

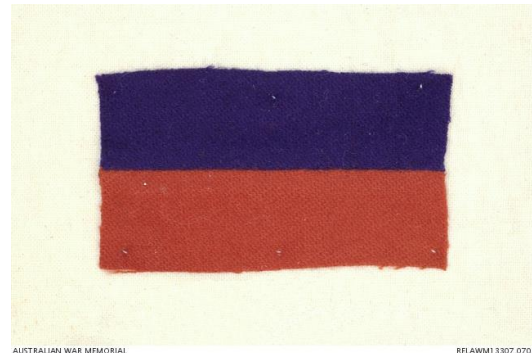


A Soldier of the Great War

Private Frank O'Callaghan

6th Battalion AIF

11th Machine Gun Company

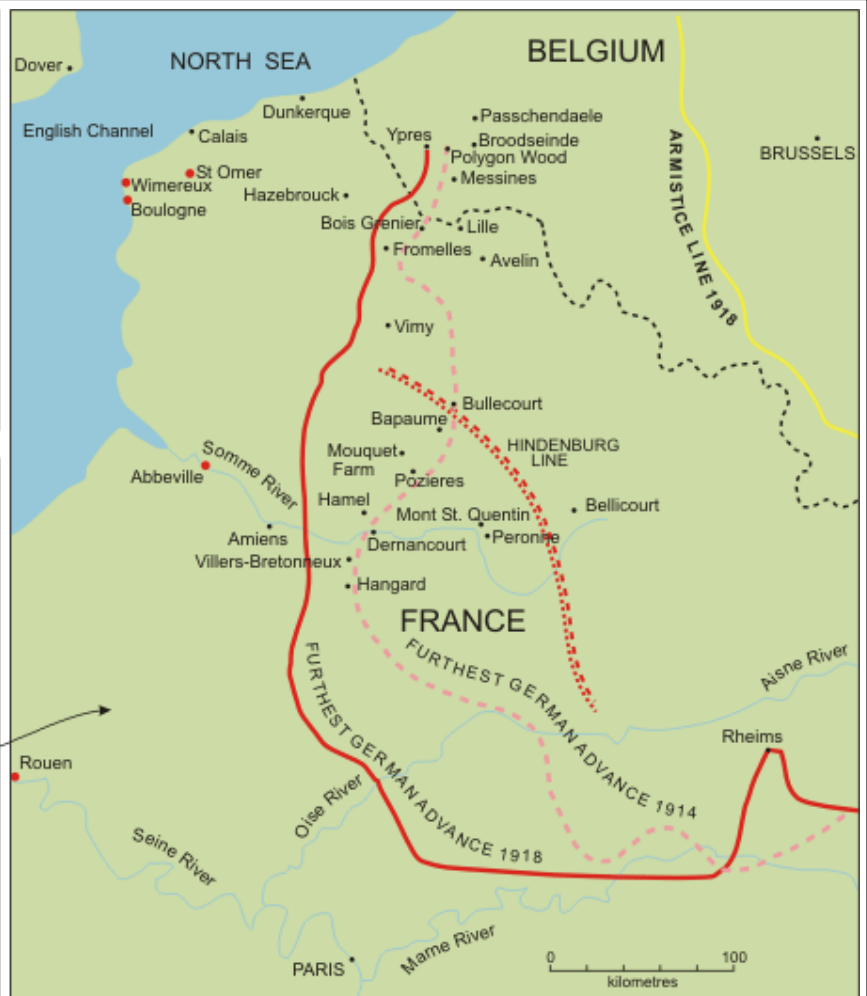


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

RELAWM1 3307.070

Private Frank O'Callaghan

Regimental number	3404
Place of birth	Warracknabeal Victoria
Religion	Roman Catholic
Occupation	Moulder
Address	Ballarat, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	20
Next of kin	Father, T H O'Callaghan, 240 Park Street, Ballarat, Victoria
Enlistment date	8 July 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	6th Battalion, 11th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/23/3
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A71 <i>Nestor</i> on 11 October 1915
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	11th Machine Gun Company
Fate	Killed in Action 29 September 1917
Place of burial	Poperinghe New Military Cemetery (Plot II, Row H, Grave No. 40), Belgium
Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial	179
Medals	Military Medal



Frank O'Callaghan was a 20 year old Moulder from Ballarat in Victoria who enlisted in the AIF on the 8th July 1915. The AIF were still on the Gallipoli peninsula and fighting hand to hand with the Turks. By the time Frank had entered and taken basic training with the 6th Battalion 11th Reinforcements, the Anzacs were about to be evacuated off Gallipoli. The next theatre of battle was to be the Western Front against a well organized German Army. Frank and his battalion left Australian shores on the HMAT A71 Nestor on the 11th October 1915. His first port of call was Tel-el Kabir and Alexandria in Egypt. It was here that the Battalion would be in training and waiting deployment to France. After the evacuation from Gallipoli the Battalions were reorganised. On the 2nd April 1916 he sailed for Marseilles and the Western Front.

The 6th Battalion saw their initial action in the Nursery Sector of Belgium and France as they were prepared for further actions. It was here that the soldiers were given some initiation to trench warfare.

The 6th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 7th and 8th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.

The battalion was raised within a fortnight of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving on 2 December. It later took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915, as part of the second wave. Ten days after the landing, the 2nd Brigade was transferred from ANZAC to Cape Helles to help in the attack on the village of Krithia. The attack captured little ground but cost the brigade almost a third of its strength. The Victorian battalions returned to ANZAC to help defend the beachhead, and in August the 2nd Brigade fought at the battle of Lone Pine. The battalion served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion was heavily involved in operations against the German Army. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley in July 1916. After Pozieres the battalion fought near Ypres, in Flanders, returning to the Somme for winter. In 1917, the battalion participated in the operations that followed-up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and then returned to Belgium to join the great offensive launched to the east of Ypres. During the battle of Menin Road in September 1917, Lieutenant Frederick Birks earned the 6th Battalion's only Victoria Cross. Birks was killed by a shell burst the next day while trying to rescue men buried during a bombardment.

In March and April 1918 the battalion helped stop the German spring offensive and later participated in the Allies' own offensive, launched near Amiens on 8 August 1918. The advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single

day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as "the black day of the German Army in this war".

The battalion continued operations until late September 1918. At 11 am on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. The November armistice was followed by the peace treaty of Versailles signed on 28 June 1919.

Sailly and Fleurbaix were the sectors where the battalion spent the month of April 1916. The Battalion went into reserve near Erquinghem for May and June, alternating in and out of the front lines.

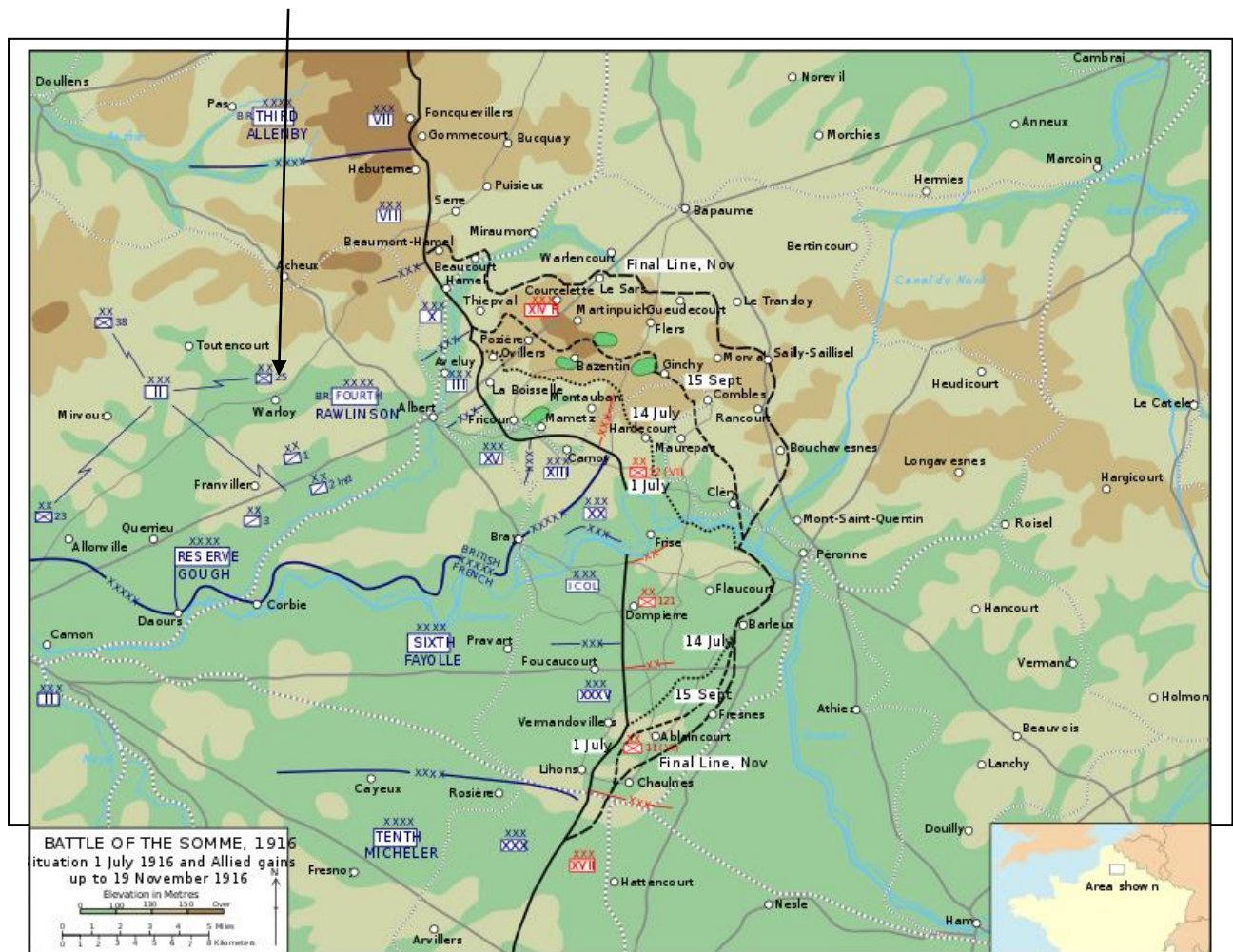
In July, as the Battle of the Somme took place the Battalion was moved south to Doullens and finally engaged at Pozieres on the 25th July 1916. It was here that the horrors of the Western Front were to be realised.

Intended in part to divert the German army's attention from Verdun, the Somme offensive included the fighting around Pozières, which dominated the high ground in the British advance towards Thiepval. There the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Australian divisions wrested a small, devastated area from the enemy, but at a staggering cost. Over 42 days the Australians made as many as 19 attacks against the German positions. The final casualties totalled an appalling 23,000 men killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. The losses sustained throughout that exhausting period were almost unsustainable for a volunteer army.

The high ground at Pozières was an essential advantage, and a place from which further attacks could be launched. The 1st Division was the first to go into the battle, and did so on 23 July 1916. The Australians managed to capture the village of Pozières, whereupon they were subjected to relentless artillery bombardment that reduced the village to rubble and inflicted a heavy toll among the allied troops. The 2nd Division relieved the 1st, and suffered even more losses attacking towards the heights east of the village. The 4th Division then went in, pressing its attack north towards Mouquet Farm and holding off German attempts to retake Pozières. Each of the three Australian divisions, though severely reduced, served a second tour on this notorious battleground.

Frank would have been involved in the Pozieres battles. Then on the 29th July he was admitted to the 2nd Auxiliary Field Ambulance and transferred to a dressing station with "sore Feet" After many weeks in the trenches, Trench feet became a huge problem for all soldiers. He eventually reported to the 1st Anzac Rest Station with blistered feet.

The Anzac Rest stations were well behind the lines and in place to rest soldiers not sick enough for hospitals but needing some break from the front line action. The 1st Anzac Rest station was at Chateau Vadencourt around Warloy.



During the terrible winter of 1916/17 the battlefields were terrible places to be with snow and cold taking its toll also.

In late November Frank was admitted to a New Zealand Hospital station with impetigo and later transferred to the 25th General Hospital at Etaples.

After recovering he marched out again to his unit and proceeded to join the 11th Machine Gun Company where shortly afterwards he was again admitted to hospital sick with scabies.

Finally healthy again, he was able to rejoin his Machine Gun Company in late January.

He proceeded back to Belgium and was engaged in action around Armentieres and Ploegsteert.

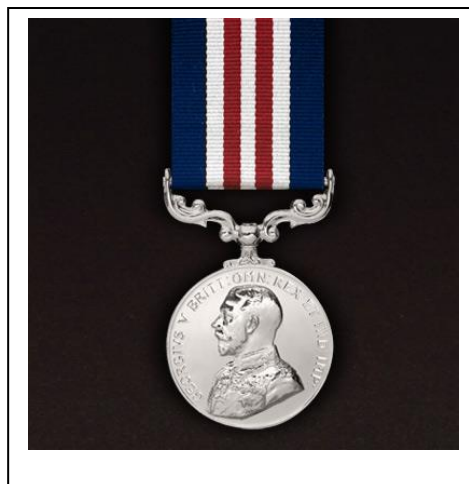
The AIF Machine Gun Companies were formed in February 1916 from the four battalion machine gun sections in each brigade. Each was equipped with 16 Vickers Machine Guns. They bore the same numbers as the brigades of which they were part, and usually had the state affiliation. In 1917, divisional machine gun companies were formed, numbered 21 to 25, where the last digit was the same as the parent division. The four companies in each division were consolidated into machine gun battalions in March 1918.

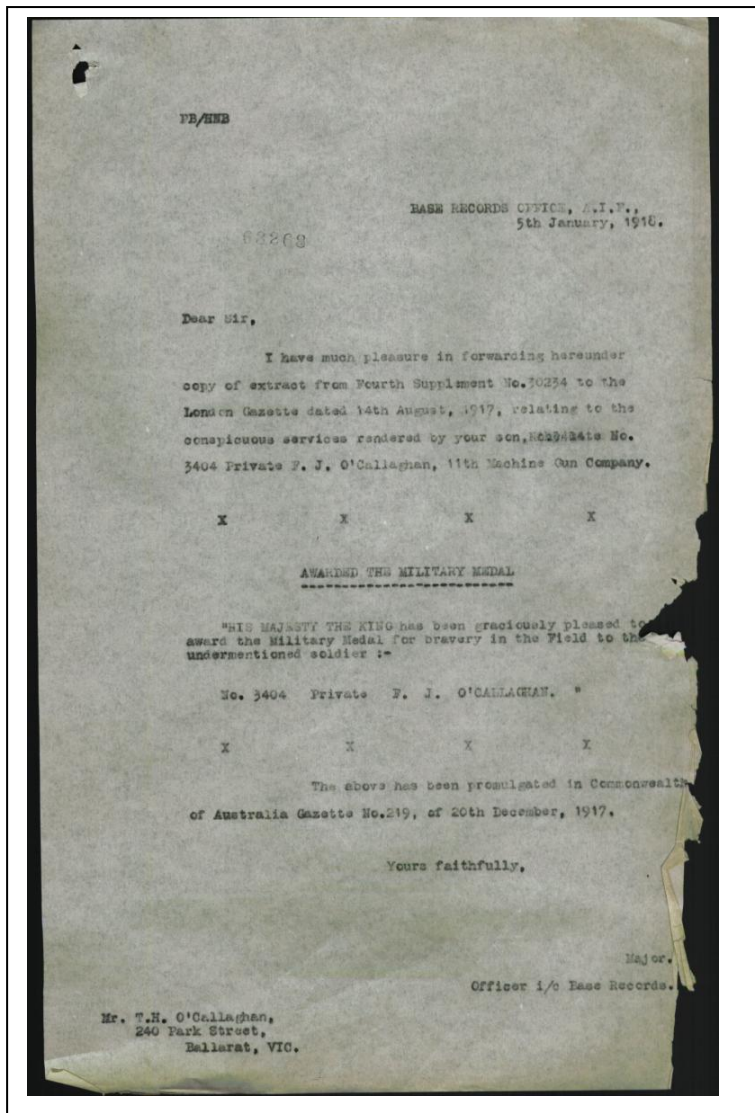
*11th Machine Gun Company (Queensland) [3rd Machine Gun Battalion]
Formed Queensland February 1916 and assigned to 11th Infantry Brigade. Departed Sydney Borda 5 June 1916. Assigned to 3rd Machine Gun Battalion 2 March 1918. 1st Reinforcements departed Sydney Borda 5 June 1916, 2nd Reinforcements departed Melbourne Orontes 16 August 1916, 3rd Reinforcements departed Melbourne Commonwealth 19 September 1916, 4th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Port Lincoln 20 October 1916, 5th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Ulysses 25 October 1916, 6th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Orsova 6 December 1916,, 7th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Ballarat 19 February 1917, 8th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Osterley 14 February 1917, 9th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Ascanius 11 May 1917, 10th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Suevic 21 June 1917, 11th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Suevic 21 June 1917, 12th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Nestor 21 November 1917, 13th Reinforcements departed Melbourne Indarra 26 November 1917.*

Frank and his fellow Machine Gunners carried out regular firing on to the front lines as required and maintained regular trench activities. They moved from area to area as required and attached to various brigades. They often covered attacks with supporting fire. They were in and out of the front line. In May they were briefly billeted in Armentieres. In July and August they were engaged around Messines and preparing for a major offensives

It was during these events that Frank was awarded a Military Medal for his bravery.

He was also reported twice for insubordination for failing to show at roll call in late August and again in early September.





On the 29th September 1917 they were engaged in a major action around Poperinghe.

Major shelling was carried out by the enemy and during this time 9 of the Company were killed along with 45 wounded in action.

Frank was one of the 9 killed in this action.

New Series 2

11th Australian Machine Gun Coy *attached to*

169

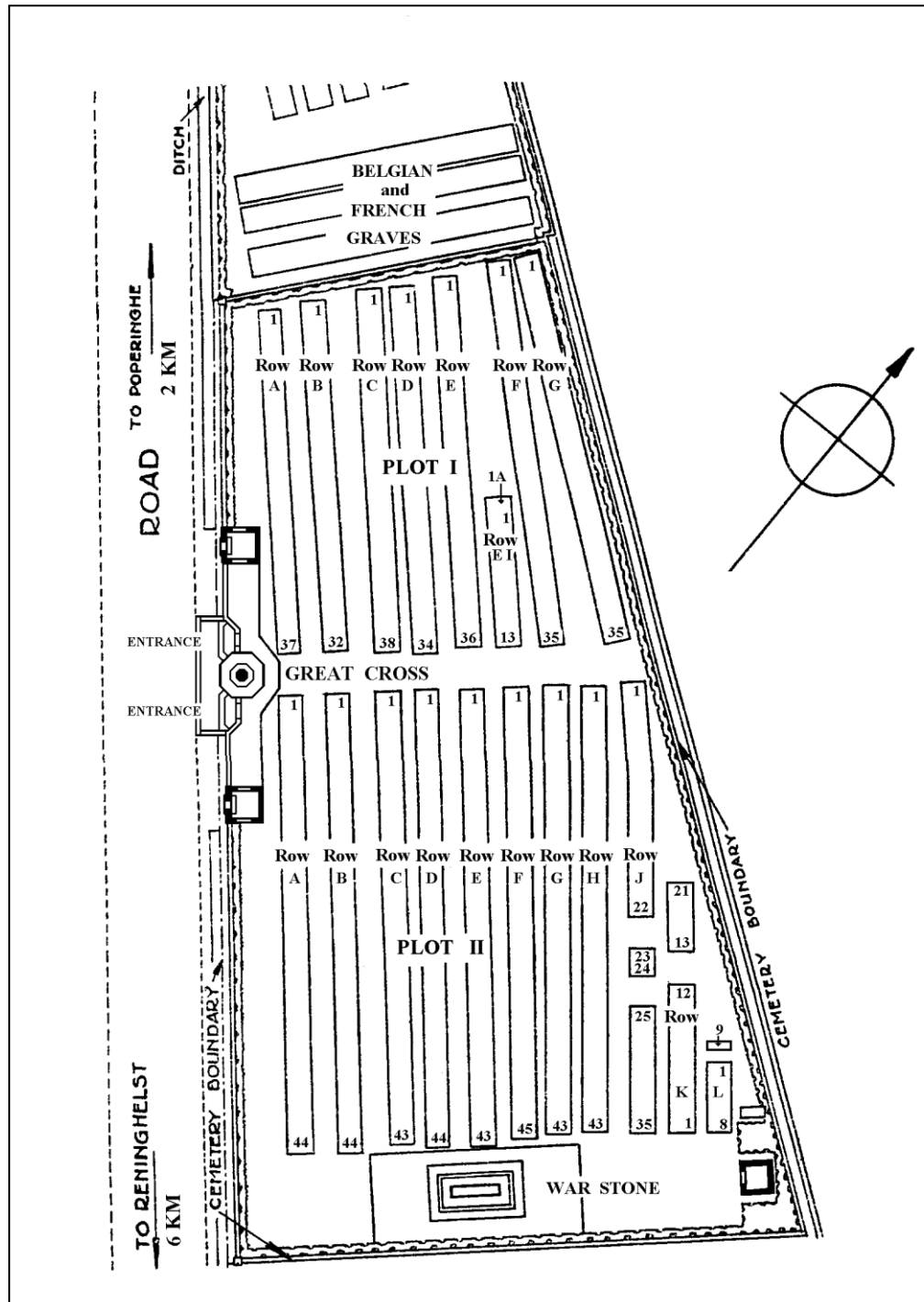
List of casualties incurred at POTERINGHE from enemy bombs 29.9.17

Reg No	Rank	Name	Remarks
3144	Lt/bpl	SCOTT WALTER	Killed
34	"	COX NORMAN VICTOR	"
266	Pte	CARD ALBERT	"
3404	"	O'CALLAGHAN FRANK JOSEPH	"
91	"	LEHANE JOHN JOSEPH	"
328	"	SMITH WILLIAM ALFRED	"
272	"	MORRISON STANLEY ROY	"
322 ^B	"	CLARK GEORGE ARTHUR	"
550	"	MCLEAN THEODORE CARLISLE	"
114	Sgt	NOTT FREDRICK G. N.	Wounded
321 ^A	Pte	CALDWELL MATHEW	"
55	"	FRASER JAMES	"
64	"	GLEN ERNEST KEITH	"
607	"	LOCH ERNEST VINCENT	"
462	"	MURNAME REGINALD BEDE	"
127	"	RUSSELL WALTER JAMES	"
137	"	SLATTER ALEXANDER	"
513	"	MOODY LEONARD	"
516	"	STARR-NOLAN WILLIAM GEORGE	"
440	"	LANGDON WILLIAM HENRY	"
97	Lt/bpl	MCCAUL FREDERICK CHARLES	"
323 ^B	Pte	CAMPEBELL ANDREW	"
267	"	CASEY EDWARD	"
503	"	GUEST HAROLD	"
49	"	DICKENSON CHARLES HENRY	"
55	bpl	HALL THOMAS BOYD	"
442	"	DAWSON LEONARD STUART	"
282	Pte	BARRAUD LESLIE VICTOR	"
274	"	HEMBROW HENRY EDWARD	"
69	"	HOLMES HARRY LESLIE	"
325	"	JENKINS FRANCIS GILBERT	"
265 ^B	"	LEE P. C.	"
474	"	SCHADEL CHARLES CHRISTIAN	"
560	"	STEVENS GEORGE	"
470	"	TRIPCONY VINCENT	"
338	"	WILSON ARTHUR JAMES	"
29	Sgt	CAREY HAROLD EWART	"
489	Pte	BAGLINI ALBERT ORESTE	"
496	"	BRYCE ALEXANDER JAMES	"
269	"	DEW FREDRICK GEORGE	"
237 ^A	"	HOPKINS WALTER	"
347	"	LOVELL EDWARD JOHN	"
374	"	MOORHEAD CYRIL ERIC	"
331	"	SCARF HENRY GEORGE	"
333 ^A	"	TOMPKINS ALFRED GEORGE	"
130	"	RYAN THOMAS	"
234	Lt/bpl	TURTON HERBERT	"
270	Pte	COLEMAN WALTER JAMES	"
61	"	GRIEVESON JOSEPH WILLIAM	"
126	"	RATHBONE ARTHUR	"
14625	"	TIVER CHARLES PRICE	"

Slightly Wounded
detained on Duty.
M. Dayton Capt
Commanding 11th Coy Australian Machine Gun Corps

His final resting place would be close by at-

Poperinghe New Military Cemetery (Plot II, Row H, Grave No. 40), Belgium



POPERINGHE NEW MILITARY CEMETERY

In Memory of

Private

F J O'Callaghan

3404, 11th Coy., Australian Machine Gun Corps who died on 29 September 1917

Remembered with Honour

Poperinghe New Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

