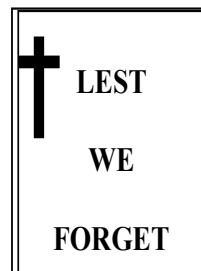


A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 2999
Name: Leslie VOCE (VOSE)
Nickname: Les



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Private
Service: Army
Enlisted: 23 Dec 1915
DOW: 28 Nov 1916

Les was born on 7 Aug 1898 at Norwood (SA) to Frank Voce and Minnie Voce (nee Hutchins): the family name is spelled both Voce and Vose on school and Army documentation ; it is recorded as Vose on the Tumby Bay Memorial . There were 3 children in the family , 2 boys and a girl, of which he was the second eldest . His family lived at Norwood in Adelaide before moving to Tumby Bay in Sep 1907, where they remained for just over 12 months before relocating to Port Lincoln . His father was a stone mason.

Les went to school at Norwood , transferring to the Tumby Bay School and later the Port Lincoln School on relocation of his family. On completion of schooling he returned to the Tumby area and worked on farms in the area until his enlistment in the Army at Norwood at the age of 18. At that time he recorded his occupation as farmer.

Les was sent to 2nd Depot Battalion (Bn) at Mitcham for training before being allocated to 6th Reinforcements/32nd Bn. He embarked on 11 Apr 1916 aboard HMAT "*Aeneas*" at Port Adelaide bound for Alexandria (Egypt). On arrival he was admitted to 11th Field Ambulance at Tel-el-Kebir with severe gastro enteritis; he was then transferred to 2nd AS Hospital at Abbassia . He was finally released from hospital on 9 Jul 1916 and shipped out to the UK aboard HMAT "*Franconia*", arriving on 10 Aug 1916.

After a short period of training in UK he then embarked for Etaples (France), arriving on 19 Sep 1916, where he undertook further training before being taken on strength by his unit (32nd Bn) on 15 Oct 1916.

The 32nd Bn was raised at Mitcham (SA) on 9 Aug 1915 with 2 companies from SA and 2 from WA. The Bn sailed for Egypt on 18 Nov 1915; it was here that Les was to join the unit , but the sickness mentioned above intervened . The Bn then sailed to

France in Jun 1916 and was committed to the front for the first time on 16 July 1916. Three days after entering the trenches the 32nd took part in the fighting around Fromelles, being

committed as part of the assault force on the extreme left of the Australian front that was focussed around a position known as the "*Sugarloaf*", during which it suffered 718 casualties - a third of the battalion's total casualties for the entire war - which equalled roughly 90 percent of its fighting strength. As a result of these losses, the 32nd Bn played no major offensive role for the rest of 1916, although it still spent periods in the front line and continued to suffer further casualties through the "attrition of trench warfare."

It had taken Les over 6 months since leaving Australia to finally arrive at his unit, but it was to be only for a short stay, as less than one month later he became a casualty through this "attrition" when he was wounded in action (WIA) on 6 Nov 1916 and was admitted to 15th Field Ambulance with a gunshot wound to the head. From here he was evacuated to the Hospital Ship (HS) "*Diepe*" on 8 Nov 1916 and then taken to the 35th General Hospital at Calais. Unfortunately he succumbed to his wounds on 28 Nov 1916.

Les is buried in the Calais Southern Cemetery at Calais, France.

Again the difficulty in the passage of information is shown in the following extracts from telegrams sent to his family. On 15 Nov 1916 a telegram advised; "Regret reported that son, Private Leslie Voce is seriously ill, will furnish progress report when received". This was followed by a telegram on 1 Dec 1916, stating; "Now reported .. condition improving ...": but of course this was 3 days after he had died from wounds, which was relayed in the final telegram to the family. We can only guess of the heartache this would cause.

Les's brother Thomas Frederick also served in WW1 with 10th Bn, where he was wounded in action on 3 occasions; his initials were included in error on the Tumbly Memorial, rather than those of Les.



British War Medal Victory Medal

Calais South
Cemetery

