

Arnold Bowen



Plaque presented to Arnold Bowen's parents by the Maldon English Baptist Church (Castlemaine RSL)

Private (Pte) 7203 Arnold Bowen enlisted in the 21st Infantry Battalion in the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Australian Division in Melbourne on 9 December 1916. He embarked overseas on 19 February 1917 and, after an eventful voyage, disembarked in Plymouth on 25 April, where he joined the 2nd (Brigade) Training Battalion at Durrington.

Enroute to England, the HMAT *Ballarat* was torpedoed by the German U-Boat U-32 in the English Channel on 25 April. All 1,752 people on board were taken off the ship within an hour and no lives were lost, but efforts to tow the ship to shallow water failed, and she sank off The Lizard the next morning.

After four months training, Pte Bowen left England on 20 August and arrived in France the next day, where he was taken on strength of the 21st Battalion, in the field at Campagne, on 1 September, one of 99 reinforcements that arrive that day.

On the night of 3 October, the 2nd Division, which included the 21st Battalion, moved up into front line positions near Zonnebeke in readiness for the next attack, a 3 km advance that captured Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October. The attack, while successful, was also costly, and the 21st Battalion alone sustained 288 casualties (61 killed).

Just five days later, the 21st Battalion was involved again when it supported the right flank of a British attack at Poelcapelle on 9 October, for the loss of another 127 men (43 killed).

On 16 October, Pte Bowen was evacuated and later admitted to the 25th General Hospital at Camiers with dermatitis between 21 October – 27 November 1917.

He rejoined the 21st Battalion on 16 December and was subsequently detached for duty with the 2nd Division Canteen from 27 December – 30 March 1918.

He rejoined from the attachment on 1 April and the battalion moved south to Lavieville, near Albert, in response to the German Spring Offensive in the Somme region. It was while in the support line here that Pte Bowen was killed in action on 17 April 1918.

Private 7203 Arnold Bowen was originally buried in the Henencourt Wood British Cemetery but was later re-interred in the Ribemont Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

Name: Bowen, Arnold	
Service Number	7203
Date enlisted	9 December 1916
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	21 st Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	19 February 1917 HMAT A70 <i>Ballarat</i>
Previous military service	2 years senior cadets & CMF
Stated age/DOB (if known)	21 years 4 months
Place of birth	Maldon, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Bank clerk
Religion	Baptist
Next of kin and address	Bowen, Mr John, father, Warnock Street, Maldon, Victoria
Permanent address	Warnock Street, Maldon, Victoria
Appearance	Medium complexion, black hair, grey eyes, height – 5 feet 8 ½ inches, weight – 8 stone, 12 lbs, chest measurement – 32/35 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	21 st Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Killed in action
Date and place died	17 April 1918 Albert, France
Cemetery details	Ribemont Communal Cemetery Extension, France. Plot IV, Row I, Grave 8
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also listed on Maldon State School Roll of Honor