Ernest Frederick Harper

Private Ernest Harper
1st Battalion, AIF
Service Number: 6020

Born: 1888, Leichhardt, NSW
Died: 5 October 1917, Broodseinde Ridge, Belgium

Ernest Harper was born in 1888 at Leichhardt, the son of William and Mary Jane Harper. Both his parents died when he was a small child and his brother Charles and sister Florrie raised the younger children. Before his enlistment he was working as a labourer and living at Emu Plains at Bendells. Harper was before Penrith Court a number of times, especially with his friend William McGee who lived in Henry Street Penrith. Harper's earliest offence was in 1911 for being drunk and disorderly. On 23 June 1916, two months before he sailed, Harper and McGee faced Penrith Court for stealing a bottle of whiskey from the Federal Hotel. They were fined in default of 14 days in Parramatta Gaol.

Harper enlisted at Bathurst on 8 March 1916. He listed his sister, Florrie Harvey as his next of kin. He embarked on 22 August on *HMAT Wiltshire* and disembarked at Plymouth, England on 13 October. By December Harper was at Etaples in France and on 8 February 1917 he was taken on strength in the 1ˢᵗ Battalion.

On 11 May Harper was sent to rest camp for a few days before rejoining his battalion. Between 24 and 26 September Harper was listed as AWOL and lost 14 days pay as penalty. Again on 27 September he was absent and forfeited 3 days pay. While coming back after a 'hop-over' during the battle of Broodseinde Ridge, Harper was killed outright by a piece of shell.

Harper's sister Florrie accepted his medals in lieu of her eldest brother not laying claim to them as he could not be located and her next brother Charles being deceased.

Memorial Details:
- Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium
- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
- Honour Roll, Penrith Superior Public School

Sources:
- National Archives Australia: B2455, GARDINER A G
- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour
- Penrith City Library Biography files