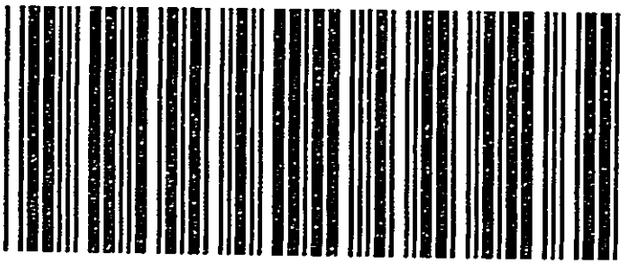
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

Captain
Harold Dench

38th Battalion



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38th. Battn. Dench, Capt. H.

K. 24/8/18.

I saw Capt. Dench killed instantaneously, about 10 o'clock one night by a M.G. bullet, while he was sitting on top of a trench in the Corbie section talking to some of us. The bullet hit him on the head penetrating the forehead. I saw his grave situated in a field about 3 miles from Corbie, several others, including Sgt. Issell and Sgt. Fraser were buried at the same place. Up to the time I left no cross had been erected.

38th. Battn. Willis, R.A.P. Cpl. 2156.

A. 3. Dartford. 24/10/18.

R.D.B.

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

DENCH
H. Capt.

"KILLED 24-8-18"

I saw Capt. Dench hit by an enemy aeroplane bomb at Villers Bretonneux and killed instantaneously. Three others were killed with him. I helped collect the parts of the body of Capt. Dench and left it in charge of the Stretcher Bearers. This was about Aug.10/18. I don't know anything of burial. He was tall and dark, rather stout, well built. The ground was held.

Informant - Anderson.Pte.R.F. 1784
(Intelligent)
38th Battn.
Princess Christian Hosp.
WEYMOUTH.

Home Address:-
31 May Road.
Toorak
Victoria

C.Stephenson
17-10-18
London
31-10-18
H.G.

This report is incorrect
Lieut Barber
38th Batt
London 20-11-18
H.

38th Battn. A.I.F.

DENCH.
Capt.H.

C

Killed in Action 24.8.18.

He was in C.Coy, and I saw him killed on the left of Bray when death was instantaneous, he being hit, by a machine gun bullet in the heart. Casualty happened about 7.30 a.m. at which time he was pushing forward to a post. Lieut. Barker was wounded at the same time by a machine gun bullet in chest. Capt.Dench has a brother a Doctor in London, and he was a very fine officer, being well liked by everyone. I assisted to carry him to dressing station two miles in rear, but cannot give any details of burial.

Infomant:- Pte.McDonald A.1883.
C.Coy., 38th Battn.,
3rd A.A.H.Dartford.

W.Oman,
24.10.18.
London,
31.10.18.
J.E.A.

M.

Mentioned in previous report as Lt.Col.Hurrey.

C

This report is correct
Lieut Barker
38 Battn
29-11-18

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

DENCH.
Capt. H.

"Killed in Action 24-8-18"

At Bray, killed by a sniper. The 58th Division of English troops on our left were driven back and the Captain with a platoon went to give a hand to them. He was hit in head and killed instantly. The same bullet wounded Lieut Barker. I saw the Capt killed. He made a name for himself and was well liked.

Interment:- Lewis.J.C.1228.
W.39.HAREFIELD.

D.P.Dickson.
London.
5-11-18.
H.G.

Note:- Written Lieut Barker 23-10-18. H.

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

DENCH
Capt. H.

"KILLED 24-8-18"

He and I were crossing between two posts during a German attempt to counter-attack the English Brigade on our left, who had given ground. The exact spot was between 2 chalk pits on the fork of the road on high ground just to the north of Bray. The bullet hit me and I collapsed and I did not know that Capt. Dench had been killed until a Stretcher Bearer who was lifting me on to the stretcher asked if Capt. Dench were quite dead. Afterwards at Wandsworth, Lieut. Baxter of my Coy. who was watching us at the time, told me the same bullet hit both of us.

He was a very ~~very~~ popular man - the best Company Commander I ever had - a fine chap in every way. I believe that it was a sniper's bullet that hit us. The report given by 1784 Anderson is quite incorrect, but those of Woods, Shields, McDonald, and Lewis are correct. Cpl. Willis's report refers to Capt. Selleck.

Informant - Barker.Lieut.
38th Battn.

London
28-11-18
H.G.

H.

A.I.F. 38th Battn. DENCH
H. Capt.

"Killed 24.8.18."

On August 24th we were to the left of Bray, on the Somme. The Tommies were on our left, and having lost their Officers, Captain Dench went over to re-organise them. He got sniped through the heart, and Lieut. Barker of C. Coy, who went with him, got badly wounded, and may be able to give information. Captain Dench was buried not far from where he fell. We went forward next day. He was O.C. of C. Coy. He had not been with us long, and had taken Captain Sellick's place. I was an eye-witness. Description:- Medium height and build, rather sandy, about 30.

Informant:- 3383 Pte. V.H.L. Dunn, (Intelligent and reliable)
38th Battn.
C. Coy, 11thPltn.
5th Sth. Gen. Hpl,
Milton Sect.
Portsmouth.

Home address:-
Evandale,
Mitchell Street,
Northcote,
Victoria.

M.

E.C. Hughes.
London
4.12.18.
H.G

38th Btn.

BENCH, H. Captn.

K.in act. 24/8/18

"I knew Casualty. He was a tall man, about 5'10", well built, fair complexion, about 35 yeers of age. Known as "Harry". Casualty was on Outpost Duty near Bray. He was sniped by a Rifle Bullet which entered his Left breast, killing him instantly. I was 100 yds. away at the time of his death, and I saw his body immediately afterwards lying out in the open. He was carried back to near Hammell and I do not know the exact spot he was buried."

Informant:- Pte.E.G. Swinston,
No.2400 38th Btn.

Private address:-
P.O. Greenhill.
T.C.F. Vic.
6/3/19

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU - MELBOURNE.

38th Btn.

DEICH, H.
Captn.

K.in act. 24/8/18

"I knew Casualty. He was a tall man, about 5'10½, well built, medium complexion, about 30 years of age. Casualty was going from Co. H.Q. to his post on the Left of Bray. He was hit by a bullet which entered his left breast, killing him instantly. I was a Stretcher Bearer and was 80 yds. away from Casualty at the time of his death, and I was attending to another Officer who was lying near Casualty and I had a look at him but he was quite dead. I do not know where he was buried."

Informant:- Pte. D.T. Hull,
No. 904 38th Btn.

Private address:-
79 Gold St.,
Collingwood.

I.C.F.
6/3/19

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

38th Btn.
late 10th L.T. Mtr. Bty.

DENCH, H.
CAPT.

Killed in action 24/8/18.

Killed at BRAY-Sur-Somme 24/8/18. Killed by Machine Gun Bullet during attack on enemy. Cannot say where buried.

5 ft. 7, about 32 years of age, clean shaven, medium build.

Informant:- W. J. Trevaskis,
No. 1313, Cpy. Clerk. D. Co.
38th Battn.

Private address:-
James Street,
Box Hill.

E 19/6/19

M d Suff

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

A.I.F. 38th Battn. Captain Dench.H.

"Killed 24/8/18."

Bray just to north of Railway line, killed by sniper, the same bullet wounded Lieut. Barker and went into Captain Dench's heart. I was in charge of the burial party and we buried him in a small cemetry north of Bray. Small V. Cross up then.

Informant:- 3442, Shields,
Ward 34,
Harefield.

D.P. Dickson,
London
30/10/18.
F.E.A.

M.

This report is correct
Lieut Barker
38 Battn
28-11-18

Havre.

26th. October. 1918.

38th. Australians. Dench, Captain, H.

K. August. 24/1918. Dets. D/B.

In C. Company in Command. I saw his body being carried out from our front line at Bray about August 24th. 1918. on a Stretcher by the Company S/Bearers to B.H.Q. I do not know where he is buried. We held the ground.

Inf:- Private. D. A. Woods. 2991.
38th. Australians. C. 10.
Australian Camp.
Rouelles.

RDM.

CP.

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

DENCH
Capt. H.

"Killed 24-8-18"

He was in C.Coy., and I saw him killed near Bray, when death was instantaneous, he being hit by a bullet in the chest. Casualty heppened about 1 p.m. on 24-8-18 at which time he was returning from an outpost. He was very popular with the boys. I did not see his grave, and we were relieved that night. Refer to Lt.Col.Hurrey, 38th Battn., who is now in France, for he will know of burial.

Informant. Gould. Pte.C.W. 891
C.Coy. Hqts. 38th Battn.,
3rd A.A.H.,
DARTFORD.

W.Oman
London
24-10-18
H.G.

M.

38th Battn.
A.I.F.

DENCH
Capt. H.

"Killed 24-8-18"

He was O.C. of C.Coy., and I saw him killed near Bray, when death was instantaneous, he being shot through the heart by a sniper. Casualty happened early in the morning of 24-8-18, at which time he was in action reorganising the Battn. after a German counter attack. He was very popular with the boys, and came from Victoria. I saw his grave near Bray, on the field, close to dressing station. I erected the Cross upon his grave, and Cross has full details marked thereon.

Informant. Feder. Cpl.F. 1832
C.Coy. 38th Battn.,
3rd A.A.H.,
DARTFORD.

W.Oman
London
24-10-18
H.G.

M.

38th Battn. Dench Capt H.

K Aug 24/18 Det D/N.

I saw him fall hit by M. G. Bullet in the chest at Curlu (?) near Villiers Bretonneaux about 10 a.m. He and another officer, whose name I cannot remember, were leading our platoon and some tommies when the same bullet got them both. He was a game soldier and was well known, coming from Victoria. I know nothing about his burial.

2645 L/Cpl E. A. G. Smith, D coy , 38th Battn.
Dartford 22/10/18.

N. B. P.

M.

J. E.