



Passchendaele

PHOTOGRAPHY AND
THE MOVING IMAGE
IN BATTLE



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Passchendaele: photography and the moving image in battle

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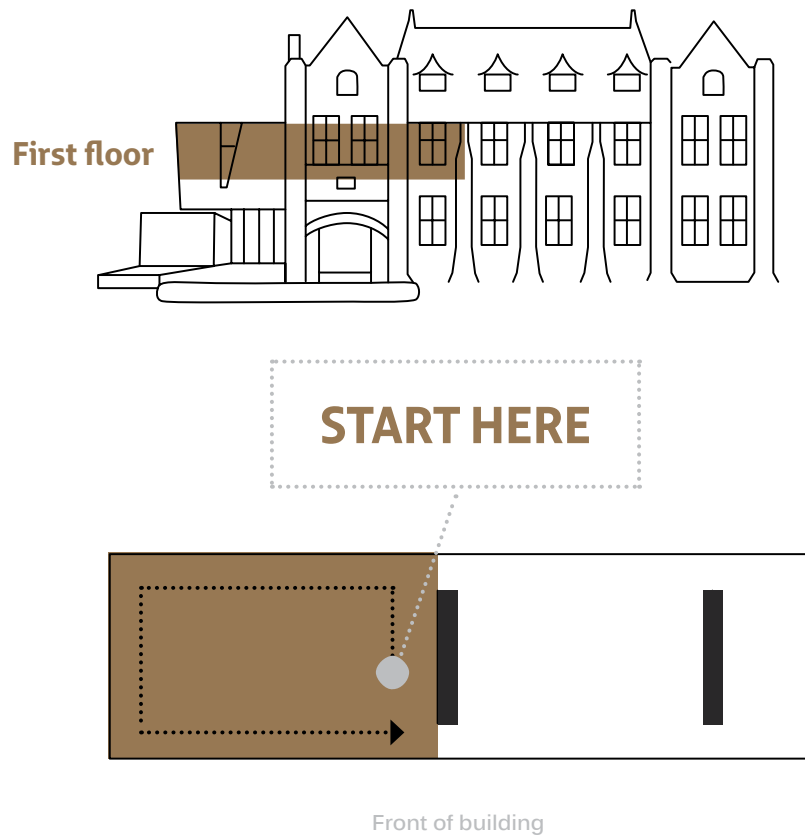
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Passchendaele





Passchendaele

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Hubert Wilkins and William Joyce (left) standing with tripod and camera on a British Mark V tank, 4 October 1918

digital reproduction, AWM E03915

Wilkins used tanks to provide height and perspective for his photographs. According to Bean, in September 1917, Wilkins was standing on a tank in order to photograph a shell bursting during the Battle of Polygon Wood. Wilkins was knocked off the tank when a shell burst beneath it, losing 'two fine [photographic glass] plates'.

This photograph and the replica camera on display hint at the challenges facing the official war photographers. Their equipment was bulky and awkward. Being at the front was challenging, frightening and dangerous. Finding suitable sites from which to photograph – safely and not so safely – required inventiveness.

A replica Thornton-Pickard 1.2 plate camera and tripod

on loan from the Australian War Memorial, PROP03103.001 Camera, PROP03103.003 Tripod

This is a replica of the type of camera and tripod used by the official Australian war photographers.

It was designed for outdoor use and was made from high quality wood with brass fittings in order to make it robust. The camera could also be folded and packed away into a carrying case. However, it was still a very heavy and cumbersome piece of equipment to carry, especially when accompanied by the wooden tripod, glass plates and all the other accessories. It was even more challenging when used in the circumstances that photographers faced on the First World War battlefields.

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Wilson, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P01920.005

Robert Wilson (1884 – 1917) was born in Scotland. In 1916, he was working as a miner and living in Abermain when he enlisted. He was killed in action at Passchendaele on 13 October 1917.

His portrait is from an honour board with images of twenty-five servicemen from Abermain who lost their lives during the First World War. Women of the Abermain Comforts Fund presented the honour board to the Abermain RSL.



GALLOWAY STUDIOS

Rupert Milton Cross, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P04709.001

Rupert Cross (1898 – 1917) was one of nineteen recruits accepted into the Australian army at Maitland on 1 February 1916. He was an 18-year-old labourer from Sparkes Creek, via Scone.

He died at Passchendaele on 12 October 1917. As with so many of the men killed at Passchendaele, there are different accounts of his death: 'he was killed by a shell', he 'was shot through the eye', 'he was missing'.

The battle was such a mess that it was almost impossible to know or see what was happening.

CAMERON STUDIO

Russell Stanley Brown, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P06497.001

Russell Brown (1888 – 1918) was a shipping clerk at the Hunter River Steamship Company wharf at Morpeth. He was also an active member of the Maitland Musical Society and, after enlistment in March 1916 and while still in Maitland, sang at entertainment evenings for the military.

He served at Passchendaele and was subsequently promoted to Lieutenant.

His correspondence home includes letters of sympathy to local families whose men had 'made the supreme sacrifice'.

Brown was killed at Morlancourt, France on 8 May 1918. He has no known grave. He was 30 years of age.

CHARLESTON STUDIOS

Clarence Smith Jeffries, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P09373.001

Clarence Jeffries (1894 – 1917) was an only child. He was educated in Newcastle and was then apprenticed as a mining surveyor at the Abermain Collieries, where his father was the general manager.

In 1912, he joined the 14th (Hunter River) Infantry Regiment, Citizens Military Force. He joined the 34th Battalion in July 1916.

Jeffries served at the Battle of Messines, and then at Passchendaele. He died on 12 October 1917. He was 23 years of age. For his actions at Passchendaele, Jeffries was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross.

Jeffries is memorialised through photographs, a park named in his honour, the Abermain Roll of Honour, a library, a memorial wall and much more.

GALLOWAY STUDIOS

Percy Roland Mears, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P04700.002

A number of the young men and women from the extended Mears family served on the Western Front. Among them were Percy Mears (1896 – 1917) and three of his brothers, Edgar, Stanley and William.

Percy was a cleaner living at Branxton when he enlisted in July 1916. In April 1917, he met up with Edgar at the front. Edgar wrote, 'Percy knows what war is like by now, but he looks well.'

Percy died of wounds received at Passchendaele. He was 21 years of age. Stanley was killed in 1918; Edgar and William returned to Australia.

Further details about the Mears family are at Brough House until 28 November 2017.

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Australian artillery limbers loaded with ammunition proceeding along Ypres Road, 25 September 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00829

Silhouettes are a signature feature of a number of iconic photographs of the battles in Flanders. In this example, the men and their horses

appear as cut-outs moving through trees full of foliage. The pictorial narrative veers away from the horrors of war and the aesthetics of the image take over.

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Looking across flooded shell craters to Menin Road through the desolated area beyond Ypres, 28 September 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00844

Horse and motor transport are taking supplies to the fighting troops along the Menin Road. Silhouettes, especially the naked and reflected trees, evoke the devastation of the Ypres landscape. The flooded shell craters in the foreground capture the wet and mud that marked these battlefields.

Hurley described scenes like this with their 'incessant rains and wind, and the roadways quagmires with the grinding of the continuous procession of transport lorries and troops.'



Passchendaele

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

Jack Bowden Pryor, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P11384.001

Jack Pryor (1890 – 1917), like all the men and women who enlisted, left family, friends and a career. This studio portrait of Pryor in civilian clothes is a reminder of the lives left behind.

Jack Pryor was newly married when he enlisted in September 1916. At the time, he was working as a plasterer with the family firm of Pryor and Pender in Maitland. He had trained at Maitland Technical College. He was also a staunch Methodist.

In one of his letters home, Jack Pryor wrote, 'I'm still looking to be back home again some day.'

Jack Pryor was killed at Passchendaele. He was 27 years old. His widow eventually remarried, to another war veteran.

Jack Pryor's personal papers are on display at Brough House until 28 November 2017.

Passchendaele

FRANK HURLEY

Preparing a duckboard track over the muddy waste near Zonnebeke, 5 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00837

Taken the day after the Australian attack on Broodseinde Ridge, the image focuses on the muddy sludge and the need to create walkways across the ground. The two horses in the foreground anchor the composition: they face towards the men. The silhouettes of men carrying the duckboards convey an impression of movement and constant toil.

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

William Wand, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P10080.001

William Wand (1897 – 1917) enlisted at Maitland in March 1916. He was a labourer from Singleton. Wand's paternal grandfather had settled at Wallarobba in the mid-nineteenth century.

During his military service Wand rose through the ranks from private to second lieutenant. He was at the Western Front from November 1916, and was wounded in action three times. The third time was at Passchendaele on 13 October 1917. He died four days later.

In 1918 Wand's sister, Mary, was sent his personal effects. They included:

letters, silk lace handkerchief, 1 fountain pen, 1 hair brush, 1 prayer book, 1 German buckle, buttons, 2 pairs of gloves, 1 pencil case and pencils, 1 belt, 1 razor strop, 1 Sam Browne belt, 1 collar, 1 tie, 1 balaclava cap, 4 pairs of socks, 2 towels, 1 singlet, 1 pair of underpants, 3 handkerchiefs, 2 shirts, 1 S.D. tunic.

In late 1920, the Australian military sent Wand's father photographs of his son's grave in Belgium.

CAMERON STUDIO

Thomas Ernest Sawyer, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P11631.001

Thomas Sawyer (1892 – 1918) came from Bishops Bridge near Maitland. At the time of his enlistment in July 1916, he was working as a shop assistant and was 24 years of age.

He was wounded at Passchendaele, and spent the next six months recovering in England. He returned to the front line in March 1918. Very soon afterwards, he was admitted to hospital with bronchitis. Respiratory diseases, trench foot and infectious illnesses were a part of life in the trenches. It was a body and soul destroying experience.

Sawyer recovered sufficiently to return to the trenches. He was recorded as missing in action on 7 May 1918 at Morlancourt in France.

It was later confirmed that he had been killed in action.

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

David Baker Cooper, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM P11014.001

David Cooper's (1890 – 1917) father and grandfather, both named Thomas Cooper, were building contractors in Maitland. David chose a different career. He was a shop assistant when he enlisted in January 1916.

Cooper, like so many other Australian soldiers, went absent without leave for a short while. This happened when he was training in England. On reaching the Western Front in early 1917, his 'excellent observation work' attracted praise from his commanding officer.

Cooper was killed at Passchendaele on 12 October 1917. He was 27 years old. His brother, Reginald, was killed at Bullecourt, France, in September 1918.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

A working party making their way along duckboard tracks, 12 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01201

These duckboard tracks near Zonnebeke led to a place called 'Tokio Farm'.

HUBERT WILKINS

Laying a mule track along the railway embankment near Zonnebeke, 15 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00982

For the construction of this road, debris from demolished houses was carried in sandbags and used for ballasting and timber was obtained from an old German dump.

The sandbags dominate the foreground of the photograph. The men and the skeletal trees stretch either side of the sandbags disappearing towards a bleak horizon and cloudless sky.



Passchendaele

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

Laying down a mule track, 15 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00979

A mule track is being laid over ground captured by the Australians during the First Battle of Passchendaele. The photograph highlights the mud, the pools of filthy water, and the futile attempts to make the ground passable. Hurley wrote:

The entire country is ploughed into waves of pulverised muddy earth, craters being filled with water, so that it is extremely difficult to move about.

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Roy Loder, 1916

digital reproduction, AWM H06232

Robert Loder (1896 – 1964) was a 19-year-old machinist from West Maitland when he enlisted in December 1915. He spent most of his military service working with machine guns from behind the lines. Even here the gunners were still at great risk.

Loder was wounded and hospitalised a total of five times while on the Western Front.

He was at Passchendaele where, as reported in the diary of the 34th Battalion:

... the machine guns and rifles were in a very bad state. The whole place was a sea of mud which had gradually worked into the parts.

Loder was awarded the Military Medal for bravery. He returned to Australia in June 1919.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

Brigade headquarters, Zonnebeke railway embankment, October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01213

The duckboard track across waterlogged ground leads to a huge fortress-like concrete dugout in the background. This construction was built by the Germans and used as a field hospital. It was then used as Brigade Headquarters by the Australian troops during the fighting towards Passchendaele and was ironically known as 'Ideal House'. Notice the men lined up outside the building.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

The swamps of Zonnebeke on the day of the First Battle of Passchendaele, 12 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01200

Frank Hurley described the land around Zonnebeke as 'a succession of miniature ponds – pitfalls for the unwary, as they are as treacherous [as quicksand].'

The focus on the water pooling in shell craters and the stark remains of trees extending to the far horizon is a powerful visual statement of the impossible terrain.

In the background on the right are the ruins of the Zonnebeke Church.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

Stretcher-bearers with wounded and other troops moving along a duckboard track to the front line, 10 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01123P

This digitally combined composite panorama is made from two separate images that were taken just before the First Battle of Passchendaele.

Frank Hurley commented on the difficulties of taking photographs in



these conditions:

...the mud! Trudge, trudge – sometimes to the knee in sucking, tenacious slime – a fair hell of a job under ordinary conditions, but with a heavy camera up and being shelled... I hardly thought ‘the game worth the candle’.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

Remains of the Zonnebeke church, September 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00834

This composition of a ruined church in a decimated landscape and anchored by low clouds offers, in the words of the Australian War Memorial, ‘a memorial of the great battles fought in this portion of the Ypres salient.’

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

The headquarters of the 3rd Australian Division at Ypres, 21 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01183

The photograph was taken the day before the Canadians relieved the Australian troops. It was from these headquarters that the operations of the Australians at Broodseinde and Passchendaele were directed.

The stark tree silhouettes, damaged building, sandbags, men in waiting and ambulance in the foreground offer a narrative about the destruction and exhaustion caused by this battle.

FRANK HURLEY

Soldiers, mules and carts stopped on a street in the ruined village of Voormezele, August 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E02061

Every soldier is looking at the camera, suggesting that Hurley asked them to stop and pose. The crumbled village buildings provide a graphic setting. Fighting in Flanders invariably meant the destruction of villages, towns, forests and landscape.

In this image Hurley uses a shallow depth of field, with elements in both the foreground and background out of focus. This has the peculiar effect of making the figures appear as if they are miniature scale models.

FRANK HURLEY

Motor and horse transport passing through Vlamertinghe, 2 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00872

This cobbled road from Poperinghe to Ypres was used continuously by motor transport. The photograph illustrates the rule laid down for all roads: the slower vehicles in a single column close to the kerb and the centre free for faster traffic.

Hurley frames the scene by what looks like the remains of a damaged building. He also captures the dust and pollution created by the trucks and, evocatively, places the village buildings as vague shadows in the distance.

CHARLES BEAN

Shell-strafed transport wagons littering the roadside near Zonnebeke, 15 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00984

Charles Bean's passion was to record and collect experiences of the First World War for posterity. He wanted documentary photographs. In this image, his focus is on a road used for moving troops to and from the front. Fatigue parties were continually employed to keep this road clear. It sits as a more flattened, but still muddy surface edged by ruined transport wagons, pools of water and mounds of mud.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

View of the road behind battalion headquarters, 15 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01043

This is the road behind the headquarters of the 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Battalions during the First Battle of Passchendaele. The 33rd Battalion suffered very heavy casualties along this road on the morning of the battle. The sadness of the location is captured through the low and brooding sky, the singular and bedraggled signpost (like a cross), and the waterlogged road.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

Making a road near Zonnebeke Station 15 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01045

Bleak, wet, impossible, impassable, men of the 3rd Australian Division are working on the almost impossible task of creating a road across the sucking mud. The horizon chops the image in half, the blank sky reinforcing the hopelessness of their endeavours.

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Menin Road and the
devastated Chateau Wood
and Bellewaarde Lake,
25 October 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E01238

Destroyed trees, churned ground,
broken transport, a bleak landscape
and, on the thin strip of the Menin
Road, soldiers dragging artillery and
making their way. As Hurley wrote:

*... once this must have been
a glorious spot in summer.
Death alone now dwells here.*

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

George Sanderson, 1915

digital reproduction, original (on shelf
below) on loan from Jan Merrick
(granddaughter of George Sanderson)



Passchendaele

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

George Sanderson, 1916

digital reproduction, Jan Merrick
(granddaughter of George Sanderson)

George Sanderson (1892 – 1963), a
labourer from Thornton, was awarded
the Belgian Croix de Guerre for his
work as a runner at the First Battle of
Passchendaele. The citation reads:

*During the operations
against Passchendaele
on 12th October, 1917,
Pte. Sanderson acted
as Company runner. He
repeatedly carried messages
backwards and forward
under very heavy machine
gun and artillery fire through
very swampy and shell-torn
ground. When food and
ammunition was short, and
difficult to carry forward, he
volunteered to take it up, and
made several trips through
extremely heavy artillery,
machine gun and rifle fire.
His gallantry, initiative and
cheerfulness greatly inspired
the men of his battalion.*

George Sanderson survived the war
and returned to Australia. His daughter
has kept his photograph and medal in
pride of place on her living room wall.

**Military medals awarded to
George Sanderson**

mounted on board with ribbons,
unidentified alloys, ribbon (not original),
15 × 15 cm approx.

1914 - 1918 War Medal, Victory Medal,
and Belgian Croix de Guerre.

**Unofficial Victory
Medal ribbon of 1919**

textile, 1 × 10 cm approx.

Acquired by soldiers prior to the
official Victory Medal becoming
available after 1921.

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

George Sanderson, 1915

vintage photographic paper, 15 × 10 cm

All items on loan from Jan Merrick
(granddaughter of George Sanderson)

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

**Unidentified soldier
in snow, winter 1916/1917**

digital reproduction (original in display
table), AWM PR05502.012

George Simmons sent this
photograph to his wife, Nell.
He wrote on the back:

*Dear Nell, this is one of our chaps
taken in the snow. You will see we
get a bit of it here sometimes. Often
dummy men are made from snow.
George.*

GALLOWAY STUDIOS

**Soldiers in front of a tent,
Rutherford Camp, Maitland,
September – October 1916**

digital reproduction (original in display
table), AWM PR05502.010

George Simmons is standing on the
far left, marked with a cross.

Stamped on the back of the
original print:

*A handsome enlargement of
this picture will cost very little
if procured from the Galloway
Studios, Kurri Kurri and Cessnock.*

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

**George Simmons with fellow
soldiers, winter 1916/1917**

digital reproduction (original in display
table), AWM PR05502.011

George Simmons is standing on the
right. Handwritten on the reverse:

*With best wishes from all,
Con Driscoll, W. Cheetham,
Ted Hodges, George.*

Like Simmons, Cornelius (Con)
Driscoll from West Maitland and
William Cheetham from Adelong
were members of the 35th Battalion, 5th
Reinforcement. Driscoll and Cheetham
returned to Australia after the war.

CAMERON STUDIO
George Simmons, 1916

hand-highlighted black and white photograph, on loan from the Australian War Memorial, P11668.001

This hand-highlighted head-and-shoulders portrait is taken from the full-length studio portrait of George Simmons (see left).

Hand colouring of photographs was very popular prior to the invention of colour photography. Watercolour or dyes such as oil and chalk pastel were applied to heighten the realism of the image. Sometimes, as with this photograph, the image was simply retouched with graphite or black ink.

CAMERON STUDIO
George Simmons, September – October 1916

digital reproduction (original in display table), AWM P07928.001

CAMERON STUDIO
George and Nellie Simmons' children, 1920

digital reproduction (original in display table), AWM P11668.003

From left to right: Jack, Joyce, George.

George Simmons' family, September 1917

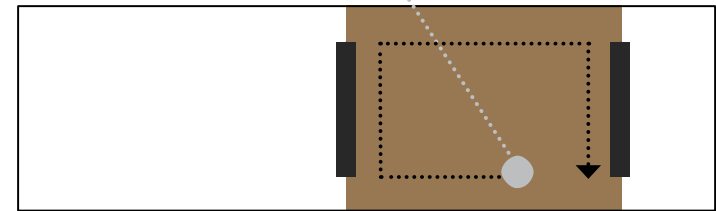
digital reproduction (original in display table), AWM P11668.002

From left to right: Joyce, George, Nellie, Jack. Handwritten on the reverse:

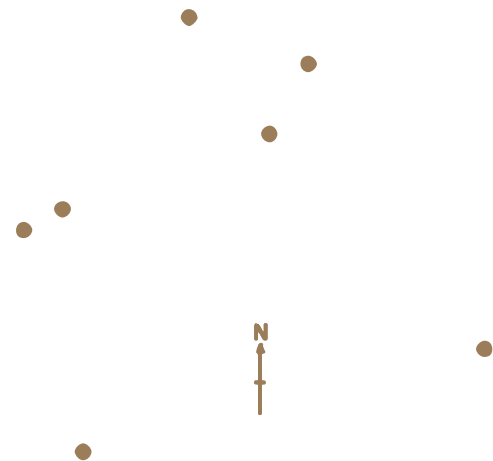
To dear Daddy, from Joyce, Jack, Georgie and Mum. With heaps of love and good wishes for a bright and happy birthday. Baby is 7 months old.



START HERE



Front of building



FRANK HURLEY

A view of cloud effects above the countryside in France, September 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E05430C

FRANK HURLEY

A view of cloud effects above the countryside in France, September 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E05430D

Hurley's portfolio contains many photographs of cloud formations, different views of light in the sky, and landscape and sky delineated by stark horizons. These are evocative, artistic shots. He used and re-used some of these images in composite photographs.

The cloud formation and filtered light in these two photographs anchor the composite photograph *Australian infantry wounded at Zonnebeke Railway Station* (see right).

In the second version of *A view of cloud effects*, Hurley has removed the trees reaching up from the horizon.

Passchendaele

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Australian infantry wounded at a first-aid post near Zonnebeke Railway Station, 12 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01202

This image starkly portrays the aftermath of Passchendaele: wounded soldiers, mud, stripped trees, battle debris. It is used as the foreground for several composite photographs (see right).

FRANK HURLEY

Australian infantry wounded at a first-aid post near Zonnebeke railway station, 12 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01202A

There are at least four extant versions of this composite photograph. It is one of Hurley's most complex composites.

The main source image (see left) is extended to create a vertical format: the horizon is lowered from near the top of the image to half way down (this also provided a clean line for joining two negatives), and cloud formations and sunrays are added.

FRANK HURLEY

The morning after the First Battle of Passchendaele, 12 October 1917

gelatin silver print, 54.2 × 48.6 cm, on loan from the National Library of Australia, PIC FH 10882 LOC H8/14

For an even more dramatic effect, for this version of the composite, Hurley added a startling dark cloud formation ringed by light and sending down strong beams that evoke the rising sun emblem of the Australian Imperial Forces.

UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

Untitled, c1920

colour-toned black and white print; 79.7 × 66.4cm, on loan from the Australian War Memorial, P05464.001

This hand-finished work, by an unknown artist, has similarities to Hurley's composites (see left). Its history illustrates the role photographs play in remembering the war.

Father Cecil Lonergan, who served as an Australian Army Chaplain in France and Belgium, owned this photograph. It is possible that Father Lonergan commissioned this work as a commemoration for friend and fellow priest, Father Michael Bergin, who was killed on 12 October 1917, the date Hurley's original photograph was taken (see far left).

FRANK HURLEY

Four Australian troops walking over duckboards in the waterlogged fields, October 1917

digital reproduction, nla.obj-160182782

This is a composite photograph. It is typical of some of Hurley's techniques. The foreground with the duckboard, men and muddy ground is taken from one negative (see album below). Hurley cropped the original image, changing its format from horizontal to vertical. Using other negatives, he added shell bursts and smoke to the sky, created a haze across the landscape and highlighted the stark lines of the dead trees.

The shell burst at the top-right corner is also used in Hurley's *Over the top*, as is a reverse image of the explosion in the middle on the horizon.

FRANK HURLEY

World War 1914–1918 campaigns in France and Belgium, c1918

photograph album, on loan from the National Library of Australia, PIC/14807/1-72 LOC Album 410

This album contains seventy-two photographs taken on the Western Front. The photograph on the left-hand

page is the anchor image used in the composite image *Four Australian troops walking over duckboards* (see above).

Hurley also used this image in the exhibition of war photographs held at the Kodak Salon in Sydney in 1919. The catalogue for that exhibition has the caption:

Just as it was. A characteristic scene on the Flanders Front. During rains it was only by means of the duckboards that this awful shell-torn quagmire could be crossed. In the foreground stands a remnant of the old Boche front-line entanglements.

FRANK HURLEY

Four Australian soldiers walking along duckboards near Zonnebeke, 22 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01236

Hurley took a number of photographs of men walking along the duckboards laid to make pathways across the otherwise impassable mud. This image is of particular interest as it includes William Joyce, assistant Australian official photographer. He appears – and disappears – in another set of photographs in the Colarts selection on the end wall (left) of this gallery space.

FRANK HURLEY

Over the top, c1918

digital reproduction, AWM E05988B

Over the top is also known as *A hop over* and *A raid*. It is a composite image created from twelve separate negatives, some taken in Flanders and some in Palestine.

The foreground is constructed from two images of what were probably pre-battle manoeuvres around Zillebeke in September 1917.

The plane formation itself is also a composite. It was created from at least four negatives, some of which were printed in reverse (see right).

The shell burst at the top right and a reverse image of the shell burst under the planes are also used in Hurley's composite photograph of troops walking on duckboards (see left wall).

A large print (4.7 × 6.1 metres) of the photograph was shown at the Grafton Galleries in London in late 1918.

FRANK HURLEY

Australian aeroplanes in battle formation, Palestine 1918–1921

digital reproduction, AWM E05989

Also titled *Off on a bombing raid*, this is a composite photograph that uses some of the same images that are in *Over the top*.

FRANK HURLEY

Two aircraft of the Australian Flying Corps in flight, Palestine, c1918

digital reproduction, AWM B01594

FRANK HURLEY

Three aircraft of the Australian Flying Corps in flight, Palestine, c1918

digital reproduction, AWM B01597

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

The battlefield near Zonnebeke, 17 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00928

This gruesome image of unburied dead enemy soldiers documents the extreme cruelty suffered in this battlefield. Wounded, dying and dead men were left for days out in open fields. Men disappeared in the mud. Death and desolation frame the photograph.

A different view of the lower half of this image is below.

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Untitled, 17 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00927

This is a close up view from a different perspective of the dead enemy soldier in a shell crater near Zonnebeke.

A reverse view of this image is used in the composite photograph (see right).

FRANK HURLEY

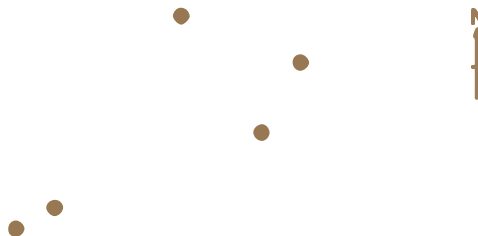
A composite image comprising a dead German soldier and an exploding shell burst added to the background, c1917

black and white photograph; 48.4cm × 34.3cm, on loan from the Australian War Memorial, P02514.001

Hurley exhibited a version of this composite photograph in the Grafton Galleries in London in 1918. He titled the photograph *Death the Reaper*. In the catalogue he wrote:

The earth thrown up by the explosion assumed the form of a skeleton with the skull looking down towards the battle-torn earth.

The shell burst, horizon and sky are additions, and the image in the foreground is in reverse to the original image (see left).



FRANK HURLEY

Remaining portion of a wall of the ruined Cloth Hall at Ypres, 5 November 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01230

Hurley and Wilkins photographed and filmed the ruins of the medieval Cloth Hall at Ypres regularly. In Hurley's words, the ruins were 'an emblem of what happens when war collides with art'.

Hurley frames the image with an arched window. It is a technique he uses in other photographs.

FRANK HURLEY

The ruins of the Cloth Hall through a cloister window, 1917 - 1919

sepia-toned and mounted photograph; 64.8 × 45.8cm, on loan from the State Library of NSW, PXD 23/46

This photograph was part of an exhibition of Hurley's war photography held at the Kodak Salon in Sydney in 1919. Hurley added the cloud formation and highlighted the ruined buildings in the background.

ALBERT VICTOR COOKE

A view through a window of the ruined Cloth Hall at Ypres, November 1918

photograph; 20.2 × 15.3cm, on loan from the Australian War Memorial, P10330.005

Albert Cooke served with the 12th Field Ambulance. He carried a private camera with him, against regulations, and took photographs of his unit and of damaged buildings. Several of his photographs, like the vintage print presented here, mirror the compositional techniques of official Australian war photographers.

The photograph documents changes to the building and surrounds since Hurley's photograph of the same scene twelve months earlier (see left). Much of the wall in the foreground has collapsed with the remainder shored up. Grass and trees have begun to regrow, and civilians replace the military traffic.

FRANK HURLEY

The gateway to the battlefield of Ypres, Menin Road, 5 November 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01237

Menin Road passed through and between the sites of many battles. The brutalised trees mark the devastation of war and the soldier peering down the road from behind a tree stump heralds impending danger. This is clearly a staged photograph.

FRANK HURLEY

Death's Highway, an exposed road in the battlefield near Ypres, 1917

gelatin silver print; 34.8 × 27.0 cm, on loan from the National Library of Australia, PIC FH 10919 LOC Drawer H7/6

In order to increase the dramatic impact of his original photograph (see left), Hurley added a shell burst to the road and darkened the sky with foreboding clouds and smoke.

Bean and the Australian War Memorial titled the original photograph *The gateway to Ypres battlefield*. Hurley, by contrast, used the more dramatic *Death's Highway* and, on another occasion, *A hit on the road*.

FRANK HURLEY

Hubert Wilkins inspecting the crosses in the military section of the graveyard in the village of Vlamertinghe, 3 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E00848

In this portrait of his fellow photographer, Hurley offers a contemplative and emotive response to the impact of war. This contrasts with his graphic images of the mud and horror of the battlefield. The photograph perhaps marks the need to remember and mourn that emerged from the experiences of the First World War. It is also a reminder that war photography, from early on, became more than a simple documentary record.

FRANK HURLEY

Hurley's assistant, William Joyce, making his way across the Westhoek Ridge near Zonnebeke, 29 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01265



COLARTS STUDIO/FRANK HURLEY

At Hellfire Corner on Menin Road, Third Battle of Ypres, c1920

hand-coloured photograph, on loan from the State Library of NSW, PXD 481/38

This is a composite image based on Hurley's photograph (above). Joyce has disappeared and is replaced by shell bursts. The title for this photograph is taken from the Colarts Studio exhibition catalogue from the early 1920s.

UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

A battery of four 8-inch Howitzers near Birr Crossroads supporting the Australians fighting in the Ypres sector, 31 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E01218

COLARTS STUDIO / UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

A battery of 8-inch Howitzers in action near Birr Crossroads, c1920

hand-coloured photograph; 52.8 × 68.1cm, on loan from the Australian War Memorial, P05380.007

This is a reverse image of the original print (see left).

FRANK HURLEY

Australians on the way to take up a front-line position with the ruins of Ypres, including the Cloth Hall, in the background, 25 October 1917

digital reproduction, AWM E04612

Another of Hurley's iconic photographs, its composition and framing illustrate Hurley's strong interest in the aesthetics of ruins.

He said of Ypres:

for my part, Ypres as it is now, has a curious fascination and aesthetically is far more interesting than the Ypres that was.

COLARTS STUDIO / FRANK HURLEY

All that is left of the long wall of the Cloth Hall, c1920

hand-coloured photograph, on loan from the State Library of NSW, PXD 481/f.124



START HERE



Front of building

FRANK HURLEY AND GEORGE WILKINS

Fighting in Flanders, October 1917

35mm black and white silent film, digital reproduction, AWM F00056

As part of their duties, Hurley and Wilkins were provided with a hand-wound wooden Debrrie Parvo model cinecamera to capture moving footage of the Australian forces in Flanders in addition to their still photographic record. This film is the result of their efforts.

Only a few minutes of footage could be filmed at a time before the reel had to be changed in a dark bag. The camera and tripod had to be operated at the same time, which restricted shooting. Shots were either static or very simple pans across the landscape, and filming could only

happen in clear, bright conditions and at approved locations. This meant training exercises often take the place of actual action in the film and it explains why most of the battle footage is of the artillery, situated far back from the front line. The film is also, for many of the soldiers, the first time they were captured on film.

It was primarily shot by Hurley in September and October 1917, and was titled – and most likely edited – by Wilkins in December of the same year.

While watching the film look for the soldiers who look towards and wave at the camera hoping to be seen by someone back home. See how the narrative is created through careful edits: men walk toward the front line along the edge of a trench, and walk the same path back some time later with stretchers in their arms. Pick out the moments where scenes captured as still photographs become moving images. See in close-up as the artillery recoils from firing another barrage or observe in the far distance tiny figures running toward their fate. Watch the fighting in Flanders as it had never been seen before – in motion.

BY DANIEL EISENBERG

Curator, Photographs, Film and Sound, Australian War Memorial

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Soldiers from the 28th
Battalion engaged in
physical exercises behind
the lines at Resecure,
France, 8 September 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E00685

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Officers of the 11th Brigade
Australian Field Artillery
inspecting a battery of
18-pounders during a brief
rest near Bailleul, France,
2 September 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E00662

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Field Marshal Sir Douglas
Haig, Commander-in-Chief,
leaving the parade after
reviewing the 2nd Australian
Division, Campagne,
France, 29 August 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E00678

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Members of the 2nd
Australian Pioneer Battalion
making a wagon track from
planks of wood at Chateau
Wood, 26 September 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E00800

On the right-hand side of the photograph you can see the wooden Debrrie Parvo cinecamera, used by Hurley and Wilkins to shoot the film. It was almost certainly left in the frame on purpose.

FRANK HURLEY

**Members of the 1st
Australian Tunnelling
Company excavating
dugouts at Hooge,
Belgium, September 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E01396

**UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN
OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

**Hellfire Corner on Menin
Road, 27 September 1917**

digital reproduction, AWM E01889

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Passchendaele





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