

**Oskar Olsen, Swedish Sailor, since the age of 14  
Eldest Daughter Thelma Marie (nee Olsen) Besier.  
Grandson of Oskar and son of Thelma  
is Roderick Besier who collated the following Military History on:**

- Oskar Olsen (born. 09.12.1890 Hernosand, Sweden. - died. 19.01.1968 Repatriation General Hospital Greenslopes, Qld). Qld BDM Register: 1968/94733.
- SMH 27.01.1968. Death Notice:
- Died 19.01.1968 at Greenslopes Hospital Brisbane, late of Caboolture Brisbane.
- Cremated at Mt. Thompson Crematorium, on 20.01.1968.

**Enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF)**

Oskar's Father name was also Oskar and he was a sea Captain in the Merchant Service, and resided at 24 Nelvin Street Hernosand Sweden. There is no mention of Oskar's mother, or any other siblings.

On 29<sup>th</sup> October 1917, Oskar, being a Sailor attempted to join the Royal Australian Navy. The Naval Secretary certified and notified The OIC Recruiting Depot Town Hall Melbourne that: *"Oscar Olsen is not required for service in the Royal Australian Navy, and there is no objection in this Department to his enlistment in the A.I.F."*

On the same day he enlisted for service in the AIF, a form completed by Oskar showed *"no fixed address."*

The article published in the Melbourne press on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1917 *"A Much-Travelled Swede seeks to be in the fight,"* (see page 3) is the same date that an initialed handwritten notation on Oskar's Army file shows *'Left Sweden on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1905 not naturalised'*.

On 29.10.1910 He completed the Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted For Service Abroad.

In regards, to

Q3. to Oskar. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalised British Subject? (N.B.- If the latter papers to be shown.)

A. to Q3. Oskar declared SWEDISH SUBJECT (bold lettering).

The first address that Oskar had on Army file was c/o Park Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, England. Is his future wife Caroline White's address. (Born: 10.03.1898 Bristol England – Died: 21.05.1978. Bankstown NSW. Oskar and Caroline had five children).

**Oskar Olsen on:**

**1917**

**Regimental No. 5089**

- 29.10.17. Enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF.)
- 30.10.17. Broadmeadows, Vic. Recruit Depot.
- 19.11.17. Joined the 14<sup>th</sup> Reinforcement, 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion Fourth Sports Unit.
- 22.12. 17. Embarked at Melbourne for Active Service Abroad on H.M.A.T (His Majesty's Australian Transport). Pennant A38 "Ulysses"
- 16. 01.17. Disembarked at Suez, Egypt.
- 29. 01.17. Embarked at Alexandria, Egypt.

### 1918

- 15. 02. 18. Disembarked at Southampton, England.
- 15. 02. 18. Marched into the 15<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion, Codford, Wiltshire, England.
- 11. 04. 18. Marched into 14<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion from 15<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion.
- 20. 05. 18. Proceeded overseas to France.
- 22. 05. 18. Marched into Aust. Infantry Base Division, Le Havre, France from England.
- 06. 06. 18. Taken on strength 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion.
- 19. 07. 18. Wounded in Action WIA. (Oskar action of night 18-19, recommended for MILITARY MEDAL (MM). *also No. 5100 Private Harry Reed recommended for MM, same action WIA, GASESED.*
- 19. 07. 18. Admitted 15<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance – GASESED.
- 21. 07. 18. Transferred to 9<sup>th</sup> General Hospital, Rouen, France – GASESED.
- 22. 07. 18. Embarked for England – GASESED.
- 23. 07. 18. Admitted 2/1<sup>st</sup> Southern General Hospital, Birmingham, England.
- 12. 08. 18. Transferred to 3<sup>rd</sup> Auxiliary Hospital Harefield, Middlesex, England.
- 14. 08. 18. Discharged from Hospital, on furlough and report to No1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England.
- 28. 08. 18. Marched into No1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England ex furlough, Class B1A3. (Temporarily unfit.)
- 07. 09. 18. Marched out to Overseas Training Brigade.
- 30. 09. 18. Married. Caroline White, at the Registry Office Aston, Birmingham, England. AIF Form 527, Serial no. 19283, ref. 37/4 Of 30.01.1919. General Register Office MXJ 084537, 11527267/1.
- 05. 10. 18. Transferred to Reinforcement 58<sup>th</sup> Battalion, whilst at Overseas Training Brigade.

### 1919

- 03. 02. 19. Admitted 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. INFLUENZA (SPANISH FLU)
- 14. 03. 19. A.I.F Records Office advised Mrs Caroline Olsen that the Awarding of THE MILITARY MEDAL- to Oskar Olsen will be promulgated in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette no. 36, 28 March 1919, and Third Supplement of the London Gazette no. 31061 of 11<sup>th</sup> December 1918.
- 18. 02. 19. Discharged to Overseas Training Brigade.
- 22. 04. 19. Marched into Australian Army Service Corp, Training Depot, Park House, Tidworth, Wiltshire, England.
- 18. 06. 19. Ivor Oskar Olsen, born at Warminster, Wiltshire, England.
- 31. 07. 19. Admitted 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England, Dangerously ill- BRONCHO-PNEUMONIA. Date of discharge from Hospital not available.
- 09. 08. 19. Left England for Australia per H.M.A.T (His Majesty's Australian Transport) Pennant A40 "Ceramic."
- 27. 09. 19. Disembarked at Melbourne.
- 20. 10. 19. Discharged from the A.I.F. at Melbourne, Termination of period of Enlistment.

**The Herald Melbourne, Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 1917.**

**A much-travelled Swede seeks to be in the fight.**

Born at Hernosand Sweden, Oskar Olsen a sailor who enlisted at the Town Hall yesterday, went to sea at 14 and claims to have been in every large port in the world.

His first trip was on a timber barque trading between \*Christiania and \*\*Hull. Then he was on the fruit trade boats from the West Indies. Later, on a five-masted barque he traded between Philadelphia and Japan, Vancouver, the South Sea Islands and Australia.

In 1905 he was on a schooner which was wrecked off the South American Coast whilst carrying saltpetre to New York. The crew members manned the lifeboats and after great hardship reached Rio Janeiro. Afterwards he shipped on a German ship carrying petroleum to Japan. The discipline was so severe and the food so bad that the crew conspired to mutiny. This, however, was quelled before any damage was done. When the ship berthed at Yokohama, Olsen and nine of his shipmates ran away and walked to Tokio in search of work in the hope of finding a ship there to sign on with.

At Yokohama they were arrested and placed in a goal, from which they escaped by cutting away with jack-knives the mortar from between the bricks, making a hole in the wall large enough to squeeze through. Their liberty was short, however, and they were all taken aboard the ship. The same night acting in collusion with the guard, Olsen and two of his men slipped quietly overboard and swam ashore, escaping this time permanently.

Subsequently Olsen came to Australia, and has been on the coastal trade for five years. He claims that the British and Australian masters are the best. When asked by the enlisting officer to specify a unit he replied. "I want to be where the fighting is"!

\*Christiania Port in Norway renamed Oslo in 1925. \*\*Hull Port in England.

END