

Battle of Pozières.

(23rd July - 7th August 1916)

Pozières was a small French village of strategic importance as it lay directly along a German trench line. On the night of the 22/23rd of March the Australians opened the offensive with success gaining much of the village but the other attacks coordinated that night failed. As the village was an important part of the German defensive network in the locality, German high command ordered it to be retaken. As a consequence of being the sole British gain on the 23rd of July, Pozières became a focus of attention for the Germans. Marren would have been part of this successful attack on the village. Three attempts were made on the 23rd of July by the Germans to retake it but each was broken up and the Germans called a temporary halt to the affair. Marren was part of this successful defence. The Germans, unable to take the place by force of men, decided to bomb the village and the defendants into submission. The bombing was relentless. Such was the rapacity of the bombing that one of the roads leading into the village on the allied side came to be known as 'Dead Man's Road'. Sadly, Thomas was killed in action in this battle on the 26th of July 1916, aged 28. German artillery fire was methodical right up until the 26th when Marren was recorded to have died. This date in particular is recorded to have been one of the most intense bombardments by the Germans of the entire war on one location. The 4th Australian Division (Marren's division) suffered 7,100 casualties.

When the Australians were relieved on the 27th of July Sgt. E.J. Rule is supposed to have remarked:

"They looked like men who had been in Hell... drawn and haggard and so dazed that they appeared to be walking in a dream and their eyes looked glassy and starey."

