

# Francis Frederick Townsend

## Service Number 2918 – 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion

### Early Life

Francis Frederick Townsend, also known as “Jigg” was born to William Henry Townsend, of Stanley, Tasmania, and Katherine Mary Spinks, of Circular Head, Tasmania in the late 1890s.

No.	When married, and where.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Rank.	Signature and Description of Parties.	Name of Clergyman, Officiating Minister, or Deputy Registrar.	When registered.	Signature of Deputy Registrar or Officiating Minister.
233	Dec 28 <sup>th</sup> 1885 St. John's Church Brisbane	Wm. Townsend Katherine Mary Spinks	36 21	Laborer Spinster	William Townsend Bachelor Katherine Mary Spinks Spinster	Wm. White	Dec 28 <sup>th</sup> 1885	Wm. White

Married in the presence of John Street Baptist Church, Brisbane according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Baptists by Wm. White Minister.

This Marriage was solemnized between us  
 { In the presence of } Susan Smith  
 of us } Elizabeth Harrison  
 Wm. White Minister.

The marriage details of Francis' parents in 1885.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Libraries Tasmania (n.d.) Tasmanian Names Index, <https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/births-deaths-and-marriages/introduction/>. Accessed 11/7/2024



Catherine and William Townsend<sup>2</sup>

Katherine and William had married in 1885 and had six children altogether. Francis placed fifth after the births of Emma, Eva, John, and Lena. Kathleen followed in 1901. Francis' family had bought property from the VDL company on Mooreville Road, adjacent to Mount Road (now named the Ridgley Highway), about 8kms out of what was the expanding town of Burnie. There was no home on the land that William had bought, so Francis grew up on New Country Road in Burnie in an old weatherboard cottage next door to his Uncle George's.<sup>3</sup> Katherine was a well-respected midwife and was widely known for her knowledge and skills in the Burnie and Ridgley areas.

---

<sup>2</sup> Townsend, C.H. *The Townsends in Tasmania*, Private Family Publication

<sup>3</sup> Townsend, C.H. *The Townsends in Tasmania*, Private Family Publication



Francis Townsend.

Francis had a pretty normal childhood, with the expectation that he would attend the local school, which had around 90 students, and spend time with his siblings and cousins in and around the family home. Despite this, Francis was arrested for stealing at the age of 11<sup>4</sup>. This charge was quickly dealt with under the first offences act – and Francis was left to move on with his life.

Over the coming years, Francis took part in the Universal Service Scheme of 1911, at the encouragement of his parents. He also gained employment as a prospector. When war broke out in 1914, Francis' first cousin and childhood friend, Lionel George signed up without a moment of hesitation. In 1915, a young Francis convinced his parents that he was indeed fit to join his cousin at war, with letters signed from both Katherine and William dated August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1915<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search* <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

<sup>5</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search* <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

## Enlistment



Francis Townsend before embarking.

Francis signed up for the war in Claremont, Tasmania on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1915. His attestation papers claimed he was 19 and 1 month, 5 foot, 5.5 inches tall, 10 stone 6 pounds in weight, with a fair complexion and light brown hair. Francis also registered as being of a Baptist religious denomination. He also had a distinctive scar near his left knee and another on his right thumb. With all his paperwork signed off, he assigned to the 26<sup>th</sup> battalion.

The Claremont training camp was known by locals as the ‘tent city’, and provided soldiers with the opportunity to train, launder and attend the dentist, hairdressers, bathe, and use the post office. The self-sufficiency of the camp meant that soldiers could focus on mastery of skills, such as using the bayonet and how to operate in realistic dugouts and trenches without being compromised by the presence of the general population<sup>6</sup>.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Francis boarded the HMAT Ulysses with the 6<sup>th</sup> reinforcements. During the next 4-week voyage, it was likely that Francis participated in on board activities, such as drills, organised sports, and concerts. Francis disembarked in Zeitoun, Egypt, where he continued to train, before transferring to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion on

---

<sup>6</sup> The Centenary of Anzac (n.d.) *Claremont Training Camp Remembered*  
[https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/grants\\_and\\_programs/centenary\\_of\\_anzac\\_grants\\_program/past\\_projects/claremont\\_training\\_camp\\_walk\\_of\\_remembrance](https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/grants_and_programs/centenary_of_anzac_grants_program/past_projects/claremont_training_camp_walk_of_remembrance) Accessed 11/7/2024

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1916. The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion formed part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade with the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> Battalions<sup>7</sup>. On the April 5<sup>th</sup>, Francis was selected to join British Exploratory Forces, leaving Alexandria for France aboard the ship, *Corsican*.



Above: The patch worn by the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF

Francis arrived in Marseille, then boarded a train which took the troops deeper into France. The journey took hours, and they awoke disappointed that they had passed through Paris in the early hours of the morning. Eventually, they arrived in Godewaersvelde at 3.30am on April 8<sup>th</sup> 1916 after 3 days and nights in the train. From here, the 12th were billeted around Strazale – kilometres from Battalion headquarters with middle-income farmers in a brick or plaster farm-house with gardens and sheds<sup>8</sup>.

Training and inspections were completed during this month. Very early on, the whole battalion attended a lecture on gas, and were promptly instructed to put on their helmets and march through a demonstration trench full of gas – to demonstrate the ill-effects of helmets incorrectly fitted<sup>9</sup>.

By April 20<sup>th</sup>, Francis was moved again with his battalion – towards Sailly, which was only three miles from the front-line trenches. During their time there it was noted that enemy aircraft were constantly flying overhead, making training outside during the day dangerous. Due to this and the proximity to the frontline, lectures took place under the cover of trees and platoons trained individually.<sup>10</sup>

## The Frontline: France and Belgium

It wasn't until May, 1916, that Francis experienced his first taste of the front-line. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, the Quartermaster, Lieut G.P. Potter, issued steel helmets to all troops. While they were originally earmarked as being 'uncomfortable', most soldiers began to find they were good for protection and gathering water for shaving and washing. The 12<sup>th</sup> moved into a support position for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade in the Fleurbaix Sector, where they

---

<sup>7</sup> AWM (2024) *The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion* <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51452> Accessed 24/1/2024

<sup>8</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 169-170

<sup>9</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 171

<sup>10</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 175

stayed for three weeks, experiencing “delightful summer weather”<sup>11</sup> from the safety of their trenches.

On 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1916, the troops became aware of a new goal – they were to help to capture the village of Pozieres, due to its commanding position on the ridge in front of what was the current front-line – and currently holding up allied advances. Within hours, Francis was on his way towards Albert, passing an increasing amount of artillery and ammunition as they moved closer. That night, they were billeted on Bapaume road – where they were subjected to shelling overnight, causing four casualties.<sup>12</sup>

Over the coming days, the battalion was led through old German trenches – complete with electricity. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1916, Francis and his comrades were given full ammunition, a gas helmet, wire cutters, flares, and 24 hours rations... and instructions to attack from the South at a right angle towards Mouquet Farm<sup>13</sup> - a vital target in saving Pozieres from the Germans.

Over the course of the following 24 hours, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion suffered 375 casualties. Those remaining at the end met near Albert at 4am on the 26<sup>th</sup> July, where they were soon joined by another 200 reinforcements. 23,000 Australian casualties were suffered here, with war journalist Charles Bean noting that the soil was, “more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth.”<sup>14</sup> Francis fortunately, was not included in these numbers.

After a 4 week break from the frontline trenches, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion was moved back into the frontline at Mouquet Farm on August 19<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that the Germans had been pushed back. While moving into the trenches the 12<sup>th</sup> came under heavy fire, which lasted until 3am<sup>15</sup>. Francis only stayed in this position for a few days, as on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion was moved back out. By the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1916, they were in Belgium.

With the weather starting to deteriorate, Francis was among those housed in Scottish Lines – A camp, where they trained in the morning and had football matches of an afternoon. The rain began to come down every day – giving Francis a look into the future of a Winter on the front-line.

By November, Francis was in Bernafay Wood where living conditions were described as “extreme discomfort in a sea of mud.. and the men remained wet footed for a week or ten days at a time”<sup>16</sup>. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion left here in a day that would remain the worst in their Battalion’s history: it rained from dawn until dusk, and the road travelled was a sea of mud & water varying in depth from two to fifteen inches. When they reached their destination – Switch Trench, they were dismayed, as “the trenches

---

<sup>11</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 184

<sup>12</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 212

<sup>13</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 219

<sup>14</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs (2024) The Anzac legend, DVA Anzac Portal

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/personnel/anzac-legend> Accessed 13/7/2024

<sup>15</sup> Anzac Centenary Victorian Government (n.d.) Pozieres & Mouquet Farm <http://www.archive.vic.gov.au> accessed 29/1/2024

<sup>16</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 248



themselves were from four to six feet deep ... The mud and water in the bottom came well over the boot tops before any traffic had taken place in the trench and rapidly became worse as [their] occupation was prolonged. With the exception of two unfinished dug-outs, there were no shelters or “possies” of any kind”<sup>17</sup>.

December was the most difficult time for anybody on the Western Front: the mud, snow and depressing atmosphere made morale difficult to maintain. It is no surprise that Francis found himself ill and evacuated to hospital on December 29<sup>th</sup><sup>18</sup>. Francis stayed at the Anzac Corps Rest Station until returning to the line on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1917<sup>19</sup>. He returned to impossibly cold weather: sleet, rain and snow every day. It was impossible to train in those conditions – it was so awful that the Divisional Commander authorized a period of three days rest<sup>20</sup>.



Photo: Weary, wet and miserable, Australian troops coming out of the front line for a rest pass along a duckboard track behind Delville Wood, January 1917<sup>21</sup>

As the harsh Winter eased, the routines did not. The familiar routine of time in the line, billets, mud, and additional training. It was relentless due to the sheer amount of rain that has been experienced and the lack of drainage throughout the relatively flat Western Front.

---

<sup>17</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 249

<sup>18</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend* <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

<sup>19</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend* <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

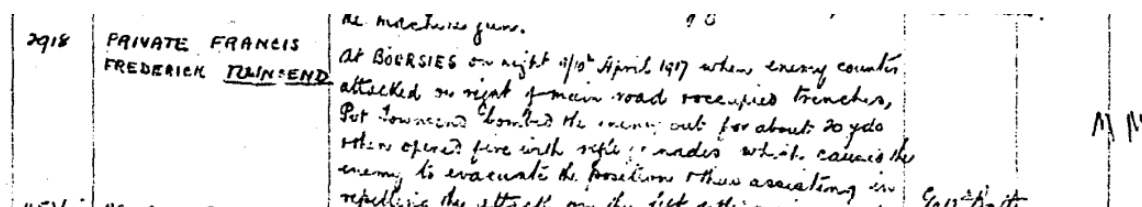
<sup>20</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 272

<sup>21</sup> AWM (2024) A line of Australian soldiers making their way along a duckboard track behind Delville Wood <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E00138> Accessed 11/2/2024

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1917, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion received orders that they were to capture the smaller village of Boursies on the main Bapaume-Cambrai Road<sup>22</sup>. There would have been some nervous excitement in the air, as it was the first time the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been tasked with anything of this magnitude, independent of any other unit.

Over the following 4 days, 70 of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion were killed or missing, and 172 were wounded<sup>23</sup>. But, the mission was declared a success. The mill, 400m from the town itself proved to be useful in gaining vision across the open country. Enemy trenches were captured after heavy machine gun fire.

For his part in the battle, Francis was awarded the Military Medal. Official reports stated that *“at Boursies, on the night 9/10<sup>th</sup> April, when enemy counter attacked on right of main road, Townsend held out for about 20 yards then opened fire with rifle under which cause the enemy to evacuate this position, thus assisting repelling this attack on the left of the main road.”*<sup>24</sup>



Francis' Military Medal Recommendation – 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1917

By this time, the string of vital villages leading up the Hindenburg Line was in allied hands – including Boursies. A young Francis Townsend from Tasmania stood proud and exhausted from his efforts. By April 27<sup>th</sup>, he was back in hospital, eventually diagnosed with influenza at the 56<sup>th</sup> casualty clearing station, where he stayed until May 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>25</sup> He rejoined his unit on May 18<sup>th</sup> where his Military Medal was presented by General Birdwood.

The summer of 1917 ironically was so hot that it was not possible to carry out strenuous training during the middle of the day. Afternoon sports continued and the Australians, now seen as a 100% front-line soldiers, lead in military drills and sporting endeavours. The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in Brigade competitions. It was noted that the health of the Battalion was good during this time too, and leave was granted so soldiers could visit Amiens for a day.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1917, Francis was sent to the 9<sup>th</sup> General Hospital Rouen, where he was diagnosed with a right knee injury. After moving to the 56<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station, he was diagnosed with displaced cartilage in the knee<sup>26</sup>. After treatment, Francis went to

<sup>22</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 302-304

<sup>23</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 311

<sup>24</sup> AWM (2024) Search People, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10224054> Accessed 24/1/2024

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) Record Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

<sup>26</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) Record Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024



the Australian Base Depot on August 4<sup>th</sup>, then later rejoined his unit on September 7<sup>th</sup> in the Ypres salient.

On September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1917, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion moved closer to the front-line, adjacent to Chateau Belge. The next morning they again moved – this time via Shrapnel Corner to Half-way House<sup>27</sup>. Here, the artillery was able to practice and the whole Battalion was accommodated in a deep, but damp dug-out. Here, they were told to rest, in preparation for the next 24 hours. Zero hour was to be 5.40am.

## All Alone

The thick morning mist covered the battlefield as dawn rose. Francis & his comrades had been waiting several hours at this point – half of whom had never been under enemy fire before, due to being new reinforcements. The creeping artillery barrage moved in, allowing the troops to move forward.

For Francis, an immense pain was soon to be felt. His cousin, Corporal Lionel Townsend displayed “great gallantry”<sup>28</sup>, by out-running his section in the advance with another NCO, to hold the Germans at bay from the door of the pillbox, until joined by the remainder of the platoon. He attempted to repeat this action some fifty yards later, only to be killed. His body was never recovered<sup>29</sup>.

This attack and capture of Polygon Wood was considered one of the most successful stunts of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion<sup>30</sup>. For Francis though, it changed his life forever. He left with the whole Brigade on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1917, without his older cousin and all alone, half a world from home.

## The Final Moments

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1917, the battalion left to relieve the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion on Westhoek Ridge<sup>31</sup>, where most of the Battalion could be accommodated in pillboxes. A series of barrages over the proceeding days, meant that they were moved around between there and Anzac Ridge, where drizzly conditions meant that men, including Francis sunk well into the mud and water.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> October 1917, conditions were described by A.L.S Davey, 2<sup>nd</sup>-Lieut of C Company:

*“There was no wire, and no trenches. Three dug-outs were bombed; they were fairly deep underground and had staircases. We captured a machine-gun and its crew of ten men, and bought them back prisoners, one man who was about to fire the gun being*

---

<sup>27</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 363

<sup>28</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 369-370

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search: Lionel Townsend* <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/5/2024

<sup>30</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 375

<sup>31</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 378

shot. The wood appeared to be lightly held, and there was very little resistance. We did not see any concrete pill-boxes.<sup>32</sup>

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, Francis came under tireless fire, trying to protect Broodseinde Ridge at Passchendaele – which gave the allies the ability to look over the whole low-lying country in front – exposing German tracks and roads. He was overheard telling ‘the boys’ he was out for “decoration or death”<sup>33</sup>. During an advance they were held up by enemy fire, so said that he would rush the pillbox from where the fire was coming. One witness stated Francis was shot through the chest, others said through the leg – or maybe both. He was evacuated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Clearing Station with his right leg blown off by gun shots. He died at 5.20am

Francis Frederick Townsend was buried in Lissenthohock Military Cemetery, Belgium<sup>34</sup>.

12th Battn.  
A.I.F.  
TOWNSEND,  
F.F. 2918  
"Died of Wounds 8.10.17."  
We were in a trench in the support line at Passchendaele at midday on Oct 8th. Townsend was a few yards from me, when the same shell which wounded me took his leg off and I heard that he died of his wounds. He belonged to B. Coy, V Pltn. Name Freddy. Short fair, had M.H.  
Informant:- Pte. McCrory, 6843,  
12th Battn, B Coy, V Pltn.  
Dartford,  
A.G. Campbell:  
London,  
9.2.18.  
H.

Records from the Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry which detail the death of Frederick Francis Townsend<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Newton, L.M. (1925) *The Story of the Twelfth*, J. Walch & Sons, pp 382

<sup>33</sup> AWM (2024), People Search: Private Frederick Francis Townsend  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10081075> Accessed 27/1/2024

<sup>34</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend*  
<https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

<sup>35</sup> AWM (2024) People Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10081075> Accessed 27/1/2024

12th Battn.  
A.I.F.

TOWNSEND,  
F.F. 2918

"Died of Wounds 8.10.17."

Re Pte. J.F. Townsend 2918, B.Coy, 12th Battn. Pte. Townsend was hit by a shell and had his legs badly smashed, he was carried away by stretcher bearer Miler of the same company and afterwards died at the dressing station about half a mile in rear, where he was buried by stretcher bearer Miler, he was buried in the field near Zillebeke (in front of Ypres) Pte. Townsend was a short thick set man, fair haired and slightly freckled face, he was hit about 15 yards up the same trench as I was in. Pte. Townsend belonged to Burnie, Tasmania.

Letter from:- I/Cpl. A. Mc Rae,  
B.Coy, 12th Battn A.I.F.  
10.5.18.

London.  
21.3.18.

H.



Photo: Francis' original cross in Lissenthohock Military Cemetery, Belgium.

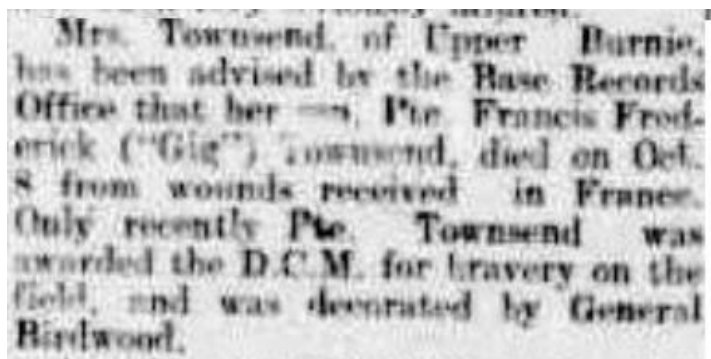
News of Francis' Military Medal was published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette 3 days after Francis was killed (11/10/1917).<sup>36</sup>

His mother, Katherine was posted his effects, including: disk, letters, photos, pipe. Religious book, small photo, wallet, 2 watches, coins, metal cigarette case, mouth organ, medal ribbon, metal brooch, steel mirror, German belt, scissors, badges,

<sup>36</sup> AWM (2024) People Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1526957> Accessed 27/1/2024

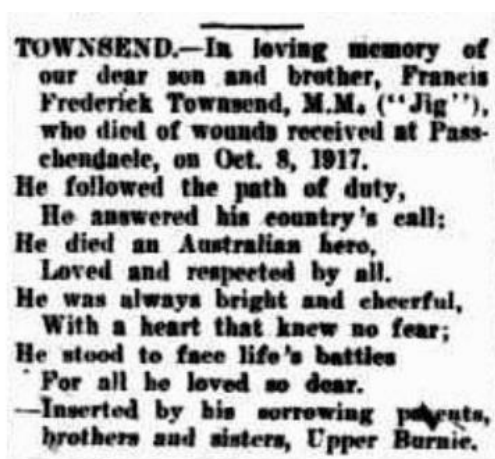
buttons, purse, gold ring, and book of poems among other things<sup>37</sup>. His medals and some postcards also followed in time.

Tasmanian records do not show any listing of Francis Frederick Townsend, however, war records state that he was 18 when he died in 1917. This means that Francis had only been 16 when he enlisted for the war.



Mrs. Townsend, of Upper Burnie, has been advised by the Base Records Office that her son, Pte. Francis Frederick ("Gig") Townsend, died on Oct. 8 from wounds received in France. Only recently Pte. Townsend was awarded the D.C.M. for bravery on the field, and was decorated by General Birdwood.

Article from North Western and Emu Bay Times, Monday 22 October 1917<sup>38</sup>



**TOWNSEND.**—In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Francis Frederick Townsend, M.M. ("Jig"), who died of wounds received at Passchendaele, on Oct. 8, 1917. He followed the path of duty, He answered his country's call; He died an Australian hero, Loved and respected by all. He was always bright and cheerful, With a heart that knew no fear; He stood to face life's battles For all he loved so dear. —Inserted by his sorrowing parents, brothers and sisters, Upper Burnie.

Advocate In Memorial Saturday 8 October 1921<sup>39</sup>

In 1920, the family were asked to shorten the length of his epitaph as it exceeded the amount of characters allocated. They had requested the lyrics to Francis' favourite hymn – Lead Kindly Light.

---

<sup>37</sup> National Archives of Australia (n.d.) *Record Search: Private Francis Frederick Townsend* <https://www.naa.gov.au> Accessed 23/1/2024

<sup>38</sup> TROVE (n.d.) *Newspapers & Gazettes: North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*, Monday 22 October 1917, page 3

<sup>39</sup> TROVE (n.d.) *Newspapers & Gazettes: Advocate*, Saturday 8 October 1921, page 2

Francis' mother Katherine died on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1925 and is buried in the Ridgley Cemetery. As he aged, William worked for his nephew in a cream pasteurising factory. In his final years, he lived in a hut on a property close to Ridgley. At the age of 91, locals would often talk to him when he went to the shops. William died on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1952, aged 92 years and is buried at the Wivenhoe Cemetery, Burnie.



Francis' headstone and grave in Lissenthohock Military Cemetery, Belgium, April 2024



## Memorials:

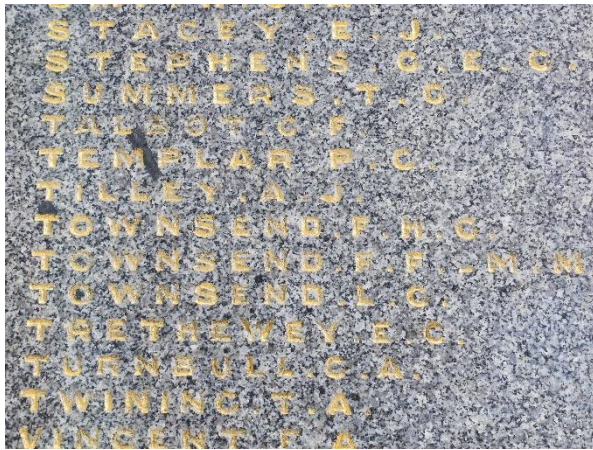


Inscription of Francis Frederick Townsend's name on the Wall of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial. His cousin, Lionel George Townsend, who died at Polygon Wood is also memorialised here.

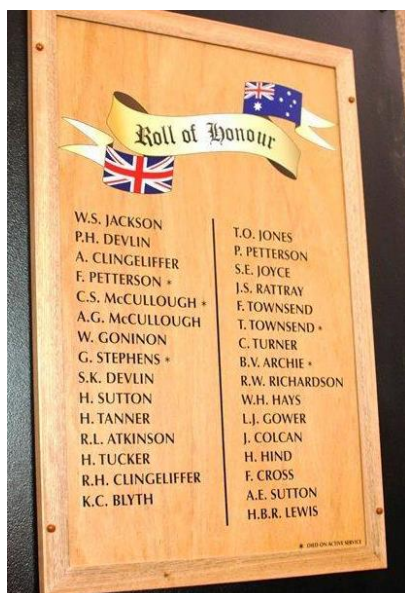


The Burnie Cenotaph





Francis is listed with his cousin, Lionel Townsend on the Burnie Cenotaph.



Francis is remembered on the honour roll at Burnie Baptist Church where he attended with his family.

## A Reflection

Originally, I chose Francis as my soldier because he came from the town close to where I live and where my children go to school. He is also Great and Great-Great Uncle to several of our family friends.

Upon researching Francis' story, learning of his battles, and visiting the Western Front, I recognise that his story was so very familiar to many Australian families. As an educator, using this story to engage my students is a pivotal moment in my teaching. Being able to explain to students that teenagers made sacrifices for people they did not

know on the other side of the world is no longer just a story – but history that was lived by so many; Their stories deserve to be shared.

I will be forever grateful for the stories shared on the Western Front and for the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize for granting me the privilege of hearing them.

