

A Soldier of the Great War

Cecil John Seidner AIF no 3236



Service Number: 3236

Rank: Private

Roll title: 49 Infantry Battalion - 2 to 10
Reinforcements (April 1916 - August 1917)

Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918

Date of embarkation: 23 December 1916

Place of embarkation: Sydney

Ship embarked on: HMAT *Demosthenes*
A64

Cecil John Seidner was born British born 1895. After coming to Australia he grew up in the town of Gayndah Queensland working as a butcher in the town until he enlisted. He had married Lilian Beatrice and decided to enlist at the age of 21 years and 2 months.

On the 26th October 1916 Cecil enlisted in the AIF and became part of the 8th Reinforcements for the 49th Battalion. He embarked overseas on the 22nd December 1916 after a few months training. Arriving finally in Plymouth England on the 3rd March 1917. As part of the 13th training battalion he proceeded to France on the 17th July 1917. From here he joined his unit the 49th Battalion and went to the battlefield.

It was reported to headquarters on the 20th October that he had been killed in action in France on the 11th October.

When Cecil arrived in France in July he was involved in campaigns and action around Ploesteert where his battalion relieved on the Front line and finally by the end of July moved to the Doullien area. Here the battalion rested and trained daily for the next offensive that the commanders were planning. In August they supported the 12th Brigade and supplied working parties and took part in salvage operations in and around the battlefields.. During this time awaiting the call to support offensive actions planned. It had been very dry during August and the battalion had done a great deal of preparation.

By September they had moved to Hazelbrouk and in and around the area of Caestre. Enemy shelling continued during this time and provided for difficult conditions. Finally the battalion moved into the Westoek area and the Menin Rd , not far from Ypres. In late September the allied soldiers moved and took the German line and held it for period of time. The battalion was relieved and rested again and were billeted in Ypres and the surrounding area of Westhoek Ridge. They were soon to be used to reinforce and replace other divisions on the front line.

The Battle of Broodseinde Ridge, fought on 4 October 1917, was the next operation launched by the British Second Army as part of the Third Battle of Ypres after Polygon Wood. In an operation involving twelve divisions advancing on a front of thirteen kilometres, the centre comprised I and II Anzac Corps fighting side by side for the first time. The former had been sideslipped about three kilometres north, so that its front now lay opposite the village of Broodseinde, and I Anzac was brought into the line on its left. Along slightly more than 4.5 kilometres of front there were now four Anzac divisions in line, in order from left to right New Zealand, 3rd, 2nd and 1st Australian. While the New Zealanders faced Abraham Heights, the Australians had as their objective the main ridge which adjoined these at Broodseinde.

Fearing that the fine weather which had accompanied operations over the preceding fortnight might change, preparations for the attack were hurried forward. On the night before the scheduled start, rain began to fall; it was, however, decided to persist with the planned advance. At dawn on the 4th, 40 minutes before the scheduled start-time at 6 a.m., the 1st and 2nd Divisions were suddenly assailed by a mortar barrage which fell on the shell-holes where they were waiting. Although considerable casualties were suffered in this bombardment, the troops could only wait it out.

Precisely at 6 a.m. the British barrage descended, whereupon the Australians rose to their feet and advanced - only to be met by a line of troops from the German 212th Regiment which also jumped to their feet at that moment 30 metres away. These had been in the process of advancing behind their own barrage in an attempt to recapture some of the ground earlier lost. The Germans hesitated momentarily, evidently disconcerted to find themselves confronted by a bigger attack than their own. The Australians opened fire with their Lewis guns and the enemy promptly broke, pursued by the waves of attackers.

Following the usual stiff fighting around pillboxes, the Australians gained all their objectives on the ridge - though at the cost of 6,500 men: the New Zealanders suffered a further 1,700 casualties. Along the whole line the attack had been successful, thereby giving the British their first glimpse of the Flemish lowlands since May 1915.

Where Australians Fought - The Encyclopaedia of Australia's Battles, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, pp. 132-133.

It was after the Battle of Broodseinde that members of the 49th Battalion returned from around Ypres where they had been resting and training and relieved other battalions and heavy bombardment and fighting continued to take place in a number of surrounding areas - Zonnebeke, Polygon Wood and Daisy Woods.

During this time **Cecil Seidner** was to be killed while fighting on or about the 11th October somewhere on the front line. There are claims of him and 5 others being killed while sheltering in a dugout.

He was one of the 40 000 Australians that were to be lost in the battles of that time, some never to be recovered but now remembered on the Menin Gate in Ypres.



Somewhere in these photos of C Company 49th Battalion is 22 year old Cecil Seidner.

He is now remembered on the Menin Gate

SEIDNER, CECIL JOHN

Rank:Private

Service No:3236

Date of Death:11/10/1917

Age:22

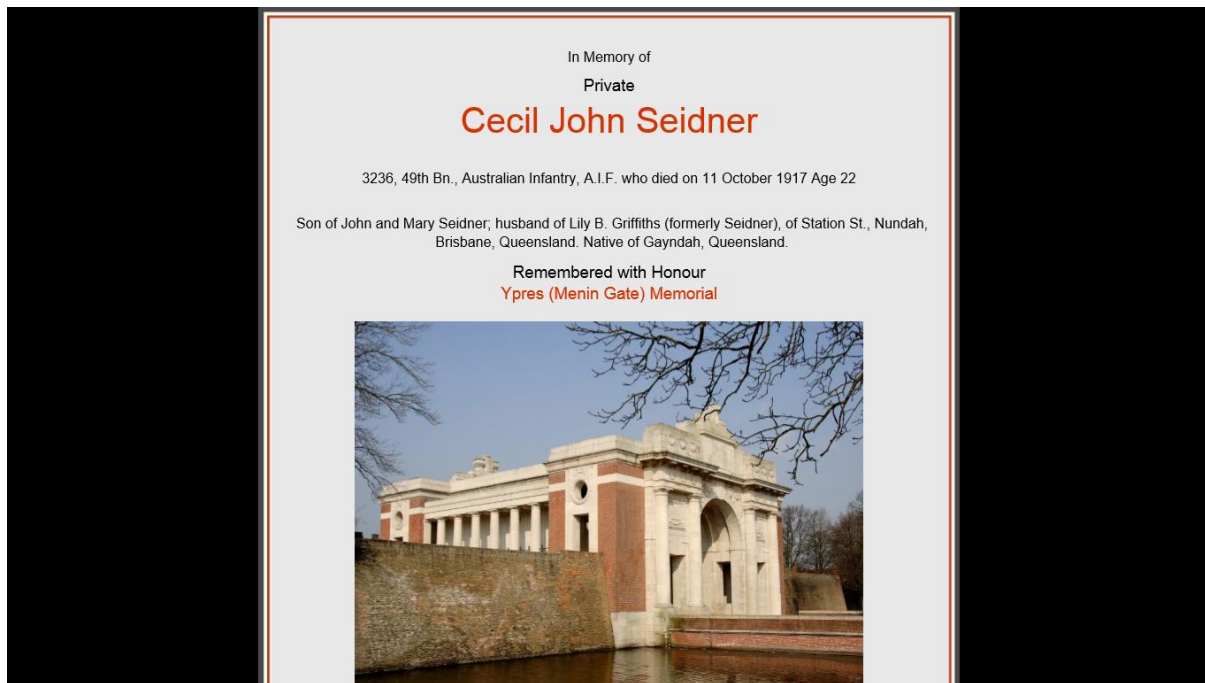
Regiment/Service:Australian Infantry, A.I.F.
49th Bn.

Panel ReferencePanel 7 - 17 - 23 - 25 - 27 - 29 - 31.

MemorialYPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL

Additional Information:

Son of John and Mary Seidner; husband of Lily B. Griffiths (formerly Seidner), of Station St., Nundah, Brisbane, Queensland. Native of Gayndah, Queensland.



Courtesy -Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Red Cross Wounded and missing lists are the only real indication of where he may lie now.

He certainly lies in the Ypres area around Zonnebeke and PolyGon Wood where there was constant fighting during this 3rd battle of Ypres.

26 September 1917 -

The battle of Polygon Wood was the I ANZAC component of a larger British and dominion operation staged as part of the third battle of Ypres. This operation was the second of the "Plumer battles", a series of well-planned, limited advances supported by large volumes of artillery, masterminded by the British general Herbert Plumer. The name "Polygon Wood" derived from a young plantation forest that lay along I ANZAC's axis of advance.

Scheduled to begin on 26 September 1917, the attack was almost derailed by a German attack on the British X Corps to the south of I ANZAC. A day earlier, Australian troops of the 15th Brigade, preparing for their attack, took part in fending off the Germans; however, their advance the next day began with continuing uncertainty as to the security of their flank.

The British and dominion advance began on schedule at 5.50 am on the 26th, with the 4th and 5th Divisions, on the left and right respectively, taking the lead in the I ANZAC sector. The infantry advanced behind a heavy artillery barrage - the noise of

this was compared to a roaring bushfire - and they secured most of their objectives without difficulty. To the south, the 15th Brigade, which after its efforts the previous day had been reinforced by two battalions from the 8th, secured not only its own objectives but those allocated to the neighbouring 98th British Brigade. The Germans launched several counter-attacks but these were thwarted by the heavy defensive artillery barrages used to protect the infantry consolidating on their objectives; this was a feature of the Plumer battles. The battle cost 5,770 Australian casualties.

Courtesy - Australian War Memorial documents

49th Batta.
A.I.F. SEIDNER,
C.F. 3236

"Killed 11.10.17."

I was told by Pte. Jones (49 B. VII M.C.) 1st A.A. Hospital, Herefield, Middlesex, now on leave, that Pte. Seidner, 3236 (49 D) was killed by concussion while we were holding the line on Oct 11th at Ypres. He could probably give all particulars. Ground was held.

Eye-witness:- Jo.
Description: 8th Rfts. Palsbat married, a butcher.
Informant:- Pte. J. Connessy, 3278. (quite intelligent)
49th Batta B Coy. VII Ptn,
3rd Southern General Hospital.
Oxford.

Home address:
Wyambyn.
Beaudesert
Queensland.
H.M. Pickard Cambridge.
7.2.18.

London.
12.3.18.

*Written from 29.5.18
Taken from file after return
"unabridged" B.*

49th Battn. D.Ccy.
A.I.F.

SEIDNER
C.J. 3236.

"Killed in Action" 11-10-17.

I did not actually see him killed, but saw him shortly afterwards. He had been hit by a shell and badly knocked. He had completed a dug out for himself and others. Shell landed in the dug out and this casualty was at Polygon Wood. I knew him well, and there is no other man of same name in company. I cannot give any details of burial nor can I refer to anyone. He was sure to be buried near place of casualty, and grave was sure to have been marked.

Informant:- Pte Hanniford, S. 2154.
D.Cc. 49th Battn.
No 7 A.A.H.
DARTFORD.

W.Cmn.
London.
20-6-18.

B.

Courtesy -Red cross Wounded and missing AWM documents

49th Battn.A.I.F.

3236

SEIDNER C. J.

"Killed 11.10.17."

Ypres near Zonnebeke in support, he was in a dug-out with 6 others I had just left about a second before the shell came and killed them. I went up in the afternoon to bury Powell but did not bury the others, they were buried by the 50th Battn. who relieved us, all in the dug-out were killed except a Cpl. and he was taken away, but I saw shell kill him and two others and stretcher bearers going out. I knew him well, came from Australia together.

Inf. Brown. 3234.

D.P. Dickson,
London.
18.7.18.
N.W.

W. 42.
HAREFIELD.

B.

49th Battalion

The 49th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 27 February 1916 as part of the “doubling” of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 9th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 9th, the 49th was predominantly composed of men from Queensland. The battalion became part of the 13th Brigade of the 4th Australian Division.

Arriving in France on 12 June 1916, the 49th moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 21 June. It fought in its first major battle at Mouquet Farm in August and suffered heavily, particularly in the assault launched on 3 September. The battalion saw out the rest of the year alternating between front-line duty, and training and labouring behind the line. This routine continued through the bleak winter of 1916-17.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, supporting the 13th Brigade’s attack at Noreuil on 2 April. Later in the year, the focus of the AIF’s operations moved to the Ypres sector in Belgium. There the battalion fought in the battle of Messines on 7 June and the battle of Polygon Wood on 26 September. Another winter of trench routine followed.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This occurred in France in late March and the 4th Division moved to defend positions around the Dernancourt on the River Ancre. The 49th Battalion assisted in the repulse of a large German attack on 5 April, launching a critical counter-attack late in the afternoon. The German threat remained until late April, and in the early hours of ANZAC Day 1918 the 49th participated in the now legendary attack to dislodge the enemy from Villers-Bretonneux.

When the Allies launched their own offensive in early August, the 49th Battalion was among the units involved and played an active role until the middle of that month, before moving to duties in the rear area. The battalion was ordered forward for its last major operation of the war in September and provided part of the 4th Division’s reserve for the attack on the Hindenburg “outpost line” on the 18th. The 49th Battalion was disbanded on 9 May 1919.

Colour Patch



Courtesy -Australian War Memorial Battalion Records

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

13706

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 3236

Name { Surname SEIDNER

in full { Christian Name CECIL JOHN.

Unit 26th. REINFORCEMENT,
49th. BATTALION.

Joined on 26th. October, 1916.

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? ... CECIL JOHN SEIDNER.
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? ...
in the Parish of ... in or
near the Town of GAYDAH
in the County of QUEENSLAND.
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? ... 21 yrs. 2 mths..
5. What is your Trade or Calling? ... Butcher.
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? ... No.
7. Are you married? ... Yes. NO CHILDREN.
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address and relationship to be stated) ... (WIFE) MRS. LILY SEIDNER GRIFFITHS
ASPLEY, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND.
REARRIED
from A. Griffiths
21-4-22
10/10/21
from 10/10/21 of Queensland.
9. What is your permanent address in Australia? ... ASPLEY, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND.
from A. Griffiths
Station St. Brisbane
from 10/10/21 of 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 ... No.
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? ... No.
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? ... Yes.
14. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? ... Yes.

I, CECIL JOHN SEIDNER. 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 26th. October, 1916.

X Cecil John Seidner
Signature of person enlisted.

D.540/1.16—C.3297. * 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.

Army Form B. 103. ³⁶¹⁵³ Regimental Number. 3236.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 8/49 Bn

Rank Pte Surname SLIDNER Christian Name Harold John

Religion C of E Age on Enlistment 21 years 2 months

Enlisted (a) 26.10.16 Terms of Service (a) was 24 months Service reckons from (a) 26.10.16

Date of promotion to present rank..... Date of appointment to lance rank.....

Extended (.....) Re-engaged (.....) Qualification (b).....

or Corps Trade and Rate.....

Occupation..... Signature of Officer.....

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B.10, Army Form A. 26, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B.10, Army Form A. 26, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received				
CARD.					
	O.C. Troops	A64 "Demosthenes"	Embarked Sydney	22.12.16. (I.R. 326)	5.3.17.)
			Disembarked Plymouth	3.3.17.	
<u>11.3.17</u>	<u>13th Eng Bn</u>	<u>MPs from Australia</u>	<u>headford</u>	<u>4.3.17</u>	<u>Rep/E.L.R. 582 2/3/17</u>
<u>14.6.17</u>	<u>" " " "</u>	<u>PROCEEDED OVERSEAS, FRANCE.</u>			
	<u>headford</u>	<u>ex 13th Eng Bn.</u>	<u>Southampton</u>	<u>14.6.17</u>	<u>Rep/E.L.R. 583 20/6/17</u>
<u>18/6/17</u>	<u>B.D.</u>	<u>Marched in</u>	<u>Harve</u>	<u>B. 213</u>	<u>18/6/17 259/24</u>
<u>7.7.17</u>	<u>4th I.L.B.D.</u>	<u>Proc: to Join Unit.</u>	<u>3.7.17</u>	<u>"</u>	<u>B. 213 259/27</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>C.O. Bn. 49</u>	<u>Taken on Strength</u>	<u>4.7.17</u>	<u>in the Field</u>	<u>B. 213 20/27 200/27 207/27</u>
<u>20/10/17</u>	<u>C.O. Bn.</u>	<u>Killed in action</u>	<u>In The Field</u>	<u>B. 2</u>	<u>14/10/17 250/25</u>
V.L. 534 19.10.17					
ORIGINAL: Copies forwarded to Defence, Melbourne, and A.I.F.					
11.11.17					
OFFICER: <u>[Signature]</u> LIEUT.					

(a) In the case of a man who has been discharged from the Army, the authority of such re-enlistment or enlistment must be stated.
(b) Signaller, Shipping Office, etc.

P.T.O.

Courtesy- Australian War Memorial Soldier records WW1

Army Form B. 103.

Regimental Number 3236

Casualty Form - Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 49th Battalion A.I.F. (8th Reinf)

Rank Pte Surname SEIDNER Christian Name Cecil John

Religion Age on Enlistment years months

Enlisted (a) 26-10-16 Terms of Service (a) Service reckons from (a) 26-10-16

Date of promotion to present rank Date of appointment to lance rank

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b) or Corps Trade and rate

Occupation Signature of Officer

Report		Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks
Date	From whom received			
	O.C. Troops	A64 "Demosthenes" Embarked	Sydney 22-12-16	(LR326
		Disembarked	Plymouth 3-3-17	5-3-17)
11-3-17	13th Trn Btn	Marched in from Australia	Codford 4-3-17	DO/21E LR582
14-6-17	do	Proceeded O/Seas France	do 14-6-17	DO/39E LR3883
16-6-17	4th A.D.B.D.	Marched in from England	Havre 15-6-17	D59/24
7-7-17	do	Proceeded to join Unit	do 3-7-17	D59/27
7-7-17	C.O. 49th Btn	Taken on strength	Field 4-7-17	D20/27 DO.28 3895
20-10-17	do	Killed in Action	Belgium 11-10-17	D20/42
		VL504	19-10-17	DO.45/5920

Anzac Section
3rd Echelon G.H.Q.
British Expeditionary Force.

W. J. M. J.
Officer i./c Records.

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.

(b) Signatures, Showing Smith, &c.

W. 6648-12765 28/9/17 (4/51) C. P. & S. Ltd., Form B.103 E/1907. P.T.O.

49TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY PRIVATE PRIVATE

PEDDER F. E.	SMITH G. G.
PEEBLES J.	SMITH W. R.
PENROSE R. M.	SPALL A. G.
PHENISTER P. E. H.	SPALL P. C.
PHILIPS R. E.	STAINES C.
POWELL N. D.	TAYLOR G.
PRICE A.	TAYLOR J.
PURTHILL S.	THOMPSON C. F.
QUAILEY G. D.	THOMPSON J. B.
QUINN M. J.	THOMPSON N.
REVELL J. P.	TJOU W. H. T.
RICE W. H.	TWELTREE W.
RILEY S. G.	WILEY C. G.
RIPPS J. C.	WILKINSON E.
SEIDNER C. J.	
SEXTON J. F.	
SHEEHAN W. R.	
SMITH E.	

DRIVER

WILLIAMS H. J.

SERVED AS WHEELER