

17th Battalion, C Company

5th Brigade

4th Division

Also 55th Battalion

Name, rank & number	1070 Pte Leonard BATTEN
Reinforcement batch	Original
Date & place of enlistment	Sydney, 19 Feb 1915
Age on enlistment	31 yrs 9 mths
Year & place of birth	1883, Melbourne
Occupation	Fibrous plasterer
Religion	Church of England
Physical Description	5' 10 ½" fair, brown eyes, brown hair
Marital status	Single
NOK & address	Brother, Paddington, Sydney
Embarkation date and ship	12 May 1915
Repatriation date & ship	23 May 1917
Date of discharge	23 Oct 1917
Total service	2yrs 8mths
Overseas service	2yrs 3 mths
Fate	Died 17 Dec 1944 in a mental hospital aged 61



Sicknesses: 11-27 Jan 1916 mumps, 12 Jan-23 May 1917 trench fever & neural debility.

Crimes: 4 Mar 1916 leaving parade, breaking camp, drunk in lines, 8 May 1916 neglect of an order, 12 May 1916 insolence to an NCO, 8 Jun 1916 failing to comply with an order, 11 Aug 1916 drunk on active service, 7 Nov 1916 AWL one day from the field

Battle honours: Suvla, Gallipoli 1915-1916, Egypt 1916, Fromelles, Somme 1916, France & Flanders 1916-1918

Service Outline:

19 Feb 1915	Enlisted in the AIF
12 May 1915	Sailed for Egypt with the 17 th Bn
16 Aug 1915	Sailed for Gallipoli with 17 th Bn
30 Aug 1915	Admitted hospital Gallipoli, scalded leg
6 Nov 1915	Returned to duty
19 Feb 1916	Transferred to 55 th Bn
20 Jun 1916	Disembarked Marseilles
12 Jan 1917	To hospital trench fever, laryngitis, myalgia
23 May 1917	Returned to Australia, neural debility
23 Oct 1917	Discharged medically unfit

Summary: The story of Leonard Batten is was not uncommon of those men that served in the AIF. Leonard, a plasterer from Melbourne, answered his country's call relatively early in the war and was one of the original 17th Bn. He sailed with them to Egypt and then to Gallipoli where they held the line near Quinns Post and Popes Hill. After two weeks at Gallipoli his leg was somehow scalded and he spent several months out of the line recuperating. He was back in the line another 6 weeks at Gallipoli until the evacuation. In Egypt he was transferred to the 55th and sailed with them to France in March 1916. He then saw considerable front line service and

would have fought with the 55th Bn at Fromelles in July 1916 and then in the Somme during the bitter winter of 1916/17. He was not an exemplary soldier and he was charged frequently for various offences including drunkenness, AWL and insolence. In Jan 1917 he was evacuated with trench fever but after a time in hospital he was diagnosed with neural debility and in May 1917 Leonard was repatriated to Australia. His claim for a pension was rejected on the grounds the incapacity "was not the result of warlike operations", however later in the year his pension was accepted. Leonard had no next of kin and eventually he was committed to a mental asylum in Parramatta where he died in 1944 aged 61.