

THE SUPERB POSTHUMOUS 'AMIENS 1918' M.M. AWARDED TO AN NCO, 19TH BATTALION, AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY, WHO WAS NO LESS THAN FOUR TIMES WOUNDED, INCLUDING AT GALLIPOLI AND POZIÈRES AND IN ACTION AT THE TIME OF EARNING HIS DECORATION BEING FINALLY KILLED SOME TIME LATER.



MILITARY MEDAL, G.V.R. '1149 CPL H. W. BOWEN. 19/AUST.INF.'

M.M. *London Gazette* 14 May 1919. The original recommendation reads:

"During the operations of 11th August 1918, against Raincourt, east of Amiens, this NCO displayed great courage and gallantry in rushing an enemy's sniping position which was causing considerable trouble to troops while digging in on the objective line. Accompanied by Sgt Hall he rushed the enemy post in broad daylight but was severely wounded by a bullet from the post when only about 12 yards away. His comrade was enabled to clear the post killing two of the enemy with a bomb and capturing the remaining three occupants of the post who were wounded."

Herbert William Bowen was born in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia in 1888 and enlisted on 10 March 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force. Posted to the 19th Battalion, Bowen embarked with them on 25 June 1915 for Gallipoli. The battalion landed on 21 August and were immediately thrown into the Battle of Hill 60 and though Bowen appears to have passed through this unscathed, he was wounded on 1 September 1915. A telegraph sent to his wife confirming this notes that it was not reported to be a serious wound and he was not evacuated from ANZAC

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hill_60_\(Gallipoli\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hill_60_(Gallipoli))

Having been evacuated from the Peninsula and after a brief spell in Egypt, the Battalion was posted to the B.E.F. in France on 18 March 1916. They were soon in action during the Battle of the Somme at the bloodily contested front of Pozières, here the Australian 1st Division suffered over 5,000 casualties before eventually being relieved. Bowen was wounded for a 2nd time here, on 28 July, suffering multiple gunshot wounds and being treated at the 44th Casualty Clearing Station before hospitalization.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Pozi%C3%A8res

Rejoining his unit on 9 April 1917 after an extended rehabilitation in England he served without incident for the rest of the year during which time the Battalion saw action at Bullecourt and Passchendaele. In the effort to resist the German Spring Offensive however he was again on the frontline and was gassed on 28 May 1918, necessitating another recovery process.



Corporal Bowen, 19th Batt; Corporal Neagle, 20th Batt; Sergeant Nunn, 20th Batt; Sergeant Birtles 19th Batt

Finally returning to his unit on 13 July 1918 Bowen joined the action on 11 August 1918 during the Battle of Amiens and it was performing his act of gallantry that he was again wounded for the 4th time. The witness statement of Private H. S. Doohan, quoted in his service papers and Red Cross file, gives further details, stating:

'I saw Cpl. Bowen. D. Company. after he was wounded (think arm) at Framerville about 5 or 6 a.m. I was a runner and was going up to the position when I saw him. He called out as he passed me on his way back to R.A.P. He was a walking case. I did not see anything more of him. He had to go through the orchard to get to the Aid post and the shelling was very heavy. Bowen was big, broad, fair, reddish complexion, about 33 years.'

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Amiens_\(1918\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Amiens_(1918))

Bowen is commemorated upon the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

Bowen's service papers have copies of rather poignant correspondence regarding the issuing of his medals. His parents being sent his memorial plaque and scroll, his father wrote asking when they would be sent his M.M. and campaign medals which they wished to have as a keepsake of their son. However apparently unknown by his parents, in 1917, Bowen had married an English girl whilst recuperating from his wounds in England and were told the campaign medals had to be sent to her in England but the issuing authorities did not have her address.. Asking the parents if they knew where to contact them, Bowen's father replied that they didn't even know she existed. After more letters over several months, it seems the wife turned up in Australia but at which point had still not had contact with the parents. It seems despite the parents request, the campaign medals were sent to the wife but its not clear where the M.M. was sent.

19TH BATTALION AIF

The 19th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. A large number of the 19th's original recruits had already served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in the operations to capture German New Guinea in 1914. The 19th left Australia in late June, trained in Egypt from late July until mid-August, and on 21 August landed at ANZAC Cove. At Gallipoli the Battalion participated in the last action of the August Offensive - the attack on Hill 60 - before settling into defensive routine in the trenches. From mid-September, until its withdrawal from the peninsula on the night of 19 December, the 19th Battalion was responsible for the defence of Pope's Hill. After further training in Egypt, the 19th Battalion proceeded to France. It took part in its first major offensive around Pozières between late July and the end of August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division, which included the 5th Brigade, came south again in October. The 19th Battalion attacked near Flers between 14 and 16 November, in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF. In 1917, the 19th was involved in the follow-up of German forces after their retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and was one of four battalions to defeat a counter-stroke by a German force, almost five times as strong, at Lagincourt. The Battalion took part in three major battles before the year was out, second Bullecourt (3 -4 May) in France, and Menin Road (20-22 September) and Poelcappelle (9-10 October) in Belgium. On 10 October 1918 the 19th Battalion was disbanded to reinforce other battalions in the brigade.



Condition GVF. Sold together with a large amount of research including service papers, Red Cross enquiry and other research. Sold at Colonial Coins Auction 2009 for \$3961 AUS; listing and receipts with research.

A really superb Australian M.M. to an original 19th Battalion man who was wounded multiple times before being killed.