

Melbourne,

30th July, 1918.

re Late Sergeant No. 6079 P.B. Osborne

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Report by Sergeant A.E. Ferguson.

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I first met the late soldier in Ballarat Camp, Victoria. He was my Company Clerk in the Ballarat Depot where I was acting as Sergeant Major. I was attracted by his sterling qualities. He was a clean living, straight boy. From the first I met him until his death in Tidworth Hospital, England no black mark can be placed against his records. He embarked from Australia about three weeks before myself. Next I met him at the 2nd Training Battalion, Salisbury Plains, about 26th or 27th October. He was acting Sergeant. He was acting as escort to Sergeant Adcock who was under arrest. I was in the closest possible touch with this young soldier. We were comrades and I know him through and through. He was detailed to go into a training school for Gas just before he was admitted to the Hospital. He was in good health until about the beginning of December 1916 when he contracted a cold and it broke out on his face, excema condition. On 5th December he was admitted to Tidworth Hospital. Discharged from that Hospital about the 20th January. When he came out of hospital he did not seem himself. I would regard him as a man whose health should have been strictly guarded. He did nothing for a few days except ordinary camp routine. During these several days he was in a languid condition. About three days before he reentered the Hospital he complained to me of having a heavy cold. He gradually got worse and on the day of his readmission to the hospital he appeared very ill and another Sergeant and myself helped him round to the Doctor, Captain Barber. He was then admitted to the Observation Ward in camp but seemed to get gradually worse until Wednesday evening when I was informed he had been removed to hospital. The next I heard was from an A.M.C. Sergeant that if Osborne were not dead he was very near it. I asked what was the matter and he said meningitis. On Friday morning the date of his death I heard he was very bad and went over to Tidworth but did not see him. He was unconscious. The next thing I hear was of his death the same night.

I consider the boy was neglected from the time of reporting sick until the time of his admission to Tidworth.

Mrs. Harris (his mother) received 15/9 back from her late son, being the only amount said to have been in his possession at the time of his death. I know of him having £17. 0. 0, two wristlet watches and an excellent pocket book. All of these have not been returned. I tried to procure these and send them to Mrs. Harris, being interested in the lad but got nothing but impudence from the Hospital Authorities.

A. E. Ferguson

Supt. 8th Batta