

Project Harold

(Harold Edeson aka Wade)

The following is a mixture of verified and *unverified* information on the above character, his family and wife(s). Confirmation of all of what follows may never be possible, however, if any reader is in the vicinity of any of the following archival entities, then please call in as you never know what gaps in this story you may fill:

State Records Authority of NSW (www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives)

143 O'Connell St KINGSWOOD

NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages (www.bdm.nsw.gov.au)

35 Regent St CHIPPENDALE

State Library of Victoria (www.slv.vic.gov.au)

328 Swanston St MELBOURNE

Public Records Office Victoria (www.prov.vic.gov.au)

99 Shiel St NORTH MELBOURNE

Archives Office of Tasmania – (www.archives.tas.gov.au)

77 Murray St HOBART

State Library of South Australia (www.slsa.sa.gov.au)

Cnr North Terrace & Kintore Ave ADELAIDE

State Library of Western Australia (www.slwa.wa.gov.au)

Alexander Library Building, between Francis St & James St Mall

State Records Office of Western Australia (www.sro.wa.gov.au)

As above

Family Tree (incomplete)

Joseph EDESON (Blacksmith)

m Elenoar, neePEATCHEY, 1869, Hobart Town

Joseph William (Mill Wright), b1870, Graytown (near Bendigo Vic)

m Florence May, neeUKN

Elizabeth Ida, b1871, Graytown, d1870, 3mths

George Frederick, b1872, Eaglehawk (now a suburb of Bendigo), d1876, 3yrs

John Godfrey, b1875, Sandhurst (a ward of Bendigo), d1876, 2mths

Harold (Bootmaker), b1876, Sandhurst, d1943, Ballarat, 67yrs

m Comfort, neeRENFREY b1881, 1901 Broken Hill N.S.W., ?d1957? at ?PARK?, ?77?yrs

Elizabeth Helena May, b1902, Broken Hill

Harold, b1905, Broken Hill, d1905, Broken Hill

Elsie Jean, b 19/8/1910

Oliver Charles Bertie (Labourer), b1878, Sandhurst, d11/3/1906 Leederville W.A., ?27?yrs

Matilda May, b1883, Sandhurst, d1885, Sandhurst, 2yrs

Horace Hamel McKean, b1885 Sandhurst, d1887, Sandhurst, 20mths

Records of Harold's WW1 service can be found at the National Archives (www.naa.gov.au) or via our download page (www.joc.id.au/downloads.htm) when I finally put them there. These are fairly extensive, and mainly outline his military movements, illnesses and financial allotments to Comfort back home with the kids, in Adelaide. An executive summary can found later on.

At this stage, I am yet to discover any marriage details for Harold and Alice, nor any divorce details for Harold and Comfort.

Now the surname of EDESON is not all that common. So you would think it would be relatively easy to find THE Edeson that you are looking for. Don't you believe it. Mind you, the current White Pages (on-line) has only two (2) Edeson's listed in Victoria. One in Swan Hill, the other in Melbourne. Who knows, stranger things have happened and as you will see, they/we may be related...I should call them.

Harold's father, Joseph, is of some interest. Along with his mother, first and possibly second wife.

All of the following is *unverified* and subject further research at any/all of the above institutions.

I will start with Joseph.

Bearing in mind that Joseph and Elenoar were married in Hobart Town, I made the instantaneous deduction that one or both were convicts (after all, the Jones family is full of them – both past and recent ones). Lo and behold, 1 x Joseph Edeson managed to make an entry. Some of the details are:

Arrested in 1829 for theft of a “crown” at age 14. Sentenced to 7 years transportation in 1831, departing England on the ship Larkins on 18 June 1831 and arriving in Tasmania on 19 October 1831. He earned his Ticket of Leave in ~~1935~~.

The age of this Joseph is a bit out, as if he was 14 in 1829, then he would have been at least 70 at time of conception of his last child. Possible, but requiring a very understanding and younger wife. Either that, or today's version of the male of the species isn't what it used to be.

Another Joseph follows.

This one arrived in Sydney from London as an “unassisted” arrival on 16 August 1847 aboard the Josephine. Age unknown.

It is worthy to note that in the “remarks” column there is the following comment: “McEdeson in SMA”.

Could this be where all of our Scottish heritage is coming from? As this Joseph was “unassisted”, I'd say he had a few quid in his sky rocket so he has to be my favourite to be THE Joseph. The question remains of how and why did he get to Hobart Town to marry our Elenoar 18 years later? Busted for opening the first McEdeson franchise perhaps?

Elenoar (or Elenor) EDESON, neePeatchey (or Peatchy) can't be found easily and further investigation is required, so watch this space – or feel free to provide info as you discover it.

Comfort EDESON, neeRenfrey. Now with a name as unusual as “Comfort”, you'd think this would be an easy one.

Nope, think again. Although the RENFREY surname is common in the Broken Hill area where she married Harold, a search through the Births and Deaths (in N.S.W.) doesn't bring up any Comforts. So it may be a “pet” name or abbreviation of another, perhaps a bit like what “Snowy” and “Billy” are of “Ivan”. Thoughts and guidance here would be most welcome.

However, a Comfort Edeson was listed as a death in 1957 at “PARK” (wherever that is), 77yrs. Pretty sure she is “our” Comfort.

Another Comfort Edeson was on the electoral roll for Toorak (247 Williams Rd), with a couple of cohabitants listed for good measure. They are: Elenor (strange name, considering), Harry (again, strange considering), Jane and John Robert. The same person?

OK, more checking required. Again, any info would be appreciated.

Alice "EDESON" neeWade (maybe/possibly/dunno). Not knowing Alice's maiden name kind of throws everything that follows into a black hole of mindless twaddle.

Today, I am going to assume that her maiden name is WADE.

Or...if you really like conspiracies, there was a Harold WADE in the same unit as Harold EDESON, but he was KIA in Europe. Cue theme music for the Outer Limits....now.

A couple of Alice WADE's have appeared and I s'pose our's could be any one of them (or none at all, depending on whether the glass is half full or half empty):

From the 1891 England Census, an Alice E. WADE b?1883?, age ?8?yrs was counted at Deptford, London. It would appear, that possibly the same Alice WADE (without the "E" this time) at 30yrs of age, arrived in Australia aboard the Orsova in May 1912.

The other Alice WADE, was on the 1914 Electoral Roll in Gembrook West with an occupation of Home Duties. Gembrook? Isn't that in the Dandenongs?

Or...it's possible all of these Alice's are the same person.

3099 PTE Harold Edeson, 7th Reinforcement, 27th Battalion.

AIF Enlistment date: 4 August 1915

Medals Awarded: British War Medal, Victory Medal (received 18 December 1925)

Previous service: ?Scottish Infantry Volunteers Adelaide? and ?76th Infantry Battalion?

Age on enlistment: 38yrs

Eyesight: without glasses – 6/60, 6/60; with glasses – 6/36, 6/36

Physical features: Height – 5 foot 4 ½ inches; Weight – 156lbs; Chest – 34 ½ to 36 inches; Complexion – fair; Eyes – Brown; Hair – Brown; Religion – Protestant.

12 December 1916, departed Adelaide for active service abroad.

27 March 1916, arrived Marseilles.

23 July – 25 August 1916, deployed with 27th Battalion at Pozieres.

26 August – 9 November 1916 hospitalised with ?D.A.H.? at 26th General Hospital, ?Etaples?.

11 November – 15 November 1916, deployed with 27th Battalion at Somme.

16 November 1916 – 31 January 1917, hospitalised with Lumbago at 10th General Hospital, Rouen, then transferred to American Woman's Hospital, England with ?Myalgia?.

7 February 1917 – reclassified as "C3" – (Frail).

17 March 1917 – RTA

12 May 1917 – arrived at Adelaide.

1 August 1917 – discharged from AIF at the Adelaide Medical Unit, with the disability of "Senility" or Dementia.

Considering Harold's age at the time of his enlistment, it is probably no real surprise that he was incapacitated in some way or another. All things considered, especially when you take Pozieres and the Somme into consideration, he was one of the luckier ones.

We'll probably never know why he enlisted. At a daily pay rate of 6d (yes, sixpence) after allotting the remainder, of 4s, to Comfort and 6d to the 'Secretary' of the State Children's Department of Flinder's Street Adelaide. Perhaps it could have been for the money, but why the State Children's Department? By the way, Comfort received somewhere around £170 over the period January 1916 to August 1917, or, £4.6s.4d every fortnight.

This is about where things become strange. On 23 April 1919, Harold applied for a War Service Leave Gratuity, which amounted to the £6 3s mentioned above. His postal address was the Mount Gambier Post Office.

Anyhow, a money order or cheque was drawn up and posted to Mt Gambier on 15 May 1919, three or so weeks after he applied for it. OK, the post has never been fast, but Harold didn't receive his money, because in that 3 or 4 weeks, he had moved over to Harrow in western Victoria, with Alice, as per the Electoral Roll. His first written correspondence to the Army was dated 23/9/19, and he wanted it. In a letter dated 15 December 1919, he even included a stamped self addressed envelope, yes, he needed it.

Known locations or addresses of Harold:

1876 Bendigo area, Victoria.
1901 Broken Hill, NSW.
1915 Adelaide, 11 Little Grenfell St, KENT TOWN, Adelaide, SA
1919 Mt Gambier, SA
1919 Harrow, Vic
1931 Ballarat, 319 Lydiard St.
1936 Ballarat, 608 Drummond St, South Ballarat
1943 Ballarat

Whether he left Mt Gambier because of Alice is not known. What is known is that they were both on the Electoral Rolls in **1919** at Harrow as Harold and Alice EDESON, in **1931** at Ballarat (Vic) as Harold and Alice WADE and in **1936** at Ballarat as Harold and Alice EDESON. Some unusual name changes there!

You may have noticed some items in this yarn with '?...?' around them. This is either because, I am unsure of the term (eg, 'D.A.H.?) or spelling (eg, 'Etaples?'). Alternatively, where the information was sourced included them (eg, '1957?').

Speaking of sources. The State Library of Victoria is an excellent example. A great majority of what is here is from there. In particular their on-site info database, which can only be accessed on-site (funnily), or, if you are a Victorian living in Victoria, on-line, after application.

Stay away from the Public Records Office Victoria, on-line at least. It'll cost you 90cents just to view a page, let alone copy it. After \$9.90 and nothing to show for it, I think it would be cheaper to drive down from Canberra for the day and look in person!

Most other so-called "Family History" websites are nothing but money eaters, so avoid at all costs, as the information that they provide is from those mentioned at the beginning of this project anyway and if you can get there under your own steam, it would work out a lot cheaper in the long run. A couple to avoid like the plague are www.ancestry.com and www.rootsweb.com both of which are one and the same. Oh, and don't touch the Mormon run one from the US either...I'm sure they put trojan's on your PC, 'cause sure as dog poo turns white in the sunshine, 2 days later you-know-who will come a knockin' on your front door!

Hope this has all been of some interest and use. Please advise of any changes or additions you think should be included by our usual means. See ya.