

A Soldier of the Great War

Edward John Falloon



Edward John Falloon

Service Number: 27

Rank: Company Sergeant Major

Unit: 1st Field Company, Australian Engineers

Service: Australian Army

Conflict / Operation: First World War, 1914-1918

Conflict eligibility date: First World War, 1914-1921

Date of death: 10 April 1918

Place of death: France

Place of association: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Cemetery or memorial details: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers

Portrait of Sergeant (Sgt) Edward John Falloon MM, 2nd Field Company Australian Engineers. An electrician from Richmond, Victoria, Sgt Falloon served on Gallipoli and the Western Front and was awarded the Military Medal twice, first in October 1916 and again in March 1917. He was killed in action at Ploegsteert Wood, Belgium, on 12 April 1918.

From the Thuillier collection of glass plate negatives. Taken by Louis and Antoinette Thuillier in Vignacourt, France during the period 1916 to 1918.

The story of Edward is quite amazing and one Australian Dean Miguel , is trying to locate him.

Red Cross reports have him missing in Belgium with Red Cross Reports showing clearly where he was buried. It was believed that the exact spot was located.

Recently, reports have confirmed that infact Edward was exhumed at a later time located in a nearby cemetery but due to him not being able to be clearly identified , he is in an unknown grave. Records state clearly where the Australian (the only one killed on that day as recorded) lies.

It is strongly believed without any hesitation that Edward(Tiny) Falloon lies here.

The story continues to be told and hopefully soon he will be finally recognised in a marked grave...another brave Australian found and remembered and never to be forgotten.

The latest update from Dean in Belgium , besides the believed grave site.

"Gday Tiny, taken a long time brother but you have not been forgotten by your family, me and your Union. I know who you are and now I know where you lay at rest".

This story could fill a book. The years or research, hope, sadness and expectation. I won't go into it all now as that will be for another day and another forum.

Today Jack and I walked the ground where Tinys Company were sent in to halt the German advance on April 10 1918. Forgive me for not going into all the details of which there is just so much, but Tiny fought in these fields south of Ploegsteert, Belgium and was shot and killed hoping into a trench.

Today we found what was most likely the remains of a trench system right where it should have been facing the German advance and the Ploegsteert village. We could look back over to the 1 Army Troop Company Head Quarters where Tinys mates carried his body and buried it. It all made sense on the ground from a practical and military perspective and in accordance with the details and reports we have. We met the land owners and they loved knowing more about what the old equipment and the depression in the ground that was the old trench. Nice folks and the young man said he could not understand why so many young men came to fight and die here from Australia. I was lost for words too.

In 1921 the remains of an 'unknown Australian soldier' were recovered just where his mates said they buried him in April 1918. He had no means of being identified but there was only one killed. Again, more detail than I have time to write but the man found was no doubt CSM Edward John 'Tiny' Falloon MM and Bar. he was buried at Strand Military Cemetery Section 10, Row P, Plot 2.

He was buried with so many other Aussies in a grave marked only with "An Australian Soldier of the Great War - Known unto God'. Not any more.

To stand at the grave site of a digger that I have looked for for many years and can't even begin to say why was an emotional and satisfying experience. To have my son Jack there with me means it will have significance for another generation.

A Digger, brother, son and proud ETU man will soon have his identity and dignity back and headstone marked in his name. I am totally confident it the comprehensive evidence as it can be no one else.

I won't rest until his grave is marked and I can sit one day with him on my own and leave myself open to the thoughts that may come.

Now off to London to meet with the Commonwealth war Graves Commission to get evidence of who the grave was not if that makes sense. leave it with me, I'll get it done.

Today I walked in the footsteps of my hero and a man I feel I know and consider a mate. I was able to sit with him and tell him he was loved by his family and not forgotten by a country that values the sacrifice of his life. That he will be remembered and soon, his identity will be returned.

For a little while I sat on the ground beside Tiny in the shade of a beautiful tree with the warm summer breeze gently moving the red rose at the base of his headstone. Aussies and Allied soldiers were buried beside him and a few poor German lads over to the side. All united in this terrible sacrifice of a war that should not have been fought.

This isn't all about Tiny Falloon, it's all about remembrance and that the value of a human life is precious no matter who's side they fought on.

Lest we forget.

The Story of One Digger. CSM Edward "Tiny" Falloon....thanks to Dean Mighuel

The world of researching Australian soldiers who fought for our country is a bitter sweet experience full of moments that will capture your imagination and then break your heart. These were just men like us, our sons, fathers and brothers. Their stories are real and so very current.

Although hard to explain, I feel I have become mates with Edward John (Tiny) Falloon, a man who died nearly a hundred years ago. I feel I know him personally after all the time I've spent researching him. I am driven to find Tiny and give him back his identity, dignity and ensure that he is afforded respect from the country for which he laid down his life.

On one level I can identify with Tiny as he was a sparky and an ETU man but he's much more than that to me now. I have through years of research, meeting his family and walking the ground where he fought and died, come to think of him as a mate and one that I can't leave him laying alone in a field in Belgium even after all of these years.

Tiny is a real bugger in some ways as he repeatedly finds ways of reminding me that you just never leave your mates behind. Fellow AIF Engineer who served with Tiny Roy Denning, wrote ANZAC DIGGER which mentions Tiny on several occasions and his photo also turns up amongst the Vignacourt Diggers. I will find him, I must.

Tiny is one of the many missing and finding him may help remind us that some 48,000 Australians died for us in WW1 on the Western Front in France and Belgium. Thousands like Tiny have no

known grave. They have no place marked for us to visit and thank them for giving their lives for our freedom. Every man who died for our country deserves to be recovered, respected, remembered and given their identity.

I've tried to get some important details about Tiny for you to save you time and assist if possible.

He lived at 376 Highett St Richmond and was an electrician and a member of the Electrical Trades Union. He worked as an electrician for the Melbourne City Council.

Here is a link to the Australian War Memorial site Roll of Honour for Tiny Falloon;

He enlisted as soon as possible in 1914. His Regimental number was 27.

RED CROSS REPORT

The Red Cross did their best to assemble a report into the death of every soldier and did a mighty job tracking down those that knew the soldier and in particular, those who were with him when he fell. The Red Cross report for Tiny gives precious details about his burial, see the statement by Sapper Ashman which is very good. Ashman is clear about the burial, the location and also that the grave was unmarked due to the advancing Germans. It is then easy to see why the grave was lost. Add to that the fact that the Germans held that ground until November of that year until the Armistice on Nov 11 1918. The ariel pictures from August 1918 of that site show Tins burial area free from shelling. Ashman also confirms that Falloons men called him "Tiny".

Tiny was their Company Sergeant Major and rose from Private to CSM and served with these boys from Gallipoli to his death in April 1918. They would have done all they could to get his body back and afforded the respect of a burial despite the Germans being so close. Diggers did their best to see their mates buried always.

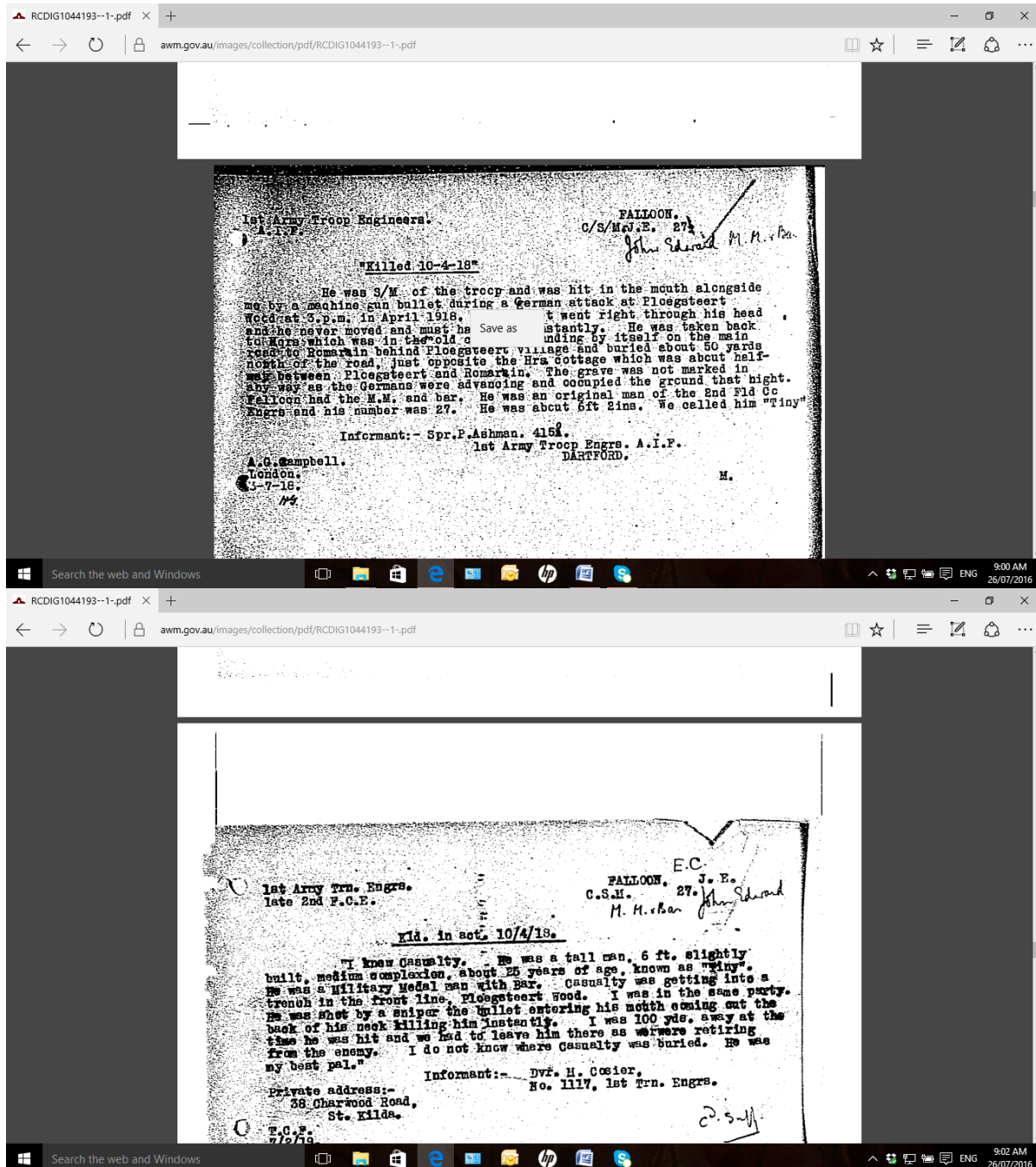
Sapper Buchans has his height at 6' 4" but his records and other accounts have him at 6' 2". Either way, a very big man in 1915 when he enlisted hence, "Tiny" was to be his name. How typically Australian.

His living family have him remembered as a swashbuckling type. I think a fearsome Sergeant Major is apt too! Buchan says they volunteered to hold up the German advance and Tiny was killed instantly.

Lance Corporal French has a different recollection from a second hand account. He discusses Falloons bravery in glowing terms "Falloon was much talked of for the way he fought and gave his life to save others." French also say he was a very big man and we called him Tiny. Note, not Sar Major or addressed by superior rank but by his nickname. This to me shows genuine affection by his men, they would never have left him behind. Private Henkel confirms as much for us again.

Driver Cosier confirms that Tinys personal belongings were gathered. Tinys military records show his dog tags were not with his personal effects, perhaps they are still with him.

Here are just a couple Red Cross reports for Edward John Falloon;



GALLANTRY

Tiny was recommended for his gallantry on no less than four occasions and interestingly no recommendation was made for his actions in which he was killed.

His first recommendation was for outstanding bravery under very heavy shelling at Gallipoli on August 6th 1915. Interestingly, it was the Commanding officer of another Battalion (the 5th) that recognised his bravery. Already promoted to Lance Corporal, Tiny was recommended for the French Croix de Guerre. This never eventuated for reasons not explained. By the recommending officers account he certainly earned it. The award was recommended when Tiny continually assembled barriers under heavy fire to protect Australians soldiers from Turk machine guns.

RCDIG1068468--48-pd x Intercultural Consulting Gro +
awm.gov.au/images/collection/pdf/RCDIG1068468--48-pd

Divnl, Engineers 1st. Australian A. N. Z. A 10th. June 1916

2nd. Field Company. 45 Corporal ~~Edward~~ Alexander ~~SWART~~ Telfer ~~SWART~~
Recommended by Lt. Col. Martyn for conspicuous bravery during the night of the attack on Lone Pine in that he kept his party at work during the whole night under a heavy fire and that by morning communication was established between captured trench and old trench opposite Lone Pine. Mentioned in Despatch from Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B. 23rd of 28th. January 1916. Extract from LONDON GAZETTE.

C.R.E. 1st. Military Medal. Aust. Div.

2nd. Field Company. 27 Corporal Edward John FALLOON
Recommended for the bravery he displayed on the night of August 6th. at Lone Pine. During heavy fire he went out and assisted (having volunteered for the job) the location of passing out communication sap between Lone Pine and Old Trench. Recommended at the same time as Corporal SWART for "Conspicuous gallantry at Lone Pine attack on 6th. August, 1915"

C.R.E. 1st. Military Medal. Aust. Div.

2nd. Field Company. 193 Sergeant Reginald Arthur TITFORD.
Special mention on 13th. July 1915 for conspicuous gallantry between 6th. May 1915 and 28th. June 1915. S.O. 375/15.
Recommended for mention by Company at evacuation at ANZAC.

C.R.E. 1st. Aust. Div. Military Medal.

Sgt. B. Walker Major-General, Commanding 1st. Aust. Division

1364 2/15

Search the web and Windows 9:06 AM 26/07/2016

RCDIG1068468--49-pd x Intercultural Consulting Gro +
awm.gov.au/images/collection/pdf/RCDIG1068468--49-pd

(P 23 21). W 3707-528 5004 7/16 H W V (E 1951) Form W. 3121/4 Army Form W. 3121.

Divisional Engineer Brigade. 1st. Australian Division. 1st. A. & N. Z. Army Corps. 9th. March 1917. Date of Recommendation.

Schedule No. (To be left blank)	Unit	Regt. No.	Rank and Name	Action for which commended	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
	2nd. Field Company. A.E.	27	Sergeant Edward John FALLOON ✓	On 1st. March near LUISSENHOF Farm he was in charge of his section at work on the road. The parties were observed and heavily shelled by the enemy. At the time he was inspecting work done by another section some distance away. He led this section to a deep dugout and observing that his own section was not under adequate cover and knowing of deep dugouts in the vicinity, disregarding his own safety he doubled back over 300 yards of shell-swept area and put his own men under cover.	C.R.E., 1st. Aust. Division.	Bar to Military Medal.	

Lieut. Colonel, C.R.E., 1st. Australian Division.

1364 2/15

Search the web and Windows 9:07 AM 26/07/2016

The battle at Lone Pine of the 6th of August was close, personal and furious. No less than seven Victoria Crosses were awarded. Nothing like it ever happened again in WW1. Tiny Fallon was in the front line sure up the new trenches. Conditions were horrific. The dead and wounded lay everywhere and the shelling and machine gun fire relentless. In this action alone, Tiny Falloon showed his mettle and was again recommended for gallantry a second time.

In further actions on the same night August 6th 1915, Tiny was recommended for the Military Medal for "conspicuous gallantry" at Lone Pine when he volunteered to go out under heavy shell fire and peg

out a communications trench. No doubt he was exposed to enemy fire and this was part of his job and an Engineer.

Now a full Corporal, Tinys was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry for his actions at Pozieres between the 20th and 26th of July 1916. The recommendation for his bravery dated 8th September 1916 noted his courage and devotion to duty under heavy fire and the example and inspiration he set his men.

RCDIG1068524--16-pd x +
awm.gov.au/images/collection/pdf/RCDIG1068524--16-pd

Army Form Wk 3121. 6

1st Australian Divisional Engineers. 1st A & B. E. A. Corps. 2nd August 1916.

Schedule No.	Unit.	Reg'tl No.	Rank and Name.	Action for which recommended.	Recom'd by	Honour or Award.
	1st Field Coy.	26	Corporal Roland KING.	During the operations against POZIERES, from 20th to 26th July, although suffering severely from shell shock he bravely remained with the men under him and did very useful work in directing operations.		Military Medal.
	2nd Field Coy.	27	Corporal Edward John FALCON.	During the operations against POZIERES, from 20th to 26th July showed high courage and devotion to duty and setting an example to the men under him under very heavy shellfire inspired them with great confidence.		Military Medal.
	3rd Field Coy.	582	Corporal Norman Wilfred ALLISON. ✓	During the operations against POZIERES, 20th to 26th July, as a signaller attached to the company he did splendid work and attended the wounded under very heavy shell fire only resting when thoroughly exhausted.		Military Medal.

7/16/16

9:09 AM 26/07/2016

The second award and Tinys fourth recommendation for gallantry, came at a place called Luisenhof Farm near Bapaume on the 1st of March 1917 when Tiny was again awarded the Military Medal referred to as a "bar" to his existing medal. Again, Tinys bravery was not in the act of killing the enemy but in risking his own life to run across 300 yards of heavily shelled ground to lead his men to safety. Such bravery to save his mates would ultimately cost Tiny his life before the war was over. See attached;

Amazingly, there is footage of Australian Engineers at work at the very time Tiny was there on the Bapaume Road. I found this only today. maybe he is one of them?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeoltHbI5xk>

KATE AND THE FIGHT FOR TINYS MILITARY MEDAL

Tiny was awarded his medal personally by General Birdwood in the field and it would have remained with him and no doubt, been amongst his very few personal possessions at the time. We know some of these were recovered and sent back to Australia. More work needs to be done as to whether these effects actually made it back. The Army says the effects went down with the SS Barunga which was torpedoed and sunk, I'm not so sure. However, it is reported that Tinys clasp on his medal broke some time later and it was sent to A H Baldwins in London for repair. I tracked down A H Baldwins and they are still in business today. They disposed of the old uncollected medals well after the war and

have no record of ever receiving Tinys medal (I'll keep looking). Tiny was never to return to London to pick it up, he wasn't alone.

His family was denied his sole possessions and the Medals that signified his outstanding bravery. As we shall see from the Military records of Tiny Falloon, he had a sister Katheryn (Kate) that loved him very much and would take on the Australian Army to get the medals her brother risked his life for.

The link to Tinys Military records at the Natioanl Archives is below. Please note the letters from his sister Kate to the Army and later General Birdwood, requesting a replacement medal. Her passion, grief, frustration and love for her brother are so evident. The line she wrote in her letter to the "Officer in Charge" dated November 10 1919 brought me to tears and still does; " the power of the Defence Department to replace his Military Medal for which he gave his life and which in a very trifling way compensates a mother for the loss of her son". This letter eventually found its way to general Birdwood which also confirms that Birdwood himself presented the medal to Tiny shortly before he died. Then Sir Birdwood personally write to the Army respectfully requesting a replacement medal. Kates love for her brother and her determination combined with Genreal Birdwoods genuine affection for his me saw justice done. leslie Falloon (Tinys niece) has this medal today. Leslie was unaware of the fight by her Auntie Kate to get it. I was unaware of the character of Tinys sister Kate and clearly she and Tiny were both warriors.

The letters in Tinys military records are in no particular order. There are many from Kate Falloon and many replies. The stubbornness of the army is stunning, the determination of Kate awesome and a great read. Tiny suffered from a lot of illness but it never kept him from his mates or the war too long.

In 1965 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, the Australian Government struck a special medal for the original ANZACs who fought at Gallipoli. A letter offering the ANZAC medal to the family of Tiny Falloon never reached the Falloon family due to some error.

On the 24th of may 1967 and forty eight years after the last letter to military authorities Tinys loving sister Kate again requests that her family receive Tinys ANZAC medal .She again prevailed and the memory of the brother she loved so much never left her.

I want to find Tiny for Kate. She would have wanted as much done as possible to ensure her brother was found and given back his identity just as surely as his Military Medal and ANZAC Medal were not forgotten.

LOST DIGGERS OF VIGNACOURT

Typically, Tiny Fallon turned up in a "glass plate" negative amongst the several hundred discovered discovered in an attic of and old farm house in Vignacourt France. of the 450,000 Australian military personel who enlisted in WW1 somehow Tiny had to be one of them, I should have known! The chances that he would be one of the 74 selected by the AWM for display or that I would have done my research, found his family and given a later picture albeit different are thousands to one. What are the odds that I would see the Chanel 7 program and see my mate Tiny. I have attached his Vignacourt photo for you and the one Leslie gave me that "scared the grandchildren".

SUMMARY

Tiny Falloon was a young Australian soldier who volunteered to fight for his country and our way of life. He is typical of the many who died and have no known grave. His gallantry was recognised again and again. many soldiers did gallant things and were never recognised. Some died without firing a shot while others won a VC. If I can find Tiny Falloon and I hope I can, I hope that it raises a conciousness about the Diggers of WW1, the missing and reality that they were then as we are now, someones son, father or brother. Tinys story was to me at first a soldiers story but it changed when I

met Leslie his wonderful niece and found out about his sister Kate and then when I read his service record it became a story about a family.

Somehow I want to find Tiny for Kate and Leslie more than anything else. She would have wanted as much done as possible to ensure her brother was found and given back his identity and respect just as surely as his Military Medal was not forgotten and returned to his family. I want to remind Tinys country that he and his mates must never be forgotten. "Finding Tiny" as I call this mission, is also about recognising the memory of all of our men lost at war and I like to think of it as an act of remembrance for them all.