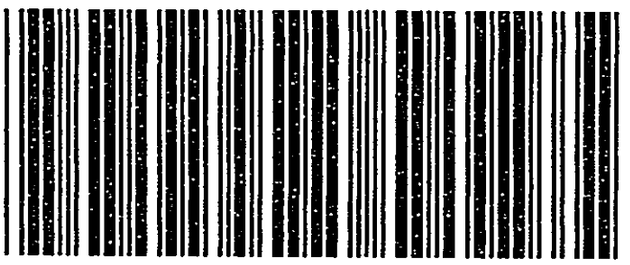
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

834 Sergeant William Hugh Dempster

2nd Pioneer Battalion



0910309M

2nd Pioneers Btn.

DEMPSTER, J. H.
Sgt. 834

Killed in action 3/5/17.

"I knew Casualty. He was a tall man about 5 ft.10 ins. well built, fresh complexion, about 27 years of age, known as "Bill". He was an original man. Casualty was going across No Man's Land between Noreuil and Bullecourt to dig a communication trench. Casualty was in charge and I was in the same party. He had only got about half way when an H.E. shell exploded in the centre of us killing Casualty instantly and wounding four other men. I was blown up by the same shell. He was very severely wounded all over and he was buried just near where he fell. I was an eye-witness!

Informant:- R. James,
No. 2642.

Private address:-
276 Moray Street,
South Melbourne.

Note:- He was one of our best Sergeants and was greatly missed by all his comrades.

T.C.F.
31/5/18.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE

A.I.F. 2 Pioneer. Dempster. Pte. W.H. 834.
D Co.

(K. May 3/17)

"Sgt: Dempster and I went up to a job together at Bullecourt on May 3rd and he was killed by a shell."

Eye-witness: Yes. instantly. Buried nearby.

Description: I knew him well - he was very tall - fair - about 31 years old.

Informant: L/C B. Middleton. 2214.
2 Pioneer. A.I.F.
Hapsbury Hospital. Ward F.5.
St Albans. Herts.

Home address: 99 Baker St.
Little Brighton.
Victoria.

17/10/17.
Gertrude Gautschi.

2 Australian Pioneers. Dempster. Sgt W.H. 834.

K. May 3/17 Det D/B

"I believe that Sgt. William Dempster (2.B. V) was killed instantaneously by a shell, going up to the line one night in May at Bullecourt. We had been carrying up ammunition, and he was our Platoon Sergeant. He was left on the side of the communication trench at the time, and when they went up to look for him afterwards to bury him, they could not find him. Sergt.Major J.Manners (2. B.) might be able to give the Red Cross more particulars."

Eye-witness: No, all the others told me about it.

Description: Out all the time, Bendigo, single, "Ball" I think we called him, a very fine fellow, the best Sergeant we ever had.

Informant: George Dight, 1912,
2 Australians Pioneers, B Co. V Pl.,
3rd Southern Gen.Hos., Radcliffe Bldgs,
Oxford.

3 Nov. 1917. Home address: 4, Martin St, Northcote, Victoria.
Hilda M. Pickard Cambridge.

M Ed Swift

Havre 8th October 1917

A.I.F. Dempster Sgt. W.H. 834
2nd Pioneers

A. 3rd May 1917 at D/B

I know Sergt. William Dempster of B.Co. 5th Pltn - He was behind me at Bullecourt on the morning of May 3rd (daylight). He had just gone over our front line when he was struck with a shell splinter and he died almost immediately. I saw him buried in the communication trench; there was no cross. We held the ground. I could point out the spot.

Informant: Pte A.L.Mills 2489
2nd Pioneers A.I.F. B.Co. 5th Pltn
Australian Camp Rouelles

RDH

M
Ed
Staff

2nd AUST. BIDE.

DIMPSTER Sergt. 4.H. No.834.

K. 3rd May 1917. Det D/B.

We were out on the 3rd May at Bullecourt and he got killed by shell fire on the parapet where he was working making up the defence. They buried him next day just behind the trench where he was working. This was at the Railway Bank on this side of Bullecourt. He was a real nice sergeant and when work was finished just like one of us.

Inf:- Pte E.J.Bannon No.3457.
Amb.T. 'Ville de Liege'.
Calais. 11.X.17. RAK.

A.I.F. Pioneers.2. DEMPSTER, Sergt.W.H. 834

K.May 3/17. Det: D & B

I saw him fall soon after he had taken his men over the top on the 3rd May, between Bullecourt and Noreuil. He was hit in the head by a bit of shell and killed straight out. I saw his body again at 4 a.m. next morning, lying where he fell and I can't say whether it was buried. Sergt. Dempster came from Golden Square, Bendigo, and was in charge of No.5 pltn. B.Coy.

Informant: Pte H A.H.Bourne. 9333. B.7.

2nd Army Rest Camp.
BOULOGNE. 6.9.17.

HMH

2nd Pioneers.
late 21st Btn.

DEMPSTER, Wm. Hugh
Sgt. No. 834

Killed in action 3/5/17

"I knew Casualty well. He was in B. Company. He was killed alongside me in the trenches at Bullecourt on the 3rd May, 1917. I heard he was engaged digging communication trench. He was killed by H.E. shell. He was not buried so far as I know. It is quite possible I may have his identification disc in my possession. I will look for it and hand it over to the Bureau. All his effects have now been sent to the Authorities."

Informant:- Lieut. E.L.G. Creswell
2nd Pioneers.

Private address
Harold Place,
Toorak.

H.A.B.
13/9/17.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

K. May 3rd 1917. Dets D/B.

I knew Sgt Dempster though he was not in my company. He was in B. He was killed on May 3rd at Bullecourt and ~~I think~~ I saw him lying dead by the side of the trench his company was digging. My company was working further up and I saw him when we came out about 7 p.m. He had been killed that afternoon. I cannot say anything as to his burial.

Inf: Pte J.D.Box. 4382. 2.C.
No. 32 Stationary
BOULOGNE. 14.9.17.

JT

2nd Pioneer Batt. A.I.F.

DEMPSTER Sgt W.H. 834.
"B" Coy. No 5 Platoon.

" K. May 3rd.,'17. Det D & B ".

" Dempster was killed instantly by a shell during the morning, when we were going up into the line at Bullecourt. He was buried where he was killed, by a party from our own Coy. I cannot say if the grave was marked in any way. He came from Victori and I knew him well, through being in the same platoon. "

Description. Hgt 5ftIO. Dark complexion. Medium build.

Witness. Finlayson J.B. 2618.
2nd Pioneer Batt. "B" Coy.

Taken at No 3 Command Depot.
Hurdcott. J.G.W.
September 18th.,'17.

S. Whitmee.
No 4 Command Depot.
Codford.

A. I. F.

PIONEERS. 2. DEMPSTER, Sgt. W.H. 834.

K. May 3rd, 1917.

I saw him lying dead on May 3rd about 7.30 or 8 p.m. at Bullecourt in our support line. He was just on top of the trench. I had no time to stop and look at him. Know nothing as to burial and I do not think his body was brought in by our Battn or I should have heardof it. It was well behind our front linr and we held the ground. He was in B Coy and I think in V platoon.

PHS.

References:- Pte. W.E. Wheeler. 2766. B.VII.
No. 1 Can. Gen. Hosp.

Staples
20.9.17.

Havre 22nd September.1917.

AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS
2nd Batt.

DEMPSTER
DEMPSTER, Sergt.W.H. 854
Lancaster, B. 167

K. May 3rd.1917. Det. D/B.

Sergt. Dempster and Pt. S. Lancaster were in B. Co., and were killed at Vaux on May 3rd,1917 while digging a Sap between our front and the new line. I did not actually see them, but was told by some boys from the Platoon. They are buried near the Village.

Informant: Pt. M.J. Mc.Allen 2662
2nd Australian Pioneers, C.Co.,
E.Fltn.
Australian Camp, Rouellen.

RJM.

AUST.PIONEERS. 2nd DEMPSTER, Sgt. W.H. 834.

K. 3.5.17. Det. D & B.

I knew Sgt. Dempster. He was in B Co., but I do not remember his Pl. nor do I know his No. I did not know anything of him before joining up. He was the only man that I knew named Dempster in the Co. He was about 5 ft.11 and about 26 years of age, dark and clean shaven. I saw him soon after he was killed by shell fire on the 3rd May during the fighting at Bullecourt. This occurred in daylight. We were forced to retire from our position that night and I am unable to say if his body was recovered.

Reference: Pte. J. A. Miller, 2672. B Co. 7 Pl.
No.1 Con.Camp.
Boulogne. 28.9.17.

AGL.

M

Havre

28th Sept. 1917.

AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS
2nd Batt.

DEMPSTER, Sergt. W.H. 834

K. 3.5.17. Det. D/B.

I helped to bury him in the open where he was killed alongside a large railway cutting at Bullecourt about the 4th May, 1917. We were ~~xxxx~~ not able to put up any means of identifying the spot, but I could point it out. There are a large number of graves in the vicinity. He was in B Co., 5th Pltn. His christian name was William.

Informant: Sergt. D. Gemmell, 1996
2nd Pioneers, B Co., 6th Pltn. A.I.F.,
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

RDM

M

Havre

1st October.1917.

2nd AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS

DEMPSTER, Sergt. W.H. 834

K. May 3rd.1917. Det. D/B.

I saw the grave of Sergt. W.H. Dempster of B.Co., an original man, in the open at Bullecourt in May,1917, near to our old front line itself. I helped to put a permanent cross on it, and could point out the spot.

Informant: Pt. H. Spooner, 2428
2nd Australian Pioneers, C.Co., IX. Bltn.
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

RDM.

2nd Pioneer Batt. A.I.F. DEMPSTER Sgt W.H. 834.
"B" Coy., No 5 Platoon.

" K. May 3rd.,'I7. Det D & B ".

" Sgt Dempster was just behind the front line at Bullecourt, on May 3rd., when he was killed instantly, and buried by a shell. It was impossible to bery him properly, and we were unable to mark the grave in any manner. He came from Bendigo, Victoria, and I knew him well, through being in the same Coy."

Description. Hgt 6ft. Medium complexion. Very Slight build.

Witness. Calman A. 2I25.
2nd Pioneers. "B" Coy.

Taken at No 3 Command Depot,
Hurdcott. J.G.W.
October Ist.,'I7.

S. Whitmee.
No 4 Command Depot,
Codford.

A.I.F. 2nd Pioneers DEMPSTER. Sergt.W.H. 834.

K.May 3rd 1917. Dets D/B.

I knew him well. I saw him lying dead in our communication trench near Bullecourt. He had been killed by concussion. He was never buried that I know of .

Inf: Sergt.G.C. Christian. 3818.
1, Con.Camp.
BOULOGNE. 4.10.17.

RAOI.

Havre 5th Oct. 1917

2nd PIONEERS A.I.F. DEMPSTER Sgt. W.H. 834

K. 3rd May 1917 dot. D/B

Dempster was in B. Co. 5th Platoon. I saw the cross that was prepared for his grave; it was to be taken and placed on his grave at Bullecourt.

Informant: L/Cpl. H. Gemmill 1995
2nd Pioneers A.I.F.
B.Co. 5th Platoon
Australian Camp Rouelles

RDM C of Suff-
M.

Havre 5th October.1917.

2nd AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS DEMPSTER, Sergt. W.H. 834

K. May 3rd. 1917. Det. D/B.

He was killed by a shell at Bullecourt out in the open going up to the line, during the daytime. His body was taken away and buried, but I do not know where. He was in B.Co. I have seen the cross for his grave.

Informant: A. Higgins, 149
2nd Australian Pioneers, B.Co.
Ambulance Train 83.
Havre.

RBS.

2nd Pioneers.
A.I.F.

Dempster.
Sergt. H.334

"Killed 3.5.17."

He was killed by a shell which exploded 2 bombs which he was carrying in his pocket and practically blew him to pieces. He had gone out with a party, trench digging in the second Hinderburg line at Bullecourt early in May. I was close by. A cross has been put up by the Battn. His name was William, age about 22, came from Bendigo, was a Sergeant No one else of his name in the Coy.,

Informant:---

Staff Sergt. D. Sinclair. 2797
2nd Pioneers. A.I.F.

London.
19.9.17.

2nd Pioneers.

DEMPSTER, W&H.
Sgt. No. 834

Killed in action 3/5/17.

"I met Cpl. Pryor now attached to battalion headquarters, France, and he told me that Casualty was destroyed by shell fire at Lagnicourt about the 3rd May, 1917. Casualty was in the act of carrying bombs at the time."

Informant:- A.F. Homann,
No. 2513, 2nd Pioneers.

Private address
Albert Street,
Warragul.

H.A.B.
17/10/17.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU—MELBOURNE.

2nd Pioneer Bn.
A. I.F.
late 21st Bn.

Sgt. William Hugh. 854.

Killed in Action 3.5.17.

No trace Germany

Cert.by Capt. Hill.10.10.19.

London.
23.10.19.

H.