

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

2256 Gunner
William Goodrich
Downie

8th Field Artillery Brigade



0950512M

Havre

15th February 1918.

8th A.F.A.

Downie W.G. No. 2256.

K. 4th Octr 1917. Det D/B.

I was told by Corporal Morey on the 6th Octr when we were with the Battery at Passchendaele that he went out in charge of a party to put down telephone wires near Zonnebeke on the 4th Octr of which Party Downie was one. As they were returning, Downie was a little way behind. A shell burst, and looking round they saw Downie lying dead. A heavy barrage then began from the Germans, so they rushed back to the battery leaving Downie. His body was never recovered. The infantry made an attack on that line but ~~xxx~~ had to come back, so that Downie would be left in No Man's Land. I knew Downie well, he was a quiet chap, sharp featured, fair haired, slight build, clean shaven. He came from Melbourne at the time of enlistment he worked on the Malvern (Victoria) tramway system with my brother. Downie was the only man out of our own battery that we never buried.

Inf:- Driver F.L.Hall No.19915.

8th A.F.A.

Australian Camp. Rouelles.

Taken from Slip

OWS. Written Cpl. Morey 28.3.18.

M

8th Bgde
31st Batty.
A.F.A.

DOWNIE,
W.G. 2256

"Killed 4.10.17."

Refer to Bdr.R.Bigwood, 31st Batty, who is now in France, he saw him killed and can give full details of death and burial.

Informant:- Gnr.D.Crawford, 31093,
31st Batty, 8th Bgde,
3.A.A.H.
Dartford

W.Oman.

London.
12.3.18.

NOTE *Written Bdr. Bigwood*
12.3.18

M.

A.F.A. 31 Bty. 8 Bde.

Downie. Gnr. W.G. 2256.

(K. Oct. 4/17.)
Dets. D/B.

"I knew Downie, he and Gnr. J. Roberts were mates. Downie volunteered to go over in place of another man so as to be with Roberts, they were in the Signallers. When they came back Roberts reported that Downie had been killed instantly with a shell. It was near Passchendaele. Roberts was with the Unit when I left wounded on April 19th and could give full details - Side of Passchendaele on Oct. 4/1917."

Eyewitness: No. Told by: Gnr. J. Roberts 31 Bty. 8 Bde.
A.F.A. B.E.F.

Description:

Informant: Dvr. J.A. Neal. 20366.
A.F.A. 31 Bty. 8 Bde.
Hammersmith Military Orthopaedic Hos:
Shepherds Bush.

Home address:

27/4/18.
A. Hoare-Ward.

MCA 2011

8th Bgde,
31st Bty.
A.F.A.

Downie.
W.G. 2256

"Killed in Action 4.10.17"

He was killed on the morning of October 4th 1917 at Ypres. He was buried on the battlefield and, as far as I know, his grave as yet has not been registered. His personal appearance herewith as follows:-
Hair, fair to medium, straight, eye-brows, light, separated over nose, eyes, light, features, pointed, growth of beard, heavy, but clean shaven, complexion, fair, build, slight, height about 5'7".
Circumstances regarding his death - He was one of the personnel of Artillery Liaison Party who volunteered to go over the top with the Infantry on the attack of the morning of the 4th. In returning from the enemy's lines with information, he was instantaneously killed by shell fire. His chum saw him fall and went to him, but found that he was dead. A piece of the bursting shell having gone through the brain. I can only conclude these few line of information with my own personal knowledge that W.G. Downie gave his life - like a brave honourable soldier that he was - for his King & Country. He was loved and respected by all of us. His comrades and I feel sure that had he lived he would have been decorated for his gallant work and bravery that memorable day.

Letter from:- R. Bigwood 19940

31st Batty. A.F.A.

Belgium. 17.3.18.

London.

27.3.18.

M.

FRANCE. C

AUST F.ART. 8 BDE.

DOWNIE. W.G. 2256.

K. Oct 4th. 1917. Det.

Bill Downie was in the 31st Battery and was a signaller; he was killed in October at Ypres. He was rather sick at the time, but he volunteered to go to keep up communications as the infantry advanced. One signaller went from each battery with an officer. None of them came back but we learnt that they were killed. Downie was the only man of our battery whom we could not carry back and bury. But since he was up with the infantry they would bury him.

JNA.

Ref ---Gunner Bunkum. 20916.
No 16 Gen. Hospital.

Le Treport. April 10th. 1918. M

8th F.A.B.

Downie.

W.G. 2256

Downey.

W.K. 29453

"Killed in Action 4.10.17"

Your letter of the 7th inst., addressed to J.E.Roberts just arrived so I opened same thinking it may be for me. There was never a man in this battery of the number and name you mention. I can give you some information about 2256 W.G.Downie of this unit killed 4.10.17, if he is the one you are enquiring about. I wrote to his wife soon after it happened so that I rather fancy he is not the one you mean. If he is, well you let me know and I will tell you all I can. There is no J.E.Roberts in this unit, but I believe there was some 2 years or so ago. I don't know what unit he is in now, our letters used to get mixed up but as there has not been any coming for him for some time, I opened this one thinking it was for me.

Letter from:- E.J.S.Roberts

London.

B.E.F. 12.2.18.

M

25.2.18.

Note Our enquiry to Gnr.Roberts was for 29453 Will.Karlin Downey 7th Bty. but his reply refers to 2256 W.G.Downie 8th F.A.B.

A.I.F. 8th F.A.B.

DOWNIE
W.G. 2256

Killed in action 4.10.17

Buried Polygon Wood, Sheet 28 N.E.
Cert. by A.I.F. Hdqrs List for Capt. Spedding.

London
31.5.19

M

ack L.P.C. 25 1318

Information regarding Death Etc of.

Belgium

2256 W. G. DOWNIE

31st BTY.

8th F.A.B.

A.I.F.

Sunday March 17th 1918

2256

W. G. DOWNIE

8 F.A.B.

12/A 4-10-17

m
3

To, the Secretary of W.M.
Inquiry Bureau A.R.C.S.
From 19940 Cdr R. Bigwood.

31st BTY.

A.F.A.

A.I.F.

Dear Miss

It is with honor and sympathy that I endeavour to give you information of our fallen comrade Gunner W. G. Downie. He was killed on the morning of October 4th 1917 at "Ypres".

He was buried "on the Battle field" and as far as I know his grave, as yet, has not been registered.

His personal appearance herewith as follows:-
Hair: Fair to medium straight
Eyebrows: Light separated over nose
Eyes: Light
Features: pointed.
Growth of Beard: heavy But clean shaven
Complexion: Fair
Build: slight. Height: About 5ft 7"

Circumstances regarding his death,
he was one of the personnel of an
Artillery ~~Detachment~~ Party who volunteered
to go over the Top with the Infantry
on the attack of the morning of the 4th ~~th~~
On returning from the Enemy's Lines

W. G. DOWNIE
of
10th A Coy
1st Div
A.I.F.

with information, he was instantane-
ously killed by shell fire.

His comrade saw him fall and went
to him, but found that he was
dead; a piece of the Bursting Shell
having gone through the Brain.

I can only conclude these few lines
of information with my own
personal knowledge that W. G.
DOWNIE gave his life - like a brave
honorable Soldier that he was - for

his King & Country.

He was loved & respected by all
of us in his Comrades; and I feel
sure that had he lived he would
have been decorated for his gallant work
and Bravery that memorable day. //