

Oliver was born at Five Docks on 14th July 1896, the son of William Edward Ferns and his wife Clara, nee Evans. He was educated at Fort St High School. At the time of enlisting in the AN&MEF on 11th August 1914 he was studying law at Sydney University. He stated that he was 20, whereas he had just turned 18, hence he enlisted under the name Carl Ferns. He returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 18th Jan 1915 having completed 161 days.

On 24th March 1915 he joined the AIF, again under the name Carl Ferns, as part of the 5th Reinforcements, 4th battalion, regimental number 2025, but was discharged on 12th April being underage.

On 16th March 1916 he again enlisted this time stating that he was born on 14th Jan 1894, number N23006. He served in Cootamundra, Dubbo and Newcastle. He was promoted sergeant on 1st April 1916 and then attended the 31st OTS school at Duntroon between 1st July 1916 and 31st August. He was appointed CSM before being appointed 2nd Lt as part of the 8th Reinforcements, 54th Battalion. He left Sydney on 11th November 1916 aboard the SUEVIC, arriving in Devonport on 29th Jan 1917.



The evening News, 13th November 1917

He moved to France on 24th August 1917 and joined the 54th on 10th September. He received a gunshot wound to the shoulder on 30th September and was hospitalised in France before rejoining his unit on 26th October 1917. Meanwhile, on the 12th Oct he was promoted Lieutenant. He was again wounded on 9th April 1918, with a fractured left femur. He transferred to the UK and returned to Australia aboard the KANOWNA, departing the UK on 5th Jan 1919.

His appointment to the AIF was terminated on 4th October 1920 and he was laced on the Reserve of Officers.

Oliver's older brother William Henry Ferns was also in the AIF, serving as a gunner with the 5th Field Artillery, regimental number 11471, from 2th October 1915 till 10th October 1919.

He too up his profession as a solicitor and in 1923 he married Christine (Chrissie) Raynor Steward.

On 21st Jan 1943 he was called up and served as a Major with the Volunteer Defence Corps until 17th Sept 1943, service number N346978.

He died at Cremorne on 31st October 1956.