

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

820 Private
John Blair

20th Battalion



0410901F

France

AUSTRALIAN INF. 20.

BLAIR, J. 820

M. 1916.

Blair - name Jack - was in XI platoon. I know him by his number. He was killed the second time the Battalion went in at Pozieres, about three months ago - July I think. He was nearly blown to pieces by a shell at my side beyond the German second line. We went too far and got cut off and had to retire to the German first line. It was three days before we could get to those who were lying out. His body was found and brought back and buried in the Cemetery, so they told me.

Informant: Pte L.J. Hallett. 876. C.X.
No. 32 Stat. Hospital.
BOULOGNE. 7.11.16.

S.P. 1-

JT.

France.

A.I.F. 20.

BLAIR, J. 820.

M/1916.

K m A 26.7.16.

He was killed at Pozieres about the 4th. of August.
He was in C. Coy and was a special friend of mine. Markham, a
m.gunner, told me that he saw him dead and helped to bring him
in.

Reference: Barber, O.M., 814, C.Co.,
No. 18 General.

Staples.
11.11.16.
RFA.

S
P.I.

A.I.F. 20th Battn
C.Coy.
Att. Anzacs Entr.Battn)

BLAIR
John. 820

Missing 26-7-16

Missing 26-7-16

Cert. by A.I.F.Headquartera List 18-9-16

Killed in Action in the Field 26-7-16

Previously reported Missing

Cert. by A.I.F.Headquarters List 14-11-16 (I.E.80

London
15-11-16

P.I&S

France.

A. I. F. 20.

BLAIR, J. 820.

M/1916.

K. C. 96-4-16

Pte. Smith (O.S.?) told me he
went over at Pozieres, and was struck by
shell on Momens land.

Reference: Erickson, W.W. 4109, 20.0.XII.
Ho. 2 A.D.B.D.

Etaples.
23.12.16.
FJB.

20th A.I.F.

Blair, Pte. J., 820,
K 26.7.16
(# 1916)

"I heard it generally stated at the time that Blair had been killed, either on July 26th or 4th August. I can't remember which. He was killed in an attack by us."

Informant: Pte. Chas. Henry Hallett, 886,
20th A.I.F., C. Co., A Pltn.,
Bethnal Green Military Hospital.

Home address: 3, Cooper St.,
Doubt Bay,
Sydney, N.S.W.

J.B. Rawlinson.
6.1.17.

S. P. 1.

France.

A. I. F. 20.

BLAIR, J. 820.

M/1916. Rm A 26-4-16

He was killed & on July 25th. in the affair at Pozieres. Major Hoskens, C.Coy, was, I believe, a witness of the casualty, and could give details. Major Hoskens himself spoke to me about Blair.

Reference: Pte. G.F. Furness, 543, B.Coy, 20th.Bn.,
L.M.G.School.

Staples.
29.1.17.
SA.

Written Major Hoskens 6.2.17

20th Batt. A.I.F.

Blair. Pte J. No. 820
C Coy, 20th Batt.

Unoffic. Killed July 26th, 1916.

"I saw Blair killed in action by a ~~AK~~ bullet between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on the 26th July/16, while taking part in a charge upon the German Trenches to the right of the village of Pozieres. I saw him in No Man's Land immediately after he was hit, but have no idea what happened to the body. I knew him well coming over from Australia with him in the original 20th Batt.

Description.

Age about 20, about 5'5", dark complexion,
medium build.

Witness.

Pte Doyle. J. No. 849, C Coy, 20th Batt.

27th April, 1917.
S.W.

Worgret Camp,
Wareham.

P.1
S

A. I. F. 20.

BLAIR, J. 820.

Unoff. R. July 28th, 1916.

He was killed at Pozieres on July 28th, the first night we were in there, by a piece of shell which I think caught him in the head. I saw his dead body lying out in the open as we were going across in the charge. It was about halfway across to the German lines. He belonged to C.Coy. and to I or XI pl. He was a Scotchman who had settled in N.S.W. I knew him well. He was batman to Lt. Evans, C.Coy.

Reference:- Pte. A.W. Nettle. 952. C.Coy.
No. 51 Gen. Hosp.

SA.

Htaples
1.5.17.

SPI

Havre

12th June, 1917.

20th AUSTRALIANS

BLAIR, J. 620

~~Enoch~~ K. 28.7.16.

He was in C Co. I knew him: he originally came from Scotland. He was killed close to the German front line at Pommerehne, and was buried a week or 10 days later where he lay. I was one of the burial party. His disc was ~~2870333~~ returned by one of the 2nd Pioneers to the Orderly Room.

Informant: Pte. W. Revell, 1533
20th Australians, C Co.,
H. S. Panama.

RBB

P.1
S

20th A. I. F.

Blair, Pte J. 820.

(Encl: E. July 26/16)

"At Pozieres Ridge on 26th July 1916 we went over the top, but had to retire. About 8 or 9 days later we took the Ridge and we found Blair's body a few yards from a German trench. We buried him where he lay, and one of the Pioneers took his disc, one of the Pioneers was F. Hallam of the 2nd Batt. but I cannot remember if he was the man who took the disc."

Eye-witness: Of finding the body and seeing him buried

Description: Medium build, dark, about 20, talked broad Scotch, known as "Scottie"

Informant: L/Cpl W. Renell, 1533,
20th Australian Infantry, C. IX
5th Southern General Hospital,
Home address: Portsmouth.

Heathcote,
Victoria.

14th June 1917.
Elsie C. Hughes.

P.1
S

20th Battn.
A.I.F.,

V
Blair
L.J. 876

820

"Died"

I have again th thank you for yours of the 29th November. Sorry to say your information appears to have been only too true. I have been in communication with Private (L) J. Hallett who is in the Boulogne Base Hospital and who vouchsafes the information that he not only saw my son killed but helped to bury him three days later. Says they were very friendly, enlisted same day in Sydney.

We also heard from another young Australian whom my husband met in Glasgow and after instituting enquiries after he returned, he has confirmed your information.

Cert. by letter from Eliza Blair,
57, Gray Street
Blawart Hill,
Yoken, Glasgow.
18-12-16.

London
21-12-16.

S.

A.I.P.
20th. Battalion,

BLAIR 820.
John.

"Killed in Action 26.7.16".

No trace Germany.

Cert. by Capt. Mills. 10.10.19.

London.
16.10.19.

P.I.
S.

ack.

RECEIVED
20 SEP 1916
CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE

54 Gray Street -
Blawarshtie

Glasgow

Sept - 18th 1916

Dear Sirs

Information has been
forwarded to me that - my son
has gone missing from the A. I. F. in France

I have been advised to seek your aid
in the hope that you will be able to assist
me in finding out particulars about him

The head offices in Horse Ferry Rd say he
went missing on the 26th of July last -
I heard from him the week previous to that
name & particulars are

John Blair Dte

(Aged 21 years

870.

70th Battalion, 5th Brigade, C Coy
1st Anzac Trenching Battalion

Australian Imperial Force, serving with
the British, Expeditionary Force France

Any information will be thankfully received
by his sorrowing mother. Thanking you
in anticipation of news. Yours Respectfully

Elizabeth Blair

8858

22nd Septr., 1916.

Mrs. Elizabeth Blair,
57, Gray Street,
Yoker,
Glasgow.

Dear Madam,

In answer to your enquiry for your son, No. 820
Pte. John Blair, 20th Batta., 1st Anzac Entrenching Bn. -
A.I.F., we regret to say that we have no information to send
you. We are making exhaustive enquiries, and shall be only
too glad to communicate with you at once, as we realise how
anxious and worried you must be.

Assuring you of our deepest sympathy,

I am,

Yours faithfully,

V. W.

Secretary.

16th November,

Dear Madam,

We are very sorry to inform you that we have received the following unofficial report from -

No. 876. Pte. L. J. HALLETT, 20th Battn. A.I.F.
who was in No.32 Staty. Hospital, Boulogne, on November 7th.
when he gave it. Informant states that 'Jack' Blair as he ^{820-20th Bn}
called him was in XI Platoon C. Coy., He was killed instantly
by shell the second time the battalion went in to action at
Pozières in July. He was killed beside him beyond the German
second line. They went too far and got cut off and had to
retire to the first line. It was three days before they could
get intthose who were lying out. He says that he was told
that your son's body was found and brought back and buried in a
cemetry near by.

We must emphasise the fact that this report is unofficial and is not therefore wholly reliable. We very much fear however that after this lapse of time we must believe that the worst has happened and your son was killed on that day.

- 2 -

We sympathise very deeply with you in your great loss and can only offer you our help in getting as many details as possible. We are sure that it will comfort^y you to know that he died instantly and therefore suffered no pain.

With sincere sympathy,

Yours faithfully,

O.C

Secretary.

L.Am

Mrs. Elizabeth Blair,
57 Gray Street,
Stewart Hill,
Yoker,
GLASGOW.

54 Gray Street
Glasgow

Yours

Glasgow

Nov 25th 1916

Dear Madam

In reply to your communication regarding my son Jack Blair 870 of the A. I. F. I am truly very grateful for the information received & have to thank you. I have been afraid all along that my dear boy was killed, As you say it is some satisfaction to know that he died instantly and a great relief to learn that he was buried. He was the only son of the eldest of the family aged 24 years. & his loss has been a great trial to his father & I. Also have to thank the young man Pte L. J. Hallett for being able to give the required information & hope he will soon be well again. If further news of Jack can be had from any of his comrades would you please communicate again.

With these words I bid me to express my gratitude for your kind & sympathetic wishes.

Yours Respectfully

Elizabeth Blair

November 29th.

Mrs. Elizabeth Blair,
57, Gray Street
Stewart Hill
Yoker.
Glasgow.

Dear Madam,

We have received another unofficial report about your son 820, Pte. J. Blair, 20th. Battn. A.I. F. from 814, Pte. C. M. Barber C. Company, 20th. Battn. who on November 11th, was in No. 18 General Hospital, B.E.F.

He says that your son was a special friend of his, and he was killed at Pozieres about August 4th. A Machine Gunner named Markham told Pte. Barber that he saw your son dead, and helped to bring him in.

With deep sympathy in your loss.

Yours faithfully,

U. D

Secretary.

L. A. W.

Re Mr. J. Blair 820 20th Bult

~~87 1/2 St. J.~~ ^{Blair} Hallett

20th Bult

54 Gray Street
Klawant Hill

Dear Madame

I have again to thank Glasgow
you for yours of the 7th 18th Decr 14/16
very to say your information
appears to have been only too true. I
have been in communicating with Mr
to J. Hallett who is in the Roule
Boul Hospital & who vouches the
information that he not only saw my
son killed but helped to carry him
three days later. Says they were
very friendly, enlisted same day
in Sydney. We also heard from
another young Australian whom my
husband met in Glasgow & after
instituting enquiries after he returned
he has confirmed your information.
So I must thank you all again &
add that I appreciate that I appreciate
your kind sympathy. I have been very ill
hence the delay in writing you

Yours respectfully

S.

Blair Blair

8th January /7

Mrs Elizabeth Blair,
57 Gray St,
Stewart Hill,
Yoker,
Glasgow.

Dear Madam,

We regret that another unofficial report has been received about your son, No. 820 Pte J. Blair, 20th Batt. A.I.F. from No. 4109 Pte W. W. Erickson, 20th Batt. He says that he was told by Pte Smith that your son went over in the attack on ⁹Esquimaux and was killed by a shell on No Man's Land.

This only confirms the sad reports already sent you and we fear that your son must have met his death on that day.

May we offer you our deepest sympathy in your loss.

V.D.
Yours faithfully,

V.D.
Secretary.
J.A.W.

12th January

-7.

Mrs Elizabeth Blair,
57 Cray St.
Stewart Hill.
Yoker.
Glasgow.

Dear Madam,

Another unofficial report has been received confirming those already sent you, about your son, No. 820. Pte. J. Blair, 20th Battn. A.I.F.

Informant - No. 886. Private Charles Henry Hallett, 20th Battalion, who on January 1st, was in Bethnal Green, Military Hospital, -says that he had heard it generally stated at the time, that Pte. Blair had been killed either on July 26th, or Aug. 4th, in an attack made by us on the German Trenches.

We are very sorry that this report contains no details of your son's death, but we hope to get further particulars which we know you will appreciate.

With sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary.

V. D.

Re. Blair
per John 520

54 Gray Street
Blair's Hill

Glasgow
Jan'y 22nd 1917

Dear Madam

I have again to thank you
for your two communications of the 8th & 12th
of this month - and I am truly grateful
for the services rendered through the
Red Cross which has quite set at-
rest all doubts as to my son being
alive. Poor lad, he was killed on the
26th of July. For we have had one of
his friends here who gave us full
details. The Leslie Blissett 896 20th Ball
he was the first to give information
while in the Base hospital at Boulogne
since then he was in the 3rd London Gen
Hospital & as he got a furlough later on
I had him here with the result that
I got full particulars. Well I think
could be relied on. He says my son was one of
many killed by a shell. also that he
helped to bury him later on.

2

I have also had word from Sydney
from two of his pals, both home
wounded, also from the Clothing depot
for prisoners of war. I mention these
facts to give you some satisfaction
for the trouble you have taken in
communication with me so often.

Again thanking you
I remain

Yours gratefully
Elizabeth Blair

7th February

-7.

Major Hoskins,
C. Company.
20th Australian Infantry Battalion.
B. E. F.

J. Blair, 20th Battalion A.I.F.
Rep. Killed in Action 26.7.16

No. 820.

J. Blair

P.M. 7.11.

2nd May 1917.

Mrs E. Blair,
57 Gray Street.
Blawart Hill.
Tooker.
Glasgow.

Dear Madam,

We regret to advise you of further unofficial evidence confirming that already sent you about your son No. 820. Pte. J. Blair, 20th Battn. A.I.F.

No. 818. Pte. J. Doyle, 20th Battn. who was in No. 4.

Command Depot, Worgret Camp, Wareham, Dorset, reports that he saw Pte. Blair killed by a bullet between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. on July 26th while taking part in a charge upon the German trenches to the right of Pozieres. He saw him in No Man's Land immediately after being hit but has no idea as to what happened to the body. They came over together from Australia in the original 20th Battn. and informant describes him as 5 ft. 5" in height, of medium build and dark complexion and about 20 years of age.

Hoping that these further details will be of help to you and assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully, Y.O.
Secretary.
L.A.W.

34 Gray Street
Glasgow

John is attached to Scotland's Colours
Glasgow
May 8th 1914

Dear Madam

I have to again thank
you for yours of the 2nd
relating to the death of my son
The John Blair & Co. 70 & 130-
A. S. 4. As you say all the
reports are unofficial but all
convey the same sad feelings that
he was "killed". I wish to
assure you of my gratitude for
the trouble taken from time
to time with regard to the
manner of his death. The
work done by the Red Cross
Society cannot be too well
appreciated. Again thank you
Dear Madam

I remain

Yours Respectfully
Elizabeth Blair

May 8th

Mrs E. Blair
57. Gray St.
Blewert Hill
Glasgow.

Dear Madame,

We are in receipt of further unofficial details about the death of your son No. 820 Pte. John Blair 20th Btn A.I.F. and we beg to advise you of the same.

No. 952 Pte Hettle who was in hospital in France says that Pte. Blair was killed at Pozieres on July 28th by a piece of shell which wounded him in the head.

Informant saw his dead body about half way across No Man's Land and says that he was a Scotsman who had settled in New South Wales. and who had been batman to Lt. Evans.

Assuring you that every effort is being made to obtain further details,

Yours faithfully,

LAW

Secretary.

Final Day 8.10.19

To

Mrs Elizabeth Blair

57 Gray St.

Blawant Hill

O

Glasgow

Glasgow.

re.

820 g Blair

20th Bn.

O

(if any) or from
letters.

Enquiry included in
W.S.M. Cable

Enquiry included in
Deferred Cable

Name and Address of
Enquirer

Relation of Enquirer to
Enquiree.

State if Next-of-Kin.

No.

of

No.

of

102 April 29 - 1918
Mr E. W. Lamond.
75 Fairfield St -
Bost. Hawthorne W.A.

Wife
Geo On cards
Mc

Harry Erbig Secretary.
man

21.10.19

Dear Madam

54 Gray Street
Glasgow
Scotland
Glasgow
Scotland
Bote 19th 1919

With reference to my
late son. Pte John Blair
820 N. 1. P. 1st Battalion
who was presumed killed
on July 26th 1917. I have to thank

you for your kind parcel received also
your letter. I have no further
questions to ask except - Is he not
entitled to two medals. He said so
himself last time I saw him.

Please let me know at your convenience
if so forward same at - yours

Yours truly I remain
Yours Respectfully
Elizabeth Blair

22nd October, 1919.

Mrs. Blair,
57 Gray Street,
Blawart Hill,
Scotstown,
Glasgow,
N.B.

Dear Madam.

In reply to your letter of 17th inst concerning
820 Pte. J. Blair 20th Batt. A.I.F. we beg to inform you that
application concerning his medals should be made to
Decorations Dept. A.I.F. Headquarters, 130, Horseferry Rd.,
S.W.1.

Assuring you of our sympathy

Yours faithfully,

MR.

(Miss.) SECRETARY.