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Soldier Joe Cox

Private Joseph Christopher Cox was typical of the many young men who signed up to serve in the First World War. A labourer from Dubbo, he enlisted just short of his 27th birthday and joined the 22nd Battalion. On 18th September 1917, Cox was killed along with six others when a German shell landed in his dugout at Westhoek Ridge during the battle of Passchendaele in Belgium. His death is a reminder that although ‘going over the top’ and leaving the trenches to face the enemy was a frightful experience for any soldier, the constant shelling by artillery was just as dangerous and just as deadly.

In a letter home to his father, Joseph Cox’s Commanding O¨cer wrote of his son’s sacri¦ce and the grief of his loss: “I cannot ¦nd words in which to express to you my sympathy, but it might help to lessen the blow to tell you that he died nobly, doing his duty. Your boy was one of the best I have ever had in my platoon, and was a soldier through and through.”

The battle of Passchendaele saw almost 38,000 Australians killed or wounded.

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