**SAPPER JAMES LAURENCE MOORE**

**3258 – Tunnelling Reinforcements / 50th Battalion**

Macclesfield, South Australia was the birthplace of James Laurence Moore on 10 August, 1884 the son of Michael and Annie Mary formerly Corcoran (nee O’Grady) Moore and was registered at Strathalbyn, S.A.

At the recruiting depot in Adelaide (4th Military District) on 21 February, 1916 the thirty-year-old miner applied to enlist for active service abroad and passed the medical examination. Attestation forms were completed and describe him as 175cms (5ft 8¾ins) tall, weighing 74kgs (163lbs) with a chest expansion of 92-102cms (36-40ins) and had a fresh complexion, with grey eyes testing fair sight in his right eye and good vision in the left one and his hair was brown. Distinctive mark was one vaccination scar on his left arm. Roman Catholic was his religion. Next-of-kin nominated was his mother Mrs Annie Datson of Chapple Street, Broken Hill, New South Wales and later changed to Iodide Street, Broken Hill. The Oath of Allegiance was signed and taken the same day.

Acknowledgement to the new recruits was published in the:

*Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide) Monday 21 February, 1916:

GONE INTO CAMP

The following men went into camp on Monday: J.L. Moore *Article abridged*

Basic training commenced with A Coy, 2nd Depot Battalion but was allotted to the Miners’ Reinforcements at Mitcham camp and placed with the No. 4 Tunnelling Company and transferred to their training camp at Rosebery Park, Sydney.

Meanwhile the recruits forming part of the No. 4 Tunnelling Company embarked from Brisbane, Qld early in May, 1916 aboard HMAT A69 *Warilda* for Sydney, NSW. Six officers and 152 other ranks together with the 1st Reinforcements of fifteen other ranks made up the two sections.

At Rosebery Park, Sydney, NSW about 11 May they joined their Headquarters and two sections (8 officers & 153 O.Rs.) plus 1st Reinforcements consisting of one officer and seventeen other ranks for final training. The rank of Sapper and the Regimental number 3258 in No. 4 Company was assigned to him.

While in Sydney the following occurred and reported in several newspapers including the:

*Western Star and Roma Advertiser* (Qld) Saturday May 20, 1916:

SOLDIER ATTACKED

Two soldiers, Sapper **J.L. Moore** and S.J. Giles, of the 4th Tunnelling Company, No. 2 Section, were walking along Pitt-street, Sydney, soon after 8 o’clock on Monday night, when they were confronted by two civilians and two soldiers, one of whom pointed across the road and remarked, “There is a German over there; go at get to him.”

The two sappers crossed the road and found a young man in civilian clothes lying his back on the footpath. His face was covered with blood, and he was unable to get up. There were a few people standing about, but none seemed particularly concerned about the injured man. More and Giles, who came from South Australia, and are strangers to Sydney, were uncertain what to do with him. They searched vainly for a police officer, and civilians unwilling to help. However, they eventually got the man to Sydney Hospital.

At the hospital the man’s right eye, which had received a heavy blow, was attended to. When questioned, he occasioned surprise by saying that not only was he not a German, but he was a member of the Returned Soldiers’ Association, having left Australia in the first ship that took troops to fight at Gallipoli. He produced his discharge certificate, and this bore the name of Rasmus Harry Mikklesen, and described him as a native of Denmark. Mikklesen said he had belonged to the 2nd Battalion. In explaining his injury, he said that he had been struck in the face with a bottle by a civilian in an hotel. He also alleged that a soldier relieved him of his returned soldier’s badge and his colors.

Mikkleson, who a few months ago was invalided from England, is employed at the Customs Department. He lived at 637 Dowling-street, Moore Park.

He participated in the Troop Inspection at Moore Park and a report published in the:

*Sydney Morning Herald* Monday May 22, 1916:

#### THE TROOPS – INSPECTION AT MOORE PARK

“In the presence of a crowd of 10,000 people the District Commandant, Brigadier-General Ramaciotti, V.D., held an inspection of troops at Moore Park, on Saturday afternoon. The troops consisted of Field Artillery, Tunnelling Section (including Queenslanders), under Major Vincent; Infantry, under Lieutenant Owen Gibbs, under Captain Brosnan, the whole parade being under the command of Major Holman, D.S.O.

Prior to arrival of the commandant and his staff, the men were drawn up in columns of companies on the Dowling-street side of the ground, facing the tramline. The bands of Liverpool Headquarters and the Engineers played selections of music.

Brigadier-General Ramaciotti, V.D. made a close inspection of the lines. Returning to the saluting base the Commandant took the salute as the various units marched past in columns of companies, and again as they returned headed by the band in columns of fours.

One company had with it a small kangaroo as a mascot. The animal was held on a ribbon, but when it drew level with the saluting base it bobbed up and down as if anxious to do its share in the saluting lines as its male friends were doing. Its antics were so ludicrous that the crowd roared.

At the conclusion of the inspection the men were marched across to the Royal Agricultural Ground, where they were provided with temporary quarters.” *Article abridged*

The 7713-ton transport departed Sydney, NSW on May 22, 1916 and collected in Melbourne, Victoria the No. 5 Company recruited from Victoria, South Aust. & Tasmania made up of Headquarters and 2 Sections (8 officers & 173 men) (3 M.D.). 1 Section from Tasmania (3 officers & 76 O.Rs.); also 1st Reinforcements for No. 5 Company (17 men from Vic. & 8 men Tas.) The ship departed on May 25, 1916 for Adelaide, S.A. to collect one Section of 3 officers & 76 O.Rs. with 1st Reinforcements of 8 O.Rs.

There is no explanation of why or when Sapper Moore returned to Adelaide but the most logical one is he disembarked the troopship *Warilda* in Adelaide due to illness and returned to the Miners’ Depot at Mitcham camp.

The troopship continued on to Perth where the No. 6 Tunnelling Company was in their final stages of preparation for departure giving a regimental show of their strength in parades.

Docking at Fremantle, W.A. on June 1, 1916 added No. 6 Company recruited from W.A. of 14 officers and 325 O.Rs. along with 1st Reinforcements of 1 Officer & 32 O.Rs. departing the same day. Their voyage terminated at Plymouth, England on July 18, 1916.

Sapper was detained at the Torrens Island V.D. Camp from 21 October, 1916 and released on November 22 and placed with the 8th Reinforcements to the 50th Battalion the next day. He was returned to Torrens Island from December 1 and re-joined on December 5, 1916. His rank was Private with the same regimental number.

The Reinforcements embarked from Adelaide (4th M.D.) on 16 December, 1916 on board HMAT A35 *Berrima* and arrived at Devonport, England on 16 February, 1917 marching into the 15th Training Battalion at Hurdcott five days later. Marched out on 6 March to the 13th Training Battalion at Codford.

Discipline was issued for the following:

Offence: Codford 13/6/17 Insolence to a superior officer

Award: 3 day’s pay by Lt-Col D.A. Lane 13/6/17

Proceeded to France from Southampton on 14 June, 1917 arriving a day later at the Aust General Base Depot at Havre. Private was taken on strength in the field on 4 July, 1917.

He appeared before the Field General Court Martial 24 October, 1917 as follows:

When on Active Service deserting his Majesty’s Service from 12/10/17 to 14/10/17

Pleaded not Guilty. Found Guilty.

Award: 5 years P.S. [Penal servitude]

Conferred by: G.O.C. 4 Aust 1st Division

In custody: 15/10/17 to 23/10/17 – 9 days

Total forfeiture: 12 day’s pay and 5 years

Private Moore spent two days at the 4th Stationary Hospital in Arques from 13 to 14th November, 1917.

Was admitted to undergo sentence of five years with the No. 3 Military Prison at Havre on 15 November but on November 28 sentence was commuted to two years.

On 19 May, 1918 Private Moore was released from No. 3 Prison and entrained to his unit at the Front with the remainder of his sentence suspended as from release date. He re-joined his unit on May 23 but was AWL from 26 June, 1918.

When Peace was declared he was still absent.

On 26 November, 1918 was declared an illegal absentee “in the field” at a Court of Inquiry held on 7 November, 1918. The 4th Aust Division reported he was arrested at Amiens on 11 November and returned to his unit on November 18.

He went before the Field General Court Martial on 2 December, 1918 and the finding was as follows:

Charge: Absent without leave from 9 a.m. 26/6/18 till 10.30 11/11/18

Finding: Guilty

Sentence: 2 years I.H.L. 2/12/18

Confirmed: By G.O.C. 13th Brigade 11/12/18

Period under charge: 17/11/18 to 20/12/18

Period: 2/12/18 till 20/12/18 concurrent

Promulgated: 20/12/18

He was admitted to the XIth Military Prison to undergo sentence of 2 years awarded 24/10/17 unexpired portion suspended; 2nd Sentence of years awarded 2/12/18. Sentences to run concurrently.

Private embarked from Calais on 28 May, 1919 on board H.T. *Barritz* disembarking under escort at Folkstone for No. 5 Military Prison and proceeded to undergo sentence at Carnavan Prison, Wales.

On 18 June, 1919 was released from H.M. prison, Exeter on suspension of sentence and marched in to the Details Camp.

He was last paid on 13 August, 1919 by Paymaster at U.K. Depots, Tidworth and detached to No. 2 Group camp at Sutton Veny.

After demobilisation Private Moore embarked for Australia on board H.T. *Port Sydney* on 12 September, 1919. Base Records advised his mother on 14 October that he was on his way home. Permission was granted at sea on 4 October, 1919 to disembark for discharge in the 5th Military District and he disembarked at Fremantle, Western Australia on 4 November, 1919.

The following appeared in the news in Adelaide in the:

*Port Adelaide News* Friday November 14, 1919:

HOME AGAIN – TROOPS FROM THE PORT SYDNEY LANDED

The troopship Port Sydney arrived at the Anchorage at 12.30 p.m. on Monday and 101 South Australian soldiers were landed from the vessel at the Outer Harbor by the launch Vigilant at 2 p.m.

The following men did not arrive:

3258 Pte J.L. Moore *Article abridged*

Military Discharge was issued in Perth (5th M.D.) on 19 November, 1919 on termination of his period of enlistment.

His Will was returned to the 4th Military District on 31 January, 1920 and proceedings of the Court Martials went to the Attorney General’s Department on 15 March, 1920.

For serving his country Private 3258 James Laurence Moore, 50th Battalion was issued with the British War Medal (16754) and the Victory Medal (16276).

These medals were not collected from the designated barracks and returned to Base Records on 30 September, 1924. A letter was sent to him care of the last known address of his mother on 18 October, 1924. He applied for both medals on 31 October, 1924 to be forwarded to him at 240 Iodide Street, Broken Hill.

In 1930 he was listed residing at 246 Oxide Street, Broken Hill North working as a miner.

He married on 19 August, 1930 in South Australia to Margaret May Woodhouse.

On 16 December, 1965 Base Records forwarded to the Victorian Repatriation Commission’s request for his service records so as a decision could be made on the eighty-one-year-old veteran.

They were listed from 1963 to 1968 residing at 1538 Dandenong Road, Oakleigh, Vic with his occupation given as labourer.

Mrs Moore died on 4 August, 1978 aged 79 years.

James Laurence Moore passed away on 19 March, 1986 aged 101 years.



Their grave in New Brighton Cemetery

Photo sourced from Find-a-Grave website

Interment took place in the New Brighton Cemetery, Caulfield.

© Donna Baldey 2021

www.tunnellers.net