

Private Frederick William HART
3323 — 3rd Battalion, 1-12 Reinforcements
5th Machine Gun Battalion



Unit colour patch



Born: 1 Mar 1884, Molong, NSW.

Next of Kin: Sister, Miss M Hart , Paddington, NSW.

Occupation: Farmer

District Connection: Cumnock, Molong

Enlistment Date: 23 Jul 1915 Liverpool

Enlistment Age: 30 yrs months

Embarkation: 2 Nov 1915 - Sydney HMAT A14 *Euripides*

Served: Western Front - POW Germany

Fate: RTA 9 Feb 1919

Honour Boards: Cumnock Memorial Gates, Cabonne Council Chambers, Molong.

Biography:

Frederick (Fred) William Hart was child of Thomas Bond Hart and Julia Adams. He was born on 1 Mar 1884 in Molong. His siblings were Rachael, Ernest, Arthur, Julia Anne (Annie), Lavinia, Matilda (Till) and Henry.

His father Thomas came to Australia from Bedford, England and married Julia Adams on 23 May 1870. Thomas Bond Hart began farming at "The Gap", near Molong, in 1876. He died of pneumonia on 6 Nov 1886 when Fred was just 2 years old. His mother stayed on at the farm with the assistance of her brother, Edward Watson Adams. She set up shop by the roadside and sold farm produce and grocery items to the teamsters etc. as they passed by.

Julia married Fred Toole in 1889 and they had two children, Violet Ada and Richard Toole. Julia also died of pneumonia at her residence "Walwayne", Anson Street, Orange, in 1911. She was buried in the Millthorpe Cemetery alongside her parents. Her sons, Fred and Bert Hart were then residing at the Gap, Molong. (*Death of Mrs Toole, Molong Argus – 18 Aug 1911, P9*)

Fred Hart enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Liverpool on 23 Jul 1915, aged 30 years and 4 months. He stated he was a farmer, single and a good horseman. His medical examination states that he was 5 feet 6 inches tall, had grey eyes, brown hair, a ruddy complexion and of the Church of England religious denomination. He listed his next of kin as his sister, Matilda Hart, Paddington, Sydney.

Pte Hart embarked on HMAT A14 *Euripides* at Sydney on 3 Nov 1915 as a member of the 3rd Btn. The ship arrived at Suez on 28 November. Mumps, diphtheria and pneumonia were prevalent during the journey with a number of deaths as a result of complications, one being Pte Harold Edwards, 2653 - 20th Btn, from Yeoval, 21 years old, who died at sea on 22 Nov 1915.

The soldiers spent some months training in Egypt. On 8 May 1916, Pte Hart was transferred to the 55th Machine Gun Company, part of the 14th Brigade. He embarked at Alexandria on 19 June and disembarked at Marseilles on 25 June.

Pte Frederick Hart was declared missing in action at the Battle of Fromelles on 20 July.

His relatives were notified by the army the following month that Pte Hart was missing in action. It wasn't until September 1916 that they were notified that he was a Prisoner of War. He was captured at Laventie, the Somme Valley on 20 July with a gunshot wound to his right shoulder. He was interned at Minden Camp.



The *Leader*, Orange - 12 Feb 1917, p5, reported:

"Private Fred W Hart, of The Gap, Molong, who is a prisoner of war at Minden, Germany, writing to Miss M Woods, of Molong, under the date November 20, says:

Just a line to let you know I am still alright. Whoever would have thought of me getting caught it was the last thing I ever thought of. One of my mates met the same fate as I did and the other, I do not know what became of him. We had a terrific fight, and I know I got hit in the shoulder, which knocked me yards... I bet you all laughed when you heard I was taken a prisoner, but for a start it wasn't funny, I can assure you."

“Germany is a wet and cold place, but the British Red Cross League look after us well as regards clothing. I also get a parcel of food each week from the league, and this I appreciate very much. Mr Priestly, of Kent, England, also sends me a parcel, while all the prisoners get a parcel of bread and cheese from Switzerland... We are allowed to write only twice a month.”

Molong Argus - 1 Mar 1918, p1, a letter from Pte Fred Hart to his niece, Miss Minnie Wood, Amaroo:

Minnie - Just a line to let you know that I am in the pink, hoping you are all the same. I have not had any letters from Australia for a long time, but we get something more substantial from good old Aussie in our Red Cross parcels. We get very nice parcels alright. I have an Englishman mucking in with me, and we get along very well. What one doesn't get the other does. He is a very good cook. For instance, the menu today for dinner was potatoes (boiled), rabbit likewise, a fruit pudding for dessert. That is only once in awhile. There are times when we have more dinner times than dinner. Nevertheless, on the whole we do very well for prisoners. I will be very pleased when it is all over so I can get out of it all.

We have no change— the same everyday. It gets very monotonous all right. I have a terrible struggle to find anything to put in my letters... At present I am doing a bit of work— no more than I can help, you may be sure. As yet I have not had my coat off, and if the weather keeps cold I am afraid I am not likely to...”

Minden is a middle-sized town in the very north-east of North Rhine, Westphalia, Germany. The POW camp was 5 km outside the town.

A book, “The prisoner of war in Germany; the care and treatment of the prisoner of war with a history of the development of the principle of neutral inspection and control” written by Daniel Joseph McCarthy and published in 1918, gives a description of Minden Camp during 1916:



“There are in the camp 8,682 prisoners of war, of whom 615 are British, and of the British, 357 are non-commissioned officers. The camp is arranged in a block system, with the barracks of each block arranged in such a way as to form a square with an open area in the court of about one hundred metres square. There are five blocks. As arranged at the present time each block is completely separated from the other blocks. The prisoners of war in each block are absolutely limited to this block area, are not permitted outside of it, and as the barracks, except for the small gateway, completely enclose this area there is no opportunity to see anything other than the four barrack brick walls and the open sky above. There are no trees or shade in this area... The surface area is of hard yellow clay without any grass or other evidence of vegetation. In the space in this court, which is not taken up with the kitchen, latrines, etc., the men play football.

The kitchen is housed in a large barrack building in the outside group of each block. It is clean, orderly and in good condition. Each kitchen is equipped with seventeen kettles and two ranges. The men were permitted to cook the food in the packages received from home, in one of two long open air ranges in the middle of the block. The canteen is housed in the kitchen building. Wine, alcohol-free beer, soft drinks, various and sundry toilet articles and tobacco are on sale. The infirmary, fifty by thirty five feet, with windows, in which fifteen cot beds were placed, was inspected in Block V.”

Pte Fred Hart's Red Cross report states that he was transferred from Minden Camp to Munster III Camp in Westphalia, Germany, on 3 Apr 1917. There were four camps. Munster III was a former brick built army barracks. Many of the prisoners were employed in the coal mines.

WW1 ended on 18 Nov 1918 and Pte Fred Hart was repatriated to Ripon, England on 5 Dec 1918. He then went onto London on 10 December and granted leave to return on 9 Jan 1919. However, Pte Hart failed to return on 9th and did not return until the following day. He was charged with the offence of being Absent Without Leave, admonished by an Officer and fined one day's pay.

On 14 Feb 1919, Fred left England per HT *Ascanius* and arrived in Australia on 26 Mar 1919. He was discharged from the AIF on 27 Jun 1919 and received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Fred had a brother and nephew who also served in the AIF during WW1.

- Brother: Lance Corporal Henry Bert Hart - 122 1st Tunnelling Company. Enlisted 26 Oct 1915 and returned to Australia in May 1919.
- Nephew: Pte Alfred Victor Hart - 2341 31st Btn. Enlisted 7 Aug 1915 and was a POW in Limburg Camp, Germany, from 26 Sep 1916 and repatriated to England on 16 Dec 1919. He also returned to Australia aboard HT *Ascanius* on 26 Mar 1919.

An inscribed gold medal from the residents of Cumnock was presented to L/Cpl Bert Hart and medals given to him for his brother and nephew at a ceremony at Leary's Hall in November 1919.

Frederick Hart married Doris (Dorothy) Jesse Buesnel at Paddington, Sydney, on 17 August 1925. The *Yass Courier* - 20 Aug 1925, p4, reported:

"Wedding. A very pretty but quiet wedding took place at St. George's Church of England, Glenmore Road, Paddington, on 17th August, when Mr Fred Hart (who is a brother of Mrs Duddleston and Miss Hart, of the Club House Hotel, Yass), was married to Miss Doris Buesnel, eldest daughter of Mr T Buesnel, of Shadforth. The bride was prettily dressed in white georgette, silver trimmings, with touches of pale blue. Miss Hart, of Yass, was bridesmaid. Mr Dan Priestley, of Gravesend, England (who is a friend of the bridegroom's, and was opportunely in Sydney on SS Orama), acted as best man. The future home of newly married couple will be at Shadforth, near Orange."

Fred was a member of the Freemasons and attended the installation of Lodge Millthorpe in September 1925.

The Australian Electoral Rolls between 1930-1936 list Fred as living at East Guyong, farmer. His wife Dorothy was listed as living at "Shadforth", Millthorpe. From 1949 the couple are both listed as living at "Shadforth", Millthorpe. They had a daughter, Dulcie Annie.

Fred's father Ernest Hart died on 7 Oct 1934, aged 62 years, in Molong.

Frederick William Hart died on 24 June 1964, aged 80 years, and died in Sydney. He is buried at the Millthorpe Cemetery.

Dianne Strahan & Val McKenzie, August 2022, www.cumnocknswmemorials.com



Left top: Gravestone FW Hart, Millthorpe.

Left bottom: WW1 Honour Plaque, Cumnock War Memorial Gates.

Below: WW1 Honour Plaque, Cabonne Council Chambers, Molong.

