



# A Soldier of the Great War

**Private John Draddy**

**41<sup>st</sup> Battalion AIF**



**John Thomas Patrick DRADDY**

enlisted on

9 February 1917

in the

Machine Gun Company 11, Reinforcement 11,

Australian Imperial Force,

with the rank of

Private, Number 665,

and was listed as

Killed in Action

on

21 February 1918

Regimental number	665
Place of birth	Ballycotton, Co Cork, Ireland
Religion	Roman Catholic
Occupation	Farmer
Address	Dalby, Queensland
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	22
Height	5' 6"
Weight	157 lbs
Next of kin	Father, Thomas Draddy, Ballycotton, Co Cork, Ireland
Previous military service	Served for 1 day in the AIF.
Enlistment date	9 February 1917
Place of enlistment	Dalby, Queensland
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	<a href="#">Machine Gun Company 11,</a> <a href="#">Reinforcement 11</a>
AWM Embarkation Roll number	24/16/3
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A29 <i>Suevic</i> on 21 June 1917
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	41st Battalion
Fate	Killed in Action 21 February 1918
Age at death from cemetery records	21
Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial	133
Miscellaneous information from cemetery records	Parents: Thomas and Ellen DRADDY, Ballycotton, Co. Cork, Ireland

**D**

41165

HOME LEAVE. 8.3.17  
AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.**

**Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.**

No. 665 Name (Surname) DRADDY  
in full (Christian Name) Jack John Thomas Patrick  
Unit 13 of 1 M.G. COY. 41st Bn  
Joined on Feb 9th 1917

**Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.**

1. What is your Name? ... John Thomas Patrick Draddy
2. In the Parish of ... in or near the Town of Ballycotton in the County of Ireland
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—if the latter, papers to be shown.) ... British Born
4. What is your Age? ... 22 yrs 3 mths
5. What is your Trade or Calling? ... Farmer
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... No
7. Are you married? ... No
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address and relationship to be stated) ... Mr. W. Thomas Draddy (father) Ballycotton Co. Cork. Ireland
9. What is your permanent address in Australia? ... Walby Queensland
10. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge ... H.I.F. (one day discharged) through throat trouble
11. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? ... yes
12. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? ... yes. Gonorrhea trouble
13. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)—Do you understand that no separation allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? ...
14. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? ... yes.

John Thomas Patrick Draddy do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than two fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.  
Date 9-2-17.  
John Thomas Patrick Draddy  
Jack Draddy  
Signature of person enlisted.

\* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.  
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

## **41<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

The 41st Battalion was raised at Bell's Paddock Camp in Brisbane in February 1916 with recruits from Brisbane, northern Queensland and the northern rivers district of New South Wales. It formed part of the 11th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division.

After training in Australia and Britain, the 41st Battalion arrived in France on 25 November 1916. It entered the front line for the first time on Christmas Eve and spent the bleak winter of 1916-17 alternating between service in the front line, and training and labouring in the rear areas.

Compared to some AIF battalions, the 41st's experience of the battles in Belgium during 1917 was relatively straightforward. It had a supporting role at Messines on 7 June, captured its objectives at Broodseinde on 4 October with little difficulty, and was spared the carnage of Passchendaele on 12 October. It was some of the battalion's more "routine" tasks that proved its most trying experiences. At the end of June 1917, the 11th Brigade was ordered to establish a new front line west of Warneton, in full view of the Germans. Work carried on night and day under heavy shellfire and the period became known to the battalion as "the 18 days". The start of August found the 41st holding ground captured by two of its sister battalions in a feint attack on 31 July. Enduring continual rain, flooded trenches and heavy shelling many of the battalion's platoons dwindled from 35 men to less than ten.

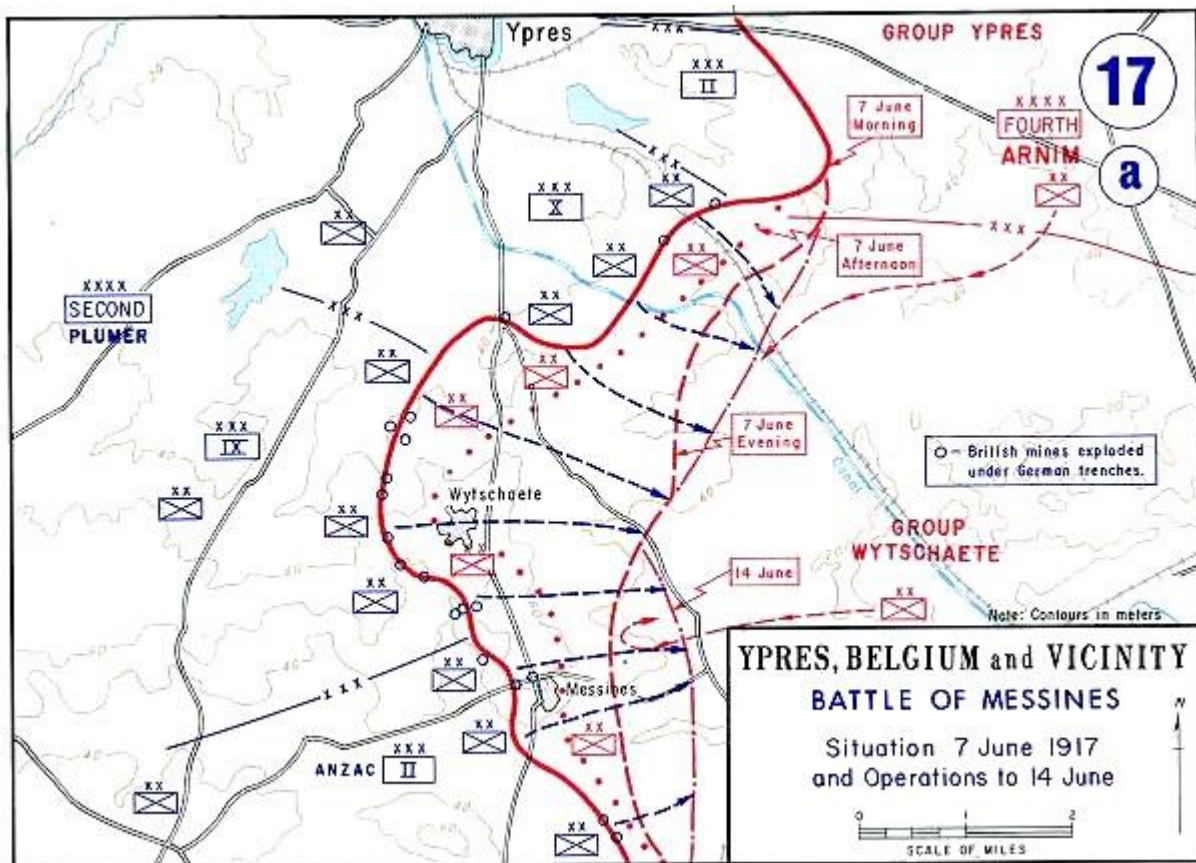
Belgium remained the focus of the 41st Battalion's activities for the five months after its action in October 1917 as it was rotated between service in the rear areas and the front line. When the German Army launched its last great offensive in March 1918, the battalion was rushed south to France and played a role in blunting the drive towards the vital railway junction of Amiens.

The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, and the 41st played an active role both in the initial attack and the long advance that followed throughout August and into September. The 41st participated in its last major action of the war between 29 September and 2 October 1918 as part of the Australian-American operation that breached the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line along the St Quentin Canal. The battalion was out of the line when the war ended, and was disbanded in May 1919.

## **41<sup>st</sup> Battalion and the Battle of Messines**

This was a successful British assault on the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge, a strongly held strategic position on the Western Front, which had been held by the Germans since late 1914. The offensive operation was the product of long preparation, detailed planning and sound training carried out by General Plumer's Second Army. The initial assault was preceded by the detonation of 19 mines under the German front line which caused an estimated 10 000 German casualties. British, Australian and New Zealand infantry advanced behind a carefully co-ordinated artillery bombardment and took all their objectives within the first hours of the battle. German counter attacks the following day failed, and although German resistance continued until

14 June, British, Australian and New Zealand forces retained possession of the captured areas. The battle is often cited as a model for a well planned limited objective attack. Messines represented a preliminary to the major British offensive in Flanders in 1917, the Third Battle of Ypres.



The opening of the Battle of Messines was at that time the biggest bang in history. At Hill 60, at the northern extremity of the line, the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company had been at work since November 1916 digging two large mineshafts under Hill 60 and The Caterpillar. Right along the British front were 17 other similar mines, all packed with explosives, and at 3.10 am on 7 June 1917 they were blown simultaneously as the opening move in the Messines attack. The Hill 60 mine created a crater 60 feet deep and 260 feet wide. The effect on the German front-line troops was overwhelming. In the wake of the explosions, and preceded by a creeping artillery barrage, the Australians, New Zealanders and British troops advanced to find a shattered enemy.

#### 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion and the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge

The battle of Broodseinde Ridge was the third operation launched by British general Herbert Plummer as part of the Ypres offensive of 1917. It was a large operation, involving twelve divisions, including those of both I and II ANZAC. The attack was planned on the same basis as its predecessors - the attacking troops' objectives were approximately 1,500 metres deep, the advance would be preceded by a massive artillery bombardment; and a creeping barrage would

lead the troops on to their objectives and then protect them while they consolidated their positions.

The attack began before dawn on 4 October 1917. The Australian troops involved were shelled heavily on their start line and a seventh of their number became casualties even before the attack began. When it did, the attacking troops were confronted by a line of troops advancing towards them; the Germans had chosen the same morning to launch an attack of their own. The Australians forged on through the German assault waves and gained all their objectives along the ridge. It was not without cost, however. German pillboxes were characteristically difficult to subdue, and the Australian divisions suffered 6,500 casualties.

### **John Draddy's War....**

John Thomas Patrick Draddy, an Irish born 22year old originally from Ballycotton in Ireland enlisted in the AIF on the 9/2/17. He was a farmer from Dalby in Qld. He was initially enlisted in the 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company. After training in Australia near Brisbane he embarked from Melbourne on HMAT 'Suevic' on the 21 June 1917 and disembarked at Liverpool on the 26 August 1917. He marched into the 11th Training Bn on the 27 August 1917 and was finally transferred to 41st Bn from 11th Machine Gun Company on the 27 August 1917.

In the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion now he underwent training. While in Training, Private Draddy found himself on a number of occasions in trouble for a variety of serious matters .

He was found guilty on the 17 September 1917, of objecting to the obey an order: awarded 2 days' Field Punishment No 2; He marched into the 9th Training Bn, on 3 November 1917 for further training.

He was then found guilty on the 21 December 1917, of being absent without leave, 12.00 pm, 18 December, to 9.00 am, 20 December 1917 and awarded 7 days' Field Punishment No 2; and forfeited a total of 9 days' pay.

Finally ,he proceeded to France through Southampton on the 1 January 1918 and marched into the Australian Infantry Base Depot, Rouelles,with reinforcements for his Battalion.

The 41<sup>st</sup> had already been in Belgium since November 25<sup>th</sup> 1916. It was posted to Armentieres on the Belgium border in North-West France. The Battalion first entered the front line on Christmas eve 1916. A bleak winter was spent alternating between service on the front line , training and labouring to the rear of the fighting trenches. The trenches were slimy ditches full of mud , the surrounding land a featureless muddy quagmire. In some places the trenches were nearly invisible and it was not unusual for a soldier to get lost and end up in an enemy trench.

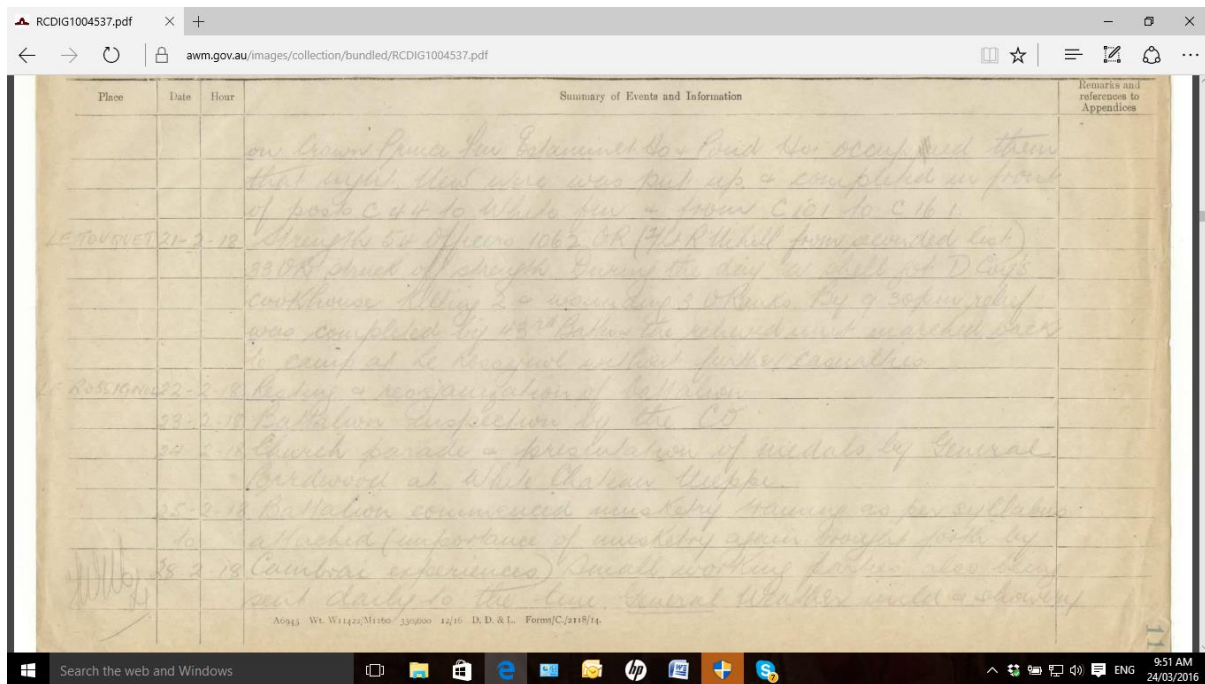
The Battalion had taken part in the Support of the Battle of Messines and played a significant role at Broodseinde Ridge. The area around Warneton would be of great importance to the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion as they built a new trench system under continued barrage.

Trench warfare in Belgium remained almost at a stalemate during most of the war as the front line moved back and forth with each assault never really achieving any major gains to their positions.

For Private John Thomas Patrick Draddy the remainder of his time in France would be short lived.

He would finally reach the front line around Warneton on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1918 and take up his position in the field. The Battalion was rotated from the front line to rear support . His platoon and others would suffer heavy losses with platoons depleted from 35 men to 10 on average.

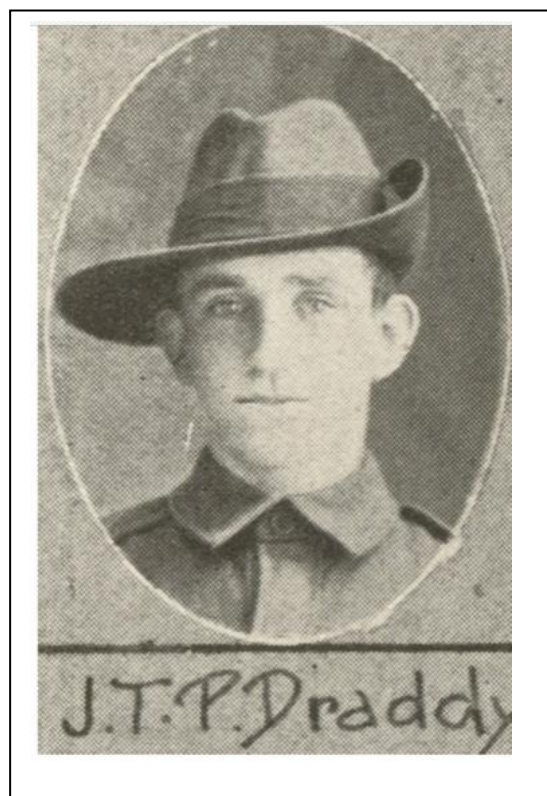
In late February 1918 while in the front line he would be killed.



Though difficult to read the war diary of the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion for the 21<sup>st</sup> February tells of the events of the day and the loss of soldiers. Private John Thomas Patrick Draddy is one of those soldiers.

A shell hit the cookhouse killing 20 soldiers.

He is now buried and remembered at London Rifle Range Cemetery in Belgium.





London Rifle Brigade Cemetery is located 15 Kms south of Ieper town centre, on a road leading from the Rijselseweg, N365, which connects Ieper to Wijtschate, Mesen, Ploegsteert and on to Armentières.

From Ieper town centre the Rijselsestraat runs from the market square, through the Lille Gate (Rijselpoort) and directly over the crossroads with the Ieper ring road. The road name then changes to the Rijselseweg.

The cemetery lies 800 metres beyond the village of Ploegsteert, on the right hand side of the N365.

### **Historical Information**

The commune of Ploegsteert remained under Allied occupation for much of the First World War, but was in German hands from 10 April to 29 September 1918.

London Rifle Brigade Cemetery was begun by units of the 4th Division in December 1914, and used by fighting units and field ambulances until March 1918; some German burials were made in April and May. The cemetery owes its name to the 22 burials of the London Rifle Brigade (which then belonged to the 4th Division) in Plot III, made in January, February and March 1915.

The cemetery now contains 335 Commonwealth and 18 German burials of the First World War.



**Rank:**

Private John Thomas Patrick Draddy

**Service No:**

665

**Date of Death:**

21/02/1918

**Age:**

21

**Regiment/Service:**

Australian Infantry, A.I.F.

41st Bn.

**Grave Reference:**

IV. C. 4.

**Cemetery:**

LONDON RIFLE BRIGADE CEMETERY

**Additional Information:**

Son of Thomas and Ellen Draddy, of Ballycotton, Co. Cork, Ireland.