

John (Jack) Charles McNicol Turnbull



John (Jack) Charles McNicol Turnbull 241 enlisted as a Private (Pte) in the 39th Infantry Battalion in the 10th Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division in Horsham on 6 October 1914, aged almost 29 years.

After spending time at both the Castlemaine and Ballarat Camps, he eventually embarked overseas on 27 May 1916 and disembarked in Devonport, England on 18 July.

The 39th Battalion departed England on 23 November and landed in France the next day, where they travelled north and billeted in the village of Merris from 27 November. On the night of 10 December, under German artillery fire, the battalion took its place in the frontline trenches around Houplines in the Armentieres sector, when they relieved the 37th Battalion.

They remained in and out of the front line there for the next two and a half months as part of their introduction to trench warfare, during which time the battalion repelled several German trench raids and sent many of its own patrols out into "No Man's Land".

The battalion returned to the rear area around La Creche in early March 1917. After several weeks training, they re-entered the line in the L'EpINETTE sector between 8 – 16 April.

They returned to the front line in Ploegsteert Wood, Belgium on 28 April, where they came under heavy German artillery fire in the ensuing days, including gas, and also repelled several large German raiding parties, for the loss of 14 men killed and 49 wounded, one of whom was Pte Turnbull who sustained multiple shrapnel wounds to his left leg, arm and chest on 30 April.



Ploegsteert Wood, c. June 1917

He was evacuated to the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station at Trois Arbres, but ultimately succumbed to his wounds two days later, on 2 May 1917.

Private 241 John (Jack) Charles McNicol Turnbull was subsequently buried in the Trois-Arbres Cemetery in Steenwerck, France.



Jack's grave at Trois-Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck, France

Name: Turnbull, John (Jack) Charles McNicol	
Service Number	241
Date enlisted	6 October 1914
Place enlisted	Horsham, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	39 th Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	27 May 1916 HMAT A11 <i>Ascanius</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	28 years 10 months (30 December 1885)
Place of birth	Horsham, Victoria
Marital status	Married
Occupation	Bricklayer
Religion	Presbyterian
Next of kin and address	Turnbull, Mrs Mary Ellen, wife, Firebrace Street, Horsham, Victoria
Permanent address	Horsham, Victoria
Appearance	Medium complexion, brown hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 5 ½ inches, weight – 9 stone, 13 lbs, chest measurement – 34/36 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	39 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Died of wounds
Date and place wounded	30 April 1917 Ploegsteert Wood, Belgium
Nature of wounds	Shrapnel wounds to left leg, arm and chest
Date and place died	2 May 1917 2 nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station, Trois-Arbres, Steenwerck, France
Cemetery details	Trois-Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck, France Plot I, Row J, Grave 6
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Played 12 games for South Melbourne FC in VFL (1908). Also remembered on the South Melbourne & Sydney Swans Football Club Honour Roll, Horsham & District War Memorial, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Roll of Honor (Rushworth), Shire of Waranga Honor Roll and the Rushworth State School Roll of Honor.