

Ernest George Hargreaves



Private (Pte) 3542 Ernest George Hargreaves enlisted in the 22nd Infantry Battalion in Geelong on 5 August 1915. He embarked overseas on 5 January 1916 and disembarked in Egypt in early February, where he was initially transferred to the 57th Infantry Battalion at Zeitoun on 23 February.

He was subsequently transferred and taken on strength of the 58th Infantry Battalion in the 15th Infantry Brigade or the 5th Australian Division at Tel el Kebir on 15 March.

He was hospitalised with sore feet from 29 March – 1 April and then again with an undiagnosed illness between 27 April – 5 May, when he rejoined the battalion. The 58th Battalion embarked for France on 17 June and disembarked in Marseilles on 23 June 1916.

They travelled north by train to the south-west of Hazebrouck, then marched to Sailly-sur-la-Lys and into the front line for the first time, near Fleurbaix, on 11 July, where they came under a heavy German bombardment on the night of 15 July. The severity of the bombardment is evident in the high number of casualties sustained by the battalion during that one night – 47 killed or missing and 103 wounded.

The battalion was in action again on 19 July when ordered to charge the German trenches at Fromelles in support of their sister 59th and 60th Battalions, both of which had been held up by German machine guns, and enfilade fire from the right, due to a failed British attack on that flank. The Fromelles episode was a disaster from start to finish, and cost the 58th Battalion another 247 casualties, including 80 killed or missing, one of whom was Pte Hargreaves who was killed in action on 19 July 1916.

His body was never recovered, and he has no known grave.

Private 3542 Ernest George Hargreaves is remembered on Panel 14 of the V.C. Corner Australian Cemetery Memorial, Fromelles, France.

Name: Hargreaves, Ernest George	
Service Number	3542
Date enlisted	5 August 1915
Place enlisted	Geelong, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	22 nd Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	5 January 1916 HMAT A19 <i>Afric</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	28 years 6 months
Place of birth	Chilwell, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Labourer
Religion	Methodist
Next of kin and address	Hargreaves, Mr R, brother, 133 Autumn Street, Geelong West, Victoria
Permanent address	c/- Barker, Mr William, friend, Leopold, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, brown hair, grey eyes, height – 5 feet 2 ½ inches, weight – 9 stone, 3 lbs, chest measurement – 36 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	58 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, France
Fate	Killed in action
Date and place died	19 July 1916 Fromelles, France
Cemetery details	No known grave. Commemorated on Panel 14 of the V.C. Corner Australian Cemetery Memorial, Fromelles, France
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Also remembered on the Leopold & District Honor Roll, Leopold War Memorial and East Geelong St Albans & Moolap War Memorial.