

Reported missing in action

■ Peter McLady

BORN at the Brisbane Claim near Stanthorpe, Patrick "Paddy" Hyde was the son of John and Mary Ann Hyde.

Paddy was 29 when he died in action at the Battle of Pozieres, the same battle fellow Stanthorpe man Jack Swaysland had died in six days earlier.

Paddy joined the 2nd Reinforcements of the 26th Battalion in Brisbane on June 15, 1915.

Paddy joined his battalion on the frontline in Gallipoli on October 12. The 26th Battalion was in position at Taylor's Hollow, to the north of Anzac Cove.

Shortly afterwards, Paddy contracted measles and was transferred by ship to the Imtarfa Hospital in Malta.

He was kept in hospital and then a convalescent camp in Malta until January 1916. Paddy rejoined his battalion in Egypt on February 21, 1916.

He left Egypt with his battalion on March 15, to join the fighting on the Western Front. They arrived in Marseilles on March 21.

A variety of training exercises followed in preparation for the battalion's life in the trenches on the Western Front.

In mid-April, the 26th Battalion moved into the frontline for the first time in the Rue Marle sector south of Armentieres where they remained throughout May and June.

As the battalion did not undertake any major attacks during this time, casualties were relatively light. However, a 26th Battalion raiding party on June 6 captured three German soldiers and killed another 20.

For this action the battalion received congratulations from General Birdwood, Commander of I Anzac Corps.

The battalion left French Flanders on July 12, before joining the fighting on the Somme. As part of 7th Brigade, 2nd Division, Paddy and the rest of the battalion were to relieve the 1st Division which had lost 5285 officers and men in the fighting at the Battle of Pozieres.

It was planned for the 7th Brigade to launch an attack on the German trenches in front of Pozieres Heights on the night of July 28-29.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ferguson reported on the attack in the 26th Battalion War Diary and an accompanying Intelligence Report.

"The men were in position in good order and time," he wrote.

"The one-minute bombardment was not enough as it did not make the enemy keep his head down at all for he continued to fire on our men all the time, having started firing on them some three minutes previous to the bombardment. He used



NOT FORGOTTEN: Patrick 'Paddy' Hyde, who lost his life in the Battle of Pozieres on July 29, 1916.

PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



Patrick Hyde's name on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

PHOTOS: PETER MCLADY

flares freely. The wire in front of the enemy was not cut enough as it caused a considerable amount of trouble.

"An order to retire was passed around from some unknown source, and though several of the officers are known to have tried to make the men go on, the retirement became general and it was not until the men were some 200 yards from the original starting point that the movement was checked.

"They were ordered to withdraw to the original trenches later."

The attack was a failure, with 36 killed, another 155 wounded; 107 men remained unaccounted for.

Paddy was reported missing in action on July 29, and no further news of him was reported. In March 1917 his mother wrote to Senator

George Pearce, the Minister of Defence, after hearing news that a friend had read in the North Queensland Register that Paddy was a prisoner of war in Germany.

She asked if this news was correct, as she had not received any further information. The Officer in Charge of Base Records replied that since Paddy had been reported as missing, no further official information had been reported.

A Court of Enquiry, in June 1917, determined that Paddy had been killed in the Battle of Pozieres on July 29, 1916. He was 29.

Paddy's Red Cross file provides more details about his death.

Corporal Frederick Stewart told the Red Cross:

"I knew Paddy Hyde all right. We joined up together. He and I were mates in the L.G. [Lewis Gun] Section.

We were at Pozieres. We went out about midnight July 28 in the second wave of attack. Hyde was killed in the early morning of July 29, 1916.

"He and I were part of a crew of 6th L.G.S. men who went out just after midnight. Hyde was the first man to fall, fatally hit. He was to my left about 100 yards away, but it was light enough to see what had happened.

"I was unable to go to his assistance. It was near a cemetery. Two other men fell mortally hit soon after.

"Only three men out of the crew of six L.G.S. returned. I was badly hit, Norwich was another and Wilson was the third. I brought Wilson back with me. I cannot give any better identification of these two men."

Bomber David Goodyear said: "We went over at Pozieres together, I with the



Wreath at the memorial.

bombing section, he [Paddy] with the L.G.S. While we were finding our way through German wire entanglements, he got shot in the stomach and dropped, saying to me 'Dave, I'm settled'. We had to continue on, and I saw no more of him."

It took more than a year for his family to learn of his death. On August 10, 1917, the Stanthorpe Border Post reported: "An official wire was received in Stanthorpe on Saturday last announcing the death of Private P. Hyde. Last year... it was announced that Private Hyde was reported missing, and the hope was entertained that he might be a prisoner of war and still alive. The wire received on Saturday, however, dissipates any hopes in that direction, for it stated that Private Hyde was killed on July 29, 1916. Private Hyde enlisted at the first recruiting meeting held in Stanthorpe and fought in Gallipoli before going to

Hyde was the first man to fall, fatally hit. He was to my left about 100 yards away, but it was light enough to see what had happened.

— Corporal Frederick Stewart

France. Much sympathy will be felt for his relatives."

In December 1920, Base Records wrote to Paddy's mother asking if his father was still alive.

The Army was trying to determine where to send Paddy's war medals.

Mary Ann Hyde replied: "My son made me next of kin. All his belongings he willed to me as his father did not keep or look after his family. He would drink all his earnings and do worse so the boy would not like to give him anything. He would only sell the medal or lose it when he would get drunk. He has not supported me this 16 years. I had to wash and work to rear my children.

"That is why my late son left me all that would be coming to him if he got killed."

His medals were sent to his mother in January 1921. Private Patrick Hyde has no known grave, but is remembered on the wall of the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux in France.