

Henry Sutcliffe

Private (Pte) 5095 Henry Sutcliffe enlisted in the 22nd Infantry Battalion in the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Australian Division in Brunswick on 21 February 1916.

He embarked overseas on 3 July and disembarked in Plymouth on 2 September, where he joined the 6th (Brigade) Training Battalion in Wiltshire.

He departed England on 12 November and landed in France the next day, where he was taken on strength of the 22nd Battalion, in the field at Dernancourt, on 27 November 1916.

During January and February 1917, the battalion spent several three-day stints in the front line near Gueudecourt and Le Sars, for the loss of 27 casualties (three killed). The conditions were atrocious, and the snow and thick mud made some sections of the trenches impassable.

On 24 February, word filtered through that the Germans were in the process of evacuating their lines, and the 22nd Battalion was tasked with sending out a patrol east of Le Sars. At 1.00 am the next day, the patrol moved forward. The battalion diary noted that, *“the remarkable quietness was extraordinary...and the night was intensely dark and so foggy that keeping direction was a most difficult task.”*

They occupied the German line without incident, but later that day were ordered to attack the next line of trenches. As the troops were tired, and the ground was still difficult to move across, the attack failed at the cost of 60 casualties.

On 3 May 1917 the 2nd Division, including the 22nd Battalion, attacked and captured a section of the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt, then held fast against fierce German counterattacks over several hours, for the loss of 438 battalion casualties, including 174 killed or missing.

Pte Sutcliffe was evacuated sick on 5 July and later admitted to the 39th General Hospital at le Havre with venereal disease from 15 July – 2 September. He rejoined the 22nd Battalion at Reninghelst, near Ypres, on 30 September.

On the night of 3 October 1917, the battalion moved into front line positions near Zonnebeke, Belgium in readiness for their first major involvement in the Third Battle of Ypres.

The Australians, including the 22nd Battalion, rose from their shell holes at 6.00 am on 4 October and ran headlong into a German attack that had also just commenced. The Australians routed the Germans in the open ground, then pressed on to take all their objectives. The Battle of Broodseinde Ridge was considered a great success. The newly captured ground was consolidated, at a cost to the battalion of 239 casualties, including 82 killed, most of which occurred during the Germans' preliminary bombardment.

Although heavy rain had been falling constantly since the success at Broodseinde, the British nevertheless decided to launch another attack toward Passchendaele, this time from Poelcapelle, on 9 October.

At 5.20 am, the 2nd Australian Division (including the 22nd Battalion) advanced and held the right flank in front of Broodseinde for a time, but inevitably, the whole attack eventually floundered in the mud.

The 22nd Battalion lost 56 men, one of whom was Pte Sutcliffe, who was killed in action on 9 October 1917. His body was never recovered, and he has no known grave.

Private 5095 Henry Sutcliffe is remembered on Panel 23 of the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres, Belgium.

Name: Sutcliffe, Henry	
Service Number	5095
Date enlisted	21 February 1916
Place enlisted	Brunswick, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	22 nd Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	3 July 1916 HMAT A33 <i>Ayrshire</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	39 years 9 months
Place of birth	Strangways, Victoria
Marital status	Widower
Occupation	Machinery expert
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Mahoney, Mrs Betty, sister, Yarragon, Victoria
Permanent address	87 Moreland Road, Coburg, Victoria
Appearance	Brown complexion, dark brown hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 4 ½ inches, weight – 7 stone, 15 lbs, chest measurement – 34/36 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	22 nd Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Killed in action
Date and place died	9 October 1917 Broodseinde, Belgium
Cemetery details	No known grave. Commemorated on Panel 23 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal