

## Edgar Russell Franks

**Corporal Edgar Franks**  
**19th and 55th Battalions, AIF**  
**Service Number: 3803**

**Born:** 1894, Marylebone, London  
**Died:** 2 September 1918, Peronne, France

Edgar Russell Franks was born in Marylebone, London in 1894, the son of Edgar Charles and Mary Ann Franks. He arrived in Sydney on board the *Moravian* in 1910 and lived with his uncle in Parramatta. Before he enlisted he had spent three years' service in the colonial forces. Franks worked as an ironworks assistant at the Clyde Iron Works. According to his obituary in the *Nepean Times*, Franks 'visited Penrith a good deal, and attended the local Methodist Church'. This no doubt is where he may have met his fiancé Maud Byrnes, the daughter of Henry and Rebecca Byrnes. Maud later married Robert Kendall in 1934.

Franks enlisted on 25 October 1915 and was allocated to the 9th Reinforcements, 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He left Australia aboard *HMAT Runic* on 20 January 1916 and disembarked at Alexandria on 26 February. As part of the AIF restructure, Franks transferred to the 55<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 3 April. On 19 May, he was admitted to the 14th Field Ambulance with a fever and discharged the same day.

On 9 June, Franks embarked aboard the *Caledonian* for the Western Front and disembarked at Marseilles on 29 June. His Battalion entered the frontline trenches for the first time on 12 July and fought its first major battle at Fromelles a week later. Although in reserve, the 55<sup>th</sup> was quickly committed to the attack and eventually played a critical role, forming the rearguard for withdrawal. After a freezing winter manning trenches in the Somme Valley, in early 1917 the 55<sup>th</sup> Battalion took part in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium.

On 6 August 1917, Franks was sent to Lewis Gun School, returning to his unit on 26 August, just in time for his Battalion's involvement at Polygon Wood on 26 September 1917. On 7 October, Franks was promoted to Temporary Corporal, with promotion to Corporal on 1 January 1918. On 30 January 1918, Franks was detached from duty and attended a course of instruction at No 1 Area Gas School from 2-9 March. From 4-18 April, he attended the 12<sup>th</sup> Lewis Gun Course at the Australian School of Musketry, Tidworth and remained with the 14<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion until 7 August when he rejoined his unit in France. On 2 September 1918, Franks was killed by shell fire during the attack on Peronne.

### Memorial Details:

- Herbecourt British Cemetery, France
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Methodist Church, Penrith

### Sources:

- [National Archives of Australia](#): FRANKS E
- [Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll](#)
- Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour
- Penrith City Library biography files