

2597 CPL Frederick Prentice MM 1894 – 1957

WW1 Service – 1915-1919



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Frederick Prentice was born on the 18th of January 1894. His biological mother was an unidentified Jingili woman from the Northern Territory Elliott / Newcastle Waters area. His biological father was Alfred Leslie Prentice from Victoria who had worked variously as a drover, station manager and mail contractor and who died in 1916. For reasons yet to be confirmed Alfred placed Frederick into the care of Walter James 'Dan' Kell and his wife Isabella Jane Kell who were managing Powell Creek Telegraph Station.

In 1905 the Kell family returned to Adelaide and their two adopted children were educated at Kyre College (later part of Scotch College).

Frederick was quite an athlete and excelled at football, cricket and running as well as winning a music award. After school he took up work as a station hand at Manunda Station in South Australia.

Prentice's unit embarked from Adelaide on board HMAT 'Morea' on 26 August 1915. He transferred to 1st Pioneer Battalion on 13 March 1916 and was appointed to Lance Corporal in France on 1 August 1916. Prentice was awarded the Military Medal for service at Mouquet Farm in France during August 1916 (Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 62. Date: 19 April 1917). The citation for his Military Medal is as follows: At Pozieres, France on 19th July 1916, L/Cpl. Prentice showed great courage, resource and ability in bringing machine guns and ammunition through the enemy barrage in the dark and across broken ground. He was one of Cpl. William's party and assisted the N.C.O. in every way. (Sgd) H.B.W Major general Commanding 1st Aust. Division He reverted to the rank of Private at his own request on 12 December 1916. Prentice undertook training with 21st Machine Gun Company from 16 August 1917 and was promoted again to Lance Corporal on 2 October 1917. He was promoted to Corporal on 31 Jan 1918 and returned to Australia on board the 'City of Poona' on 28 March 1919.

Frederick Prentice MM died in Katherine, Northern Territory on 22 November 1957 unknown and without family or friends. Using the fact that Prentice had told a fellow worker that he had served in World War One, the Acting Superintendent of Police, Northern Territory asked AIF Base records for help in identifying his next of kin. The information the police already had was that the dead man was half Maori and had died of a heart attack.