Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

33152 Gunner
Laurence Butler

4th Divisional Ammunition
Column



0660602K

Amu. Col.
4th Div. A.I.F.

BUTLER L. 33152.

"Killed 12.10.17."

Butler a gunner just joined up, was killed in Ypres stunt, on right of Zonnebeke I think, while salvaging limbers at the same time as Billy Richards Cpl. about whom a direct enquiry made by Red Cross to unit, was wounded. I can't say where Butler was buried but he would be.

I knew Butler well, a good boxer and singer and came in same boat A.9 Shropshire leaving, Melbourne 11th May, 1917.

I was told of the casualty by G. Madden who was wounded by same shell, who is now transferred to 4. Cet. Sec. and was with the section quite recently.

I saw one of our Div. same section as Butler, (2nd Sec). who told me that Butler was killed at Chateau Wood between 4 and 5 o'c in the afternoon and thinks he is buried at D/S at Menin Rd., I dont know his name, saw him at Weymouth to-day 27.6.18.

WARand,
London.
15.7.18.
H.G.

Inf. Brunning, S. 33276.
4 D A C
Hut 86,
WESTHAM.

NOTE.
Written Pte. Madden,
15.7.18.

H.

4th D.A.C. A.I.F.

BUTLER.
L. 33152.

"Killed in Action 12.10.17."

Re Gunner Butler. On the 12.10.17 a party of us including Butler were sent up to salvage a wagon on the corduroy road in Chateau Wood just past Ypres. A shell landed amongst us killeding four and wounding five. Butler had his head blown off, and as Fritz was shelling very heavily the remainder of the party had their work cut out to get away the dying and wounded and so Butler, who of course was killed instantaneously, was left there. I myself went to hospital but on my return to the D.A.C. was told that a burial party was sent up next day to bury ~~Buleter~~, but when they got there they found that his body had been removed and buried.

His mates went through his kit and sent any valuables and keepsakes to his relatives in Melbourne. They probably could give you further particulars and I will try and see No. 33147 Gunner J.F.Thomas, 37th Battery, 10th Artillery A.I.F. If I dont see him within the next few days I will write to him and get him to forward you any further details. His other mates 33148 F.Fink and 33149 Roy Maclellan are both in Hospital, Blighty but if you write to either of them, C/o Foy and Gibson, 14 Finsbury St., London E.C.2. I know you will get all particulars as they went up with the burial party. Butler was of small statue but very well built, clean shaven, on the fair side & usually wore glasses.

4th D.A.C. A.I.F.

BUTLER.
L. 33152.2

Inf:- Geoggry Madden,
4th Aust. Mobile Veterenary Section,
Aust. .I.F.
France.

London,
31.7.18.
Note.
Written Maclellan and Fink,
31.7.18.
Gun.Thomas written to 17.7.18.
H.T.

H.

4th Div. Amun. Column. A. I. F. BUTLER L. 33152.

"Killed 12.10.17."

At Hell Fire Corner Passchendaele, Butler and others had gone out to salvage a waggon, date early in Oct. was killed instataneously by H.E. shell. Badly hit-he was buried, but I dont know exact locality. Gunner. Thomas No..... 37th Batty. 10th Brigade, F.A. told me the above - He, Thomas, is still with Batty in France and could give particulars. I knew Butler. Chrisitan name Larry.

Inf. :- Gunner F.W.Rose, 33933.
37th Batty, 10th Brigade,
HAREFIELD.

A.D.G.
London.
17.7.18.
H.G.

NOTE.
Written Gnr. Thomas. H.
17.7.18.

"Killed in Action 12-10-17"

Re 33152 Gnr.L.Butler. I first met Gnr Butler in the Art: reinforcement camp at Maribyrnong, Victoria, when he formed one of our party of six who always lived in the same tent, consequently I became very closely associated with him, and knew him better than most of the other fellows. Subsequently we all left Australia for France together in the same reinforcements, managing to stick together even when sent to France, on October 4th 1917. On October 11th we arrived at the 4th D.A.C. Headquarters, then near Ypres and were allotted to the 2nd Section of the above Unit, next day Friday 12th October, was sent up to an Ammunition Dump in the morning, returning to camp in the evening when I heard that my pal Larry Butler had been killed that afternoon. Later, I obtained full particulars of the occurrence from an eye-witness, and remember of Butler's party, a Geoffery Madden, now in the 4th Divisional Mobile Veterinary Section, who was wounded at the same time. Particulars are as follows:-

Butler was sent with a party of twelve, about 2.p.m. to salvage a broken ammunition wagon, and on arriving at the spot, the party waited for some time in a dug out as the Huns were shelling fairly heavily, when things quieted down, they sallied forth and began to attach ropes to the vehicle when the German Artillery again opened upon on spot with 5-9 inch shells, which fell right in amongst the party, one of the killed, being Larry. Death was instantaneous.

Next morning we went up to bury the poor chaps, but found that some Engineers had done so the same evening, so Butler was buried where he fell and his grave marked by a small cross, with aluminium plate attached giving all his particulars, number, Unit etc. The exact spot is known as Chateau Wood about five kilos from the city of Ypres itself and at the time was an artillery position which was always heavily shelled, it is a well known part of the Ypres front and can be easily found. Owing to the recent German advance there, the front line must run through or very close to the spot, so I should think that the chance of ever again finding poor old Butler's grave is very remote, as the spot is sure to be shelled heavily.

All Larry's personal belongings were collected at the time and sent home to his Mother by Gnr.T.Fink, now in Hospital in England, and whose address is C/O Col.Reay, "Melbourne Herald" 92 Fleet Street, London. he also came away with Butler and knows him even better than I do.

As regards Butler's personal appearance, he was a short thick-set and very muggety , was an excellent boxer, Crsman and had a fine tenor voice - in fact was an allround athelete and a good entertainer. He was at one time employed on the staff of the Melbourne "Herald." At the time of enlistment had a wine and spirit business at South Melbourne, I believe, when we left his Mother resided at Ascot Vale, Melbourne. There is absolutely no doubt as

4th D.A.C.
A.I.F

BUTLER.
L. 33152.

regards his identity, but if you wish you can obtain a verification of these facts from Gnr T.Finak whose address I have given you. Trusting these facts will fully satisfy your enquirers,

Letter from:- 33147.J.F.Thomas,
37th Batty. A.F.A.
Note:- Finak already written 30-7-18. A.I.E.FRANCE.

London.
2-8-18.

M

A.I.F. 4th D.A.C.

BUTLER
L.33152

Killed in action 12.10.17

Buried Hooge Crater Cemetery 2 miles E. of Ypres.
Cert. by A.I.F.Hdqrs List for Capt. Spedding.

London
28.5.19

M

4th D.A.C.

BUTLER,
L. 33152

K. 12/10/17

I did not know casualty well enough to give a description of him but I was with him at the time of his death. He was going up with a salvage party at Limber at Chateau Wood, Menin Road, an H. E. shell exploded a direct hit on the limber, killing casualty instantly, and Gunr. Gott, Gnr. Allgood. He was buried just where he fell and I saw his grave, no cross had been erected up to the time of my leaving.

Walker, J.A.
493 2
Private Address:-
15 Ballarat Street,
BRUNSWICK

T.C.F.
13/6/19

M

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU--MELBOURNE.

12 7 17

Pte. G. Madden

4 Can. Inf. Bde.

(late 4th D.A.C.)

Abroad

a.1.7.

abt.

3315-2

Gnr. L. Butler.

4th D.A.C. a.1.7.

K 12-10-17

12.7.18

a.1.p.

12.7.18.

Gnr. Thomas
37th Bty
10th T.A. Bde. R.F.A.
Abroad

abt.
3312-2
Pte. L. Butler
4th D.A. Column.
R.F.A.
12.10.17

12.7.18.
a.1.p.
W.

14

No. 33148. Lt. J. Finch
c/o Fox & Gibson
14 Finsbury Street
London. E.C. 2.

About
33152 Pte. L. Butler
4th Div. Ammo Col.
A.I.F.

Kv 12.10.17

Written 30.4.18
M.S.7.

HOSPITAL

HARBORNE [illegible]
V. A. D. HOSPITAL, BIRMINGHAM.

INFORMATIO

Fill in exactly as List.	SURNAME.	Christian Name.	Regtl.No.	Ra
	Dibbs	Captain O.B.	45th	

GIVEN

	SURNAME	Christian Name:	Regtl.No.	Ra
	Arnold	Thos Wm	9[illegible]	230

STATEMENT OF

NOTE. *In all cases state fully what informant says he saw or heard and give* ***DATE AND PLACE*** *of occurrence.*

(to be taken in

~~Dibbs~~ Dibbs

I knew Captain ~~Dibbs~~ verywell. I was tra
him at Kiama 70 miles of Sydney.
The Captn was killed by high explosive a
wounded in the head and was killed outri
him at the time but one of my mates (? n
been killed-. I know that the Capt lies
the foot of the railway embarkment. He wa
with other men who fell victims to the hi
a cross could be set up Fritz took the gl
saw Captn Dibble's cross on our limber
(in O.L.) who was killed a few days late
in O.L. was also killed about the same da
I fix the date of Captn Dibbs death as a
1st April because J.A.Littlewood No 366
(O.L.) are reported killed on the 28th M
almost together at night under cover at
men I was wounded in June at Bonnieres
Captn Dibbs was attached to D Coy. 1/[illegible] the Informa

PLEASE ALSO ANSWER

1. Was Informant Eye-Witness?	2. If not, w of the
3. Was the ground held or lost?	4. If Inform (a) was d (b) was th
5. Did Informant know Christian Name, Initials or No. of man enquired about?	6. Was there name in
7. Give Informant's description of man enquired about—any nickname, marks, scars, etc.	
8. *Searcher's opinion of Informant's accuracy and intelligence*	Intelligent well informed but was not clear as to dates!

Reports should always be written very clearly in ink, or typewritten.

Please note the Report includes two other men in and the officer

No. 33149 Lt Roy Maclellan
c/o. Foy & Gibson
14 Finsbury Street
London. E.C. 2

About
33152 Pt L. Butler
4th Div. Amun. Colm
A.S.C.

K 12.10.17

Killed 30.7.18
A.S.C.

HOSPITAL 5 Sowden. Guilin Section, Perth

INFORMATI

Fill in exactly as List.	SURNAME.	Christian Name.	Regtl.No.	Ra
	Smith	G.	5704	P

GIVEN

	SURNAME	Christian Name.	Regtl.No.	Ra
	Lackley	L.T.	5636	P

STATEMENT OF
(to be taken i

NOTE. It will does state fully what informant says he saw or heard and give DATE AND PLACE of occurrence.

3

We were in the large pale
ancre - a portion of a lin
Smith. They took him to
after, & he moved his lim
15 min ~~20~~ minutes previous
15 min only 10 mins: premo
& was a Signaller. //

PLEASE ALSO ANSW

1. Was Informant Eye-Witness?	yes.	2. If no of
3. Was the ground held or lost?	Held.	4. If I (a) (b)
5. Did Informant know Christian Name, Initials or No. of man enquired about?	a. George. b. No.	6. W n
7. Give Informant's description of man enquired about—any nickname, marks, scars, etc.	Short. Rather El	
8. *Searcher's opinion of Informant's accuracy and intelligence*	Very intelligent. Re	

Reports should always be written very clearly in ink, or typewritt

Ack Pte Evans 29.7.18 RJ

1/ C

33152 France.

L Butler 24 July 18.

4 D.A.C

The Secretary Kn A 12.10.17

Enquiry Bureau M

36 Grosvenor Place. 2

London.

Dear Madame,

Your letter re 33152 Gnr L Butler reached me this morning, & I will give you all the information regarding him, indeed I can state that I am one of his most intimate friends & comrades in the artillery.

I first met Gnr Butler in the artillery reinforcement camp at Maribyrnong, Victoria, where he joined one of our batteries. He always liked to be alone & consequently became very closely and

vated with him, and I view him
lighter than most of the other letters.
Subsequently we all left Australia
for France together in the same re-
inforcements, managing to stick
together even when sent to Frame.
on 4th October 1917. On October 11th we
arrived at the 4th D.A.C. Headquarters then
near Ypres, and were allotted to the 2nd
Section of the above unit; next day
Friday 12th October I was sent up to an
ammunition dump in the morn-
ing returning to camp in the evening
when I heard that my pal Jarry
Butler had been killed that after-
noon. Later I obtained full par-
ticulars of the occurrence from
an eyewitness and member of Butler's
party, a Geoffrey Madden now in
the 4th Divisional Mobile Veterinary
Section, who was wounded after

sometime; particulars are as follows:-
Butler was sent with a party of twelve, about 2 p.m. to salvage a stolen ammunition wagon, and on arriving at the spot the party waited for some time in a dugout as the Hun was shelling fairly heavily in the vicinity. Quieter, they sallied forth and began to attach ropes to the vehicle when the German artillery again opened upon the spot with 5.9 shell. One fell right in amongst the party, one of the killed being Larry. Death was instantaneous. At first mention is made of sent up to bury the four chaps, but found that Lord Engineers had been to the same evening, so Butler was buried where he fell and his grave marked by a small cross with aluminium plate attached giving all the particulars, number unit etc.

The exact spot is known as "Plateau Wood" about five kilometres from the city of Ypres itself and at the time was a fairly position which was always heavily shelled, it is a well known part of the Ypres front and can be easily found. Owing to the recent German advance there, the front-line must run thro' very close to the spot, So I should think that the chance of ever again finding poor old Butler's grave is very remote, as the spot is sure to be shelled heavily.

All Larry's personal belongings were collected at the time and sent home to his mother by Lieut. Fink now in hospital in England, and whose address is c/o Col. Kay, Melbourne Herald, 92. Fleet St London, he also came away with Butler and knows him even better than I do.

As regards Butler's personal appearance, he was short, thickset and very nuggety, was an excellent boxer, gymnast and had a fine tenor voice — in fact was an allround athelete and a good entertainer. He was at one time employed on the Staff of the Melbourne "Herald," at the time of enlistment had a wine and spirit business at South Melbourne I believe; when we left his mother resided at Ascot Vale, Melbourne. There is absolutely no doubt as regards his identity but if you wish you can obtain a verification of these facts from Gen J. T. Hurley to whom I have given your address. Trusting these facts will fully satisfy your enquiries, I am

Yours Sincerely

3/31/17. J. F. Thomas, 37th Bty. Aust. Field Art.

Nole. Finke already written 29/7/18 / A. I. F.

Re-103152

Gunner L Butler 19 7 18

4th D.A.C.
A.I.F

33152
L Butler
4th D.A.C.
Kia A 12 10 17
M
2

Note

Written Maclellan & Fink
27 30.7.18