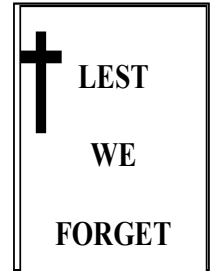


A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 224
Name: Walter George BATES
Nickname: Wal



Medals and Decorations

1914 - 15 Star
British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Trooper
Service: Army
Enlisted: 20 Oct 1914
KIA: 29 Aug 1915

Walter (Wal) was born on 7 Dec 1894 at Mundoorra (near Port Broughton, SA) to James Bates and Annie Maria Bates (nee Mildren). There were 10 children in the family, 8 boys and 2 girls, of which he was the third youngest. His father was a farmer at Mundoorra; in 1902 the family moved to the Butler area and took up the lease of a scrub block of 3690 acres at Wild Dog Hill. At this time it must have been a very remote area and they only remained on this block for 3 years before moving onto Sec 330 of Yarranyacka in the Lipson area after the death of Wal's mother in 1904.

Wal went to school at Warratta, commencing in Nov 1905 and leaving in Nov 1909, along with his sister and one of his brothers. His father and some of the family returned to the Adelaide area (Norwood) and it is thought that Wal accompanied them. Wal enlisted in the Army from that location on 20 Oct 1914 at the age of 20 years. On enlistment he listed his occupation as farmer.

He was sent to Base Light Horse at Mitcham for training before being posted to 9th Light Horse Regiment (9th L H Regt) and entraining for Melbourne. The 9th L H Regt was formed in Adelaide and trained in Melbourne between Oct 1914 and Feb 1915. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Regt hailed from South Australia and the other $\frac{1}{4}$ from Victoria. As part of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, the 9th L H Regt sailed from Melbourne on 11 Feb 1915. Wal (with his unit) disembarked from HMAT "Karoo" in Egypt on 14 Mar 1915 for further training.

The light horse units were considered unsuitable for the initial operations at Gallipoli, but were subsequently deployed without their horses. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade landed in Gallipoli in May 1915 and was attached to the Australian and New Zealand Division. Wal arrived in Gallipoli on 16 May 1915.

On 12 Jun 1915 he was admitted aboard the Hospital Ship (HS) “*Newmarket*” suffering from influenza, before being transferred to the hospital at Mudros, on the island of Lemnos in the Aegean Sea near Gallipoli. He was discharged from hospital after 3 weeks, but this was only a temporary reprieve as he was again admitted to hospital, this time 1st Army General Hospital at Heliopolis on 8 Jul 1915 suffering from vertigo, possibly as a result of his earlier illness. On release from hospital on 10 Aug 1915 he was transferred to the overseas base at Mustapha before embarking on the SS “*Nile*” at Alexandria on 17 Aug 1915, bound for Gallipoli.

Wal rejoined his unit (9th L H Regt) two days later. In just under two weeks (29 Aug 1915) he was posted as missing in action. This was after an action where his unit suffered 50 percent casualties, attacking Hill 60 at Gallipoli on 27 Aug 1915.

A Court of Enquiry was convened on 26 Apr 1916 and found that he, along with 17 others of his unit, had been killed in action on 29 Aug 1915, the day that they had been posted as missing.

Again the difficulty of communication at the time is brought home by the delay in getting this information and subsequent documents to the family. His father was still alive at the time of Wal’s death, but died 3 years after. The Army sent a number of letters and packages to the Norwood address, but they were all returned to sender. The Army then advertised in the “Advertiser” newspaper on 17 Nov 1921, attempting to make contact with the next of kin or any person who knew of their whereabouts. Eventually a sister in a hostel in Adelaide, another sister in hospital in Port Lincoln and his eldest brother made contact with the Army. So in 1921 the effects and medals of the late trooper were forwarded to the eldest brother, Arthur J. Bates, c/- P.O. Butler, via Tumby Bay, who was determined to be the closest living “lineal” relative and therefore the official next of kin. The brother’s address was later recorded as Ungarra, when further documentation was sent in 1922.

There is no known final resting place for this soldier but he is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial, which includes the names of 3268 Australian’s and 456 New Zealanders who have no known grave and also those who succumbed to wounds or disease and were buried at sea.



1914-15 Star

British War Medal

Victory Medal



Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli