

Arthur Hewitson



Private (Pte) 1032 Arthur Hewitson enlisted in the 22nd Infantry battalion in the 6th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Australian Division at Queenscliff on 15 February 1915. He embarked overseas on 10 May and disembarked in Egypt in early June, where he was promoted to Corporal (Cpl) on 26 August.

Due to the pressing need for more soldiers following the failed August Offensive, the 2nd Division, including the 22nd Battalion, sailed for Gallipoli on 30 August and arrived on 5 September. The next day, they entered the line in the Lone Pine sector, which was deemed a “quiet” part of the front by that stage, as most of the fighting continued to the north.

Cpl Hewitson contracted influenza and enteric fever on 16 October and was evacuated to Malta on 27 October. He was admitted to hospital there until 16 November, then transferred to England and admitted to the 3rd Southern General Hospital at Oxford from 20 November – 8 February 1916, after which he spent four months recuperating at Weymouth.

He embarked for France on 27 July and rejoined the 22nd Battalion at Warloy on 10 August 1916.

On 22 August, the 2nd Australian Division, including the 22nd Battalion, entered the line in front of Mouquet Farm, a heavily fortified enemy structure that had already held up the advance in front of Pozieres for several weeks. The 2nd Division attacked on 26 August and was repulsed with the loss of over 1,200 casualties. Although held in reserve, the 22nd Battalion sustained 44 casualties.

For his good service and performance during this action, Cpl Hewitson was mentioned in the AIF Orders of 13 September, then promoted to Sergeant (Sgt) on 21 October 1916.

Sgt Hewitson was diagnosed with trench feet on 12 November and evacuated to England, where he was admitted to the 1st London General Hospital from 17 November – 1 January 1917, then granted leave until 16 January.

He subsequently contracted influenza and was hospitalised at Perham Downs from 2 – 19 March, then returned to France on 6 April and rejoined the 22nd Battalion on 9 April.

On 3 May 1917 the 2nd Division, including the 22nd Battalion, attacked and captured a large section of the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt, then held fast against fierce German counter attacks lasting several hours. Overall, the 22nd Battalion sustained 174 men killed or missing and another 264 wounded, one of whom was Sgt Hewitson, who sustained a gunshot wound to his right arm.

He was evacuated to the 13th General Hospital at Boulogne the next day, then transferred to England and admitted to the Tooting Military Hospital between 5 May – 6 June, then to the Holborn Military Hospital at Mitcham from 6 June – 3 August 1917. After another month at the 1st Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield, he was granted leave from 8 – 22 September, then posted to the Overseas Training Brigade.

He returned to France on 11 November, where he rejoined the 22nd Battalion in the field at Kemmel, on 19 November.

He was granted additional leave in England in late February 1918 but became sick with boils and was hospitalised at the 1st Northern General Hospital in Newcastle from 1 – 12 March, then rejoined his battalion in France on 15 March.

Not long after, following news of the Spring Offensive in late March 1918, the 22nd Battalion rushed south and arrived at Dernancourt on 7 April, where battalion orders were issued and simply read, "*There will be no withdrawal. Every bit of ground will be fought for.*"

While the main German offensive had petered out by then, the battalion remained in the front line near Ville sur Ancre and Morlancourt throughout much of May, and it was in this general area that Sgt Hewitson was wounded for the second time, when he sustained a gunshot wound to his right arm on 14 May 1918.

He was initially evacuated to the 6th General Hospital at Rouen from 15 – 18 May, then transferred to England and admitted to the Duston War Hospital at Northampton between 19 May – 10 June.

He spent a further two months at the 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Dartford until 20 August, then embarked for return to Australia on 18 January 1919.

Sergeant 1032 Arthur Hewitson disembarked in Melbourne on 10 March, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 25 May 1919.

Name: Hewitson, Arthur	
Service Number	1032
Date enlisted	15 February 1915
Place enlisted	Queenscliff, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	22 nd Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	10 May 1915 HMAT A38 <i>Ulysses</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	22 years
Place of birth	Sebastopol, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Butcher
Religion	Methodist
Next of kin and address	Hewitson, Mr John, father, Point Lonsdale, Victoria
Permanent address	Point Lonsdale, Victoria
Appearance	Dark complexion, dark brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 9 inches, weight – 9 stone, chest measurement – 35 inches
Final Rank	Sergeant
Final Unit	22 nd Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Gallipoli, France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	3 May 1917 Bullecourt, France
Nature of wounds	Gunshot wound to right arm
Date and place wounded (2)	14 April 1918 near Ville sur Ancre, France
Nature of wounds (2)	Gunshot wound to right arm
Date and ship embarked for Australia	18 January 1919 HT <i>Ulysses</i>
Date discharged	25 May 1919
Nature of discharge	Medically Unfit (wounds)
Honours/medals	1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Died 4 November 1956. Also remembered on the Point Lonsdale War Memorial and Borough of Queenscliffe Roll of Honor.