

Frederick Vermont Martinsen



Private (Pte) 6070 Frederick Vermont Martinsen enlisted in the 14th Infantry Battalion in the 4th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Australian Division in Geelong on 27 March 1916, aged 43 years. He embarked overseas on 1 August and disembarked in Plymouth on 25 September, where he joined the 4th (Brigade) Training Battalion in Wiltshire.

After two months training, he left England on 28 November and landed in France the next day, where he joined the 4th Division Base Details at Etaples. He was eventually taken on strength of the 14th Battalion, in the field at Ribemont, on 4 January 1917, one of 28 reinforcements that arrived that day.

Following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in March 1917, the battalion cautiously patrolled forward to ascertain the enemy's whereabouts. They reached Beugnatre on 27 March where battalion headquarters took shelter in an abandoned cellar. At 6:30 am on 29 March, a delayed German mine exploded, killing four men and wounding four others.

The 14th Battalion then moved into the front line and took part in the poorly planned assault on the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt on 11 April. In the vanguard of the attack, with no artillery or tank support, the battalion suffered 601 casualties (including hundreds killed or missing), one of whom was Pte Martinsen who sustained a gunshot wound to his right leg.

He was initially evacuated to the 6th General Hospital at Rouen from 11 – 28 April, then transferred to England and admitted to the 1st London General Hospital between 29 April – 6 July, after which he was granted leave until 20 July.

He recovered from his wounds but was later diagnosed with chronic bronchitis and was invalided back to Australia on 1 November.

Private 6070 Frederick Vermont Martinsen disembarked in Melbourne on 3 January, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 8 February 1918.

Name: Martinsen, Frederick Vermont	
Service Number	6070
Date enlisted	27 March 1916
Place enlisted	Geelong, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	14 th Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	1 August 1916 HMAT A28 <i>Miltiades</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	43 years 6 months
Place of birth	St Leonards, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Fisherman
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Ralston, Mr Alice, mother, Portarlington, Victoria
Permanent address	St Leonards, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 11 ½ inches, weight 11 stone, chest measurement – 39 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	14 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	11 April 1917 Bullecourt, France
Nature of wounds	Gunshot wound to right leg
Date and ship embarked for Australia	1 November 1917 HT <i>Anchises</i>
Date discharged	8 February 1918
Nature of discharge	Medically Unfit (chronic bronchitis)
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Brother of Lewis Martinsen and half-brother of John Ralston. Died 2 December 1956. Remembered on the St Leonards Honor Roll, Portarlington Honor Roll and Portarlington War Memorial.

