

Gordon Francis Yeoman

Private Gordon Yeoman
20th and 56th Battalions, AIF
Service Number: 2862

Born: 1888, Castlereagh, NSW
Died: 20 October 1916, France

Biographical Details: Gordon Francis Yeoman was born at Castlereagh in 1888, the son of Francis and Eleanor Mary Yeoman. He was educated at Castlereagh Public School and after leaving school worked as a farmer and orchardist in the Castlereagh area. Prior to the outbreak of war, Yeoman served for three years with D Company, 3rd Battalion Infantry at Richmond and was considered one of the best rifle shots in his battalion. Yeoman was believed to have been the first person to enlist from the Castlereagh area.

Service Details: Yeoman enlisted on 14 May 1915 and was allocated to the 6th reinforcements, 20th Battalion. The battalion left Sydney on 2 November 1915, aboard *A14 HMAT Euripedes* bound for Egypt. After several months training, Yeoman was appointed to a machine gun section and saw active service on the Suez Canal and in the desert against Turk and Arab forces. On 6 January 1916, Yeoman was found guilty of mounting a guard in a dirty condition and confined to camp for 2 days.

On 16 February 1916, Yeoman was allocated to the 56th Battalion. On 16 April 1916, Yeoman was admitted to the 15th Field Ambulance and then No 2 Casualty Clearing Station with "Intestinal Toxaemia". He rejoined his unit on 1 May 1916 and on 19 June 1916 the 56th Battalion embarked at Alexandria to join the British Expeditionary Force in France. On 29 June 1916 the battalion disembarked from the troopship *Huntsend* at Marseilles and were sent to the Western Front where they took part in the Battle of the Somme including action around Armentieres and later, Pozieres.

On 15 October 1916, Yeoman was admitted to the 14th Field Ambulance with pneumonia. He was transferred to No 1 Casualty Clearing Station and then taken by Ambulance train to the 35th General Hospital. He was subsequently transferred to the 9th British Red Cross Hospital at Calais where he died from lobar pneumonia on 20 October 1916.

Memorial Details:

- Memorial Panel 163,8 Southern Cemetery Calais, France
- Castlereagh Honour Roll, Smith Park Castlereagh.

Sources:

- [National Archives Australia: B2455](#)
- [Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry File 3040210](#)
- [Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll](#)
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Penrith City Library Biography files

***Nepean Times* 16 November 1916, p5**

Death of Castlereagh Hero: There is scarcely a hamlet, or village, in Australia which has not sent its toll of volunteers to take part on the side of the Allies of Liberty and Civilisation in the Great War; and to many such locales the grim realities of war have brought the dark shadow of bereavement, though the death in action of its gallant young scions, or through other causes incidental to warfare. Over 40 indeed of the roll of those who have enlisted from the Nepean District have laid down their lives; and amongst those heroic dead who have sacrificed their all in the Great Cause, we have now to number the name of Private George F Yeoman, eldest son of Mr and Mrs F Yeoman, "Mt Ritchie", Castlereagh, news of whose regretted death was conveyed from the Military authorities to Rev J A Reynolds, of Emu Plains, under date 31st ultimo. The information concerning the demise of Private Yeoman stated: – "It is officially reported that No 2862, Private G F Yeoman, 56th (late 20th) Battalion, A Coy, AIF, died 20th October, from lobar pneumonia pericardius, at 35th General Hospital. Please inform relatives, and convey deep regret of their Majesties the King and Queen and Commonwealth Government on the loss Army has sustained in the death of the soldier named." From the above intimation, it is evident that Private Yeoman's death occurred eleven days before receipt of cable. The deceased was a fine stalwart young Australian, in his 28th year, 6 ft. 2in. in height and some 13 stone weight; so was a typical Castlereagh native, one of the splendid physical products of the Australian bushland whose prowess on the battlefield has gained them the Commander-in-Chief's (General Haig's) estimate of being "the most dashing and forceful soldiers in the armies of the Empire." The late Private Yeoman enlisted on 14th May 1915, and was, we believe, the first soldier to enlist from Castlereagh (his example being frequently followed since). He embarked, with other reinforcements, for the seat of war early in November, 1915; and, after some months training in Egypt, in one of the machine gun sections, he saw active service on the Suez Canal and in the Desert against the Turks and hostile Arab tribes. He was transferred with his unit to the Western Front (France) in June (1916), and took part in the big push at Armentieres, and later around Pozieries; being altogether some five months in that "warm" zone of operations, before being seized with his fatal illness, which it is thought was, probably, accelerated by the exposure and hardships incidental to a soldier's life at the battlefield.

The late Private Yeoman had followed the pursuits of farmer and orchardist at Castlereagh, and was deservedly liked and esteemed by the people of the whole Nepean District. He had early manifested a liking for military matters, and had been for some four years in the 3rd Battalion Infantry (D Coy) Richmond; and he was one of the best rifle shots in his battalion. Deceased had written frequently, and remarked that while in Egypt, notwithstanding the hard and strenuous work, had had put on a stone in weight being, at the time of writing, over 14 stone.

The sympathy of the district will be accorded Mr and Mrs Yeoman and family in their sad bereavement. Castlereagh will mourn, while it will also – with all Australians – commemorate the heroism of one who has so truly proved the intensity of his patriotism by making the sacrifice of his life for the vindication of the cause and ideals of his Country and Empire.