

**Chichester Cemetery,  
Chichester, West Sussex  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**LIONEL SCHMITZER SERVED AS**

**4311 PRIVATE**

**J. E. SMITH**

**54TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**5TH NOVEMBER, 1918 Age 24**

*Sacred Heart Of Jesus*

*Have Mercy On His Soul*

## Lionel SCHMITZER

Lionel Schmitzer was born in 1895 to parents Frederick and Honora (Nora) Schmitzer (nee Farrell). His birth was registered in Taree, New South Wales.

Lionel Schmitzer enlisted under the name of Jack Edward Smith & stated he was a 21 year old, single, Carpenter from Oxley Island, Manning River, NSW when he enlisted on 8th October, 1915 at Holsworthy, Sydney, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4311 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs N. Smith, Oxley Island, Manning River, NSW.

Private Jack Edward Smith was posted to 1st Infantry Battalion, 13th Reinforcements on 8th October, 1915 for recruit training.

Private Jack Edward Smith embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Aeneas (A60)* on 20th December, 1915 with the 1st Infantry Battalion, 13th Reinforcements.

Private Jack Edward Smith was allotted to and proceeded to join 54th Battalion from Zeitoun on 16th February, 1916. He joined 54th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 16th February, 1916.

Private Jack Edward Smith embarked from Alexandria on 19th June, 1916 on H. T. *Caledonian* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916.

Private Jack Edward Smith was wounded in action in France on 19 - 20th July, 1916. He was admitted to 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 20th July, 1916 then transferred to Ambulance Train on 21st July, 1916. Private Smith was admitted to 35th General Hospital at Calais, France on 21st July, 1916 with GSW (gunshot wound/s) to left thigh. He was transferred from Calais to No. 1 Convalescent Depot at Boulogne on 2nd August, 1916. Private Smith was discharged to Base Details - fit on 21st August, 1916.

### 54th Battalion

The 54th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 16 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 2nd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 2nd, the 54th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Moving to France in June 1916, the 54th fought its first major battle on the Western Front at Fromelles, on 19 July. It was a disaster. The 54th was part of the initial assault and suffered casualties equivalent to 65 per cent of its fighting strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 54th Battalion

#### *Bac-St. Maur*

*19th -20th July, 1916 – The Battn attacked the enemy trenches at 5.50 pm "See Appendix B Attached" & occupied his front line trenches at about 6 pm. The Battalion withdrew from its new position & returned to Billets at Bac. St. Maur at 7.30 am. Our Casualties were killed 3 Officers 70 other ranks. Wounded 11 Officers 277 other ranks Missing 4 officers 169 other ranks.*

*(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)*

Newspaper item – *The Northern Champion*, Taree NSW – 16 August, 1916:

**“Soldiers Three”**

*Lionel Schmitzer, wounded in France in the memorable dash of the Australians at Pozieres, is the third son of Mr. Fred. Schmitzer, of Oxley Island. He was determined to take a hand in the war, and went to Sydney to enlist amongst the first from this district, but was rejected. Bad teeth was the reason assigned. He returned home, and got his teeth attended to. When a call was made through the Press for Rejects to again offer he went to Sydney and presented himself at Victoria Barracks and was again turned down as a soldier, but was offered a job as groom in Egypt. His .reply was that he could get 10/ a day working his father's horses, and he wasn't going to Egypt to get 6/- a day for that work, and if he couldn't do fighting the game was no good to him. The earnestness of this boy of 19 caused a sympathetic recruiter to tell him to shorten his name and try the Board of Health recruiting office that night. He did, and under the name of John Edward Smith was accepted without any trouble. His mother received a cable last week that he was wounded, so this soldier of 20 has seen the fighting he was anxious for. The reports show that it was of the heaviest of the war.*

*His brother, Thomas James Schmitzer, was in the 8th Battalion, about which the untrue report was cabled a few days ago that it had been wiped out. He evidently heard of the same news being in the British papers, for he cabled his mother from London last week that he had passed through the Pozieres carnage without a scratch, and had a couple of days leave in England after it.*

*Another brother, Frederick Clement Schmitzer, should be somewhere about France now. He is one of Carmichael's men. He and Tom didn't have to shorten their names.*

Private Jack Edward Smith was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples & was marched out to join his Unit on 14th September, 1916. Private Smith rejoined his Unit in France on 15th September, 1916.

Private Jack Edward Smith was admitted to 15th Australian Field Ambulance on 12th December, 1916 with Influenza. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 10th January, 1917 then admitted to 5th General Hospital at Rouen, France the same day with Trench Feet. Private Smith embarked for England from Rouen on 10th January, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Aberdonian* with Trench Feet.

Private Jack Edward Smith was admitted to Norfolk War Hospital, Norwich, England on 12th January, 1917 with Trench feet – slight. He was transferred to 1st Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield on 11th April, 1917 then discharged to Depot at Weymouth on 26th April, 1917.

Private Jack Edward Smith was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset, England on 26th April, 1917.

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

Private Jack Edward Smith was marched in to Overseas Training Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire on 29th April, 1917.

Private Jack Edward Smith proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 16th July, 1917 from Overseas Training Depot. He was marched in from England to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 17th July, 1917. He was marched out to his Unit on 31st July, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in France from Hospital on 1st August, 1917.

Private Jack Edward Smith was “Mentioned in Despatches” – “*The two N.C.O.'s and five other ranks mentioned in column four were portion of a fatigue party which daily, from 24-9-17 to 29-9-17 carried R.E. stores S.A.A., bombs etc., from HOOGE Crater to the front line and the “Butt” about 4,500 yards. On the return journey, they brought back wounded to the A.D.S. at CLAPHAM JUNCTION. During the whole time mentioned, these worked increasingly. By their courageous \_\_\_ and devotion to duty, they set a splendid example to the remainder if their party. Each trip they made to the front line, necessitated passage through most intense enemy barrages which caused very severe casualties to their party.*” The seven men named were from 54th Battalion, A.I.F: 4972 L/Cpl George Armour; 2153

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Pte Stanley Richard Drew; 1624 Pte Percival Lloyd Buckley; 4844 Pte John Moylan; 4311 Pte John Edward Smith; 2432 Cpl Charles Stanley Joyce & 4902 Pte Charles Walsh.

Private Jack Edward Smith was detached for duty with 5th Divisional Headquarters from 16th November, 1917 & rejoined his Unit on 13th December, 1917.

Private Jack Edward Smith was sent to 14th Training Brigade School in France from 10th July, 1918 & rejoined his Unit on 3rd August, 1918.

Private Jack Edward Smith was wounded in action (2nd occasion) in France on 31st August, 1918. He was admitted to 9th Australian Field Ambulance on 31st August, 1918 with multiple wounds then transferred to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station with multiple shrapnel wounds. Private Smith was transferred to Ambulance Train on 1st September, 1918 & admitted to 5th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 2nd September, 1918. He was reported as dangerously ill on 29th September, 1918 & again on 6th October, 1918 & on 14th October, 1918. Private Smith was transferred to Ambulance Train 32 on 21st October, 1918 with GSW (gunshot wound/s) to head, hand, right buttock & legs.

## 54th Battalion

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Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 54th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. The 14th Brigade took up positions to the north of Villers-Bretonneux and held these even when the village fell, threatening their flanks.

Once the German offensive had been defeated, the Allies launched their own offensive in August 1918. The 14th Brigade did not play a major role in these operations until late in the month, but its actions, including those of the 54th Battalion at Anvil Wood, were critical to the capture of Peronne, which fell on 2 September.

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 54th Battalion

#### *31st August – Barleux:*

*Shelling during the night was continuous, and considerable quantities of Yellow Cross Gas was placed about the battery positions in the vicinity. During morning twilight this attention slackened and at dawn ceased.*

*At 9 a.m. the C. O. reconnoitred forward in vicinity of squares O.3.,9.&15, in an endeavour to locate any bridges or suitable places of crossing should the advance proceed successfully. The 15th Brigade had been allotted the difficult task of crossing the SOMME at these points, and the 54th Battalion, was, in conjunction with the remainder of the 14th Brigade, to maintain close support throughout.*

*At 10 a.m. the Brigadier summoned a conference of C.O.'s, and issued the information that, the former intentions had been altered, and instead movement was to be made by units straightaway to area in B.23. .with a view to crossing the Canal at the OMMICOURT Peninsula, and, assembling in I.7. assaulting the fortress of PERONNE.*

*The attack was to be made by the 5th Division in co-operation with the 2nd. Australian Division, who had earlier in the day, and not without considerable loss, secured the heights of MT. ST. QUENTIN.*

*The Battalion left BARLEUX at midday, but upon arriving at the intended point of crossing found the bridges down and the broken bridgehead subjected to heavy shell fire. It was clear the crossing would have to be effected elsewhere, and direction was made towards FEULLIERES which was known to have connection with the further shore.*

*Before the town could be reached dusk had set in and with it severe attention from enemy batteries. Gas too hung about the valley aid subjected the men to a deal of inconvenience.*

*By 8 p.m. the crossing was effected and shortly after the assembly point was reached.*

*The long delay in reaching the rendez-vous was primarily attributed to the temporary loss of MT. ST.QUENTIN*

earlier in the afternoon. From the heights of that place enemy observers were able to get direct observation upon the approaches of that part of the Canal running about the OMNICOURT Peninsula and intense shell fire on the bridge and its surroundings was the result.

Only two casualties were received throughout the day.

Up till midnight active preparations were being in hand for the assault at dawn in the morning.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Newspaper item – The Northern Champion, Taree, NSW – 28 September, 1918:

*Mr and Mrs Fred Schmitzer, of Oxley Island, recently received a cable from the military authorities, stating that their son, Private Lionel Schmitzer, has been dangerously wounded in action in France. The sons of Mr and Mrs Schmitzer have done their duty to Empire, One of them, Sergeant-major Thomas Schmitzer, was killed in action, another son, Fred, returned wounded, and now Lionel, who is 23 years of age, has been badly hurt. It is three years since he enlisted. Much sympathy is felt for Mr and Mrs Schmitzer, who gave cheerful consent to their fine lads joining the ranks and risking all the tragedies of war.*

Private Jack Edward Smith was admitted to Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, England on 23rd October, 1918 with shell wounds to leg, right amputated -severe.

Private Jack Edward Smith died at 3 pm on 5th November, 1918 at Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, Sussex, England from wounds received in action - shell wounds to leg, right amputated, heart failure – died under anaesthetic. The “Morning State of Sick” form recorded “Private John E. Smith, “A” Company. 54/ A.I.F.”

A death for John E. Smith, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Chichester, Sussex, England.



Private Jack Edward Smith was buried on 11th November, 1918 in Chichester Cemetery, Chichester, West Sussex, England – Plot number 134.80 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Jack Edward Smith - *Coffin was Elm with brass fittings. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths sent by the Hospital Staff of Greylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, and sisters. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the burial service conducted by the Rev: J. Pritchard. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of relatives or friends present at the Funeral – Hospital patients and sisters.

Newspaper item – The Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer, NSW – 22 November, 1918:

*"Times": Last week a message came through that a soldier had died of wounds, but owing to the confusion we did not mention the names. It has now been definitely cleared up that the soldier was Lionel Schmitzer, son of Mr Fred Schmitzer, of Oxley Island. This death is a very sad one when one thinks of the circumstances of the enlistment. Young Schmitzer was rejected by the authorities on account of his name. Then he presented himself again under the name of Smith, and being a fine, healthy young man he easily passed. He was anxious to do his bit, even changing his name to be permitted to do it. Widespread sympathy is extended to the bereaved parents and family.*

Private Jack Edward Smith was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were named to "Pte J. E. Smith" & sent to Pte Schmitzer's father - Mr F. Schmitzer, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Lionel Schmitzer (who served as J. E. Smith) – service number 4311, aged 24, of 54th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Frederick and Honora Schmitzer, of Bohnock, Manning River, New South Wales.

Private L. Schmitzer is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 159.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(42 pages of Private Jack Edward Smith's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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



### Connected to Private Lionel Schmitzer who served as Private Jack Edward Smith:

Older brother Thomas James Schmitzer (born 1893) – Private 2165, 30th Battalion. Enlisted 6th September, 1915, aged 22. Embarked HMAT *Ballarat* (A70) on 16th February, 1916. Final rank – Company Sergeant Major. Killed in action 26th February, 1917, aged 23. Buried Bancourt British Cemetery, France.

Older brother Frederick Clement Schmitzer (born 1891) – Private 1244, 35th Battalion. Enlisted 7th December, 1915, aged 25. Embarked 1st May, 1916 on HMAT *Benalla* (A24). Returned to Australia 19th October, 1917.

F. C. Schmitzer is remembered on the Taree War Memorial.



## Newspaper Notices

### **General News**

Messrs Lionel Schmitzer, Oxley Island; W. J. R. Kelly, Camden Haven; and W. E. Booth, Mitchell's Island, have volunteered for the front.

*(The Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer, NSW – 29 May. 1915)*

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It is with feelings of pride for our common Australian citizenship, and the happy proof of the intermingling of the Races in one common nationality, and under one flag, that we note that Lionel Schmitzer, of Oxley Island, son of Mr Frederick Schmitzer, has volunteered for the war. He carries with him the hearty approval of his parents and kin, and the congratulations of the older German families, of whom may have settled in this district, and are amongst its best citizens. Australia is now their country. This is Australia's war – Taree "Champion".

*(Nambucca and Bellinger News, NSW – 11 June, 1915)*

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### **Casualties**

#### WOUNDED

Lionel Schmitzer, Oxley Island.

*(The Wingham Chronicle and Manning River Observer, NSW – 1 November, 1916)*

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### **CASUALTY LIST**

The 450th casualty list includes the following names:-

Died of wound: Private J. Smith (Oxley Island)

*(Daily Examiner, Grafton, NSW – 7 December, 1918)*

AUSTRALIANS WHO HAVE FAITHFULLY DONE THEIR DUTY



Sgt. M.H. T. SCHMITZER,  
KILLED.



Pte. F. C. SCHMITZER,  
On Active Service.



Pte. J. E. SCHMITZER,  
On Active Service.

The Schmitzers, of Oxley Island, Manning River.

(Sydney Mail, NSW – 20 March, 1918)



**PTE J. E. SCHMITZER**

On Active Service

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### 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. 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 Lionel Schmitzer, who served as Jack Edward Smith, does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Sacred Heart Of Jesus Have Mercy On His Soul*

### **Chichester Cemetery, Chichester, West Sussex, England**

Chichester Cemetery has 174 Commonwealth War Graves. Also known as Portfield Cemetery.

Of the 89 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war, the majority are in a War Graves Plot in Squares 121 and 126 bordering a path on the far right hand side of the cemetery. This was constructed by the City Corporation, who also erected the War Cross at the eastern end of the enclosed plot especially designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and closely resembling the Commission's own Cross of Sacrifice. The names of the 1914-1918 war dead in the cemetery are engraved on the base of the Cross. There are also 75 Commonwealth burials of the 1939-1945 war here, mainly in two adjoining Church of England dedicated Squares, Nos. 115 and 159, in the south-western portion of the cemetery enclosed by a hedgerow on three sides, on the fourth side a wall bearing the inscription 1939-1945 THE MEN AND WOMEN BURIED IN THIS PLOT DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE. In the northern section a further Square, No. 42, is dedicated to Roman Catholic burials, there is a metal plaque bearing a similar inscription. There are also 7 non-Commonwealth war burials and 4 non World War burials in the care of C.W.G.C. within the cemetery. *(Information from CWGC)*



**Chichester Cemetery** (Photos by Adrienne – Find a Grave)





**Some War Graves in Chichester Cemetery** (Photo above by Basher Eyre; below from CWGC)



Photo of Private Lionel Schmitzer's, (who served as Jack Edward Smith) Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Chichester Cemetery, Chichester, West Sussex, England.

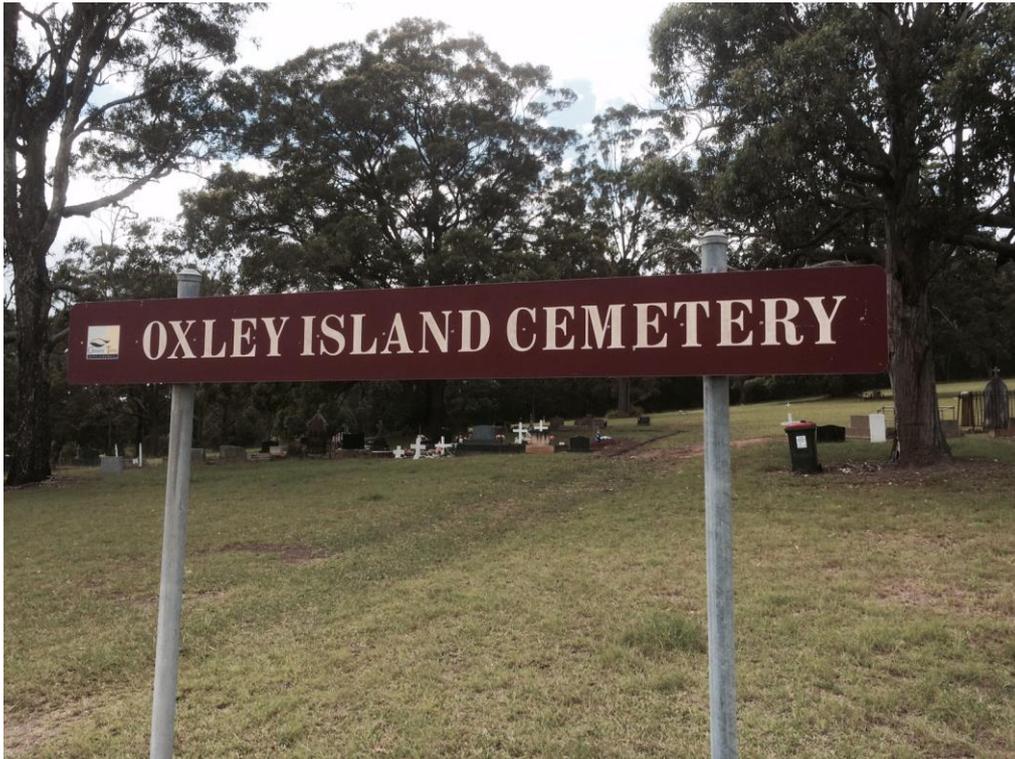


*(Photo courtesy of Allan Noble)*



**Private Schmitzer (who served as Jack Edward Smith)'s headstone in background** (Photo courtesy of Allan Noble)

Lionel Schmitzer & his brother Thomas James Schmitzer are both remembered on their parents' headstone in Oxley Island Cemetery, Oxley Island, New South Wales.



*(Photo by BrianAllan – Find a Grave)*





Face of Headstone showing Frederick & Honora Schmitzer



Face of Headstone showing Thomas James & Lionel

*Also Our Dearly Loved Sons*

*Coy. Sgt. Mjr. Thos. James  
Killed In Action Feb 26 1917  
Aged 24 Years.*

*Pte. Lionel  
Died Of Wounds Nov 5 1918  
Aged 23 Years.*

*Requiescant In Pace.*