



In Memory of
Private
LITTLETON CAMPBELL GROOM

1843, 42nd Bn Australian Infantry, A.I.F.
who died age 28
on 10th June 1917

Son of Frederick William and Fanny Matilda Groom, of "Lorriane," Herries St.,
Toowoomba, Queensland.

Remembered with honour

BETHLEEM FARM EAST CEMETERY, BELGIUM



PRIVATE
LITTLETON CAMPBELL GROOM

42ND BN, AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY
SERVICE NUMBER: 1843



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P03452.027

Littleton Campbell Groom enlisted in Toowoomba on 19 February 1916 two months after his twenty-seventh birthday. He gave his occupation as newspaper reporter and was employed on the family-owned *Toowoomba Chronicle*. After the war his father stated he was the paper's sub-editor. Littleton carried one of the family names, his uncle Littleton Ernest Groom being Member for the Darling Downs (MHR) and a minister in the Federal Government. Following a custom of the time, the name "Littleton" was from his grandmother's maiden name. Littleton junior's parents were Frederick William and Fanny Matilda Groom of Herries Street, Toowoomba. He was born and educated in the city, attending state schools and the Christian Brothers College.

Littleton was of the Church of England religion. He was 5'8" tall, weighed 140 pounds and had a fair complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. After basic training he was posted to the new 42nd Battalion at the Artillery Camp at Enoggera and embarked for overseas service in Brisbane aboard A42 *Boorara* on 10 June 1916.

Littleton continued training in England where the 42nd was based as part of the 3rd Division, the newest and last of five divisions to join the AIF on the Western Front. The 42nd Battalion crossed the English Channel on 25 November and deployed to the quiet sector near Armentieres in northern France. Here the battalion mastered the techniques of trench warfare. The men endured the harshest winter for at least twenty years in the following months, many of them becoming ill. Littleton was stricken with scabies and boils and was hospitalised for several months.

As the summer of 1917 approached the British Army prepared for a major offensive in Belgium. One of the greatest trials of the war for the front-line men was about to unfold in the mud of Flanders. The initial blow was made by ANZAC troops at Messines Ridge on 7 June. The battle opened with the explosion of enormous mines under the German trenches on the Ridge. The explosion was heard in London and possibly Dublin. The 3rd Division took its objectives and held on for several days of severe German counter-attacks. On 10 June Littleton Groom was killed in action. The Australians held the ground and Littleton's body was recovered and later buried at the Bethlehem Farm East Cemetery nearby (grave A.15).

In the early 1920s Fanny Groom signed the receipts for her son's medals and symbols of commemoration issued by the government. Littleton was 28 years old when he died. His brother Colin was killed in March 1917; two cousins also died. These were the four grandsons of William Groom commemorated by a special stone at his grave in Toowoomba.

Toowoomba Grammar School Archives Records indicate that Littleton was never a student at the school. In John Winn's book on the History of the Cadet Unit, he refers to Littleton being a staff member. Records held at the school do not confirm this statement. However, Littleton's uncle Sir Littleton Ernest Groom was a student at the school (1879 – 1885). The School Magazine dated May 1917 reports that at the official launch of the World War One Honour Roll, *The Honorable L. E Groom head of the school in 1883 then*

delivered a powerfully eloquent oration. Littleton Campbell Groom's father, Frederick William Groom was a student at the school in 1877. The School Magazine dated November 1917 states, '*GROOM, LITTLETON CAMPBELL-Son of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Groom, of Toowoomba-At School 1905-6. Killed in action in France, June 10th, 1917. Age 28.*'

As Littleton Campbell Groom is mentioned on the Honour Board for World War One, we have included him in our roll.

External Links:

[National Archives of Australia Military Records](#)

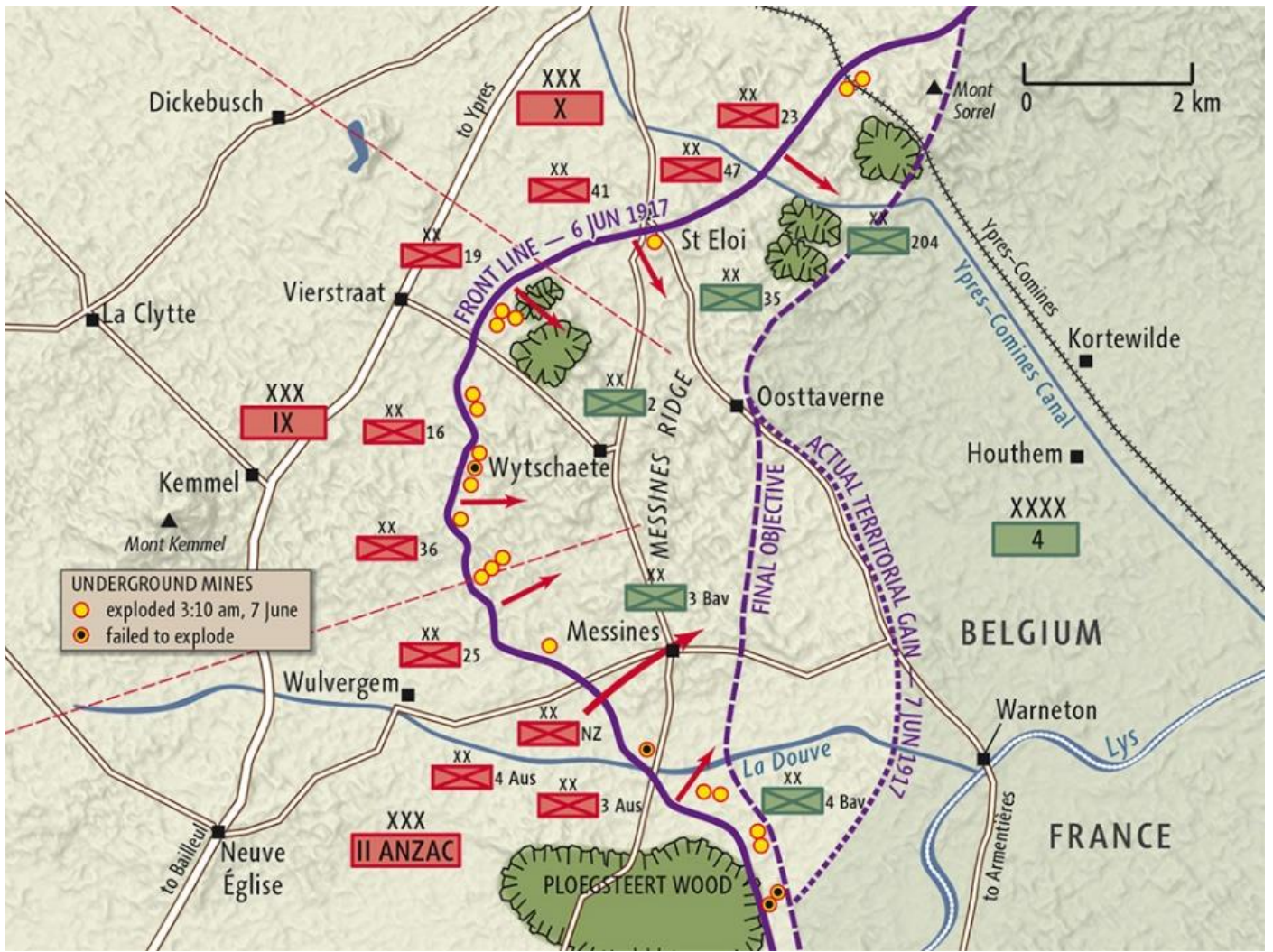
[CWGC](#)

[Australian War Memorial Honour Roll](#)

[AWM4 AIF unit war diaries 1914-18 war 23/59/8 42nd BN June 1917](#)



42nd Battalion in the field, AWM



Map of the Battle of Messines, 7 June 1917



Littleton Campbell Groom's Headstone at Bethlem Farm East Cemetery, Belgium taken in 2015