

GROSVENOR, James Arthur (19795 AIF)



Name	GROSVENOR, James Arthur Driver AIF
Service Number	19795
Date of Birth	12th July 1893
Died	18th August 1963
Place of Birth	Victor Harbor SA
Resident	Victor Harbor SA
Cemetery	Victor Harbor Cemetery

Image 1 © Brenton Grosvenor family collection 2011.
Taken prior to his embarkation

James (Jim) Arthur Grosvenor was born at Newcastle, NSW, on 12 July 1893, the fourth of ten children of Archibald Thomas Grosvenor and Prudence Grosvenor (*nee* Prouse). The family moved to the Victor Harbor area and James was educated at the local public school.

Jim was single, and a grocer's assistant, when at the age of 22 years, he enlisted in the AIF on 31 August 1915. He was given the serial number 19795 and posted to the 2nd Depot Battalion where he undertook his basic training. On 1 November, Jim was posted to the 4th Reinforcement Unit of the 6th Field Artillery as a gunner and sent to the Signal School. On 1 April 1916, he was transferred to the 30th Battery of the 8th Field Artillery Brigade, then based at Maribynong, Victoria.

On 20 May 1916, the unit embarked from Port Melbourne on the HMAT A7 *Medic* and sailed for England, berthing at Plymouth on 18 July. The embarkation roll reveals his daily rate of pay was five shillings of which he remitted home three shillings to his mother. All enlisted men received an additional one-shilling per day, to be paid on completion of their overseas service. On disembarking, Jim and his fellow soldiers entrained to the massive Australian base on the Salisbury Plains where they underwent further training.

Each Australian division had its own artillery units and the 3rd Division Artillery was formed in July 1916 with the remainder of the Division on the Salisbury Plain. On 24 November 1916, Jim and his fellow soldiers embarked for France and disembarked at Le Havre. They reached the Brigade, which was based near Messines, Belgium. The Brigade was in the front line and the casualties continued to mount daily. A short time after his arrival, Jim was appointed as a driver, his duties entailed the driving of field gun carriages and ammunition wagons in the Brigade's Ammunition Column.

The strain on the gunners and drivers during the battles was intense and as one driver later recalled: *"Fritz (the Germans) made it pretty hot on the roads and he got a good many horses and men. One team was blown up about 30 yards in front of me"*.

Carrying ammunition was considered to be the riskiest work of the lot, and many preferred being on the guns. Most of the roads were under heavy shellfire at intervals, and were death traps at any time.

The men on the gun lines were under constant bombardment as the artillery on each side endeavoured to knock out the opposing batteries as these provided vital fire support to the attacking infantry. Gas shells were a constant fear as the escaping gas would linger for hours and settle in the bottom of trenches and dugouts. German gas bombardments not only forced the Australian gunners to work in gas masks, which degraded their performance, but men also had to be taken off the gunline to escort casualties to the rear.

In early October 1917, the attack to capture the Passchendaele Ridge was carried out and 3rd Division Artillery was one of the formations required to provide artillery support to the attacking infantry. During the offensive three soldiers of the Brigade were killed in action, one died of his wounds and ten were wounded. On 18-19 October, a further four soldiers were killed in action whilst a further 26 were wounded. There were 12 soldiers evacuated sick to hospital.

The Brigade continued to rotate in and out of the frontline until the end of the war. Their casualties continued to mount but Jim was one of the fortunate ones to survive. After the Armistice, Jim remained in France until 18 March 1919 and on 11 May, he embarked on the *Zealandia* for the journey home, berthing at Port Adelaide on 26 June. After home leave, he was demobilised on 10 August 1919.

Jim later married Annie Marguerite Virgin and there were two children of the marriage. James Arthur Grosvenor died on 18 August 1963 and is buried in the Victor Harbor Cemetery.

Jim's brothers Sidney John Grosvenor and Clifford Ivo Grosvenor also served in the AIF in France and Belgium. During the Second World War, Jim's son, Jack Prouse Grosvenor, served in the Militia Forces and the 2nd AIF (S47648 & SX19110 PTE J.P. Grosvenor) prior to joining the Royal Australian Air Force (442442 Warrant Officer J.P. Grosvenor).

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Research Team, January 2011. Updated by T.Young
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Appendix



Image 2© *Brenton Grosvenor family collection 2011*

Portrait taken in the field of the 30th Battery, 8th Field Artillery Brigade, circa 1918, Jim Grosvenor is in the back row, third from left. Jim earlier served with the 29th Battery.



Image 3© *Ian Milne 2011*

Grave of James Arthur Grosvenor who is buried in the Victor Harbor Cemetery.



Image 4© *Faithe Jones 2025*

