

Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England

War Graves

World War 1



Lest We Forget



6718 PRIVATE

F. A. A. BONNEFIN

15TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

4TH AUGUST, 1917

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte F. A. A. Bonnefin is located in
Grave Plot # 290. C. 15. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Francis Alcide Adrian BONNEFIN

Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin was born in London, England in 1878 to parents Francis Alcide Bonnefin & Annie Bonnefin. His birth was registered in the December quarter, 1878 in the district of Hackney, London.

The 1891 England Census recorded Frank Bonnefin as a 12 year old Errand boy (Frame Maker) living with his mother & 2 younger siblings as visitors with the Cornelius family at 23 Rodney Place, Palalinate, Newington, London. Frank's mother was listed as Annie Bonnefin (married, aged 33) & her 2 other children – Edgar (aged 10) & Lilian (aged 4).

Francis Bonnefin (Picture frame maker, aged 20, of 38 Haggerston Rd) married Edith Sheers (aged 18, of 89 Treadway Street) on 2nd April, 1899 in St. Jude's, Bethnal Green, London. Francis's father was listed as Francis Alcide Bonnefin, Civil Engineer & Edith's father was listed as Henry Thomas Sheers, Gas fitter.

Edgar Francis Bonnefin was born on 12th December, 1899 in Bethnal Green, London. A birth was registered in the district of Greenwich, London in the June quarter, 1903 for Francis Henry Bonnefin & in the June quarter, 1908 for Edith A. L. Bonnefin (born 20th February, 1908).

Francis Bonnefin, aged 32, was listed as a passenger on board the *Oswestry Grange* that departed from London & arrived at the port of Brisbane, Australia on 12th March, 1911. Also listed as passengers were Edith (wife, aged 29), Edgar (son, aged 10), Frank (son, aged 7) & Edith (daughter, aged 2).

A birth was registered in 1913 in Brisbane, Queensland for Elsie Bonnefin.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Oxley, subdivision of Balmoral, lists Francis Alcide Bonnefin, Carpenter, & Edith Bonnefin, Home duties living at Carlton Hill, Bulimba, Queensland.

Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin was a 38 year old, married, Carpenter from Carlton Hill, Bulimba, Brisbane, Queensland when he enlisted at Brisbane, Queensland on 21st August, 1916 with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 15th Infantry Battalion, 22nd Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6718 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Edith Bonnefin of Carlton Hill, Bulimba, Brisbane, Queensland.

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin embarked from Brisbane on HMAT *Kyarra* (A55) on 17th November, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 30th January, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Bonnefin was marched in to 4th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire from Australia on 30th January, 1917.

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin was sent sick to Group Hospital at Codford on 11th May, 1917 & discharged on 18th May, 1917.

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin was sent sick to Group Hospital at Codford on 6th July, 1917 with an inflamed rectum & was admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 12th July, 1917 – cause not yet determined.

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin died at 12.10 a.m. on 4th August, 1917 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Ulcerative colitis with perforation of transverse colon (cause of death notified after a Post mortem was held).

A death for Francis A. A. Bonnefin, aged 38, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File for Private F. A. A. Bonnefin contains a letter from The Matron of The Military Hospital, Sutton Veny which reads:

“ No. 6788 Pte Bonnefin was admitted into this hospital on 11th of July complaining of Diarrhoea and slight vomiting. He was on fluid diet for some time and did not improve. He was seen by a specialist who advised an operation, which was performed on Aug. 2nd. He was found to have a perforated gastric ulcer. He lived two days after operation and died at midnight on August 4th. He was conscious up to a very short time before he died and did not seem to have any acute pain. His brother in London was wired for when he was considered seriously ill, and again after operation but unfortunately was unable to come. He received a military funeral and was buried in Sutton Veny churchyard.”

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin was buried on 8th August, 1917 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 290. From the burial report of Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin - *Coffin was first class. Military Funeral. The last words spoken by deceased were to the Sister of his Ward as follow:- “Thanks for all your kindness and attention.”*

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin requested in his Will, dated 19th April, 1917, that all his property be given to his wife – Mrs Edith Bonnefin.

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Bonnefin's widow – Mrs E. Bonnefin in England (sent December, 1921 & October, 1922). Mrs Edith Bonnefin & her children returned to England on 7th October, 1919.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin, 6718, of 15th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

Private F. A. A. Bonnefin is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 75.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(39 pages of Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives.



(The Queenslander Pictorial 1917)

Newspaper Reports

ROLL OF HONOUR

BONNEFIN— Private Francis Bonnefin, died of illness (ulcerative colitis), August 4th, 1917. Thanking all our kind, sympathetic friends in our sad bereavement.

God knows best,
When, and how.
To call our loved ones,
Tho' far away
To peaceful rest.

Inserted by his loving wife and children.

(The Queenslander, Brisbane – Saturday 25 August, 1917)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

CASUALTY LIST NO. 333

DIED OF ILLNESS

Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin, Bulimba 4/8/17 (Prev. rep. ser. ill)

(The Brisbane Courier, Qld – Tuesday 28 August, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Private Francis Alcide Adrian Bonnefin does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards. The 26th Division was concentrated at Sutton Veny in April 1915 and No 1 Australian Command was there from the end of 1916 to October 1919. There was also a hutted military hospital of more than 1200 beds at Sutton Veny for much of the war and No 1 Australian General Hospital was stationed there after the Armistice. Sutton Veny (St John) Churchyard contains 168 First World War burials, 167 of them in a plot at the north west corner of the church. Of these, 143 are Australian. There is only one Second World War burial in the churchyard.

(Information & colour photos from CWGC)





AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00376



War Graves at Sutton Veny *(Photo from CWGC)*

Photo of Private F. A. A. Bonnefin's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)