

= 11th Battalion (Australia) =

The 11th Battalion was an Australian Army battalion that was among the first infantry units raised during World War I for the First Australian Imperial Force . It was the first battalion recruited in Western Australia , and following a brief training period in Perth , the battalion sailed to Egypt where it undertook four months of intensive training . In April 1915 it took part in the invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula , landing at Anzac Cove . In August 1915 the battalion was in action in the Battle of Lone Pine . Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli , the battalion returned to Egypt where it was split to help form the 51st Battalion . In March 1916 , the battalion was deployed to the Western Front in France and Belgium where it took part in trench warfare until the end of the war in November 1918 .

The battalion was disbanded in 1919 , but since 1921 has been re @-@ activated and merged several times as a reserve unit , initially as the 11th Battalion (City of Perth Regiment) , which fought a brief campaign against the Japanese on New Britain during World War II . Other units that have maintained the traditions of the original 11th Battalion include the 11th / 44th Battalion (City of Perth Regiment) , ' A ' (City of Perth) Company , 1st Battalion , Royal Western Australia Regiment and the current 11th / 28th Battalion , Royal Western Australia Regiment .

= = World War I = =

= = = Formation = = =

The 11th Battalion was formed on 17 August 1914 , less than two weeks after the declaration of war on 4 August , and was among the first infantry units raised during World War I for the all @-@ volunteer First Australian Imperial Force . Along with the 9th , 10th and 12th Battalions , it formed Colonel Ewen Sinclair @-@ MacLagan 's 3rd Brigade , which was assigned to the 1st Division . The first battalion raised in Western Australia , under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James Lyon @-@ Johnston , the 11th concentrated at Blackboy Hill , Western Australia . Drawing personnel from around the state with the majority coming from Perth and the goldfields , recruits came from all elements of society , with the majority being former labourers and agricultural workers or miners . Seventy @-@ three percent of original enlistments were Australian born , with the remaining recruits being mainly English @-@ born with smaller numbers coming from other parts of the British Isles . By 24 September it had reached its authorised strength of 1 @,@ 023 officers and other ranks . On formation , the battalion consisted of eight rifle companies , designated ' A ' to ' H ' , and a headquarters company with signals , transport , medical and machine @-@ gun sections .

The majority of the battalion 's non @-@ commissioned officers were long @-@ serving Citizens Forces soldiers or Regular personnel . Some had previously fought in South Africa during the Boer War and others had previously served in the British Army . Rudimentary training was undertaken at Bellvue , Western Australia , and at the end of October it sailed from Fremantle on the SS Ascanius and SS Medic . Originally bound for the United Kingdom , where they were to complete training , after stopovers in the Cocos Islands and Colombo , their orders were changed due to concerns about overcrowding in training camps in the United Kingdom and at the start of December , the battalion arrived at Mena Camp in Cairo , Egypt . There , the battalion 's eight companies were reorganised into the four that existed under the British Army establishment and further training was undertaken . The battalion remained in Egypt until early March 1915 when it sailed on SS Suffolk and SS Nizam from Alexandria to the island of Lemnos in the Aegean sea , in preparation for the Landing at Anzac Cove .

= = = Gallipoli = = =

= = = = Landing at Anzac Cove = = = =

On 24 April 1915 , the battalion disembarked from Suffolk and boarded HMS London , which was bound for Gallipoli in the Dardanelles . At 4 : 30 on the morning of 25 April , ' A ' and ' C ' Companies of the battalion landed at Anzac Cove around Ari Burnu Knoll , a mile south of Fisherman 's Hut , on the left flank of the first wave . Under heavy machine @-@ gun and rifle fire , the battalion stormed the cliffs , driving the Turks back . However , the battalion became disorganised during the landing and mixed with other units . Small sections of the battalion were engaged in firefights all along the Australian front . Major Edmund Drake @-@ Brockman , one of the battalion 's senior officers , tried to sort the scattered men into their battalions : 9th on the right , 10th in the middle and 11th on the left . Meanwhile , the second half of the battalion landed further north of the first wave , directly under heavy machine @-@ gun fire from Turks fully prepared and alerted by the first wave .

Over the next few days , the battalion dug in on the first and second ridges under heavy fire from the Turks . Casualties were heavy , but a defensive line was established . On the 30th , the battalion was withdrawn and moved into reserve on the beach . The next day , it reoccupied its section of the front . At this stage , the battalion was 450 @-@ strong . By 1 May , 30 officers and 940 other ranks from the battalion had landed .

= = = = Raid on Gaba Tepe = = = =

On 4 May 1915 , a party of 100 men from the battalion , led by Captain Raymond Leane and a detail of engineers , launched an unsuccessful attack on a Turkish fort at Gaba Tepe , which was being used to observe artillery fire onto Australian positions around Anzac Cove . The Turks opened heavy fire on the party which was forced to withdraw . The Australians lost four killed , including an officer , and 19 others were wounded . The raid was the AIF 's first of the war . At this point , the battalion estimated that it had suffered 38 killed , 200 wounded and 197 missing . On 15 May , the battalion received 244 reinforcements , bringing its total strength to 23 officers and 723 other ranks .

In the early morning on 19 May , Turkish forces launched an attack against the left flank of the Australian lines , which developed into a major battle along the whole Australian front . The attack was repulsed with heavy losses . The 11th Battalion suffered nine killed and eight wounded , mainly from shrapnel . One Turkish officer and five soldiers surrendered . On 21 May , a truce was declared and a burial party from the 12th Battalion was sent out . However , it was fired at by the Turks and as a result burial parties were discontinued . A similar truce was declared on 24 May . A line was drawn halfway between the two lines and each side sent out parties to bury the dead and collect equipment .

= = = = Lone Pine = = = =

On 27 July 1915 , after two weeks in reserve , the battalion relieved the 12th Battalion at Tasmanian Post , on the right on the Australian front line . On 31 July , a party of around 200 men led by Leane were ordered to capture a section of Turkish trenches in front of the battalion 's position . After engineers detonated three mines prepared near Turkish communications trenches , the storming party captured the Turkish trench following a bayonet charge , with the loss of one officer and 36 other ranks killed . Seventy @-@ three other members of the battalion were wounded during the attack , including Leane , who was mentioned in dispatches . Turkish casualties were estimated by the battalion to be 60 killed .

On 6 August , the battalion held off a fierce Turkish counterattack on the trench , which became known as " Leane 's Trench " during the Battle of Lone Pine . Heavy casualties were sustained on both sides . The battalion suffered 41 killed , 94 wounded and 19 missing . By the end of the month , the 11th Battalion 's strength , despite having received six batches of reinforcements , had fallen to just over 500 men , approximately half its authorised strength . The following month , command of the battalion passed to Leane when Lyon @-@ Johnston took over as brigade commander . As the health of the men deteriorated , the battalion 's strength fell further to just over 300 . The arrival of winter in October brought heavy rain and even harsher conditions .

= = = = Withdrawal = = = =

In November , the battalion supported the 5th Light Horse around " Chatham Post " until it was withdrawn , with the 9th Battalion , from Anzac Cove . The withdrawal had been planned for the 14th , but due to bad weather this was delayed until the night of the 16 / 17 November 1915 . From Anzac Cove , it sailed to Lemnos where it recuperated at Sampi Camp , following seven months in the trenches . The battalion 's war diary records particularly bad weather on Lemnos during this period , noting " Mudros seems a most unsuitable place to send troops for a rest " . During this rest period , the battalion reported its first and only case of diphtheria , following which the whole brigade was quarantined . On 17 December , the battalion 's last casualty of the campaign , a soldier named Private Hayes , died from meningitis . The battalion lost a total of 353 men killed during the campaign .

= = = Western Front = = =

In early 1916 , the battalion sailed to Alexandria on the Empress of Britain . From Alexandria , it travelled by train to bivouac at Tall al Kabir . At this time , the battalion received 367 reinforcements from Australia before undertaking defensive duties around Gebel Habieta , guarding the Suez Canal . In February , the AIF was re @-@ organised and expanded . This saw the veteran battalions split to provide cadres for new battalions and as a part of this process , the 15th Battalion provided personnel to the 51st Battalion , by transferring the even numbered sections to the new battalion . At this time , the battalion received four Lewis Guns for organic direct fire support .

On 30 March 1916 , as the AIF 's infantry divisions were transferred to Europe , the battalion sailed from Alexandria aboard the HMT Corsican . It arrived at Marseilles , France , on 5 April and then moved by train to Flêtre where it was billeted until the 19th when it moved to Sailly , where it commemorated Anzac Day on 25 April . In mid @-@ May , after a period of acclimatisation and training to prepare them for the European battlefield , the 11th Battalion moved up to the front line around Petillon in the Fleurbaix sector , with a strength of 27 officers and 929 other ranks . A further draft of reinforcements , totalling 69 men all ranks , arrived on 25 May , and on 30 May the battalion had its first experience of combat on the Western Front . Late that evening , German artillery bombarded the Allied line around the Cordonnerie salient , before infantry launched a raid on the 11th Battalion 's trenches . In the fighting that followed the 11th Battalion lost four men captured , 37 killed and 70 wounded .

= = = = Pozières and Mouquet Farm = = = =

Throughout June , the 11th Battalion was placed in support of the front as it was brought back up to strength . At this time , the battalion 's organic fire support was increased by the addition of two extra Lewis Guns . The following month , they moved to the Somme and were committed to the fighting around Pozières . After arriving at Albert on 19 July amidst a gas attack , the battalion spent the next couple of days preparing to attack , working to improve trenches and cache stores , during which they were subjected to heavy artillery bombardment . The attack was put in just before midnight on 23 July and was a costly success . Amidst heavy casualties , the 11th Battalion took the forward German trenches and amidst the confusion of the fighting advanced beyond their limit of exploitation , entering Pozières and moving beyond where they became embroiled in close quarters fighting . After capturing five artillery pieces , the battalion 's officers and non @-@ commissioned officers eventually managed to regain control of the advance and the battalion was brought back into a defensive line along their first objective . At dawn , patrols from the battalion entered the village again and cleared out the cellars beneath the battered remains of the village 's buildings , capturing over 40 prisoners .

During the night of 24 / 25 July , the Australians attacked again , but after establishing a new defensive line , the 11th was forced to withdraw after suffering heavily from both friendly and enemy

shelling . In the morning of 25 July , further casualties were sustained by German artillery . German infantry then launched a counterattack on the battalion 's right , but the Australians managed to hold their ground . They remained in the line throughout the day , before the 19th Battalion arrived as part of the 5th Brigade 's relief of the 3rd Brigade . Having lost 19 officers and 512 other ranks killed , wounded or missing , the battalion had suffered the most of all the 3rd Brigade 's battalions and was moved back to Berteaucourt to be rebuilt .

After re @-@ organising , in mid @-@ August the 11th Battalion moved to La Boisselle where they were placed into brigade reserve . Just before dawn on 21 August , about 200 men from the 11th took part in an attack around Mouquet Farm ; casualties amounted to 20 killed and 40 wounded and afterwards the battalion was moved to Belgium . The 11th Battalion spent the remainder of 1916 in the Ypres sector , in Flanders , but was moved back to the Somme at the end of the year as the worst winter in 40 years descended on the front .

= = = = Louverval = = = =

In early 1917 , the Germans fell back towards the Hindenburg Line in an effort to shorten their lines and move into prepared positions . As the Allies pursued the withdrawing Germans , in late February the 11th Battalion captured Le Barque , conducting mopping @-@ up operations before advancing to Thillooy where they fought a minor engagement before being relieved by the 3rd Battalion , having lost 12 killed and 30 wounded during the fighting and a further 10 men killed and 13 wounded by artillery . Sickness also took a heavy toll during this time due to the bad weather . In March , Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Rafferty took over as commanding officer and the following month , as the Allied line was pushed further forward towards the Hindenburg Line , the 11th Battalion played a supporting role during the 3rd Brigade 's attack around Boursies , before occupying the front around the village of Louverval . On 15 April 1917 , during the Battle of Lagnicourt , Lieutenant Charles Pope , of ' A ' Company , was in command of an important picket post on the right of the battalion 's positions outside Louverval , with orders to " hold the position at all costs " . The Germans attacked the position with overwhelming numbers and surrounded the post . Having used up their ammunition , the remainder of the post charged with fixed bayonets into the surrounding German positions . Pope 's body was later found with those of his men , having killed 80 Germans . Pope was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross , Australia 's highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy .

= = = = Bullecourt and the Third Battle of Ypres = = = =

In early May , the 11th Battalion moved to Norieul , where they occupied a recently captured portion of the German line . A couple of days later , during the Second Battle of Bullecourt , their position was attacked by German " shock troops " . In response to the attack , supporting artillery was called down , and the attack repulsed . The Germans laid down a heavy bombardment in retaliation . An attack was ordered , but the order was rescinded when the senior officer in the forward trench , Major Aubrey Darnell , expressed concerns about the state of the soldiers in the assault wave . The Germans then put in another attack , which was once again turned back , before the 11th launched a limited counterattack and regained the ground that had been lost . The battalion , having lost 68 men killed , two captured and 140 wounded , was down to a strength of just over 400 men . They were relieved and then moved back to Bapaume , where they received a draft of over 100 reinforcements .

Over the next couple of months , the battalion was rebuilt , reaching a strength of 44 officers and 1 @, @ 002 other ranks by late August . The following month they were committed to the Third Battle of Ypres . Their first attack came around Glencorse Wood on 20 September , during which the 11th Battalion lost 46 killed and 100 wounded , before moving to Westhoek Ridge in early October . Another move saw them transferred to Broodeseinde Ridge , where they conducted a raid on German positions around Celtic Wood on 6 / 7 October in concert with the 12th Battalion . The following day , the 11th Battalion moved to a position on " Anzac Ridge " , before later moving to

Zonnebeke at the end of the month where they suffered heavy casualties from German artillery . Throughout November and the first part of December , the battalion remained out of the line , resting around Bologne , before returning to the front around Messines in late December , remaining there over New Years . The battalion 's strength during this time was 32 officers and 687 other ranks .

= = = German Spring Offensive and the final Hundred Days = = =

In early 1918 , after the capitulation of Tsarist Russia the Germans , having moved the bulk of their forces to the Western Front , launched the Spring Offensive , striking against the British forces in the Somme . The initial onslaught pushed the Allied forces back and the Australian divisions , which had been merged into the Australian Corps , were thrown into the line in an effort to stem the tide . In early March , the 11th Battalion moved to the Hollebeke sector , where they were subjected to gas attacks before being sent south to Amiens at the start of April , joining the rest of the 1st Division in defence of Hazebrouck in the middle of the month . For the next couple of months the battalion rotated through the line in a defensive role as the German offensive was blunted . In June , as the Allies sought to regain some of the initiative , they undertook a series of Peaceful Penetration raids . On 2 June , the 11th Battalion attacked Mont de Merris , which resulted in the capture of a large amount of German equipment and over 200 prisoners for the loss of 16 men killed and 74 wounded . A lesser attack was launched on the German trenches opposite the battalion on 22 June . Around this time , a small group of US soldiers was attached to the 11th Battalion to gain experience . The following month , the battalion captured Gerbedoen Farm before supporting the 10th Battalion 's successful attack on Merris .

On 8 August , the Allies launched their own offensive , known as the Hundred Days Offensive , around Amiens . The 11th Battalion did not take part in the opening phase of the offensive , moving to Hamel and establishing themselves in a defensive position around Harbonnieres . On 10 August , the battalion was committed to a strong attack around Lihons ; although successful , the attack lasted three days and resulted in heavy casualties , including 58 killed and 140 wounded . On the night of 12 / 13 August , the 11th was withdrawn to the support line just behind the front . Later , they were moved to Vaire and then Cerisy , before supporting the 9th and 12th Battalions around Chuignolles and Proyart on 23 August and then around Chuignes and Cappy two days later , where further losses were experienced . The 11th Battalion 's final attack came against the Hindenburg Outpost Line on 18 September when they launched a three @-@ company attack around Fervaque Farm and Carpeza Copse near Villeret . Despite being severely understrength ? each company had an average strength of just 76 men ? they advanced over 3 @,@ 000 yards (2 @,@ 700 m) and took over 120 prisoners and large quantities of German equipment , for the loss of 18 men killed . Further casualties came on 24 October when German aircraft attacked the battalion headquarters , killing a number of officers , including Darnell , who was the acting commanding officer . The heavy casualties that the Australians had suffered during the final year of the war , and the decrease in volunteers arriving from Australia , meant that the battalion was desperately understrength . In October , they were withdrawn from the line for rest and reorganisation , at the insistence of the Australian prime minister , Billy Hughes . At this time , the battalion was reorganised into a two @-@ company structure . In early November , the battalion prepared to return to the front around St. Quentin , but before they could return to the fighting , an armistice came into effect , bringing the war to an end .

By the end of the war , a total of over 9 @,@ 000 men had served in the 11th Battalion , of which 1 @,@ 115 were killed and 2 @,@ 424 wounded . Members of the battalion received the following decorations for their service during the war : one VC , one CB , two CMGs , seven DSOs , one OBE , 30 MCs and one bar , 25 DCMs with one bar , 96 MMs with two bars , three MSMs , 85 MIDs and seven foreign awards . Following the armistice , the 11th Battalion was moved to Chaelet , in Belgium , where the demobilisation process began . The battalion 's personnel were slowly repatriated to Australia , while those that waited undertook training to prepare them for civilian life . On 6 February 1919 , the 11th Battalion was amalgamated with the 12th , to form the 11th / 12th Battalion ; a further amalgamation occurred on 27 March when the 11th / 12th merged with the 9th /

10th Battalion , forming the 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade Battalion . A short time later , the battalion disbanded . The 11th Battalion 's final commanding officer was Major Jack O 'Neil , an original member of the battalion who had been appointed a company sergeant major during the battalion 's formative period at Blackboy Camp .

= = Inter war years and World War II = =

In 1921 , following the conclusion of the demobilisation of the AIF , the government undertook a review of Australia 's military requirements and the part @-@ time military force , the Citizens Forces , was reorganised to perpetuate the numerical designations of the AIF units . As a result , the 11th Battalion was reformed in Perth , drawing personnel and lineage from the 2nd Battalion , 11th Infantry Regiment and the 2nd Battalion , 51st Infantry Regiment . Upon formation , the battalion inherited the battle honour of " South Africa , 1899 ? 1902 " , which it bore for the 1st and 2nd Battalions , West Australian Infantry . In 1927 , territorial designations were introduced and the battalion adopted the title of the " Perth Regiment " ; it was also awarded battle honours for World War I , receiving a total of 23 . Its motto at this time was Vigilans .

Upon establishment , the Citizens Forces units were manned through both voluntary and compulsory service ; but , in 1929 ? 30 , following the election of the Scullin Labor government , the compulsory service scheme was abolished and the Citizens Forces was replaced with an all volunteer " Militia " . As a result of the economic pressures of the Great Depression the number of volunteers fell , and consequently a number of infantry battalions had to be disbanded or amalgamated . The 11th Battalion was one of those amalgamated , being joined with the 16th Battalion in 1930 to become the 11th / 16th Battalion . The two units remained linked until 1 October 1936 , when the 11th Battalion (City of Perth Regiment) was re @-@ formed in its own right , as part of an expansion of the Militia due to concerns about war in Europe .

During World War II , like most Militia units , the 11th Battalion performed garrison duties for most of the war . It stayed in Western Australia , and was assigned to the 4th Division , as part of the 13th Brigade , before later moving to the Northern Territory in 1943 . Later that year , the battalion was gazetted as an AIF battalion , after more than 65 percent of its personnel volunteered to serve outside Australian territory . The battalion , along with the rest of the 13th Brigade , was later transferred to the 5th Division and saw service against the Japanese during 1945 in the New Britain Campaign . Due to the large size of Japanese forces on New Britain , the Australian campaign was focused mainly upon containment . After landing at Jacquinot Bay the battalion was based around the Tol Plantation and conducted patrolling operations to restrict the Japanese to the Gazelle Peninsula . Little contact was made and actual combat was limited ; the battalion 's casualties amounted to three dead and four wounded . Following the end of the war , the 11th Battalion was disbanded on 11 April 1946 .

= = Post World War II = =

In 1948 , Australia 's part @-@ time military force was re @-@ raised in the guise of the Citizens Military Force . At this time , the 11th / 44th Battalion (City of Perth Regiment) was formed . From 1960 , following a reorganisation of the Army that saw the adoption of the Pentropic divisional establishment , the 11th / 44th was reduced to a company @-@ sized element and ' A ' (City of Perth) Company , 1st Battalion , Royal Western Australia Regiment maintained the traditions of the 11th Battalion . The following year , the 11th Battalion was awarded the 15 battle honours that had been earned by the 11th and 2 / 11th Battalions during World War II . A separate 11th Battalion , Royal Western Australia Regiment was reformed in 1966 , being formed through a designation of the 2nd Battalion , Royal Western Australia Regiment . Ten years later , the battalion was reduced to an independent company and in 1987 , the 11th Independent Rifle Company was amalgamated with the 28th Independent Rifle Company to form the current 11th / 28th Battalion , Royal Western Australia Regiment .

= = Alliances = =

The 11th Battalion held the following alliance :

United Kingdom ? Royal Sussex Regiment (approved in 1925) .

= = Battle honours = =

The 11th Battalion received the following battle honours :

Boer War

South Africa , 1899 ? 1902 (inherited) .

World War I

Somme 1916 ? 18 , Pozières , Bullecourt , Ypres 1917 , Menin Road , Polygon Wood , Broodseinde , Poelcappelle , Passchendaele , Lys , Hazebrouck , Amiens , Albert 1918 , Hindenburg Line , Epehy , France and Flanders 1916 ? 1918 , ANZAC , Landing at ANZAC , Defence of ANZAC , Suvla , Sari Bair , Gallipoli 1915 , Egypt 1915 ? 16 .

World War II

North Africa 1940 ? 41 , Bardia 1941 , Capture of Tobruk , Derna , Greece 1941 , Brallos Pass , Crete , Retimo , South @-@ West Pacific 1944 ? 45 , Liberation of Australian New Guinea , Matapau , Abau ? Malin , Wewak , Wirui Mission .