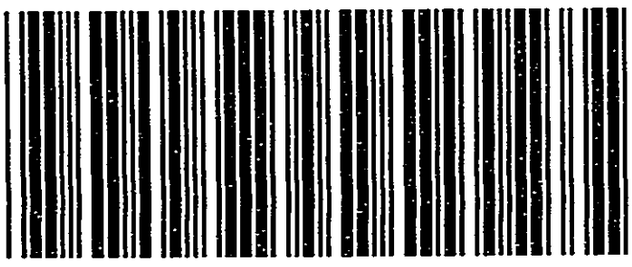
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

25891 Private
Albert Dutfield

57th Battalion



0971008P

A. I. F. 57th Bn.

DUTFIELD, A. 25891. M.March5/18.
HARRIS, G.L. 2044. M.March3/18.
WILSON, E.G. 2269. M.March5/18.

I knew all 3 of the above intimately: they were all in my Plat.(IX) Early in March/18, I cannot remember the exact date, we were together in the trenches under very heavy shell fire. Dutfield, Harris and Wilson were in a group a few yards from me, when I saw a shell burst right on to them and these three, amongst others, were literally blown to pieces. We found the few remains of some but could find no trace of Dutfield, Harris or Wilson, who must have been blown clean out of the trenches. We could not leave the trenches for the next 10 days owing to the heavy shelling.

Reference: W.Legerton, 5125, C.Coy. IX Pl.

No.11 Stationary, Rouen, 2.5.18.

RHS.

57th Battn.
A.I.F.

DUTFIELD
A. 25691

"Missing 5-3-18"

I am afraid that there is not the least chance that Pte.Dutfield, 7 57th Battn. C. Coy.M.Gnr. can be a prisoner. He was on a post in March, in front of Messines, when a Minnewerfer came over. It burst on the post, and practically everyone was killed. He was with his M.G. team there, and was never found. We were in supports to C.Coy. I had been on the post previously, and relieved them again afterwards, when we were given all particulars. I am sorry I can think of no one who can give the Red Cross more news. Those who I kno were with him were killed too. Ground was held.

Eye-witness: No.
Description: East Ham, I believe. Single, with Battn. Dec.4th

Informant. Cross L/Cpl.Walter 2148
(quite intelligent & s med accurate)

Home address:-
31, Brecon Road,
Fulham,
London.

57th Battn. A.Coy. 4th Pltn.,
3rd Southern Gen.Hpl.,
The Base,
OXFORD.

H.M.Pickard-Cambridge
7-5-18
London
15-5-18
7

Off.M.

FRANCE.

57th BATT. A.I.F.

DUTFIELD. A. 25891.

HARRIS. G.L. 2044.

WILSON. B.G. 2269.

~~xMxMarrxxxxxx191~~
M/March 5th.1918

Dutfield was in C.Coy, X Platoon. These three men were in an outpost in advance of the front line at Messines when a shell dropped into the post and all three were blown to pieces; nothing remained of them that was recognisable. I was in a post about 30 yards away from them when it happened. L/Cpl Brewer, C.Coy, IX Platoon, lately gone from hospital to his base, would be able to give ypu all details as he was also in the post at the time of the casualty.

WSI.

Ref ---Pte A.J.Petts. 1760.
No 2 Can. Gen. Hospital.

Le Treport. May 8th.1918

Written L/C Brewer 23.5.18.

A.I.F. 57th Battn.
late 14 F.A.B.

DUTFIELD
A. 25891.

Missing 5/5/18

Dutfield was S/B with Wilson in same post when latter (Eng. Satd. B.G. Wilson 2269 W.A.R.) B. Popplington now with 29 A.S.C. of C Coy., got out of this post and can give full particulars. There were about 9 all told were killed by a miniwerfer at Messines just before we came out the line at Messines. I helped to bury them (there were also, L/C Malcolm, Martmelli, Wise, Dudley, Sergt. King and others whose name I do not recollect) in a cemetery near the Railway line at Wulverghem. Grass was put round the edges and flowers on the grave.

Informant:- 1905, A.E. Gordon,
57th Battn., C Company,
Hut 17, Westha-

NOTE:- Written Pte. Popplington.

W. A. Rand

London

1/6/18.

OFF.M.

A.I.F. 57th Battn.

DUTFIELD
Pte. A.25891

"Missing 5/3/18"

I heard a general report at the time - beginning of March - that Dutfield was blown to pieces by a minnewerfer. This was a stray shell sent over at night time, it killed four or five men, and no trace of Dutfield was found. He was a stretcher-bearer in C Company. This occurred in our trenches to the right of Messines. Ground was held.

Eye-witness:- No.
Description:- Fairish, fairly tall, well-built, was in C Coy.

Informant:- 2000 Walter Dobinson, Cpl., (Rather glib reports
57th Battn., A.I.F., (should be corrobera-
B Coy., VI platton, (ted.
Horton (County of London) War Hospital,
Epsom?

Home address:- Westoe,
Gladesville,
Sydney, New South Wales.

P.L. Waterhouse,
8/6/18
London
18/8/18.

OFF.M.

57th Battn. C.Cc.
A.I.F.

DUTFIELD.
Pte.A. 25891.

"Missing" 5-3-18.

Was S/B to C.Ccy. At Messines about 5th March, night time. German shell fire right on M/G post where Dutfield was, no trace of him found afterwards. Pte Harry Street -- Mc, of C.Cc. Pte Jack Holberg -- Mc , of C.Cc. and two others were the party in post, all were killed and buried in a cemetery back of Messines Ridge. All men of C.Cc say that Dutfield must have been blown to pieces. He was known to have been in the post 5 or 10 mins before shell fell. Description:- tall, about 5 ft, fair, slight clean shaven, age 24/26 years, strong county accent, was an Englishman and always had presentiment that he would be killed. Holberg was married in Tasmania.

Informant:- Pte R.Arnold. 3356.
57th Batt: Co. IX Fl.
WEYMC

A.D.G.
London.
19-6-18.

Off.M.

57th Battn. late
14th F.A.B.
A.I.F.

DUTFIELD
Albert 25891

"Missing 5-3-18"

Re 25891 Pte.A.Dutfield, who was reported Missing on the 5-3-18. We were holding a line of out-posts at Messines, and Dutfield was attached to one of them. During the evening of the 4th, we were heavilty shelled by minerwerfers, one of which landed in the post occupied by Dutfield and others. Four were found to be Missing, and the body of one was found later, but no trace could be found of the other3, and after careful searching we could not discover any clue, so we have come to the conclusion that the 3 were killed outright, perhaps buried. Sometimes it is a job to find anything after a shell or "Minny" has landed. I am afraid I can give you no hope of Dutfield being alive. Description:- About 5'11" high, 12 or 13 stone, fair hair, ruddy complexion, and square shoulders. Any other particulars concerning Pte.Dutfield you might want, let me know and I will endeavour to do my best for you.

Letter from:- Brewer. L/Cpl. D.H.
57th Battn.,
FRANCE. 30-5-18

London
20-6-18

Off.M.

A.I.F. 57th Battn.

DUTFIELD
A. 25891

"Missing 5/3/18"

Dutfield was killed at my side by a Minnewerfer shell about half past ten on the night of the 5th of March at Messines. We were on a machine gun outpost and the shell burst right on the top of the parapet. Dutfield was killed instantaneously being blown to pieces and I was wounded and buried by the same shell. He was in my platoon and was the only man of that name in the Company. He was a Stretcher Bearer, a tall fair chap, who had been in America and then out to Australia and joined up there. His people live in England.

Informant:- 5226 Pte. C. G. Wallis,
57th Battn., C Coy.,
Sutton Veny.

HH

London
21/6/18

OFF.M

57th Batt. A.I.F.

Dutfield.A. Pte. NO.2589I.

C.Coy.

Missing March 5th 1918.

I saw him killed instantly by a shell, whilst we were in front of Warneton, he was blown to pieces. It would be impossible to bury him. I knew him well in the coy, He came from Melbourne, His people live in England.

Description. Age. 27. Height. 5-10. Complexion. Fair. Well Built.

Witness. L,Cpl. Hannan,W,J. NO.5102. C.Coy. 57th Batt.

Taken at
NO.4.C.D.Hurdcott.
22-4-18.
F.G.H.

S.Whitmee
NO.4.Comm.. Dept
Hurdcott.

57th A.I.F.

Dutfield A 25891.

(M. March 5th 1918. Dets. D/B)

"Dutfield was in C. Coy.
I saw him killed by a shell about 20 yards away early in March in Messines. He was killed outright. There was no opportunity for burial."

Eye witness: Yes.

Description:

Informant: L.C. Richards 2724,
57th A.I.F., C Coy. 12 Pltn.,
Red Cross Hospital, Hetley.

22.6.18.
G.R.B.

57th Battn.
A.I.F.

DUTFIELD
A. 25891

"Missing 5-8-18"

Behind Kemmel, at Stinking Farm, was in C.Coy. In March, not sure of date, we were in locality from Jan. to end of March. Dutfield was killed by shell instantaneously, in evening, badly smashed in head and body. He was on outpost duty at time. I did not see him killed, but immediately after. We were at the time holding lines and making roads. I was about 500 yds. off him when he was killed. Buried in same Cemetery as Pte.J.F.V.Featherstone 3149 (Military Cemetery). I was at burial, Cross erected, and Padre read the service.

Informant. Smith. Pte.O.W.
57th Battn. C.Coy. 10th Pltn.
WEYMOUTH.

A.D.G.
London
24-6-18
H.G.

Off.M.

57th Inf Battn.
late 14th F.A.B.
A.I.F.

DUTFIELD.
A. 25891.

"Missing" 5-3-18.

Re Pte Dutfield. I am afraid the information I can give you will not be of much use. Briefly it is this, Pte A.Dutfield enlisted in Sydney, was born in London and was for some period a sailor. I do not know his number but he was tall - I should think about 5 ft 9 ins, rather slight build and dark complexion. When last seen he was on an outpost with 3 others at Messines. A Minniewerfer caught the post annihilating it andpresumably killing the 4 of them as only one was recognisable, and two were not recovered from which of course you can draw your own conclusions. There is not the slightest doubt but what he was blown to pieces. His mother, I am told, lives in London. I did not know him personally but saw him now and again. This is about all I can tell you hoping it will be of some use. I can not swear to some of the statements above, as they were given to me.

Letter from:- Beckingham.W.E.
FRANCE.

London.
24-6-18

M.A.

Dutfield

57th Battn.
A.I.F.

~~DUTFIELD.~~
Albert. 25891.

"Missing 5-3-18"

On the Messines sector left of Warneton the Boche raided one of the 57th Battn posts about 2.a.m. Dutfield was a stretcher bearer and standing to - when a shell landed in our midst - wounding me and killing Dutfield. This I know because the S/Bs who attended me said "You are lucky, because Dutfield was killed". Probably he was blown to pieces.

Informant:- Ward.E.D.4469.
57th Battn.A.I.F.C.Jc.
SOUTHALL.

T.St.J.F...
London.
2-7-18.
M.I.5.

M.A.

A.I.F. 57th Battn

DUTFIELD
Albert
25891

"MISSING 5.5.18"

Killed in Action 5.5.18 Previously reported Missing 5.5.18
Cert. by A.I.F.Hqrs 30.8.18

London
11.9.18

P.I.
OFF.H.

1988/1/16

HRE.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON.

C O P Y.

Statement made by No. 5102 L/Cpl. HANNAN W.J. 57th Bn. A.I.F.
re No. 2589 Pte DUTFIELD A. 57th Bn. A.I.F.

W. A. ~~Missing~~ 5.3.18.

About the 5th March 1918 "C" Coy. 57th Battalion was holding the line at MESSINES opposite WARNETON. No 2589 Pte Dutfield wa s a member of the same Platoon as myself viz. 9th and was stationed in a "Post" about 50 yards in front of where I was.

About 11 p.m. a "Minnenwerfer" shell dropped in the "Post". I with others went forward to bring in the wounded but only found 2 wounded men. The remains one dead man were found the following morning but no trac Pte Dutfield and 2 others (Privates Harris and Wilson)

It was a direct hit on the Post and I am of the opinion that these 3 men were blown to pieces.

Dated at No. 3 Camp Parkhouse.

(Sgd) W.J. HANNAN L/Cpl.

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) O.J. WOOD. Lieut.
A.H.G. 1st Div.

P. 1

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. 4ARC/1984/1/16.

C O P Y

Statement made by No.5226 Pte WALLIS.C.G.57th Btn.

re No.25891 Pte DUTFIELD.A. 57th Btn.
K.A ~~Missing~~ 5.3.18.

On the night of the 5th March, 1918, No. 25891 Private Dutfield A. 57th Battalion, and I were on an outpost at Messines, and at about 10.30. a Minenwerfer came over and blew the post out, and No.25891 Private Dutfield A. 57th Battalion, was killed instantaneously, and that was the last I saw of him.

Dated at No.1.Command Depot. for Red Cross

(SGD). C.G. WALLIS

Statement madeand signed before me

(SGD). R. DOOLEY.
Lieut & Adjutant.
No.1.Command Depot.AIF.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. 1984/1/16

C O P Y.

STATEMENT MADE BY No 2469 Pte WARD H.D. 57th Bn.,
re No 25891Pte DUTFIELD A. 57th Battalion.

K A ~~Missing~~ 5.3.18.

On the morning of the 5th (Fifth) of March the enemy raided one of our posts and the above-named soldier was next to me in the trench. He was stretcher bearing at the time, when a shell landed amongst us, and I did not remember anything for about 5 (five) minutes, after when one of the stretcher bearers told me that I was the only one alive Dutfield being killed, probably blown to pieces, and the[illegible]d me I was the only one come out of it.

I was talking to him just before the shell landed and I have seen some of the boys and they say he was blown to pieces.

Dated at, Southall, (Sgd) H.D. WARD.

Statement made and signed before me. (Sgd) J. McMillan Lt.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. IS.

4AEC/1984/L/16.

C O P Y

Statement made by No.3348 Pte Arnott R. 57th Btn.

re No.25891 Pte Dutfield A. 57th Btn.
K.A. ~~Missing~~ 5.3.18.

Of my knowledge No.25891 Private Dutfield A. 57th Battalion, was a stretcher bearer in the 57th Battalion.

He was on duty at Messines in a machine gun post about 70 yards in front of the main line.

The enemy was shelling heavily at the time and No 25891 Private Dutfield was blown to pieces. I did not actually see the body.

Dated at PARKHOUSE.

(SGD). R. Arnott.

Statement made and signed before me (SGD). Gerlad M. CARR. Captain.

ORIGINAL 37 TUNNEL SCHELDE 1984/1/16

COPY

Statement made by No 1760 Pte Petts A.J. 57th Btn

re 25891 Pte Dutfield A. 57th Btn
K.A. ~~Missing~~ 5.3.18.

I was with Reg No 25891 Private Dutfield in a Machine Gun Section attached to C.Company of the 57th Battalion. Private Dutfield was stationed on No 15 post near Messines on about 5.3.18.. When he was blown to pieces by a Minnenwerfer, but the remains were so much shattered that they could not be indentified although it is certain he was killed.

Not Lead on
C. J. E. A.

Dated at War Hosp Duston. (SGD) A...Petts

Statement made and signed before me

(SGD) H.F. Gutchell
Capt R.A.M.C.

A Bel K. P. I.

C O P Y

Statement made by No.2000 cpl.DOBINSON.W. 57th Btn.

re No.25891 Pte DUTFIELD.A. 57th Btn.
K.A. ~~MISSING~~ 5.3.18.

On the 5.3.18. the 57th Battalion were holding part of the line between Messines and Warlincourt and after dusk the enemy shelled the company line with "Monnies" and one had the luck to fall in the post that Private Dutfield was in. a number of the lads were buried and killed, but we could find no trace of Private Dutfield after we had dug the others lads out.

Dated at Horton Co.of London War Hospital. EPSOM.

(SGD). W. DOBINSON.

Statement made and signed before me

(SGD). R. OTLEY.
Major.
R.A.M.C.

57th Battn.

DUTFIELD, A.
25891

K. 5/3/18

I knew Casualty, he was a tall man, well built fair complexion about 28 years of age, known as Duff. Casualty was in a strong post at Messines Ridge. A Minnie Werfer exploded a direct hit on casualty, killing him instantly. I was standing up and I saw the shell explode and was wounded by the same shell. He was so severely knocked about that we were not able to bury him. The man alongside of him was blown forty yards.

Schlatterlein, J. A.
3602
Private Address:-
[illegible]ey Street,
BENDIGO.

T.C.F.
6/6/19.

P.1

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU—MELBOURNE.

57th Btn.

DUTFIELD, A.
Pte. No. 25891

Kld. in act. 5.3.16

"I knew Casualty. He was a tall man, well built, fair complexion about 24 years of age. Was an Englishman. Casualty was acting Stretcher Bearer at Messines Ridge. A minenwerfer exploded near him killing him instantly with one other. I went over and had a look at him. He was severely wounded all over."

Informant:- C.S.M. A.G. Harris.
No. 1959

Private address
A'beckett Street,
City.
about 7 or 8 doors from Queen St.

T.C.F.
23.5.19.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

57th Battn.

DUTFIELD,
A. 25891

K. 5/3/18

I knew casualty, he was a well built man, 6'5" tall, fair complexion, about 25 years of age. Casualty was in the front line at Messines. He was on a Machine Gun at the time of his death, when a Minnywerfer landed into the post, killing him instantly. He was badly knocked about. I saw his body in the post. He was buried just in rear of the line. A cross was erected over the grave, with his name, number and unit on it.

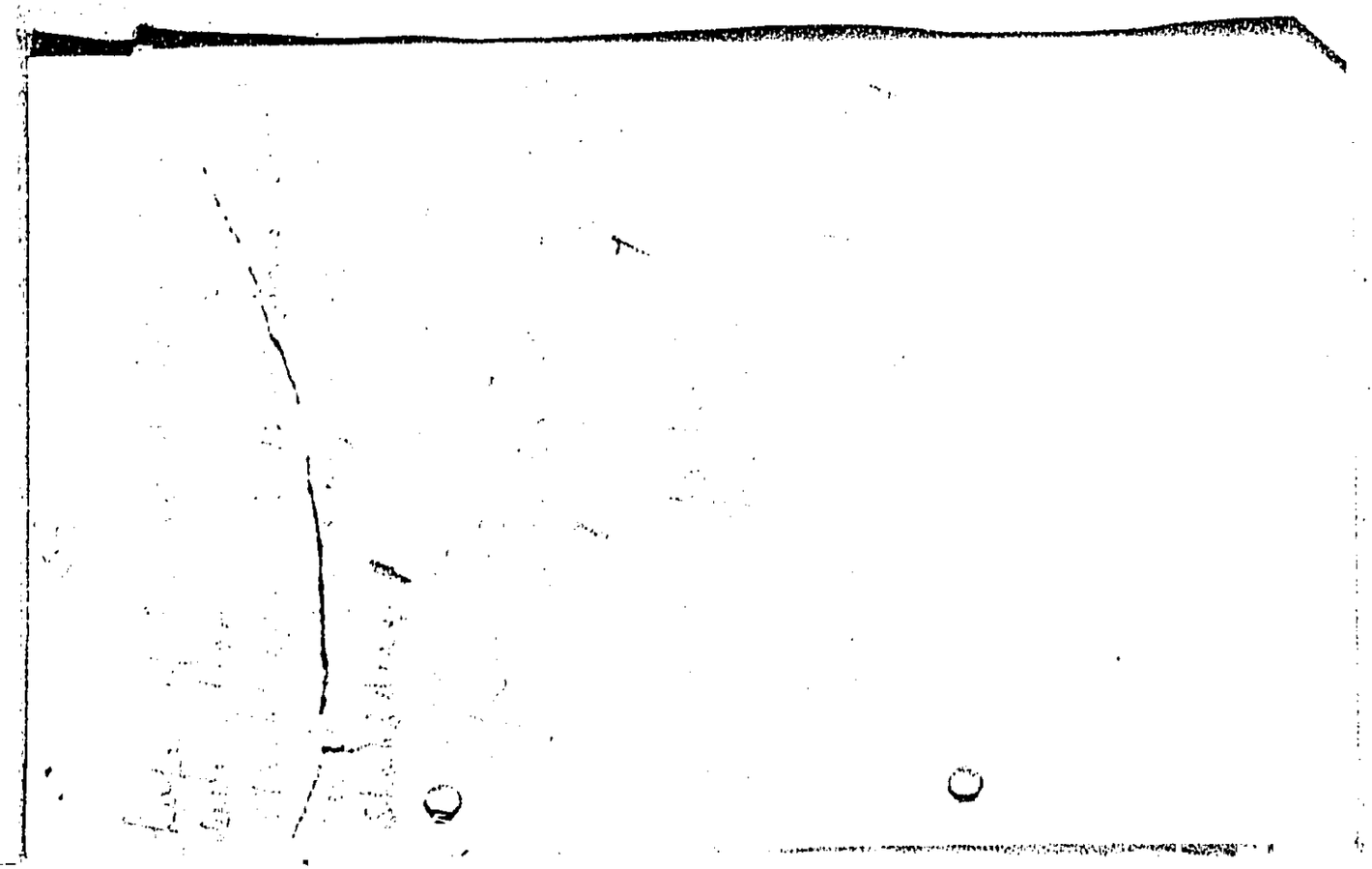
WILCOCK,
C. 2536

Private Address:-
Pascoe Street,
LONG GULLY,
Bendigo.

N.A.T.
4/7/19.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

2589
Albert Dietfield
57th Batty Calc 114th Y A B
M 5-3-18



Adutchpc 22.6.18 N.Z.

France (Cd)
12/6/18
25891 A DUTFIELD
57th Inf Bde
late 14 FAB
M. 5/3/18

To the Secretary
Enquiry Bureau
Australian Imperial Force
Melbourne

57th Late 14 FAB

Dear Sir,

Re enquiry concerning the late Driv. Dutfield to hand, & I am afraid the information I can give you will not be of much use, briefly it is this. Driv. C. Dutfield enlisted in Sydney was born in London & was for some, School a Sailor. I do not know his records, but he was tall & about, think about 5ft 9 inches, Regt. build & dark complexion. When last seen he was on an outpost with Gaiters at Messines. A minnenwerfer caught the post annihilating it & presumably killing the 4 of them & only one, was recognisable & he was not recovered from craters of course you can draw your own conclusions. This is the 1st the August days, before he was blown to pieces the months I am told lives in London. I did not know him personally but saw him now & again. This is about all I can tell you hoping it will be of some use, I can not recall to some of the Platements about as they were to me.

Yours Sincerely
W. F. Rutherford

Address
12/6/18
25891 A DUFFIELD
57th Inf Bde
M. 5/3/18
Camp Lewis

To the Secretary
Emergency Service Club 14 FAB

57th Inf Bde 14 FAB

Re Inquiry concerning the date
of Pvt. Duffield to hand, he I am
sorry that the information we can
give you will not be of much
use. Pvt. Duffield enlisted on May 5th
1917 he was in training at camp Lewis
Wash. for one month, he then went
overseas with Co. M. 363rd Inf. 91st Div
Later was transferred to the 57th
Inf. Bde. 14th F.A.B. Pvt. Duffield
was accidentally killed on
Dec. 6th 1918 by a train
at Bordeaux France. He was buried
there in the American Cemetery
at Lebourne. Should you desire
further information in regard to
this matter we shall be glad to
furnish it if possible.

Sincerely
Capt. E. Rockenplatz

out 16.8.18.

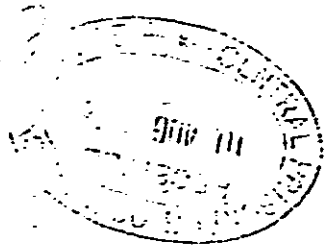
199 Green Street
Forest Gate. E.7
9.8.1918

Dear Sir

I am writing to ask if you could give me any assistance to acertain whether my Son is a prisoner of War. He is reported as missing on March 5th 1918. His description is tall & fair Private A Dutfield No. 25891. C. Company, 5th Lewis Machine Gun Section. Australian Imp. Force. Was acting as stretcher Bearer at Messines on that night at 10 O. Clock.
any tidings would be thankfully welcomed by his anxious & heart-broken Mother

Gertrude May.

Age 24 years next month.
Could you advise me of any address of Red Cross Society where information is likely to be gleaned. By so doing you would Render me a great service at the same time



CENTRAL PRISONERS OF WAR COMMITTEE,

BRITISH RED CROSS AND ORDER OF ST. JOHN.

TELEGRAMS: PRISONERS, SOUTH KENSINGTON, LONDON.

PHONE: KENSINGTON 7040.

4, THURLOE PLACE,
LONDON, S.W. 7

Records. August 13th 1918.

With the Secretary's Compliments.

The Australian Red Cross.

August 17th, 1918.

Mrs. Gertrude May.
199 Green Street.
Forest Gate. E.7.

Dear Madam.

Your enquiry for your son -

25891 Pte. ALBERT DUTFIELD . 57th Battalion. A.I.F.

has been handed to us by the Central Prisoners of War Committee as we conduct all enquiries for Australian soldiers. From the nature of the reports which we append we fear that there is no doubt but that your son was killed on 5-3-18 although we would emphasise the purely unofficial nature of the evidence upon which our conclusion is based and would point out that he is still reported officially as Missing.

2148 L/Cpl.W.Cross when interviewed in the 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford on 7-5-18 stated that he afraid that there is no hope of Pte. Dutfield being a prisoner. He was on duty at a post in front of Messines on 5-3-18 when a minnewerfer exploded almost on top of it, killing all of them in the post. The ground was held but they did not recover their bodies. This report is confirmed by L/Cpl. D.H. Brewer who wrote to us from the unit. He stated that they were holding a line of outposts at Messines and Pte. Dutfield was attached to one of them. During the evening of 4-3-18 they were heavily shelled by minnewerfers, one of which fell in the post occupied by Pte. Dutfield and others, killing them all instantaneously. Careful search was made but they failed to discover any trace of them and concluded that they had been buried by the explosion of the shell. He added "I'm afraid I can give you no hope of Pte. Dutfield being alive."

5226 Pte.C.G.Wallis when at No 1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny stated that Pte. Dutfield was killed at his side by a minnewerfer shell about 10-30 p.m. when they were on a machine gun outpost - at Messines. The shell burst on top of the parapet - killing him instantaneously and wounding informant who adds that Pte. Dutfield who was a stretcher bearer was tall and fair and he had been in

America for some time before going to Australia. This evidence is corroborated in all particulars by several others of the unit and we fear that there is little hope of your s being alive for so many months have elapsed since his casualty occurred. None of the informants suggest that he may have been taken Prisoner and we feel that were he in Germany he would have advised you by now.

Should we receive further details of your son's casualty we shall immediately advise you as we realise how anxious you must be.

With our sincere sympathy and regretting that our evidence is of such a distressing nature.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss) [illegible].

Secretary.

September 13th, 1918.

Mrs. Gretrude May.
199 Green Street.
Forest Gate. E.

Dear Madam.

We deeply regret to inform you that as we feared from the nature of the unofficial evidence already sent you.

25891 Pte. A.DUTFIELD. 57th Battalion. A.I.F

is now reported officially as Killed in Action on 5-3-18, having been reported previously as Missing on that date.

With our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Secretary.

September 18th 1919.

Mrs Gertrude Way.
129, Green Street.
Forest Gate. E.7.

Dear Madam,

With further reference to your enquiry for your Son 25891 Pte Albert Duffield, 57th Bttn A.I.F., killed in action 5.3.18. We beg to forward you an unofficial report from 2536 C.Wilcock who has returned to Australia. He said he knew Casulaty he being a well built man, about 6Ft 5ins, fair complexion 25 years of age. He was on Machine Guns in the front line at Messines- death was instantaneous. He was buried just in the rear of the line at Messines Ridge. A cross was erected over the grave with his name, number and unit on it.

We regret not having official information to send you but we feel it will be a little comfort to know his grave is marked and the spot known.

With sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully.
(Miss).

SECRETARY.