

# Private Norman Currie Tyrer

2001, 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, AIF

b: Malvern VIC, Australia 13<sup>th</sup> October 1894

d: K.I.A., front line Green Trench nr. Gapaard, Messines, Belgium, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1917

bur. Green Trench or Gooseberry Farm, Messines, Belgium

memorials: Menin Gate Commonwealth War Grave, Ypres, Belgium and  
Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT, Australia





**46th Battalion 1st AIF**  
April 28, 2011

PTE N.C. Tyrer



**46th Battalion 1st AIF**

April 28, 2011

Railway siding at Bullecourt



# WE WERE THE 46TH



## The History of the 46th Battalion in The Great War of 1914-18

Ian Polanski



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**46th Battalion 1st AIF**

October 10, 2011



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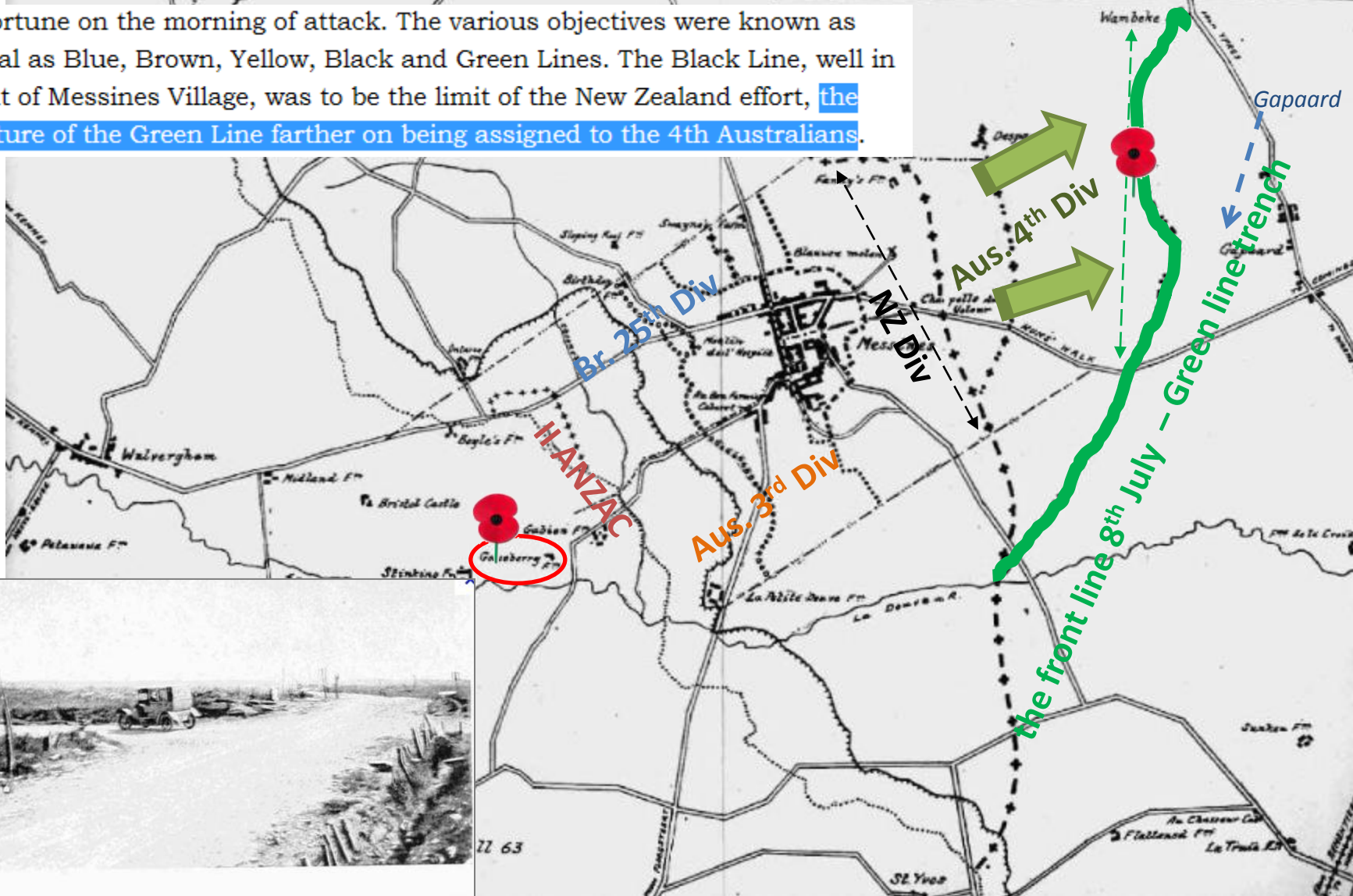
**46th Battalion 1st AIF** Unit history

October 10, 2011 at 3:26am





of fortune on the morning of attack. The various objectives were known as usual as Blue, Brown, Yellow, Black and Green Lines. The Black Line, well in front of Messines Village, was to be the limit of the New Zealand effort, the capture of the Green Line farther on being assigned to the 4th Australians.



CAPAARD. END OF VILLAGE, GOING TOWARDS HOUTHEM



In June 1917 the New Zealand Division took part in the successful advance onto Messines ridge, in Belgium. Again, casualties were heavy. This wounded soldier is at the advanced dressing station (ADS) during the battle. The ADS was usually the second place to which the wounded were carried. The first was a regimental aid post, close to the front lines, where the wounded would be given light first aid and then carried to the ADS. The ADS was better equipped, but the conditions and treatment were still limited. The next stop was a casualty clearing station, usually a tented area several miles behind the lines. Operations might be carried out there. Finally, the men would be taken to a base hospital for long-term care. However, many never reached the hospital.



Scene inside an Advanced Dressing Station, Belgium, 1917.





## Advanced dressing station

The left of the photograph is dominated by a shelter. This shelter is made of sandbags and has a very wide door less entrance. On the ground outside are two rows of duckboards. There are pieces of equipment leaning up against the wall and dangling from the lintel of the doorway. There is a soldier standing in the doorway and another at the end of the wall. Two soldiers are walking passed carrying a stretcher between them. There is no-one in the stretcher instead it is stacked with blankets. In front of the shelter is an untidy wasteland with bits of fencing and equipment piled up.

This photograph shows that regardless of the nationality of the army, most of the soldiers' experiences of war were similar. Jobs and situations were universal across the Western Front.



Essex Farm ADS & John McCrae May 1915









Photo 17th February 1918. J.A. Barker memorial Cross - 2600 Corporal C. Holliday, C Company, 35th Battalion, at memorial erected near Ash crater to members of the 35th Battalion, who fell at the battle of Messines on the 7th June, 1917. A memorial similar to this one less the names was erected by the Battalion Pioneers near Gooseberry Farm, just west of Messines, in June 1917 but was destroyed by enemy shellfire.





The N134 east of Mesen (Messines) in the vicinity of the 'Hun's Walk' area of the Messines battlefield of 1917. [DVA]  
Image 2 of 9



'Huns Walk', east of Mesen (Messines), captured by Australian soldiers during the Battle of Messines on 7 June 1917. [AWM E01295]

Image 1 of 9

CLOSE X



# Huns' Walk, Messines, July 1917

The Australians had some great adventures in this battle, and not enough has been told about them, because they took a great share of the fighting, especially in the last phase of it, when they passed through some of our first-wave troops and held a great stretch of new front under violent fire and against the enemy's endeavors to retake the ground.

On the extreme right of our line, forming the pivot of the attack, was a body of Australian troops who had to get through the German barrage and fling duck-board bridges over the little Douve river, and cross to the German support line under machine-gun fire from a beastly little ruin called Grey Farm.

The enemy was sniping from shell holes, and bullets were flying about rather badly. A young Australian officer dealt with Grey Farm, crawling through

a hedge with a small party of men, and setting fire to the ruin, so that it should give no more cover.

Meanwhile, further to the north, the Germans were still about in gaps not yet linked up, and in strong points not yet cleared. A body of them gave trouble in Huns' Walk on the Messines road, where there was a belt of uncut wire when the Australians arrived. "Hell!" said the Australians. "What are we going to do about that?" There was great shell-fire and machine-gun fire, and the sight of that wire was disgusting.

"Leave it to me," said a young Tank officer. "I guess old rattle-belly can roll that down." He and other Tank officers were keen, even at the most deadly risks, to do good work with their queer beasts alongside the Australians for reasons that belong to another story.

They did excellent work, and this Tank at Huns' Walk crawled along the hedge of wire and laid it flat, as its tracks there still show. Another Tank was slouching about under heavy shelling in search of strong posts, with the Australian boys close up to its flanks with their bayonets fixed. Suddenly, a burst of flame came from it, and it seemed a doomed thing.

But out of the body of the beast came a very cool young man mounted high with bits of shell whistling by his head. He stamped out the fire, and did not hear comments of the Australian lads, who said "Gosh! that fellow is pretty game. He's alright." Much further north another Tank came into action, with the Australians near. A few old remnants of charred wall and timber, where there was a strong post of Germans in concrete chambers, were causing our troops loss and worry. "Anything I can do to help you?" asked a Tank officer very politely through the steel trap door. "Your machine guns would be jolly useful in our trench," said an Australian officer. "We are a bit under strength here." The Tank officer was a friend in distress. He dismantled his machine-guns, took them into the trench and fought alongside the Australians until they were relieved.

Just west of Van Hove Farm, in a gap between the Australians and the English, the Germans got into a place called Polka Estaminet—don't imagine it as a neat little inn with a penny-in-the-slot piano in the front parlour—and they had to be driven out by sharp rifle fire.

Next morning one of our men walked into a pocket of a hundred Germans, and a young Australian officer was told off with 20 men to bomb them out. There was a battle of bombs which was very hot while it lasted, and then the Germans bolted off under machine-gun and rifle fire.

Australian patrols went out and brought in 40 wounded Germans and counted 60 to 80 dead. Later on the enemy made a further attack up the valley of Blauwepoorbeek, where our Cheshire men destroyed an advance column and the Australians beat them off, so that none of them reached our lines.

Forty years hence these stories will be told in Sydney and on the Australian farms far out in the bush, when, perhaps, the world will have grown wiser and look back to all this war as an inconceivable thing. White-haired old men, who are now the Australian boys I see about the fields of France, will be looked at with wonder, as men who passed through hell fires and great devilry.

On the other side of the world names of a few bits of broken brickwork in a great chaos of shell craters will be famous and sinister, and these boys now who go back—the lucky ones—will be pointed out as those who fought at Van Hove Farm and saw the Tank go up the Huns' Walk.



Two tanks on their way into action during the attack on Messines Ridge, 7 June, 1917. [AWM E01419]



46<sup>th</sup> Bn. AIF photo





# Collar dogs and 46 Battalion gravestone, France





**46th Battalion 1st AIF**

April 27, 2011

Hindenburg Line 1918





## 46th Battalion 1st AIF

April 27, 2011

Battalion Officers 25 May 1917 Standing L to R  
 CAPT N.F. Bremner DSO, LT R. Outhwaite MC, LT  
 L.L. Coulson MM, CAPT L.J. Kimber, MAJ J.M.  
 Edgely DSO, CAPT W.R. Davidson MC, CAPT J.J.  
 McPherson, LT J.J. Carr, CAPT D.B. Payne MC,  
 kneeling L to R, LT A.V. James MM, LT P.C.  
 Brearley, CAPT L.C.A. Craig MC, sitting L to R LT  
 L.W. Crichton, CAPT E.B. Thomas AAMC, LT L. Bull  
 MC, CAPT G.H. Clarke and CAPT G.S. Vanstan MC  
 photo supplied by Jack Davidson.





## 46th Battalion 1st AIF

April 27, 2011



Battalion Quartermaster's staff. Standing rear right, 3967 CPL H.F. Wilson, sitting centre LT R. Outhwaite MC and sitting left, RQMS M.E. Mills MSM.



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Anzac Day in Melbourne 1970s. Capt D.B. Payne looking at camera. Included in photo, J. Hallifax and Arthur Bolton.