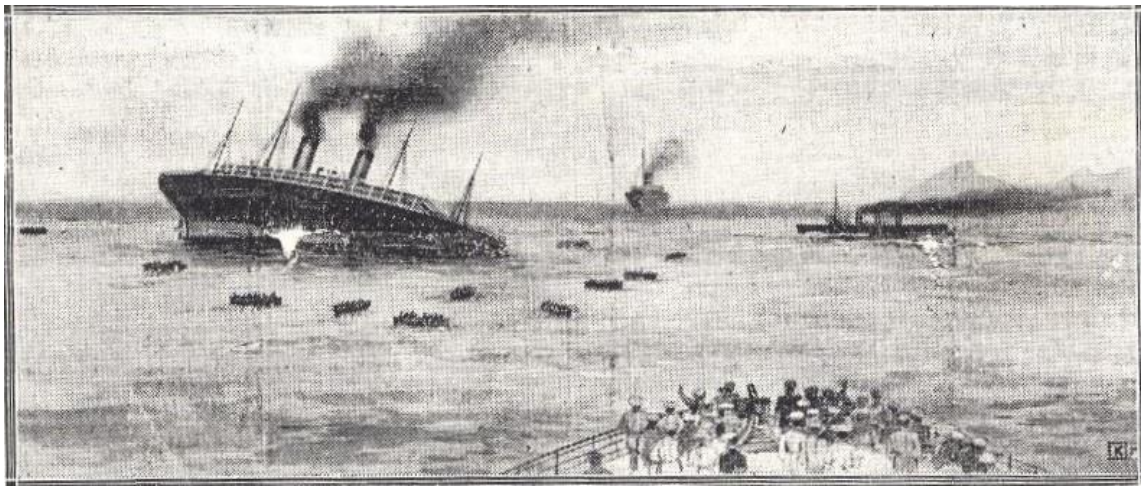


Bertrand Osmond Thorpe Gibbs

Private (Pte) 1171 Bertrand Osmond Thorpe Gibbs enlisted in the 23rd Infantry Battalion in the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Australian Division in Melbourne on 15 March 1915. He embarked overseas on 10 May and disembarked in Egypt on 12 June.

After several weeks training, the 23rd Battalion embarked for Gallipoli on board the HMT *Southland* on 30 August. While still about 56 km from Lemnos, the *Southland* was torpedoed by the German submarine *UB-14* on 2 September and had to be abandoned. While the ship didn't sink immediately and most of the 1,400 men on board were rescued, around 40 men lost their lives, many in the original torpedo explosion.

In the November 1918 issue of *The Longerenong Collegian*, Pte Gibbs is quoted from a letter home stating that he, "...saw the wake of the torpedo as it approached... and was eventually picked up and landed at Mudros Bay after several hours in a small open boat."



Hospital ship, Neuralia and French destroyers rushing to the rescue. Drawn by an eyewitness and referred to in a letter from Captain F. Johnston. Source: The Herald (Melbourne) 23 November 1915

The battalion disembarked at Gallipoli on 5 September and entered the line at Lone Pine later the same day, where they remained for several months. On 21 November, Pte Gibbs was diagnosed with asthma and evacuated to Malta, where he was hospitalised at St Patricks Hospital from 29 November – 22 December 1915. He returned to Egypt on 21 January 1916 and rejoined the 23rd Battalion on 21 February.

Pte Gibbs sailed for France on 19 March and disembarked at Marseilles on 26 March, where he spent time in and out of the line near Armentieres and Fleurbaix in the following weeks.

By 28 July the battalion had moved to the Somme and entered the trenches at Pozieres, where they sustained 476 casualties in just a few days, including 123 killed or missing, one of whom was Pte Gibbs, who was wounded (no details) and captured by the Germans on 28 July.

Private 1171 Bertrand Osmond Thorpe Gibbs subsequently died of his wounds at a German Prisoner of War Camp in Caudry on 2 August 1916, and was buried at the Caudry Old Communal Cemetery, France later the same day.

Name: Gibbs, Bertrand Osmond Thorpe	
Service Number	1171
Date enlisted	15 March 1915
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	23 rd Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	10 May 1915 HMAT A14 <i>Euripides</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	19 years 1 month
Place of birth	Northcote, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Clerk (Lands Department)
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Gibbs, Mrs Lilian Maud, mother, Auckland PO, New Zealand
Permanent address	Melbourne, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, dark brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 8 inches, weight – 10 stone, chest measurement – 34/36 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	23 rd Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Gallipoli, France
Fate	Died of wounds while a German POW
Date and place wounded	28 July 1916 Pozieres, France
Nature of wounds	No details
Date and place died	2 August 1916 German POW Camp, Caudry, France
Cemetery details	Caudry Old Communal Cemetery Caudry, France. Row A, Grave I
Honours/medals	1914/15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also listed on Holy Trinity Anglican Church Roll of Honor, Maldon Methodist Church Roll of Honor, Maldon State School Roll of Honor, Longerenong Agricultural College Roll of Honor, Ballarat POW Memorial