

Reginald William Brinsmead MC



Sergeant (Sgt) 64 Reginald William Brinsmead enlisted in the 4th Light Horse Regiment at Broadmeadows on 18 August 1914. He embarked overseas on 19 October and disembarked in Egypt on 11 December.

The 4th Light Horse arrived on Gallipoli (as infantry reinforcements without their horses) on 21 May 1915 and moved into the trenches at Courtney's Post two days later. On 5 June 1915, they were in the centre of the line facing German Officer's Ridge when they came under a heavy Turkish artillery bombardment which caused five casualties (two killed).

The regiment took over the line at Ryrie's Post during July and it was while here that Sgt Brinsmead was evacuated ill with heat exhaustion on 21 July. He was admitted to the Tigne Military Hospital on Malta from 29 July – 23 August, then transferred to England and treated at the Bethnal Green Military Hospital in London between 31 August – 3 December 1915.

He spent another six months recuperating at the Monte Video Camp at Weymouth before he joined the 2nd (Brigade) Training Battalion at Perham Downs Camp on 28 June 1916.

He departed England on 22 October and landed in France the next day, where he was transferred and taken on strength of the 8th Infantry Battalion in the 2nd Infantry Brigade of the 1st Australian Division at Bernafay Wood on 10 November 1916.

Following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in early 1917, the 8th Battalion moved into the front line at Lagnicourt on 16 April, the scene of heavy fighting the previous day. On 22 April, Sgt Brinsmead was evacuated sick with mumps and was treated at the 3rd Australian Field Ambulance from 22 April – 11 May then rejoined the battalion the next day.

He was transferred to the 1st Anzac Corps School at Aveluy from 19 July – 8 August, during which time he was also promoted to Second Lieutenant (2nd Lt) on 28 July.

The battalion moved north to Belgium in late September and participated in the Battle on Menin Road on 20 – 21 September, where they achieved all their objectives and captured 300 Germans and 14 machine guns, at a cost of 229 casualties, one of whom was 2nd Lt Brinsmead, who sustained a gunshot wound to his left hand on 20 September.

He was evacuated to the 30th General Hospital at Calais from 23 – 25 September, then transferred to England, where he was admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital between 23 September – 15 November.

While recuperating in hospital, he would have been informed that he had been awarded the Military Cross on 14 October 1917. The citation read:

“During the attack on POLYGON WOOD east of YPRES on 20th September 1917 this officer displayed great gallantry and devotion to duty. On his company commander becoming a casualty early in the operations, he took command (although wounded) displaying great skill and initiative in leading his company and in capturing the final objective. Through his determination and untiring energy, the position was consolidated, and the defence organised.”

He was discharged from hospital on 15 November, and he joined the Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill the same day.

He returned to France on 3 December and rejoined the 8th Battalion at Desvres on 11 December. They moved into the front line near Wytschaete on the night of 14 December and the 8th Battalion diary for 17 December recorded the following:

“Enemy patrol overcame and took prisoner the garrison of No. 13 post (five men and one LMG (Lewis Machine Gun). In returning to their lines, enemy attacked by LMG fire and prisoners escaped with LMG, taking prisoner one officer and five OR (other ranks). Rest of enemy believed killed. Two members of the garrison – Lt R. Brinsmead and one OR – killed by sniper while patrolling in search of the missing men. Post re-established. Our patrols active during night.”

2nd Lt Brinsmead's body was later recovered, and he was buried nearby, but this grave was later lost, so he has no known grave.

Second Lieutenant Reginald William Brinsmead is commemorated on Panel 7 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium.

Name: Brinsmead, Reginald William	
Service Number	64
Date enlisted	18 August 1914
Place enlisted	Broadmeadows, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Sergeant
Initial Unit	4 th Light Horse Regiment
Previous military service	29 th Light Horse (CMF) – 3 years
Date and ship embarked for overseas	19 October 1914 HMAT A18 <i>Wiltshire</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	21 years (17/4/1893)
Place of birth	Leopold, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Brinsmead, Mr Henry, father, Leopold, Victoria
Permanent address	Leopold, Victoria
Appearance	Dark complexion, black hair, grey eyes, height – 5 feet 9 inches, weight – 10 stone, 3 lbs, chest measurement – 33/36 inches
Final Rank	Second Lieutenant
Final Unit	8 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Gallipoli, France, Belgium
Fate	Killed in action
Date and place wounded	20 September 1917 Menin Road, Belgium
Nature of wounds	Gunshot wound to left hand
Date and place died	17 December 1917 Wytschaete, Belgium
Cemetery details	No known grave. Commemorated on Panel 7 of the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
Honours/medals	Military Cross, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also remembered on the Leopold State School Honor Roll, Leopold & District Honor Roll, Leopold War Memorial and the East Geelong St Albans & Moolap War Memorial.