**OATES, Clifford William**

**Place of Birth:** London  
**Service number:** 1923  
**Rank:** Private  
**Age at Embarkation:** 23  
**Occupation:** Labourer  
**Next of Kin:** William Oates (father), Ballengarra, Wilson River  
**Roll title:** 36 Infantry Battalion - 1 to 6 Reinforcements (May-November 1916)  
**Date of Embarkation:** 4th September, 1916  
**Place of embarkation:** Sydney  
**Ship embarked on:** HMAT Port Sydney  
**Status:** K.I.A. Reported missing 21st July, 1917 after attack on German lines near Messines Ridge. Brother Reginald Oates was with him and did not see him again after the attack commenced. Remembered on Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium.

**OATES, Reginald**

**Place of Birth:** Somerset, England  
**Service number:** 1924  
**Rank:** Private  
**Age at Embarkation:** 21  
**Occupation:** Bush worker  
**Next of Kin:** William Oates (father), Ballengarra, Wilson River  
**Roll title:** 36 Infantry Battalion - 1 to 6 Reinforcements (May-November 1916)  
**Date of Embarkation:** 4th September, 1916  
**Place of embarkation:** Sydney  
**Ship embarked on:** HMAT Port Sydney  

**OATES, Ronald Mervyn**

**Place of Birth:** London, England  
**Service number:** 866  
**Rank:** Private  
**Age at Embarkation:** 26  
**Occupation:** Teamster  
**Next of Kin:** William Oates (father), Ballengarra, Wilson River  
**Roll title:** 35 Infantry Battalion (May 1916)  
**Date of Embarkation:** 1st May, 1916  
**Place of embarkation:** Sydney  
**Ship embarked on:** HMAT Benalla  
**Status:** K.I.A. Admitted to hospital 22nd February 1917. Died of wounds 25th February, 1917. Buried Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France
A brief account of Ronald and Clifford Oates in the Great War

by Ken Oates (Great nephew)

Ronald enlisted in the 1st AIF at Wauchope, on 8 December 1915, a little over a year after the war began. Ronald was 26 years old, and was described as being of dark complexion, 5’10” tall, with blue eyes and brown hair, and had a tattoo on his right arm. His employment was given as teamster, and he was in many ways the archetypal bushman that is such a part of the ANZAC myth.

After his enlistment, Ronald was sent to Maitland where he became a member of C Coy, 35th Battalion. In May 1916, the Battalion was sent to England on the SS Benalla, and disembarked at Plymouth on 9 July 1916. During the voyage Ronald was promoted to Lance Corporal, and trained with the Battalion in England until November 21 1916. The 35th Battalion embarked for France at Southampton, and was sent to France through the established base port of Boulogne, in the Pas de Calais region, and Ronald found himself at the front in the early part of 1917.

Ronald was promoted to Corporal in the field on 27 January. The official reports state that on 18 February 1917 Ronald received a neck wound while in action east of Boulogne, and was initially evacuated by the 10th Field Ambulance to a Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. Ronald was so on transferred to the No 10 Ambulance train, bound for Boulogne, and was admitted to the 13th General Hospital the following day. He died from his wounds after a week, on the 25 February 1917. His body was interred in the Boulogne East Cemetery.

Clifford joined up in Sydney at Victoria Barracks on 30 March 1917, and his records say that he was 5’5” tall, and had been working as a labourer. Initially Clifford was posted to C Coy, 3rd Battalion, who were training in Cootamundra. He was transferred to the second replacements for the 36th Battalion in June 1916 where he joined his brother Reginald. The replacements were sent to England on H.M.A.T. A15 on 4th September 1916, and arrived in Plymouth, Devon, on 29 October 1916. The Battalion continued training in England until they were transported to Etaples, a traditional fishing port near Boulogne in northern France. The Oates brothers joined D Company of the 36th Battalion and were marched up to the field in mid-January 1917, and saw their first action.

Over the next six months, the brothers were in and out of action in northern France, and then Belgium, and in June 1917 were located in the Messines area. This was the site of a major action, when sappers tunnelled under the German position and laid mines in what was one of the biggest mine-based battles of the war.

The mines were exploded on the 7th June and over the next few days the whole front south of Ypres moved deeper into German territory. The men of D Company 36th battalion were kept in reserve during the main attack on Messines, going in to replace other troops on the front line a few days later. Then on the night of the 20/21st of July, D company went into a very difficult action as part of around 80 men who attacked some German strong points, and took two German posts. However, the Germans counter-attacked, and repelled the Australians who suffered significant losses. Clifford Oates was never seen again after going over the top of the trench just after midnight on the 21st July, and his brother Reginald was wounded.
O'BRIEN, Felix Joseph

Place of Birth: Omagh, Ireland
Service number: 468
Rank: Private
Age at Embarkation: 25
Occupation: Labourer
Next of Kin: Mrs Ann O'Brien, Ennis, Hastings River
Roll title: 25 Infantry Battalion (June 1915)
Date of Embarkation: 29th June 1915
Place of embarkation: Brisbane
Ship embarked on: HMAT Aeneas
Status: RTA 12th May, 1918

OCHS, Otto Oswald

Place of Birth: Port Macquarie
Service number: 357
Rank: Corporal
Age at Embarkation: 23
Occupation: Motor mechanic
Roll title: No 1 Mining Corps [Nos 1-1291] (February 1916)
Date of Embarkation: 20th February, 1916
Place of embarkation: Sydney
Ship embarked on: HMAT Ulysses
Status: RTA 21st June, 1916

*O'LEARY, Albert Joseph

Place of Birth: Wauchope
Service number: 1199
Rank: Private
Age at Embarkation: 25
Occupation: Clerk
Next of Kin: William O'Leary (father) Smiths Creek, near Kempsey
Roll title: 36 Infantry Battalion (May 1916)
Date of Embarkation: 13th may, 1916
Place of embarkation: Sydney
Ship embarked on: HMAT Beltana
Status: K.I.A. 12th July, 1917. Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
OSTLER, Albert

**Place of Birth:** Yarmouth, England  
**Service number:** 2133  
**Rank:** Private  
**Age at Embarkation:** 19  
**Occupation:** Fisherman  
**Next of Kin:** Alfred Ostler (father) Rawdon Island  
**Roll title:** 34 Infantry Battalion - 1 to 6 Reinforcements (May-November 1916)  
**Date of Embarkation:** 24th August, 1916  
**Place of embarkation:** Sydney  
**Ship embarked on:** HMAT Anchises  
**Status:** RTA 11th May, 1919

OSTLER, Ernest

**Place of Birth:** Sitapur, India  
**Service number:** 4585  
**Rank:** Private  
**Age at Embarkation:** 29  
**Occupation:** Fisherman  
**Next of Kin:** Alfred Ostler (father) Maldon via Wauchope  
**Roll title:** 30 Infantry Battalion - 7 to 12 Reinforcements (May-November 1916)  
**Date of Embarkation:** 25th November 1916  
**Place of embarkation:** Sydney  
**Ship embarked on:** HMAT Beltana  
**Status:** RTA 26th September, 1917. Discharged Sydney, 16 February 1918 – Medically unfit  
**Notes:** See Appendix 3 and Appendix 4

OSTLER, G. (Alfred George)

**Place of Birth:** Norwich, England  
**Service number:** 2639  
**Rank:** Private  
**Age at Embarkation:** 18  
**Occupation:** Farm labourer  
**Next of Kin:** Alfred John Ostler (father) Rawdon Island, Wauchope  
**Roll title:** 36 Infantry Battalion - 1 to 6 Reinforcements (May-November 1916)  
**Date of Embarkation:** 9 November 1916  
**Place of embarkation:** Sydney  
**Ship embarked on:** HMAT Benalla  
**Status:** RTA 12th June, 1919  
**Notes:** See Appendix 3