

## Frederick Cox



Private 253 Frederick Cox enlisted in the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division in Perth on 8 March 1915.

He embarked overseas on 9 June. During the voyage he was promoted to Sergeant (Sgt) on 17 June, and he disembarked in Egypt on 2 July.

The battalion departed Egypt on 4 September and landed at Gallipoli a week later, where they relieved the New Zealand Otago Battalion and took up defensive positions on Rhododendron Spur. By this stage of the campaign, the August Offensive had failed, and no further allied offensive operations were undertaken. The 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion evacuated the peninsula on 19 December and eventually returned to Egypt on 10 January 1916.

They left Egypt on 10 March and disembarked in Marseilles on 21 March, then later entered the line for the first time around Armentieres.

The men moved to the Somme in late July, where the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, including the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, continued the Australian attack from Pozieres on 28 July. They were ultimately held up by barbed wire that the artillery had failed to cut and suffered 370 casualties in the attempt.

They remained in the line and attacked for a second time on 4 August – this time successfully – then held the captured ground until relieved two days later.

After the ordeal of Pozieres, the battalion was sent north to the much quieter Ypres sector to recover, after which Sgt Cox was also granted leave in England during December 1916.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion played a mainly supporting role at the Second Battle of Bullecourt in May 1917, then moved back to Belgium in early September.

On 20 – 21 September during Third Ypres, the battalion took part in the successful attack from Glencorse Wood, which later became known as the Battle of Menin Road, at the cost of 317 casualties, including 70 killed or missing.

Just two weeks later, they were involved in the attack on Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October, which was another success, albeit for the loss of around 100 men, mostly while carrying supplies to the front line.

On 9 October, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, including the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, was tasked with protecting the right flank of a British assault on the village of Poelcappelle. The attacks eventually faltered in the mud, and the Australian gains could not be held. The 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion suffered a further 60 casualties in the effort and were then relieved in the line.

At the completion of Third Ypres, things quietened down and Sgt Cox was given leave in England between 29 October – 13 November 1917.

The battalion wintered in Belgium, but was transferred to the Somme again in late March 1918 in response to the German spring offensive. During April, they defended the line around Villers-Bretonneux as the Allies fought to defend the vital railhead of Amiens, then provided support to the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade's attack on Ville-sur-Ancre on 19 May.

On 8 August, the Allies launched their offensive from Amiens, during which the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion was initially engaged around Villers-Bretonneux. A series of advances then followed as the Allies exploited their initial success.

On 29 August, as the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade attacked Biaches, the 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion was assigned the task of capturing the Amiens–Peronne railway bridge. The following day, they forced their way across the river near Peronne and, during the subsequent Battle of Mont St Quentin–Peronne, joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade's advance towards Aizecourt-le-Haut.

The battalion continued fighting right up until early October, when Sgt Cox was again granted leave in England from 2 – 22 October.

He departed France for the last time on 20 January 1919 and embarked for return to Australia on 16 June.

Sergeant 253 Frederick Cox disembarked in Fremantle on 24 July, where he was discharged from the AIF on 22 September 1919.

Name: Cox, Frederick	
Service Number	253
Date enlisted	8 March 1915
Place enlisted	Perth, WA
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	28 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	9 June 1915 HMAT A11 <i>Ascanius</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	21 years 6 months
Place of birth	Midland Junction, WA
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Bootmaker
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Cox, Mr Frederick, father, Newcastle Road, Midland Junction, WA
Permanent address	Midland Junction, WA
Appearance	Dark complexion, black hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 6 ½ inches, weight – 9 stone, chest measurement – 36/39 inches
Final Rank	Sergeant
Final Unit	28 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Gallipoli, France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and ship embarked for Australia	16 June 1919 HT <i>Ormonde</i>
Date discharged	22 September 1919
Nature of discharge	Termination of Period of Enlistment
Honours/medals	1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Family resided in St Leonards pre-war. Brother of James & William Cox. Remembered on the St Leonards Honor Roll and St Paul's Anglican Church Honor Roll.