

Noel James Black

Private (Pte) 3348 Noel James Black enlisted in the 24th Battalion in Geelong on 26 July 1915. He embarked overseas on 26 November and disembarked in Egypt in late December, where he joined the 6th (Brigade) Training Battalion at Zeitoun.

On 24 February 1916, Pte Black was transferred and taken on strength of the 8th Infantry Battalion in the 2nd Infantry Brigade of the 1st Australian Division at Serapeum. The battalion left Egypt on 26 March and disembarked in Marseilles on 30 March, then entrained for the north to Steenwerck.

On 11 May the battalion moved into the front line at Fleurbaix for the first time. By the time they were relieved on 29 May, they left the line having sustained 17 casualties (six killed).

They then moved into Belgium and held the line near Messines from 24 June – 4 July, for the loss of another 85 men, including 19 killed.

The 8th Battalion headed south to the Somme on 10 July and entered the support trenches at Pozieres in the early hours of 23 July, and the village itself that night. They were subjected to a continuous German artillery barrage for the next four days and sustained 363 casualties (97 killed or missing).

On 18 August, the 8th Battalion was ordered back to Pozieres to attack the trenches on the flanks of the German stronghold of Mouquet Farm. The assault failed, at a cost to the battalion of another 211 casualties, including 57 killed or missing.

The battalion then returned to Belgium in October and spent several weeks in the line near Ypres, which is where Pte Black contracted tonsillitis and was treated at the 2nd Australian Field Ambulance from 23 – 30 October.

Following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in February 1917, the 8th Battalion moved into the front line at Lagnicourt on 16 April, the scene of much heavy fighting the previous day.

On 22 April, the battalion conducted a successful raid on the German line opposite. They captured three prisoners and caused many casualties, for the loss of one killed and 14 wounded of their own, one of whom was Pte Black, who sustained shrapnel wounds to his head and leg, which was fractured.

He was immediately evacuated to the 3rd Casualty Clearing Station at Bapaume but subsequently died of his wounds there on 26 April 1917.

Private 3348 Noel James Black was buried in the Grevillers British Cemetery, France later the same day.

Name: Black, Noel James	
Service Number	3348
Date enlisted	26 July 1915
Place enlisted	Geelong, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	24 th Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	26 November 1915 HMAT A73 <i>Commonwealth</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	19 years 7 months (24/11/1895)
Place of birth	Winchelsea, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Labourer
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Black, Mr James, father, Moolap, Victoria
Permanent address	Moolap, Victoria
Appearance	Dark complexion, black hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 7 inches, weight – 8 stone, 14 lbs, chest measurement – 33/35 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	8 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, France, Belgium
Fate	Died of wounds
Date and place wounded	22 April 1917 Lagnicourt, France
Nature of wounds	Shrapnel wounds to head (penetrating) and leg (fractured)
Date and place died	26 April 1917 3 rd Casualty Clearing Station, Bapaume, France
Cemetery details	Grevillers British Cemetery, France. Plot II, Row A, Grave 10
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also remembered on the Leopold & District Honor Roll, East Geelong, St Albans & Moolap War Memorial, Leopold War Memorial, Geelong & District Peace Memorial, Winchelsea War Memorial, Winchelsea & District Memorial Grandstand and Wurdale Roll of Honor.