

Howard Spinks

Private (Pte) 6407 Howard Spinks enlisted in the 23rd Infantry Battalion at Geelong on 27 October 1916, having been rejected twice previously, once for teeth and once for varicocoele.

He embarked overseas on 23 November and disembarked in Plymouth on 29 January 1917, where he joined the 6th (Brigade) Training Battalion at Larkhill Camp.

He spent several weeks at the Parkhouse Hospital with an undisclosed illness between 6 – 25 February, and then a few days at the Larkhill Hospital with a cough from 1 – 5 April.

Pte Spinks was transferred to Windmill Hill Camp on 29 April. He spent a few days in hospital with scabies from 23 – 28 July, then embarked for France on 25 August.

He arrived the next day, where he was transferred and taken on strength of the 37th Infantry Battalion in the 10th Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division at Blequin on 1 September 1917, one of 246 reinforcements received that day.

The battalion moved up to the Zonnebeke area on 2 October in preparation for an attack on Broodseinde Ridge, which began at 6.00 am on the morning of 4 October 1917. The 37th Battalion suffered 224 casualties, but all the objectives were achieved, and the battle was considered a success. Then the rain started to fall.

The battalion's next action, an attack on the village of Passchendaele on 12 October 1917, was a disaster. The soldiers were subjected to German artillery fire while they waited then, once the attack commenced, were pinned by machine gun fire, and hindered by the deep mud, so made no headway at all, at a cost to the 37th Battalion of 71 men killed and 179 wounded, one of whom was Pte Spinks who sustained gunshot wounds to his legs and face.

He was evacuated to the 3rd Australian General Hospital at Wimereux from 13 – 20 October, then transferred to England, where he was admitted to the Leeds War Hospital between 21 October – 18 December 1917.

Pte Spinks was granted leave from 24 December – 7 January 1918, then transferred to the Sutton Veny Camp on 9 January.

He was promoted to Corporal (Cpl) on 22 September and transferred to the permanent staff of the No.1 Command Depot at Tidworth.

Later declared as unfit for further military service due to varicocoele, Cpl Spinks embarked for return to Australia on 11 December 1918.

Corporal 6407 Howard Spinks disembarked in Melbourne on 30 January, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 13 April 1919.

Name: Spinks, Howard	
Service Number	6407
Date enlisted	27 October 1916
Place enlisted	Geelong, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	23 rd Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	23 November 1916 HMAT A20 <i>Hororata</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	31 years 9 months
Place of birth	Moolap, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Stone cutter
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Spinks, Miss Rosanna, aunt, Little Ryrie Street, Geelong, Victoria
Permanent address	Moolap, Victoria
Appearance	Brown complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 10 inches, weight – 10 stone, 2 lbs, chest measurement – 33/35 inches
Final Rank	Corporal
Final Unit	37 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	12 October 1917 Passchendaele, Belgium
Nature of wounds	Gunshot wounds to legs and face
Date and ship embarked for Australia	11 December 1918 HT <i>Saxon</i>
Date discharged	13 April 1919
Nature of discharge	Medically Unfit (varicoccele)
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Died 1967. Also remembered on the Leopold State School Honor Roll, Leopold & District Honor Roll and Leopold War Memorial