

Frank Trebilcock

Private (Pte) 2150 Frank Trebilcock enlisted in the 38th Infantry Battalion in the 10th Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division in Bendigo on 11 March 1916. He embarked overseas on 25 September and disembarked in Plymouth on 11 November, where he initially joined the 10th (Brigade) Training Battalion in Wiltshire.

He was subsequently taken on strength of the 3rd Pioneer Battalion on 22 November and sailed for France two days later. Shortly after he arrived, Pte Trebilcock was admitted to the 7th General Hospital at St Omer with mumps between 5 – 26 December then, two days later, he was taken on strength of the 38th Battalion at Armentieres, where he was also promoted to Corporal.

He was promoted to Lance Sergeant (L Sgt) on 26 January 1917, after which the battalion moved into the front line at Bois Grenier and, on the morning of 27 February, conducted a large-scale trench raid on the German lines. At 12.30 am, a force of 650 Australians left the trenches and captured 17 German prisoners, for the loss of 61 casualties (16 killed) of their own. According to the 38th Battalion diary, German dead were estimated to be around 200.

L Sgt Trebilcock was promoted to Sergeant (Sgt) on 19 March and was seconded to the 2nd Anzac Corps from 2 April – 9 June, when he rejoined the battalion.

The 38th Battalion then moved to the Zonnebeke area on 2 October in preparation for an attack on Broodseinde Ridge. The assault began at 6.00 am on the morning of 4 October and despite heavy casualties was considered a success. The 38th Battalion sustained 184 casualties (34 killed) but achieved all their objectives and captured about 300 Germans.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Dead and wounded Australians and Germans in a railway cutting during Passchendaele, 12 October 1917.

The battalion's next action however, an attack on the village of Passchendaele, which followed on 12 October 1917, was a disaster. The waiting soldiers were subjected to heavy German artillery fire then, once the attack commenced, were pinned by machine gun fire and hindered by the deep mud. The attack failed, at the cost of another 381 battalion casualties, one of whom was Sgt Trebilcock, who sustained a gunshot wound to his left leg.

He was evacuated to the 53rd Stationary Hospital at Boulogne from 13 – 24 October then spent the period 24 October – 6 November at a convalescent depot in the same town, before he rejoined the 38th Battalion at Romarin on 22 November 1917.

Sgt Trebilcock was granted leave in England from 8 – 24 January 1918 as the battalion manned the relatively quiet Messines sector.

Following news of a German breakthrough on the Somme, the 38th Battalion was rushed south on 24 March and later moved into Marrett Wood near Morlancourt, the junction of two exhausted British armies. On 28 March about 100 Germans attacked the battalion in the wood but were repulsed with heavy casualties.

On 9 April, the battalion was in the line near Buire sur Ancre where, according to the battalion unit diary, the German artillery fire was particularly heavy, but the main German assault had run its course.

Sgt Trebilcock was detached for duty with the 9th (Brigade) Training Battalion on 27 July, and he sailed for England three days later, where he commenced his new role at Tidworth Camp on 31 July 1918.

He was attached to the 2nd Training Brigade at Codford Camp from 29 January 1919 and was later granted indefinite leave from 26 July, following his wedding to Miss Annie Phillips at St Martins in the Field Church, London on the same date.

Sgt Trebilcock and his wife embarked for Australia on 25 September, exactly three years since he had departed.

Sergeant 2150 Frank Trebilcock disembarked in Melbourne on 13 November, where he was discharged from the AIF on 28 December 1919.

Name: Trebilcock, Frank	
Service Number	2150
Date enlisted	11 March 1916
Place enlisted	Bendigo, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	38 th Infantry Battalion
Previous military service	Cadets – 11 years
Date and ship embarked for overseas	25 September 1916 HMAT A9 <i>Shropshire</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	30 years 2 months
Place of birth	Leopold, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Trebilcock, Mr Richard, father, Pakington Street, Geelong, Victoria
Permanent address	Pakington Street, Geelong, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 6 ½ inches, weight – 9 stone, chest measurement – 32/35 inches
Final Rank	Sergeant
Final Unit	38 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 wound to left leg
Date and ship embarked for Australia	25 September 1919 (with wife) HT <i>Port Denison</i>
Date discharged	28 December 1919
Nature of discharge	Termination of Period of Enlistment
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Married Annie Phillips in London on 26 July 1919. Died 1968. Also remembered on the Leopold State School Honor Roll, Leopold War Memorial, Bendigo Soldiers Memorial Institute Honor Roll and the Geelong College Roll of Honour.