

## Oscar Henry Schroeder



Gunner (Gnr) 169 Oscar Henry Schroeder enlisted in the Siege Artillery Brigade (SAB) in Queenscliff on 4 June 1915. He embarked overseas on 17 July and travelled via the Suez Canal to England, where he disembarked at Devonport on 23 August and joined the Siege Artillery Depot at Lydd, Kent.

The brigade, initially manned by Garrison Artillery soldiers, was organised into two batteries, the 54<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup>, each equipped with four 8 inch Howitzers and 9.2 inch Howitzers respectively (increased to six in July 1917).

In early 1916, the brigade designation was changed to 36<sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Group (HAG) and they left England on 26 February 1916 and disembarked at Boulogne, France later the same day. They moved to billets at Beaumetz on 3 March and then into the front line for the first time at Tinques, to the west of Arras and Vimy on 14 March, where they came under the command of the British 17<sup>th</sup> Corps. Gnr Schroeder joined the 55<sup>th</sup> Battery on 17 April 1916.

In early July, the 36<sup>th</sup> HAG moved south to the Somme region where they came under the control of the British 10<sup>th</sup> Corps, but shortly after that, Gnr Schroeder was hospitalised in Rouen with synovitis in his right knee from 15 – 20 July.

He was transferred to England, where he was hospitalised at the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital from 22 – 26 July, and then sent to the convalescent camp at Woodcote Park, Epsom between 26 July – 14 August.

Post discharge, Gnr Schroeder was granted leave in England from 14 – 31 August 1916.

He then spent four months training with the heavy artillery group reinforcements at Wellmarsh Camp, before he again embarked for France on 20 January 1917, where he eventually rejoined the 36<sup>th</sup> HAG on 25 February.

Following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, the 36<sup>th</sup> HAG moved to Sapignies, north of Bapaume, in mid-March 1917, where they fired on Bullecourt.

By early April the 55<sup>th</sup> Battery was operating near Athies, on the Arras front. The battery came under heavy German artillery fire on 27 April, which caused 18 casualties, one of whom was Gnr Schroeder, who sustained multiple shrapnel wounds to his back and legs.

He was evacuated to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Aubigny but subsequently died of his wounds on 2 May 1917.

Gunner 169 Oscar Henry Schroeder was buried in the Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France later the same day.



*Gnr Schroeder's original grave marker at Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France*

Name: Schroeder, Oscar Henry	
Service Number	169
Date enlisted	4 June 1915
Place enlisted	Queenscliff, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Gunner
Initial Unit	Siege Artillery Brigade
Date and ship embarked for overseas	17 July 1915 HMAT A67 <i>Orsova</i>
Previous military service	Royal Australian Garrison Artillery
Stated age/DOB (if known)	23 years
Place of birth	Burnley, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Professional soldier
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Schroeder, Mr William, father, c/- PO Aura, Victoria
Permanent address	Artillery Barracks, Queenscliff, Victoria
Appearance	Dark complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 9 ¾ inches, weight – 9 stone, 14 lbs, chest measurement – 36/39 inches
Final Rank	Gunner
Final Unit	36 <sup>th</sup> Heavy Artillery Group
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Died of wounds
Date and place wounded	27 April 1917 Athies, France
Nature of wounds	Multiple shrapnel wounds to back & legs
Date and place died	2 May 1917 42 <sup>nd</sup> Casualty Clearing Station, Aubigny, France
Cemetery details	Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France. Plot II, Row J, Grave 65
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also listed on the Borough of Queenscliffe Roll of Honor and Royal Australian Garrison Artillery, Third Military District Honor Roll.