

Description of a trench raid: Private 683 Herbert Tippet, 37th Battalion

Letter found on Trove. Article compiled by Graeme Hosken.

Australian troops in France were trained in the art of trench raiding when they were based in the Armentieres 'nursery' sector in the first half of 1916. CEW Bean devoted Chapter IX of *Volume III* of the Official History to the raids at Armentieres. By May 1916 each brigade of each AIF division in France had been ordered to prepare a raid, and raiding teams were formed (usually all volunteers) with the main intention of capturing German prisoners from the lines opposite the Australians.

Bean wrote: "It is, however, certain that, apart from the need for identifying the enemy, raids would necessarily have been undertaken in order to give confidence to the troops, encourage a fighting spirit, and, if possible, inflict losses on the enemy and damage the morale of his garrison¹."

Chapter IX contained summary tables of raids from 25/26 June, 1916, through to 2/3 July². Member Andrew Pittaway wrote an article on the first (earlier) trench raid, conducted by the 'Black Anzacs' of the 7th Brigade on the night of 6 June, in *DIGGER* Issue 37, pp33-37.

Letters describing a raid, written by one of its participants, are hard to find, but one did sneak through the censors and was eventually published in a Western Australian newspaper some ten months after the raid took place. Indeed, by the time the letter was printed in Australia, the Armistice had been signed and the writer was buried in France.

This raid, described by **Private 683 Bert Tippet**, occurred considerably later in the war, on the night of 10 February, 1918. **Herbert Henry Victor ('Bert') Tippet** was born in Bendigo, Victoria, and was working pre-war as a clerk and living at 553 Nicholson Street, North Carlton. Bert had already served his country in the Tropical Forces (the successor of the AN&MEF) for one year and 146 days, and had been discharged when his time expired [see postscript].

At the age of 28 years and eight months, Bert decided to volunteer for the second time. His parents were both deceased, and he named his sister, Mrs Ethel Alice McGown, as his next of kin³. Bert was quite an imposing figure, standing 5'11¼" tall and weighing 173 pounds with a 36-39" chest, fair complexion, grey eyes and fair hair.

Tippet enlisted on 27 March, 1917, and was allocated to the 11th/10th Machine Gun Reinforcements⁴ on 9 June, 1917, having been trained as a machine-gunner since 24 April at Seymour Machine Gun Depot. This placed him in the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Division.

Bert sailed from Melbourne on the A29 *Suevic* on 30 June and disembarked at Liverpool, England, on 26 August. He then spent over three months being instructed at the 10th Training Battalion, before proceeding to France from Sutton Mandeville on 18 December, 1917. Six days later, Bert was reallocated to the **37th Battalion**, most likely as a member of a Lewis gun crew.

After two days in the Australian Infantry Base Depot at Rouelles, Bert marched out to join his unit and was taken on strength of the 37th Battalion on 24 December. Around the last week of January 1918, Bert and his best mate, **Bill Morgan**, put their hands up to become part of the raiding party, which was comprised of men from the 37th and 38th Battalions.

Four days after the raid, Bert wrote to his sister Ethel, providing a detailed and graphic account of his first action on the Western Front.

RAIDING GERMAN TRENCHES

GERALDTON SOLDIER'S GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

The following interesting letter was written by Sergeant [sic] Bert Tippet to his sister in Carlton, Victoria. Bert Tippet, about four years ago, was a resident of Geraldton, and was also well known in the Murchison townships. He was killed a few months ago in just such another trench raid [sic] as he here describes. Writing on 14th February, he says:—

About three weeks ago a party of eighty men was asked for from our battalion to join with another eighty from the 38th Battalion to pay Fritz a visit. It was explained that we were on a very hard job, both for its danger and for the special training necessary. Well, I made one.

After our party was complete we moved away from the battalion to a special camp, about five miles behind the line. From aeroplane photos obtained by our airmen of the enemy trenches, a model of same was marked out on a big field, showing in the smallest detail the exact position of his numerous

¹ Bean, 'Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918,' *Volume III*, page 243.

² Bean, *Volume III*, pp260-283.

³ Ethel, and a brother, William Tippet, lived in the house next door to Bert, at 555 Nicholson Street, North Carlton.

⁴ Twenty-two men were in this draft of machine gun reinforcements.

dug-outs, pill-boxes and strong points within that sector. It's really marvellous how much our people know about his trenches and all his doings; we certainly have some good spies over his side.

We were soon busy going over the model trenches, getting into special parties and rehearsing exactly what we were expected to do when the time came. This work was made difficult by the necessity for keeping all information re our intentions from enemy spies.

I was in a party to go to his second line, under a **Lieutenant Crowe**, who, I'm sorry to say, as far as we know, was killed. **Bill Morgan** and I were to be mates. Every preparation was made, and every detail seen to during the first two weeks; we were running over the trenches day and night, each party doing its own special job.

I will not write of all we went through during that time; as it would take too long, but I tell you I was pretty glad of a spell for two days granted us previous to going over.

I might say that all of us were taken right up to the sector over which we were going in little parties each night, so we all knew the track pretty well, that's if you could call it a track. I know I almost fell rather than walked over it. I'm sure there wasn't a shell hole on the whole track I didn't fall in, and came home at night more like a huge mud pie than anything else.

On Sunday morning, 10th February, we were issued with Tommies' uniform, as our people did not want the Boche to know that Australians were up against them. I can't understand why, as the papers gave it out as Australians. I suppose they had their own special reasons.

I wished you could have seen me in my outfit, or rather, *unfit*. The tunic was fully ten sizes too small, and the pants almost as bad as those M— made for me some years ago – do you remember them? All the boys had a good laugh when they saw me in them.

Bombs, Lewis guns, ammunition, demolition charges, steel vests for the bayonet men, and dozens of other things, including chewing gum, were then issued. It did not take long for us to be fixed up, and we then went to church.

Well, at 5.50 [pm] off we went. Everyone was very cheerful, and for the first mile most of the boys were singing. The railway took us to within about two miles of Fritz's front line, and at 7.45 we started on the track up. Only a few shells fell close to us, and we were living in hopes of not getting many, as we were working on a timetable, and the slightest little hitch would upset everything.

However, we were lucky, and after most of us had fallen down dozens of shell holes we reached our own front line. At 9.30 we got over the parapet, and crawled to within about 20 yards of the enemy's wire, which took till 9.50. Our artillery was timed for 10 o'clock, so we had to wait for ten minutes.

If I were talking to you I could probably give you a slight idea of my feelings during that time. I will not attempt it here. We could hear distinctly the Germans singing in their dug-outs, a German band at the back of their line, and some chaps in the front line talking. Little did they think that 150 Aussies were almost ready to jump in on them.

Ten minutes to wait – it does not seem long writing of it, yet it seemed about ten years to me, lying flat in about six inches of mud, with rifle and bayonet held up over my head to keep it clean. It felt like a ton weight.

All our watches were put on exactly to the tick, and I had my eyes on my watch hundreds of times. Half a minute to go! I was watching well back over our lines for the artillery to open, and all of a sudden the sky simply seemed to catch on fire. It was ten o'clock and zero (a term used by the artillery).

It seemed about 20 or 30 seconds before our first shell hit, and after that it was just one solid stream of shells and machine-gun bullets, which scattered mud all over us and ploughed the ground up as if it were their intention to blow half of Belgium to the clouds. We had to stay perfectly quiet for one minute after our artillery opened fire, as we had dummies stuck up a long way to our left, operated by our men in the front line, so that when Fritz sent his lights up he would think we were coming over on that sector and shell the dummies instead of us.

That minute seemed like an hour, after which we crawled up a bit further and waited for our artillery to lift from his front line to the second, which was four minutes on each line. After what seemed like hours, it lifted, and it was now our turn to do our bit. (To be continued) .

Source: 'Geraldton Guardian,' 14 December, 1918.

The following is the continuation of a letter written by the late Sergt. Bert Tippet, to his sister in Victoria, the first portion of which appeared in our last issue:—

Our scouts were in front, and smashed his wire to smithereens with a torpedo made of high explosives for that purpose. It did its work well, but all the same I got over minus half my puttees and trousers. My legs were scratched in millions of places, which I did not feel at the time, and I got a lot of sympathy after.

After this I hardly knew whether I was on my head or my heels. I remember Bill Morgan killing a German with his bayonet, and later putting a machine gun – which was pouring lead at us – out of action by bayoneting its gunner.

I fell, rather than jumped, into the trench, and when I picked myself up I found I had something on my bayonet. This was my first kill, and I will never forget the sensation.

It's a bit hard to write of all this in case one might be accused of skiting, both on my own behalf and on behalf of the brave boys who went over. I can't say I think it should be called bravery or anything else by a nice name that makes one fight when face-to-face with a pack of murderous Germans, with the thoughts of the farewell kisses and tears of loved ones left behind fresh in one's memory. But all the same, the way our boys went over at the dozens of Boches in the trench was something magnificent, and I am perfectly satisfied there are no troops on earth anywhere equal to our heroes.

The enemy were the famous Bavarian Guards, and were fully ten to our one, and we had to come through a very narrow opening in their wire. If they had any guts – excuse the expression – they would have killed every one of us before we got anywhere near their trench. I'm game to bet if they attacked us in the same manner that not one of them would get back. We were only 150 strong, and had to come up in the open against his bombs and machine guns, to say nothing of his rifles, etc. Only one of our party, so far as I can gather, was killed at this stage. Of course, you can bet we did not waste too much time getting over.

However I'll get on with the story, which must be great evidence of the civilised state of the world at the present time, and beautiful reading for a good Christian girl like you.

It did not take Fritz, or rather, his artillery long to find out where we were coming over, although the dummies worked real well. He soon started to strafe in between our line and his on the sector over which we came, and the earth seemed to be rolling with the effect of his 'minnies' – minenwerfers – which go into the ground anything from six to ten feet, and leave a hole about sixteen feet in diameter. Anyhow, he was too late with them, as we were all across.

All the Germans in the front trench who did not put their hands up were killed, and we then started along his communication trenches, bombing in front of us, which made it necessary for us to walk over dead Fritzes. A lot of the Boches ran into dug-outs, and our boys were dropping bombs in them first, and then telling them to come out.

Out of one dug-out, which held about 20 of them, only three came out. Our whole trouble at this stage was taking out the prisoners, as it blocked us in every way, but our heads wanted as many prisoners as possible, to extract information. We lost more lives over the prisoners than anything else, as each batch meant an escort, and it was leaving us short of men and a lot of them got wounded and killed going back to our line.

Our party killed lots by throwing bombs in dug-outs and bayoneting those that tried to run away. If I live to be a hundred I will never forget the smell of the dug-outs after a few of our Mills bombs had been dropped in. I shudder now every time I think of it.

Our time was almost up, and we started to get back, which was the worst part of the lot, as we had to go through his barrage of 'minnies' and machine guns. I lost Bill Morgan at this stage, and was with a chap named **Phillips**. Our officer was also missing, and a few of our boys were hit.

When we rushed the trenches a lot of the Boches jumped out and got into shell holes to the side. I suppose they went there at first for safety, and on finding themselves in good positions, started firing at us when [we were] coming out of the trench. One machine gun was only about fifteen yards from us, and the gunner seemed intent upon killing every one of us. Fred Phillips and I got out of the trench safely and rolled into a shell hole just in front.

All the time the Fritz on the close gun was putting bullets all around us. We tried to bomb him, but on account of our hole being so shallow we did not have enough freedom, and our bombs were falling short. After a few seconds he turned his gun from us on to the chaps coming out of the trench, and we decided to rush him.

He kept firing until we were just a few yards from him; I suppose it was his intention to run, but he left it a bit too late, and he and four others of the gun team will not shoot at Aussies again. We

bayoneted two, and the other three tried to run, but my mate threw a bomb right in amongst them, which put them out of action pretty effectually.

We brought the gun home with us, and after getting home had to spend about an hour scraping the mud off before one could recognise it was a machine gun. I will never understand how so many of us got back over No-man's land, as it was simply one sheet of shells and bullets.

Our total casualties were 33, which was something wonderful seeing we had no cover at all coming back, and again had to pass through the narrow opening in the wire. The last batch of prisoners hampered us a lot too, as the cowardly beggars would not walk or run, but would just crawl, and any amount of bayonet pricks in their sit-downs would not make them hurry much, although I must give them their due; they can crawl pretty quickly. As they went they cried like children; such a mournful cry, too.

Anyhow, half-choked and half-dead, we got safely back to our front line, or rather some of us. I'm sorry to say about ten of our lads were hit coming back. We lost two officers and our other two were wounded, and 26 men. The 38th Battalion only lost five, but they had no resistance at all, and got back pretty quickly.

Of course, not all the 26 were killed. I think only about eleven were killed and missing. Three in our party were killed, and eight wounded, who were got back to our line.

We now started back to the train, and Fritz made it very warm for us with his big guns, which threw tons of shells along the track. However, we got back without much further casualties, and a drink of cocoa was waiting for us.

I did not drink much then, as the frightful reaction had set in, and I had to sit down and keep quiet. I almost lost all feeling, but recovered after about half an hour, and got rid of fully two pints of cocoa. Shortly after an officer gave me a good drink of whisky. I think that was the best drink I ever had in my life, as it stopped the dreadful shaking and shivering, and made me feel quite all right.

The papers gave us credit for 100 killed and 37 prisoners. I'm sure there must have been another 37 or more of them killed in No-man's land when being taken back, as we were walking over them everywhere.

Two days later General Birdwood, also a Yankee general, came to our camp and gave us great praise for our work, and said it was one of the best raids of the war, and I quite believe him, as we had so few men. We should have had 160, but fully ten or fifteen were sick, and from various other causes did not take part.

Bill Morgan turned up next morning, having put in most of the night helping the AMC with the wounded. I was really sorry he was not with me when capturing the gun, as we have been mates all along, and it would have been nice to have been together in that stunt. We have all got plenty of things in the way of watches, cigarette cases, etc., which we took from the prisoners, who were only too pleased to give them up.

Source: 'Geraldton Guardian,' 17 December, 1918.

Charles Bean gave a brief account of the raid in *Volume V*, p47. He wrote:

*February 10. The supporting artillery had been temporarily strengthened by the addition of the 6th (Army) Brigade AFA. Nine officers and 195 men of the 37th and 38th Battalions (10th Brigade) under **Captain Fairweather** raided south-west of Warneton, and penetrated to the second trench, capturing 33 prisoners (8 of them wounded) of the 228th RIR (49th Reserve Division). The raiders claimed to have killed 102. They themselves had 39 hit, including **Lieutenants Crowe and Dixon**, and 9 men of the 37th were missing. The raid evoked General Birdwood's warm congratulations. German prisoners taken a few weeks later said that an Australian officer had been captured in this raid; the officer refused to give any information, except his name, and the private would say no more than that his battalion were shock troops⁵.*

Bert continued to serve with the 37th Battalion until 2 August, 1918, when his service record shows him being *injured accidentally*. He was admitted to the 10th Field Ambulance with a shrapnel (bomb) wound to the head, then transported on to the 47th Casualty Clearing Station, where he died of his injury on 3 August.

⁵ These numbers vary slightly from Bert's figures in his letter. The 37th Bn unit diary says each battalion provided 4 officers and 100 other ranks.

An inquiry was held into Bert's injury on 4 August, 1918, which produced a more accurate account of his death. **Private 2140 Albert Ernest Rowe** was handling a loaded German revolver which he accidentally fired, dangerously wounding Bert Tippet in the head. Rowe told the hearing:

I was out on a working party and on returning at 2 am I called at company headquarters and took a revolver of German pattern from one of the anti-aircraft gunners' dug-out which I knew to be there, and the property of the No. 1 of the Lewis gun team, to whom I was going to return it.

The revolver had a handkerchief wrapped around it preventing it fitting properly in the holster. I removed the revolver from the holster, with the intention of taking the handkerchief off and returning it to the holster. I was just replacing it when it exploded. I did not know it was loaded. I then learnt from the stretcher-bearer that Pte Tippet had been wounded in the head. I went to my dug-out and unloaded the revolver.

Sergeant 3169 FR Blake gave evidence:

*At about 2 am on August 2nd I had just returned from a working party, and was speaking to **Private Couch** when I heard a shot fired. I looked around and saw Private Rowe with a revolver in his hand. I said, "Did you fire that shot?" He replied, "It went off. I did not know it was loaded."*

*Just then **Private Lockhead** came running along calling for the stretcher-bearer, saying that Private Tippet was wounded in the head. I saw Private Tippet lying about 25 yards from where the shot was fired and he was bleeding from the head.*

I immediately reported the matter to my platoon officer.

The inquiry classified Bert's death as being due to 'accidental injury.' Rowe was transferred to the 8th Battalion on 1 October, 1918, but was transferred to the 38th Battalion on 2 December. There is no record of any punishment being awarded to Rowe for his actions causing the death of Bert Tippet⁶, and the unit diary of the 37th Battalion for August 1918 makes no mention of Tippet, Rowe or the Inquiry.

Bert Tippet was buried in Crouy British Cemetery, 16 km north-west of Amiens, in grave IV.D.7. A package of Bert's personal effects was sent to Ethel McGown, containing photographs, two wallets, badges, a metal wrist watch, pocket camera, cards and a tobacco box. A second parcel was received in 1919, containing a printing frame, torch, letters, cards, pocket book, belt with badges attached, and a lanyard.

On 18 September, 1918, the following notices were placed in the 'Geraldton Guardian.'

In Memoriam

Killed in action, somewhere in France, our old beloved friend and comrade,
Herbert Henry Victor Tippet (Bert), late of Geraldton.

Across the sun the message came,

In action 'Bert' was killed;

As noble a heart as ever beat –

In freedom's cause was stilled.

He took the risk, he gave his all –

His life – for Australia's name,

And now our hero finds a place

In a matchless roll of fame.

Inserted by J and RA Smith, Geraldton.

TIPPETT. – In loving memory of my dear friend,
Private Herbert Henry Victor Tippet,
killed in action, somewhere in France.

— Inserted by A Waller⁷.

The 'Swan Express' (Midland Junction, WA) added further information on Bert's working life in a short obituary (known errors are bolded and marked with an asterisk):

⁶ There is no correspondence in Bert's file to show that his family was told *how* Bert was killed. The fact that the 'Geraldton Guardian' said that Bert was killed in *another trench raid* indicates that Ethel may not have known, or if she did, may not have wished the circumstances of his death to be circulated.

⁷ Alf Waller was a butcher in Geraldton. On the AWM ROH circular, Ethel named Alf as a possible contact for the official historian. It seems likely that Ethel sent a copy of Bert's letter to Alf, who then provided it to the 'Guardian.'

*News has been received in Geraldton that Pte Herbert Henry Victor Tippet had been **killed in action*** in France. About four years ago Pte Tippet was residing in Geraldton, where he was highly esteemed. He was well known in musical circles, and occupied the position of secretary of the Waterside Workers' Union. After being turned down as a recruit for military service he left for the Murchison, subsequently holding the position of secretary to the Health Board at Warriedar. After making further attempts to enlist without success **he went to New South Wales***, and on again offering himself for service he was accepted. He left **Sydney*** for England in **October last***, and arrived in France in **February*** of this year.*

Source: 'Swan Express,' 27 September, 1918.

On 3 June, 1921, Base Records Office wrote to Ethel McGown, noting that she was Bert's next of kin, but inquiring if there were any older brothers or sisters who would have first claim on Bert's war medals, etc. Her reply gives an insight into the difficulties that sometimes confronted siblings after both parents had died.

Dear Sir [Major Lean]

My oldest brother (Thomas Tippet) left home when my youngest brother (Herbert 683, 37th Batt.) was twelve months old & is now in Queensland, as far as any of his people know. Not any of us has seen him since he left; he very rarely writes to anyone. Surely he would not be entitled to the medal.

My older sister (Mrs Langwig of Albany PO, Westralia) is the wife of a German & when I wrote told her to apply for a next-of-kin badge, she told me she did not want it. I applied & was granted it. She was not at all pleased with my dear brother for enlisting.

In one of my brother's letters, he wrote "I'm making arrangements for everything to be sent back to you in case I don't get through." It was just before he went over on a big raid⁸. He left everything to me to distribute as I thought fair. My brother and I were always pals & his death was a severe blow to me.

Yours sincerely,

Ethel McGown.

PS. I have a brother younger than I & he and my brother Herbert were more to each other than Tom ever was. In fact, he [Bert] was too young to remember anything of him. My other brother's address will be the same as mine, only William Tippet⁹.

The Department of Defence decided that William would receive the medals, etc., but he would have to give them up if Thomas Tippet demanded them at some time in the future and if the Minister agreed to this request. William signed a statutory declaration to this effect, and received Bert's entitlements, except for the Victory Medal, regarding which he wrote to the Army: *Kindly give my sister, EA McGown, the Victory Medal entitled to me*¹⁰. When composing the epitaph for Bert, Ethel was perhaps a little selfish with her choice of words, given that there were other siblings:

BROTHER OF MRS EA GOWER, OF 553, NICHOLSON ST., NORTH CARLTON, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA. NATIVE OF BENDIGO, VICTORIA.

The men: Cpl 845, later Lieutenant, William Gordon Hamilton Crowe, 'C' Coy/37th Bn, 23-year-old bank officer of Drouin, Vic, enl 22/2/16, KIA 10/2/18 at La Basse Ville near Warneton, buried Pont-du-Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorque, France, IV.G.20; **Pte 675 William Charles ('Bill') Morgan**, 11th Rfts/10th MG Coy & 37th Bn, 30-year-old labourer of West Geelong, Vic, enl 14/2/17, RTA 25/3/19; there was a Pte 970 Frederick Edward Phillips in the 37th Bn but he did not take part in the trench raid, so it appears that 'Fred' Phillips was **Cpl 2887 Andrew Stewart Phillips MM**, 6th Rfts/37th Bn & 39th Bn, 26-year-old widower and railway employee of East Brunswick, Vic, enl 6/10/16, RTA 4/7/19; **Sgt 1106, later Lieut, Norman Edward**

⁸ Herbert made out his will on 26 January, 1918, fifteen days before the raid, leaving his property, effects and deferred pay to Ethel.

⁹ Herbert was one of 14 children of Elisha and Elizabeth Jane Tippet (nee White). The children of the 1862 marriage were: Elisha (1864-1867); Mary Jane (1865-1905); Elisha (1867-1911); **Thomas (Tom) Robert** (1868-1928, died in Cairns); Elizabeth Martha (1870-1959, **Mrs Langwig**); John (1871-1914); Beatrice (1872-1957); Edith Honour (1874-1875); Maria Maud (1876-1909); Richard (1877-1914); **Ethel Alice** (1881-1969); David **William White** (1882-1959); James Henry White (1885-1886) and **Herbert (Bert) Henry Victor** (1886-1918). Tom must have been aged 19 when he left for Queensland. Eight of his siblings pre-deceased Bert.

¹⁰ Letter dated 11 December, 1922.

Dixon, 'D' Coy/37th Bn, 24-year-old married traveller of Middle Brighton, Vic, enl 30/7/15, KIA 10/2/18, no known grave; **Pte 2140 Albert Ernest Rowe MID**, 3rd Rfts/37th Bn & 38th Bn, 30-year-old machine hand of Wandiligong, Vic, enl 17/8/16, RTA 12/5/19, died 4/10/61; **Pte 844 Ambrose William Couch**, 'C' Coy/37th Bn & 38th Bn, 21-year-old felt hatter of Abbotsford, Vic, enl 12/2/16, RTA 30/4/19; **Sgt 3169 Frank Rupert Blake**, 7th Rfts/37th Bn, 28-year-old clerk of Kew, Vic, enl 5/1/16, RTA 18/1/19; probably **Pte 2622 William Dudley Lockhead**, 5th Rfts/35th Bn & AASC Details, 30-year-old clerk of Scone, enl 29/8/16, RTA 17/3/19.



Far left: Cpl William Gordon Crowe.

Source: vwma.org.au.

Left: Sgt Frank Rupert Blake.

Source: vwma.org.au.

Postscript: Pte 981 Herbert Tippet, 4th Battalion, Tropical Force

Bert first offered his services on 6 October, 1915, at Perth, WA¹¹. He stated he was aged 27 years and four months, which would have given him a birth year of 1888, when records affirm that he was born in 1886¹².

Bert gave his occupation as blacksmith and named Thomas Tippet of Charters Towers, Qld, as his next of kin, which was a little unexpected as he never really knew his older brother. In 1915 Bert was 5'11" tall and weighed 167 lb. Bert

trained at Blackboy Hill in the 32nd Depot Battalion from 7 to 22 October, and was then allocated to the WA Section of the New Guinea Guard from 23 October.

On 20 November, 1915, Bert arrived in Rabaul as part of the 4th Battalion of the Tropical Force. He was struck off the strength of the battalion when he was transferred to Kokopo for duty on 6 January, 1916. Bert was promoted to sergeant on 11 November, 1916, at Rabaul. On 10 January, 1917, Tippet proceeded to Australia for discharge and was struck off strength, time expired, on 12 April, 1917, not before spending four days, 19-23 February, 1917, in No. 8 General Hospital at Fremantle, suffering from malaria.

It is interesting that Bert enlisted in the AIF on 27 March, 1917, while still officially in the Tropical Force.

Endnotes: (1) Bert Tippet is listed as being in 'C' Company's contribution to the 37th's half-share of the raiding party, under the command of 2nd **Lieutenant DI Johnston**¹³. Albert Rowe was in the same company as Bert, and is shown as a Lewis gunner; Andrew Phillips was also a 'C' Company man. Bill Morgan was in 'D' Company, under Lieutenant Crowe. As Bert said that he *was in a party to go to [the German] second line, under a Lieutenant Crowe*, it appears that the men from 'A' to 'D' Companies were 'mixed up' for the raid. The report mentions that three machine guns were captured, so one of these would have been the gun taken back by Bert and 'Fred' Phillips. (2) The Editor is planning to produce an e-book on this trench raid. (3) While researching Victorian BDMs to try and work out Bert's family, it occurred to me that I have a genealogical book on the Tippetts in Australia. I discovered that Bert was also a descendant of my great, great, great grandparents, William and Frances Tippet¹⁴. Small world! – Graeme.

¹¹ Bert was living with one of his siblings at 5 Mackay St, Victoria Park, WA.

¹² Bert is recorded as dying at age 32 on his headstone, which was his correct age. His age on joining the AIF was also correct, so it was only in 1915 that he was confused as to his birth year.

¹³ **Lance-Sgt 914, later 2nd Lieut, Donald Ivan Johnston MC**, 'C' Coy/37th Bn, 22-year-old civil servant of Auburn, Vic, enl 27/2/16, RTA 25/1/19. Awarded MC for his actions on the night of the trench raid: *For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Whilst acting as scout officer of a party raiding the enemy trenches he led the party along the routes which he had previously prepared without experiencing the slightest difficulty. On returning to our lines and hearing that a wounded man had been left out in 'No-man's land' he at once went out to bring him in. On the way he encountered an enemy patrol of eight men. He attacked this patrol, put it to flight, and succeeded in rescuing the wounded man. His courage and devotion to duty were most marked.*

¹⁴ Emma Tippet was the wife of my great grandfather on my father's side.