

Edward Thomas Werry



Private (Pte) 3498 Edward Thomas Werry enlisted in the 57th Infantry Battalion in the 15th Infantry Brigade of the 5th Australian Division in Melbourne on 19 February 1917. He embarked overseas on 21 June and disembarked in Liverpool on 26 August, where he joined the 15th (Brigade) Training Battalion at Hurdcott Camp in Wiltshire.

After four months training, he left England on 18 December and landed in France the next day, where he was taken on strength of the 57th Battalion, resting near Doudeauville, on 25 December 1917.

As news of the German Spring offensive on the Somme filtered through, the Australian units in the north were put on alert and then rushed south to meet it. The 57th Battalion arrived at Corbie on 30 March 1918 and established their defences, although the peak of the assault had passed.

The Germans however made one more concerted effort on 24 April, and they captured Villers-Bretonneux from the British units that were defending it. The capture of the village meant the Germans could now shell the crucial rail hub of Amiens.

The position needed to be rectified quickly and at 10.00 pm on 24 April 1918, the 13th and 15th Brigades (including the 57th Battalion) staged a stunning, night-time counterattack at bayonet point and without artillery support. The Germans were stunned and, over the course of the next two days, eventually routed, as the Australians re-captured Villers-Bretonneux.

Overall 57th Battalion casualties numbered only 72 (12 killed) while German casualties were significantly higher. The German offensive on the Somme was at an end.

The 57th Battalion was mainly in reserve for the Amiens offensive on 8 August and the subsequent 15th Brigade assault on Peronne at the end of the same month.

The battalion's last major action, the joint Australian and American assault on the Hindenburg Line, occurred between 29 September – 1 October 1918, when the 5th Division (including the 57th Battalion) passed through the American 30th Division and captured Bellicourt. They were relieved the next day and left the front line for the last time.



Breaking the Hindenburg Line by Frank Schoonover

Pte Werry was granted leave in England from 26 October – 15 November and then promoted to Lance Corporal (L/Cpl) on 18 February 1919.

He was seconded to a salvage party, recovering lost or damaged battlefield equipment, from 26 February, but this was cut short when he was enrolled in an agriculture and animal husbandry course at No.14 (British) Veterinary Hospital, situated near Abbeville, from 5 – 30 March 1919.

Lance Corporal 3498 Edward Thomas Werry sailed to England on 30 May and embarked for Australia on 24 July. He disembarked in Melbourne on 27 September, where he was discharged from the AIF on 27 October 1919.

Name: Werry, Edward Thomas	
Service Number	3498
Date enlisted	19 February 1917
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	57 th Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	21 June 1917 HMAT A29 <i>Suevic</i>
Previous military service	Four years senior cadets. 6 months 69 th Infantry Battalion, CMF
Stated age/DOB (if known)	18 years 6 months
Place of birth	Queenscliff, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Driver
Religion	Methodist
Next of kin and address	Werry, Mrs Elizabeth, mother, Wharf Street, Queenscliff, Victoria
Permanent address	Wharf Street, Queenscliff, Victoria
Appearance	Medium complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 7 inches, weight – 8 stone, 3 lbs, chest measurement – 31/35 inches
Final Rank	Lance Corporal
Final Unit	57 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and ship embarked for Australia	24 July 1919 HT <i>Bakara</i>
Date discharged	27 October 1919
Nature of discharge	Termination of Period of Enlistment
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Died 1972. Also remembered on the Borough of Queenscliffe Roll of Honor.