

= John Hines (Australian soldier) =

John " Barney " Hines (1873 ? 1958) was a British @-@ born Australian soldier of World War I , known for his prowess at collecting " souvenirs " from German soldiers . Hines was the subject of a famous photo taken by Frank Hurley that depicted him surrounded by German military equipment and money he had looted during the Battle of Polygon Wood in September 1917 . This image is among the best @-@ known Australian photographs of the war .

Born in Liverpool , England , in 1873 , Hines served in the Royal Navy and King 's Liverpool Regiment , and worked in several occupations . He arrived in Australia shortly before World War I began and volunteered for the Australian Imperial Force in August 1915 . Although discharged due to poor health in early 1916 , he rejoined in August that year and served on the Western Front from March 1917 to mid @-@ 1918 , when he was discharged again for health reasons . During his period in France he proved to be an aggressive soldier , and gained fame for the collection of items that he amassed , but was undisciplined when not in combat and frequently punished . Following World War I , Hines lived in poverty on the outskirts of Sydney until his death in 1958 .

= = Early life = =

Hines was born in Liverpool in 1873 . When he was aged 14 he attempted to join the British Army , but was returned to his mother after she protested . At the age of 16 he successfully enlisted in the Royal Navy but was discharged the next year after contracting malaria .

During the following decades Hines drifted between jobs and countries , including spending three years in the King 's Liverpool Regiment and serving as a guide in the Second Boer War , before arriving in Australia in mid @-@ 1914 . He was a large man and much of his body was covered in tattoos . Hines may also have been illiterate , though he was capable of signing his name .

= = World War I = =

Hines first joined the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 24 August 1915 , falsely claiming to be 28 years of age . In the year before he joined the Army he had worked as a seaman , engineer and shearer . He was discharged from the AIF as medically unfit on 20 January 1916 . On 8 May Hines successfully rejoined the AIF , this time giving an age of 36 years and seven months . By this stage of the war medical requirements were less strict due to the need for reinforcements to make good the AIF 's casualties . Hines was assigned to the 45th Battalion and departed Sydney for Europe onboard HMAT A18 Wiltshire on 22 August 1916 .

After completing training in England , Hines joined the 45th Battalion on the Western Front in March 1917 . In June that year he captured a force of 60 Germans during the Battle of Messines by throwing hand grenades into their pillbox , and was later wounded . He returned to his battalion in time for the Battle of Polygon Wood in September , where Frank Hurley photographed him on 27 September surrounded by the loot he had captured . Hines was an aggressive soldier and it has been claimed that he killed more Germans than any other member of the AIF . Though brave in battle and admired by his fellow soldiers , his behaviour was erratic at times . The wartime commander of the 45th Battalion , Arthur Samuel Allen , described Hines to a journalist in 1938 as " a tower of strength to the battalion ... while he was in the line " .

Hines ' enthusiasm for collecting German military equipment and German soldiers ' personal possessions became well known within and possibly outside of his battalion , and earned him the nickname of " Souvenir King " . Although he collected some items from battlefields at Ypres and the Somme region , most were stolen from German prisoners of war . He kept the items he collected for himself , and there are no records of any being handed over to the Australian War Records Section , the AIF unit responsible for collecting items for later display in Australia . Hines sold some of the items he collected to other soldiers , including for alcohol . The photograph of Hines at the Battle of Polygon Wood was published in late 1917 under the title Wild Eye , the souvenir king and became one of the best @-@ known Australian photographs of the war . Many soldiers identified with Hines

and were amused by his collection of souvenirs . The photograph was used as propaganda , and a false story developed that the German Kaiser Wilhelm II had become enraged after seeing it .

Away from the front line , Hines developed a record of indiscipline . He was court martialled on nine occasions for drunkenness , impeding military police , forging entries in his pay book and being absent without leave . He also claimed to have been caught robbing the strongroom of a bank in Amiens , though this is not recorded in his Army service record . As a result of these convictions , Hines lost several promotions he had earned for his acts of bravery . He was also fined on several occasions , and the resulting need for money may have been one of the factors that motivated his looting . A member of the 3rd Battalion described Hines as " not normally a weak man but rather one ... uncontrolled " . An officer from the 45th Battalion stated after the war that Hines had been " two pains in the neck " .

In mid 1918 Hines was discharged from the AIF as being medically unfit due to hemorrhoid problems . He arrived back in Australia on 19 October 1918 . While his Army service file records that he was lightly wounded on two occasions , Hines later claimed to have been wounded five times .

= = Later years = =

Hines was traumatised by his experiences during World War I. For 40 years afterwards he lived in a humpy made of cloth bags near Mount Druitt on the outskirts of Sydney , and never married . The humpy was surrounded by a fence on which he hung helmets taken from German soldiers ; he became well known to locals , though school children were afraid of him . Hines was unable to find consistent work , and lived on his Army pension as well as income from odd jobs and selling his souvenirs . He gained renewed fame when the photo of him at Polygon Wood was displayed at the temporary Australian War Museum in Sydney (the predecessor of the Australian War Memorial) from 1933 , and several newspapers and magazines aimed at former servicemen published profiles of him . An article in the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia 's magazine *Reveille* in 1934 highlighted Hines ' desperate living conditions and stated that he had been unemployed for four years . Several former soldiers sent money to him in response to this article . Hines ' pension was also doubled , though this income made him ineligible for relief work during the Great Depression . Despite his poverty , Hines travelled to Concord Repatriation Hospital each week to donate a suitcase of vegetables from his garden to the former soldiers being treated there .

Hines told a journalist in June 1939 that he was seeking to join the Militia and hoped to fight in another war . He attempted to enlist in the military during World War II , despite being in his 60s , but was rejected . An article published in *The Nepean Times* during 1943 claimed that Hines had attempted to stow away on a troop ship in 1940 , but was found and sent ashore before the vessel sailed .

On 28 January 1958 , Hines died at Concord Repatriation Hospital aged 84 or 85 . He was buried in Rookwood Cemetery in a grave which was unmarked until 1971 , when the Mount Druitt sub branch of the Returned Services League of Australia paid for a headstone . The Blacktown City Council also renamed the street on which he lived in the suburb of Minchinbury to John Hines Avenue , and a monument commemorating him was built at the nearby Mount Druitt Waterholes Remembrance Garden in 2002 .

A large version of the famous photograph of Hines was accorded a prominent position in the Australian War Memorial 's permanent building in Canberra after it opened in 1941 . The photo was also included in the 2014 redevelopment of the Memorial 's permanent World War I exhibition . In a short biography of Hines published in 2002 , historian Peter Stanley commented that " ' Wild Eye 's ' bravado conceals a deeper pathos " and he " was a man whose skills in fighting were needed and whose knack for souveniring was admired , but he had few gifts that a peaceful society valued " .