

Service No. 956

Rank: Private

Unit: 15 Battalion Town Eudlo

Date of Birth: 9 Jun 1892

Place of Birth: Eudlo, Queensland

Date Enlisted: 17 Oct 1914

Ship Sailed On: A40 HMAT Ceramic

Date Ship Sailed: 22 Dec 1914

Soldiers History

When 22-year-old Frank Snell enlisted into the Army on 17 October, 1914, less than 11 weeks after the outbreak of World War 1, his mates at the Moreton Central Sugar Mill rallied around and bought him a watch as a going-away present.

Frank worked at the mill with his father. His parents, John and Bessie, had settled at Eudlo when they arrived from Cornwall as assisted migrants in the barque Scottish Hero in 1883. They had 12 children and Frank, the eighth (including two sets of twins) helped raise his four younger siblings when his mother died suddenly in 1903.

He shared a love of band music with his father and not surprisingly, when he joined the 15th Infantry Battalion at Enoggera within weeks of its being raised he carried a note from the Acting Bandmaster of the 2nd Brigade Area, Captain Martin, stating that Frank wished to enlist as a bandsman. His records don't show whether or not his request was granted, but the Battalion was authorized to carry two buglers for each company, according to its war diary.

The Battalion's companies of about 100 men each were organised regionally, with men from North Queensland in A Company, Central Queensland in B, Wide Bay and Maryborough C, Brisbane D. Darling Downs and Toowoomba E. F Company was made up of men from the Northern Rivers District of New South Wales and a small number of Queenslanders, including Frank.

The Battalion was preparing to head overseas and his training began immediately. Within three weeks of his entry, the whole Battalion set off on a 20 km route march to Sandgate in 36 deg temperatures, returning the next day after a pre-breakfast 8 km march in and around the town.

Frank's first month in uniform was a blur of drill, kit and uniform issues, weapons training, battle drills, and inspections, until finally the Battalion boarded trains and headed south, arriving in Melbourne on 26 November, 1914. At Broadmeadows Camp, the Battalion was joined by its Tasmanian contingent, including Private John Joseph Corrigan who was to move up through the ranks to command the Battalion in France almost exactly two years later.

The Battalion sailed from Melbourne on 22 December 1914 in A40 HMAT Ceramic, an 18,700-tonne cargo ship leased by the Australian Government from the Liverpool, UK, based Oceanic Steam Navigation Co Ltd and converted to a troopship. The Ceramic joined up with other ships of the second ANZAC convoy and left for Egypt on New Year's Eve 1914.

The trip was uneventful with fitness and weapon training, lectures and sports relieving the boredom of shipboard life in a crowded trooper.

Frank disembarked with the Battalion at Alexandria on 3 February 1915 and travelled to Cairo by train. There he was based at Heliopolis, on the outskirts of Cairo, and was quickly into acclimatization and training. Throughout February and March, it trained and exercised at Battalion, Brigade and Division level as part of the New Zealand and Australian Division.

On 12 April 1915, the Battalion again boarded trains and headed back to Alexandria where they embarked in the troopships A 30 HMT Australind and A29 HMT Seeang Bee. The Seeang Bee left the same day for the island of Lemnos, followed by the Australind the next day. After two days at sea, the two transports reached the harbor of Mudros where the troops prepared for the landing that was to come. They practised climbing in and out of naval cutters and horse boats large flat-bottomed barges for over a week all under the gaze of harbor-side observers on Lemnos.

The invasion fleet sailed on the night of the 24/25 April and by 5.30 a.m. the Australind was at the entrance to the Dardanelles where the troops were able to watch the naval bombardment and the landing of British troops at Cape Helles. At 11.45 am it moved north. At 4 pm the Seeang Bee anchored off the disembarkation point at ANZAC Cove and 30 min later transferred troops to a destroyer where they waited under Turkish shellfire until 10.30 at night before disembarking. Some of the troops were still in the Seeang Bee and weren't able to land until 9 a.m. the next morning, April 26. By this time the Battalion's companies had been split into three groups, but the main group took up positions in Shrapnel Gully before moving to Monash Valley, further up the gully and reorganizing on 30 April. Turkish snipers and artillery took a heavy toll on the Battalion, which took up positions on Popes Hill where Monash Valley split. The battalion repulsed a heavy attack in the afternoon and on 2 May day covered the advance towards the enemy positions on Baby 700. The Turks poured fire down on the Australians and New Zealanders from their trenches on the heights above the valley. Frank was one of the casualties.

The records don't show whether he was a rifleman or whether he was one of the company buglers a position which traditionally would have made him a stretcher bearer. If a stretcher bearer, he would have had to make the perilous journey down the valley under fire many times. He was taken to the beach seriously wounded and transferred to the Hospital Ship Gascon. He died the next day, on May 3, on the voyage to Alexandria and was buried at sea.

Among his belongings returned to his father were a watch and some pages of music.

Battles Fought: Gallipoli Victory Medal & British War Medal & If died in the war

Died from wounds

Date Returned to Australia: Did not return

Date of Death: 3 May 1915

Place of Death: Gallipoli

Where Buried: At sea en route to Alexandria, Egypt, from Gallipoli, Turkey.

Where Commemorated: Maroochy Shire Honour Roll, Shire Chambers, Bury Street, Nambour

Nambour Town Band Roll of Honour, Nambour & Maroochy District Band Hall, Daniel Street, Nambour

Eudlo Roll of Honour, Eudlo Community Hall, Rosebed Street, Eudlo

Eudlo In Memoriam, Eudlo Community Hall, Rosebed Street, Eudlo

Lone Pine Memorial, Turkey

Sources: Nambour Chronicle

AWM: Nominal and Embarkation Rolls,

15th Infantry Battalion War Diaries Official History of World War 1, Vol 1 World War 1 Units

Qld State Archives:

Passenger List Index Qld

Pioneers' Index 1829-1889

Qld Federation Index 1890-1914

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The Ships List