

Victor Valentine HETHERINGTON

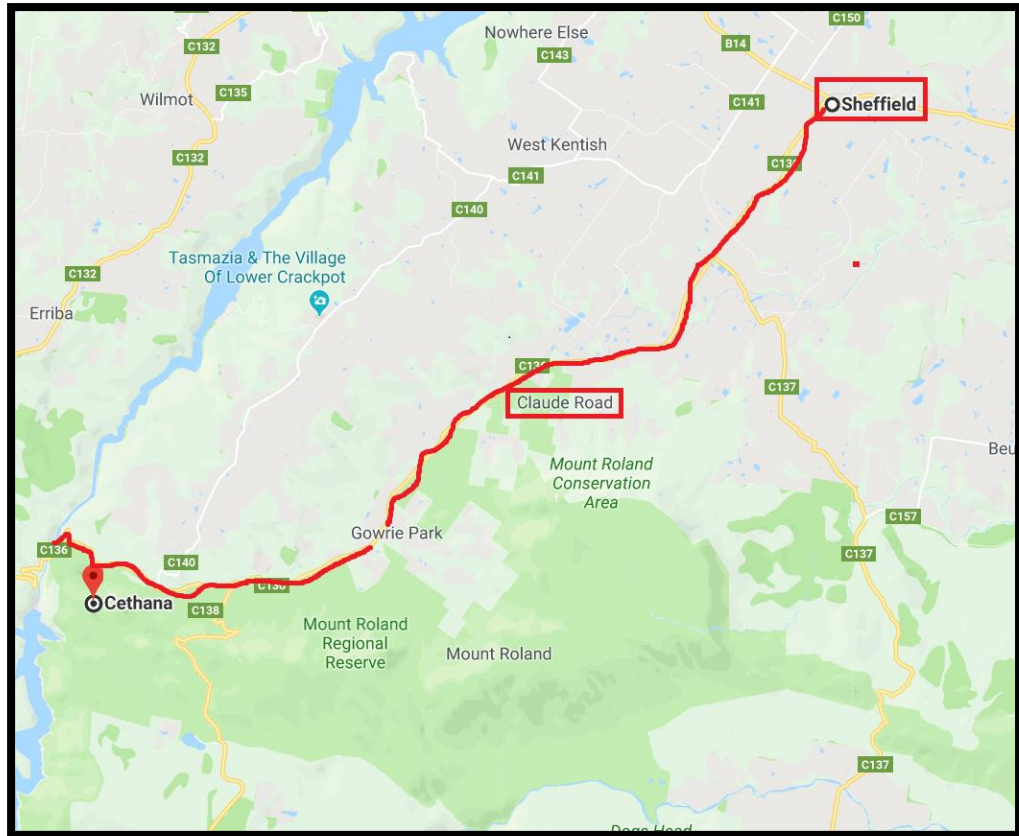


Victor Valentine Hetherington was born on 14 February 1890, in Sheffield Tasmania. His parents Joseph and Mary Ann Hetherington had lived in Claude Road Sheffield for all of their married life.



Mary Ann Hetherington (c.1930)

Victor, a farmer, married Jessie McCoy on 23 July 1913, in Sheffield and continued to live in Claude Road area. They had two children, Victor Valentine Hetherington (1914–1921) and Olga Agnes Hetherington (2 August 1916–).

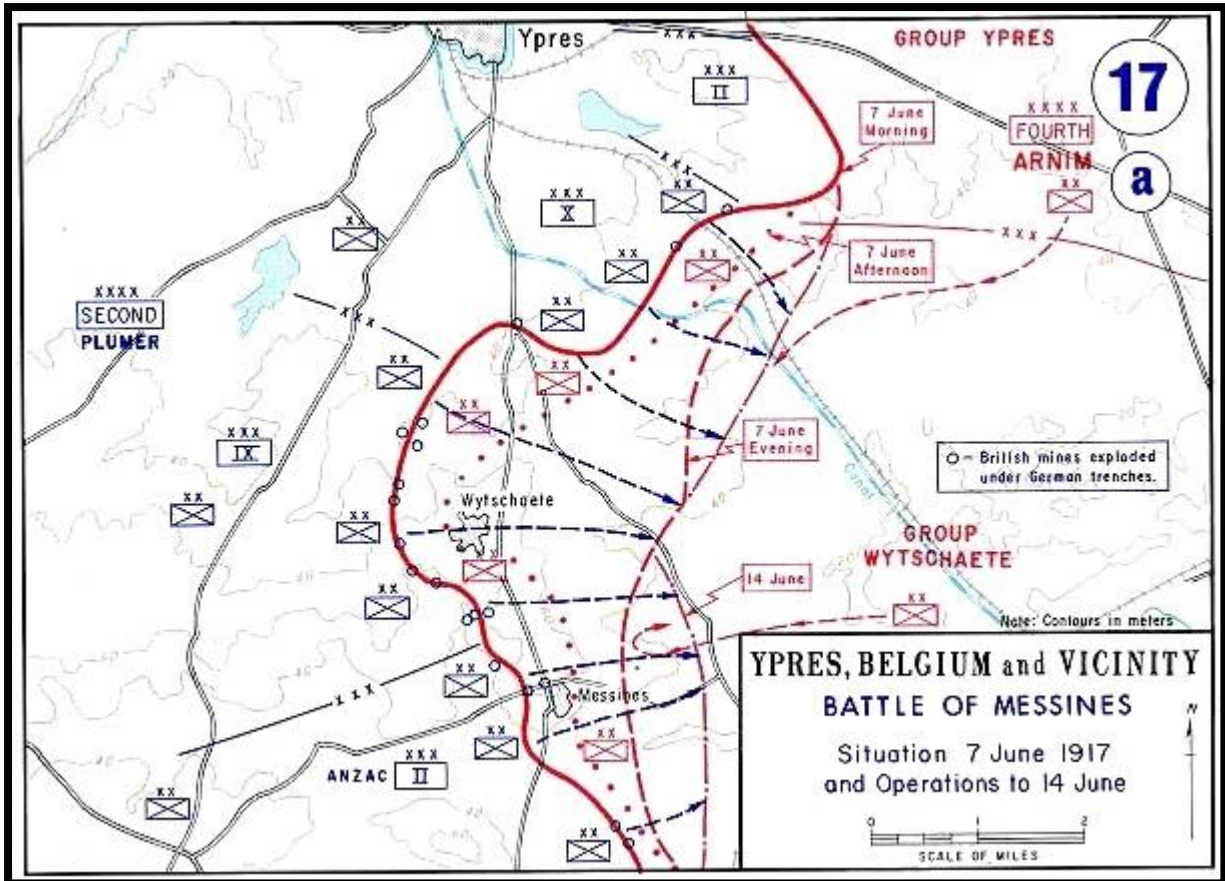


Olga had not been born when Victor, aged 27, enlisted on 15 May 1916 with the 40th Battalion 2nd Reinforcements. He enlisted with Jessie's brother John McCoy. Her seven other brothers were too young to enlist at this time but by 16 February 1918, the next brother, Arthur McCoy had also enlisted with the 40th Battalion. Records indicate that both Victor and John were tall and healthy young men; Victor at 5 foot 10 inches tall and weighing 12 stone and John, 6 foot 1 inch tall and a similar weight.

Both Sheffield men left Hobart aboard HMAT A70 Ballarat on 8 August 1916, six days after his daughter was born. It must have been a very long voyage for Victor however, as he had been admitted to the ship's hospital isolation bay while at sea and continued to be hospitalised in Plymouth upon arrival in England on 30 September. He was discharged from duties as his hospitalisation took 31 days. In the meanwhile his fellow troops, including his brother in law John, had proceeded to Codford and then to Larkhill and by February were in the field in France.

By April 1917 however he too proceeded to France and re-joined the 40th Battalion in the field.

On 7 June 1917, both Victor and John McCoy were with the 40th Battalion, along with thousands of troops ready for the attack on the strategically important Wytschaete-Messines Ridge, the high ground south of Ypres. The Germans used this ridge as a salient into the British lines, building their defence along its 10 mile length. It was the first large-scale action involving Australian troops in Belgium and it also marked the entry of the 3rd Division into a major battle, with General Monash in command. Winning this ground was essential for the British and Allies to launch a larger campaign planned for east of Ypres; the Third Battle of Ypres.



At 3:10am on the morning of 7 June, the switches were triggered to detonate the 19 enormous mines containing one million pounds of ammonal, under the German front lines to precipitate the attack. John McCoy was wounded in action that morning and hospitalised until early September. Although some fighting continued until 14 June, the result was virtually decided by the end of the first

By 14 June 1917 the II Anzac Corps was to push forward on the right from Plugstreet Wood to Trois Tilleuls Farm and Hill 20. It was in this area that Victor received serious injuries from a gunshot wound. His skull was fractured and he was transferred immediately to the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station located at the rail-head at Trois Arbres within the town of Steenwerck in French Flanders and extremely close to the front in the Armentieres sector.



No. 2

Above: 2nd Casualty Clearing Station – 7 June 1917



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H01993

Above: 2nd Casualty Clearing Station

Victor didn't survive the injury and died later that day. He was buried at the nearby Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension (Plot III, Row C, Grave No. 3).

The following notice was placed in the Herald:

Zeehan and Dundas Herald (Tas. : 1890 - 1922), Wednesday 4 July 1917, page 2

General regret was felt and expressed at Claude Road when the news came through that Private Victor Hetherington had been killed in France. A young wife and two young children were left to mourn their loss. The sad news was conveyed to Mrs Hetherington by the Rev. Best, of Sheffield. Out of over .30 who have enlisted from Claude Road during 1916, this makes the first casualty. Two other casualties have been reported in addition during the week — Private John. McCoy, suffering from the efforts of gas poisoning, and Private T. Elliott, wounded.

The following year John McCoy was wounded twice more from gunshot wounds (March and May 1918), hospitalised and returned to the field and on 11 August he was severely gassed, hospitalised and again returned to the field. He returned to Australia in early 1919. Arthur McCoy also returned to Australia late 1919 after assignment to the Australian Burial Detachment for most of that year.

During 1920 Jessie received Victor's British War Medal and Victory Medal as well as Victor's effects.

E.F.
Australian Imperial Force.
KIT STORE.

AMSI
110, GREYHOUND ROAD.
HAMMERSMITH, LONDON.
W. 6.
TELEPHONES: HAMMERSMITH 1900, 1901.

Inventory of Effects of- **The Late No 1863.Pte Hetherington.V.V. 40th Batt'n.**
Forwarded to- **WIFE.** **A.I.F.**
Mrs Jessie Hetherington,
Claude Road,
TASMANIA.

EFFECTS.

Ex 3rd Echelon. No 1529.)	Disc. Letter Case, 2 Purses, Metal Cigarette Case, Scissors, Badges, Metal Ring, 2 Religious Books, 2 Coins, 3 Checks, 2 Medallions, Cards, Photos, Unit Colors, Charm.
N.O.)	
Ex Kit Store.)	Kit Bag Handle.

No. of Package **17930** Checked by

WULYSSES

In addition she received several communications that she had to shorten her intended inscription on Victor's gravestone. The 1920 letter informed her that she had received two previous communications but had not altered the inscription. It is not recorded what Jessie's original wording was but the rather blunt letter stated that inscription:

' had to be reduced to ' 66 letters only' (the space between and two words counts as an additional letter) and it will not be practicable to have the inscription chosen by you inscribed, as same contains 108 letters. It is also noted that you now state you desire to have the Star of David incised and I would point out that this is the customary emblem of the Jewish faith. As your son was a Protestant it is thought you would prefer to have the Cross, (the emblem of Christianity) incised

I am again returning the Circular and shall be obliged if you will adjust same and return it as soon as possible.

Major – Base Records

During this time Jessie had moved to Hobart after her son Victor died and was living with Olga at 'Sunnyside' New Town.