

John enlisted in F Company of the AN&NEF and served from 11th August 1914 till discharge at end of Engagement on 4th March 1915 – a total of 206 days.

On his Attestation Form, he stated he was born in Fernvale, Queensland, was 23 years old and a boilermaker by trade. He nominated his father, Harcourt Aldham of Bluff Rock, NSW, as his next of kin and indicated that he had previously served with the 6th Australian Light Horse Regiment for a period of 14 months.

On 2nd September 1915 he enlisted in 54th Battalion, AIF and left for Egypt aboard the Ballarat, disembarking on 22nd March 1916. On 19th June 1916 he left Alexandria arriving with the 54th at Marseilles. On 1 July 1916, he was appointed Lance Corporal and some 22 days later was taken prisoner by the Germans at Fleurbaix.

Details of his capture and internment are well documented. In a recorded interview, John states:

“I was wounded by a rifle bullet in the elbow joint of my right arm by a bomb in the right leg on the same day. The former wound has caused permanent injury, and my arm is of little use; the latter has healed; it caused erysipelas in the foot and leg, because it was not properly looked after, and an abscess formed on the foot.

I received attention at a field dressing station about three miles behind the German lines. I was well treated. I did not receive or see any cruelty.”

The above formed part of an examination by John White, 28 Budge Row, Cannon Street, E.C.4, at King George Hospital on 28th January 1918 who formed the opinion that John was “...intelligent and reliable.”

John was repatriated from Germany to Holland on 13th January 1918, eventually arriving in England on 20th January. He spent some time in Hospital in England before returning to Australia aboard the Ruahine in June 1918 where he was discharged as medically unfit on 1st Jan 1919.

After the war, John married Nenetta Alice Ambrosoli, and had a son, Jack, born 26th July 1919.

Jack NX53693 enlisted at the outbreak of World War 2, as a signaller in the 2/19th Battalion, which left Australia on 2 Feb 1941 for Singapore. Initially the battalion moved north to Seremban, Malaya, eventually returning to Singapore.

Following the fall of Singapore in Feb 1942, Jack was reported as missing. It was not until September 1943, that he was reported to be a prisoner of War. Like his father before him, Jack survived the war eventually being recovered from Kranji Camp, Singapore and repatriated to Australia.

John Aldham died on 3rd October 1977 aged 86, and Jack died on 1st February 1991, aged 71.