



TELEPHONE:  
 CENTRAL 4780.  
 55/Lt.  
 NTW  
 ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS  
 TO "THE SECRETARY"

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE.  
 BASE RECORDS OFFICE, A.I.F.  
 MELBOURNE. 19th January, 1917.

32098

No. ....

Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in forwarding herewith copy of extract from First Supplement No. 29765 to the London Gazette of 26th September, 1916, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by your son, Lieutenant P. W. Chapman, 55th Battalion.

X

X

X

X

AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to confer the Military Cross on the undermentioned officer in recognition of his gallantry and devotion to duty in the field :-

Lieutenant PERCY WELLESLEY CHAPMAN.

For conspicuous gallantry during an action. He repeatedly led bombing attacks along the enemy's trenches and fought them back long enough to enable many of our wounded to reach safety. "

X

X

X

X

The above has been promulgated in Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. 184 of 14th December, 1916.

Yours faithfully,

*W. Mackintosh*  
 Lieut. Major.

for Officer i/c Base Records.

A. W. Chapman Esq.,  
 South Hill,  
 Goulburn, N.S.W.

7 to tell you what little I  
can.

I never met him - he  
was O.C. of A Coy, while  
I was in B - though I  
often saw him with his  
Company on parade when  
out of the trenches.

I should have written  
before, but as I came away  
from the Battalion (with  
slight car trouble) about  
the day after he was  
killed I was not able to  
obtain as full particulars  
as I wished, and he was  
then reported as missing.

I have since had letters from  
some of the Boys, and have  
seen some of those who  
were wounded a week or  
two after I left. One of  
the latter was amongst a

AUSTRALIAN



3<sup>rd</sup> Aus. Aux. Hosp.  
Canford - Kent

RED CROSS

6 May 1917.

Dear Mr Chapman

You will no  
doubt be surprised to hear  
from me, but I want first  
of all to offer you and Mrs  
Chapman and all your  
family my sincere sympathy  
in the death of your son,  
Captain Chapman.

And, since I don't know  
if any of his brother  
Officers, or anyone, has  
written to you with any  
particulars, I feel I ought

3 number told off to bring  
Captain Chapman and another  
officer, and from him I  
was able to gather a fair  
amount of information.

Our Battalion was in  
the front line and support  
trenches for the most part,  
though there were a couple  
of platoons and several  
officers in some dug-outs  
and rest huts in rear of  
the trenches - amongst the  
latter was your boy. One  
morning, about 12<sup>th</sup> March,  
word came back to the rear  
that a Captain Palmer  
had been killed by a shell.  
Captain Chapman, I under-  
stand, volunteered to go  
up the line and take  
his place, and with this  
intention set out during  
the morning. I understand

if he was not again seen and  
word came back in the  
afternoon that he was  
missing - I was in the  
reserves at the time myself  
and heard this report.

A day or so after this  
the Germans retreated from  
their line, and our fellows  
following up found your  
boy in front of what had  
been the German front line  
trench. We were at that  
time in the Somme district,  
just a little to the right of  
Bapaume, in country the  
whole aspect of which had  
been changed by <sup>continual</sup> shell-fire,  
so that it was very difficult  
to find one's way about,  
all land-marks being  
effaced, and it is thought  
that the Captain missed

6 attend to and keep the graves there in order.

If I have harrowed you with too much detail I am sorry; but I think you will understand my motive. The fact that your son was first reported missing may have caused a certain doubt in your mind, and I felt you would rather know the facts.

Captain Chapman was a brave man - in fact I have frequently heard the men refer to him as the "gamest fellow in the Battalion", and I hope the knowledge that he was so may help to soften the weight of your

5

AUSTRALIAN



RED CROSS.

his way (the day was foggy and misty) and, passing through our own front line which was merely a chain of outposts, wandered on to the German line.

I am told he must have been killed instantly and not suffered. He was brought back and buried in the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance ground at a place known as Bernafay Camp on the Longueval Road. It may be some comfort to you to know that the R. M. C.

'1  
trouble.

With kindest regards  
to you all and again  
assuring you of my  
sincere sympathy

I am,

Yours sincerely,

Mumford

Lt Mess.  
No. 9. Camp.  
No. 1. Command Dept  
A. I. F.  
Sutton Veney,  
Via Warminster  
Wiltshire  
England.

17.10.17

Dear Mrs. Chapman

Your letter dated 11th August just received, and I very much regret the loss of your Son Captain Chapman, whose company I was a platoon Sergeant, and I assure you he was very much respected by all ranks of the Company, and I think his loss was a very severe blow to every one of us as he was looked upon by every one in the Battalion as one of the very best Soldiers that ever left Australia, and the boys under his command always had a good word for him as he was so very just in his treatment in regards to crimes when before him, infact the boys respected him so much that they always refered to him as Captain Chappie, and I never heard any one speak a single disrespectful word of him, and I am sure you have the deepest sympathy of all hands who knew him.

I am expecting to leave here to rejoin my Battalion very soon now and I will show your letter to all the boys who are left, I left the Battalion while occupying Bullecourt on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May being wounded in the leg, Trusting this finds you and Family in Good health, and asking you to receive my deepest sympathy. I was speaking to your son only a few minutes before he left our lines on his mission which proved so disastrous, and when he did not return that night I took two lads out with me to see if we could see any signs of our much respected Captain but we had to return with out success very much to our disappointment. When our Battalion advanced some of the lads brought Captain Chapmans remains back to Bernaphy Wood where he was laid to rest beside another of our Captains by name of Captain Palmer who was a great friend of your son. Our Pioneers erected a very nice cross of Wood and a low fence round each grave which I took a small photo of which each which I left with Reg Sgt Major Campbell and he said he would see that one was sent to you which I trust you have received ere this.

I remain  
yours in sympathy.

No. 508. Sgt. Livingstone. S.P.

B. Coy.  
55<sup>th</sup> Bn.  
Battalion

**CAPTAIN P. W. CHAPMAN'S  
DEATH.**

In the last casualty list, amongst the names of those killed, appears that of Captain P. W. (Bob) Chapman, second son of Mr. A. W. Chapman, for many years on the staff of the Lands Office here, and now District Surveyor at Goulburn. The late Captain Chapman spent his boyhood in Orange, and, after a term at Hawkesbury College, was for a time on the land near Forbes. He enlisted about two years ago, as a private, and so distinguished himself that he rapidly rose to the rank of Lieutenant. Some months ago he was awarded the Military Cross, for a particularly fine piece of work in leading a bombing party and holding shattered trenches against a strong attack, and was shortly afterwards promoted to the rank of captain. An old boy of "Wolaroi," his is another bright young life given bravely and cheerfully in the service of his country.