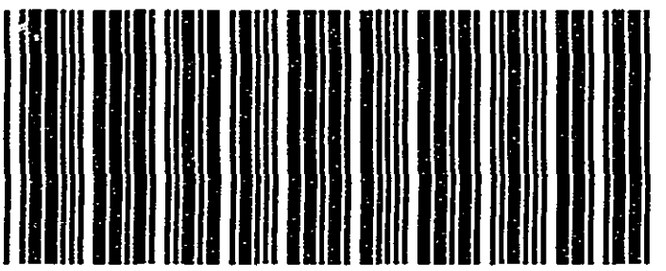
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

1656 Private
Hugh Ernest Lee Bake

2nd Pioneer Battalion



0190501G

2nd Pioneers Btn.

BAKE, H. E. L.
A/Cpl. 1656.

Killed in action 5.5.17.

"I knew Casualty. He was a short man, slightly built, fair complexion, about 23 years of age, known as "Hughie". Casualty was advancing at Bullecourt and he had taken the first objective and had dug in. An H.E. shell exploded near Casualty killing him instantly. I was 50 yds. away at the time of his death and he was buried just near where he fell."

Informant:- Pte. F. J. Marck,
No. 3578, 2nd Pioneers Btn.

Private address:-
Gallipoli, P.O.
Queensland.

T.C.F.
6/9/18.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU–MELBOURNE.

[redacted]

Havre

22nd June 1917

AUSTRALIANS
2nd Pioneer Btn

BAKE, H.E.L. 1656

Missing 5th May 1917

He was last seen in our trenches at night time at Bullecourt. He went out to get his rifle and he was never seen again. This was about 9 p.m. and 'Fritz' opened a heavy shelling on our lines. It was impossible for him to have been taken prisoner of war. He were 800-1,000 yards off the German lines. Search parties were sent out next night to find him.

Informant: H. H. Hughes 2886
Australians 2nd Pioneer Btn
H.L. "Panama" Havre

RBS

2nd Pioneers Battn.
A.I.F.

Bake.
H. E. L. 1656
N?

"Killed 5.5.17"

I saw his body after he had been hit by a shell at Bullecourt. He was digging a sap and the shell lended in the sap. I was a couple hundred yards away. Cpl.Denton was killed at the same time. I saw their bodies together. I knew Bake at Larkhill England, but cannot say anything about his or Denton's burial.

Witness:-
Pte.[illegible].Hill 2875
2nd Pioneers A.Coy.
B.22 Ward,Dartford.

W.A.Rand.

London.
22.10.17.

P.I.
Offm.

[illegible]

2nd Australian Pioneers Bake, H.E.L. 1656,

(K. May 5/17. Det: D & B)

"I was told by his mates 2 hours after it happened that Pte Hughie Bake was killed instantaneously by a shell at Bullecourt early in May. He was buried where he fell, between Bullecourt and Noreuil. I knew him very well, and heard all about it, but I don't know if a cross was put up on the grave: write tothe Adjutant, of 2nd Aust. Pioneers for full details."

Eye-witness: No, but he heard about 2 hours after

Description: Sailed from Australia on 7.4.16 same as Informant, came from Victoria

Informant: L/Cpl John [illegible], [illegible],
2nd Australian Pioneers, C. [illegible],
[illegible] Southern General Hospital,

Home address: Cowley Section, Oxford.
77, Station Rd,
26th Sept/17. Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
Payne.

Note Written to Adjutant. 8-10-17

1 Ex to [illegible]

A.I.F. 2nd Pioneer Batt. Bake. Pte. H.E.L. 1656.

(K. May. 5/17.)
Det. of D/B.

"I saw Pte. Bake killed by a bomb while digging a trench in the Bullecourt Offensive, on the night of May 5th. 17. A couple of men working near also identified him as Pte. Bake. I cannot give any details of burial."

Eye-witness: Yes.

Description:

Informant: Sgt. Jack Storer. 1047.
A.I.F. 2nd Pioneer Batt.
A.Co. 4 Plat.
Edmonton Hospital. W.Ward.

Home address: Dunmore St.
Bexley. New.S.Wales.

Oct.12./17.
J. Evans.

P.1

[redacted]

2nd Pioneers
late 23rd Btn.

BAKE, H.E.L.
A/Cpl. No. 1656

Killed in action 5/5/17.

"I met Major Hockley A. Company, 2nd Pioneers in London. He is now returned to France with the unit. He told me that Casualty was killed on the 5th May, 1917. I refer you to him for details."

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.

CR
F.M. 7.8.17

France. 27-7-17.

Secretary. Australian Red Cross Society.

Dear Madam,

Your enquiry for Pte H.E.L. Bake, No 1656, addressed to Cpl Branch of this unit, was given to me as Branch had no news of him at all. So far as I have searched myself, have found no trace of his burial, in any cemetery. None of his effects were recovered; to the best of my knowledge he was badly shattered, but no one ~~is~~ saw him, the next man being wounded by the same shell. About twenty years of age, medium height, light hair; with plain band ring on left hand. His pay-book etc. have not been recovered; I have not been near the scene of action since the fifth of May, so do not know what is going on there now.

Yours faithfully,
Pte E.R. Green, No 2375
A Coy, — this unit —

1656.
H.E.L. BAKE
2 Pion Btn 2 Pioneers A1F

K.A. 5.5.17

Off M
P.1.5

4.

November 1st, 1917.

S/Sgt.S.A.Miles,
2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
Southall.

Dear Sir,

We beg to forward further unofficial evidence which has come to hand concerning the death of your friend

1656 Pte.H.E.L.Bake,
2nd Pioneers Bttn,
A.I.F.

One man stated that he saw Pte.Bake killed by a bomb while digging a trench in the Bullecourt Offensive on the night of May 5th, 1917. A couple of men working near also identified him as Pte.Bake, but informant cannot give any details of burial.

Another informant said he saw Bake's body after he had been hit by a shell at Bullecourt. He was digging a sap when the shell landed in the sap. Informant was only a couple of hundred yards away at the time. He adds that Cpl.Denton was killed by the same shell, and he saw their bodies together. He also can give us no information concerning Bake's burial.

We shall advise you of any further particulars come to hand.

Yours faithfully,

V.D.

October 15th, 1917.

S/Sgt. S.A.Miles,
2nd Australian Auxiliary Hpl,
Southall.

Dear Sir,

We regret to inform you of further unofficial evidence about No 1656 Pte.H.E.L.Bake,
2nd Pioneers Battn,
A.I.F.

and trust that it will be some comfort to have this assurance of his instantaneous death.

Informant reports that he was told by friends two hours after the casualty that Pte.Bake had been killed instantaneously by a shell at Bullecourt early in May and was buried where he fell between Bullecourt and Noreuil, and we have written to the Adjutant of the battalion for full details of his grave location.

In the meantime we are continuing our inquiries and as soon as we receive further news we shall let you know.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

V.D

SECRETARY.

LAM

July 30th. 1917.

S/Sgt. S A. Miles,
2nd. Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
Southall,

Dear Sgt. Miles,

We have now received an unofficial report about your friend :-

1656 Pte.H.E.L. Blake, 2nd. Pioneers Battn., A.I.F.

and we regret that it throws so little light on the circumstances of his death.

No 2886 Pte. N.E. Hughes of the same Unit when interviewed on a Hospital ship at Havre stated that Pte. Blake was last seen in our trenches at Bullecourt about 9.p.m. on 5.5.17 when he went out to find his rifle Shortly afterwards the Germans opened heavy shell fire on the trenches and Pte. Blake was never seen, although search parties were sent out next night to find him.

We are making further enquiries for details and hope soon to obtain a more definite account of Pte. Blake's death which we shall immediately forward to you.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy in theloss of your friend.

Yours faithfully,

9th July, 1917.

S/Sgt. S. A. Miles,
2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
Southall.

Dear Sir,

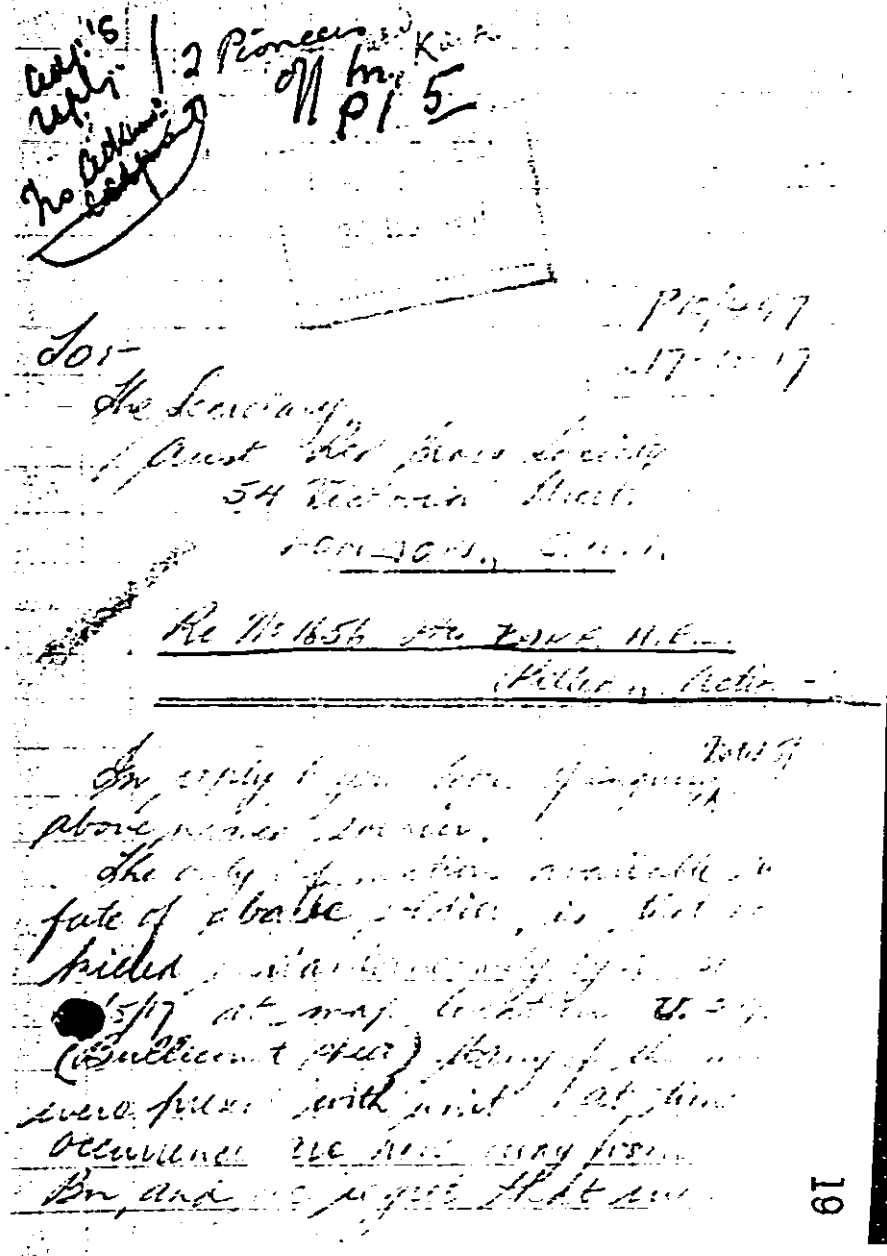
In reply to your enquiry, we very much regret to inform you that 1656, Pte. H. E. L. Bake, 2nd Pioneer Battn. A. I. F., if now officially reported to have been killed in action on the 5th May 1917. His name is on our Searchers List, and we are doing our utmost to obtain all possible information, which we will send on to you. In the meantime, perhaps you will advise us of any change in your address.

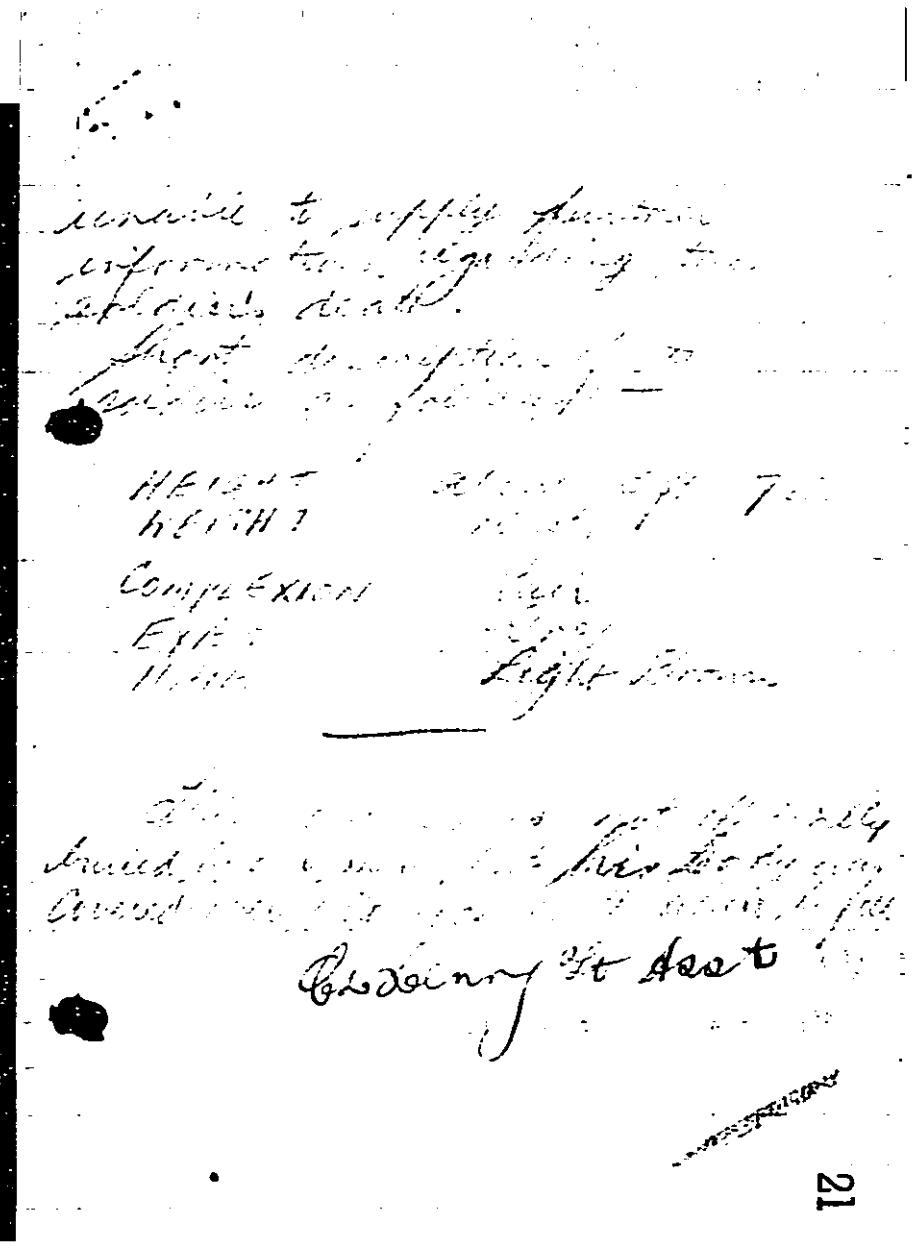
With our most sincere sympathy,

Yours faithfully,

Miss McConnell

Secretary.





Adj. 's reply | 2 Pioneers
No Action [illegible]

[illegible] Kan.
[illegible] P1 5

[illegible]
17-[illegible]-17

To:-
The Secretary
[illegible] Aust. Red Cross Society
54 Victoria Street
[illegible]

Re No 1656 [illegible] H.E.
Killed in Action

In reply to your [illegible] of inquiry [illegible] above named soldier.
The only information available [illegible] fate of above soldier, is that [illegible] killed [illegible] 5/17 at map location [illegible] (Bullicourt [illegible]) [illegible] every [illegible] with unit [illegible] at time occurrence [illegible] away from Bn and [illegible] regret that [illegible]

19

unable to supply further information regarding the soldier's death.
Short description of [illegible] soldier as follows:-

HEIGHT [illegible] 7
WEIGHT [illegible]
COMPLEXION [illegible]
EYES [illegible]
HAIR Light Brown

[illegible] not officially buried [illegible] his body was covered [illegible]

[illegible] Asst

21

2nd AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS. H. E. L. [illegible], 1656.

~~Missing~~ 5.5.17.

K in a

Cpl. Branch told me he had seen him killed at Bullecourt during the attack on the 4th May.

Reference: Pte. D. Heggie, 2376.

No.12 General, Rouen. 2.7.17.

E3.

P-1

Written Cpl Branch 2.7.17

AUSTRALIAN AUXILIARY HOSPITAL
13 NOV 19..
Marylebone Road, LONDON

Mrs Vera Deakin.
52 Victoria St.
S.W.1.

Dear Madam.

Very many thanks for all your kindness in respect of the late
No 1666. Pte H.E.L. Bake.

Although sad, it is a comfort to know that he died instantaneously & not left to linger in the battlefield again thinking of us.

Yours sincerely
L.A. Mills
Capt.

2nd Pioneer Btn.
A.I.F.

BAKER.
Hugh Ernest Lee 1656

Killed in Action 5.5.17

No trace Germany
Cert. by Capt. Mills. 10.10.19.

London.
23.10.19.

Off. M. & P. I.

Sent post card 26-6-17

1656. 2nd Pioneer Batn. A. Cy. 13.6.17

Bake

Bake. H.E.L.

Missing since May 5th.

Saturday night

Battle Bullecourt

Fell in & marched out with

Cy. but was not seen at

work or afterwards.

His particular Chum

has Enquired at Dressing

& Clearing Stations but

Can get no news.

Home address

Murray Flats

Swan Hill

Victoria

Age 21. Complexion fair

Hair dark, eyes blue.

Kindly write to. S/Sgt S.A. Miles

2 Australian Aux Hosp

Sunhall.

Please supply any inf.
you have to Sugt. miles
as within

P.C.

19.7.17

Cpl BRANCH

2 Pioneers

AIF

B E F

for

1656

1.1

Lt. E. L. BAKE

2 Pioneers

K.A. 5.5.17

F.M

21.7.17

August 8th, 1917.

2375/Pte. E.R.Green,
A.Co, 2nd Pioneers,
A.I.F., B.E.F.

Dear Pte. Green,

Very many thanks for your letter in answer to our enquiry, addressed to Cpl.Blanch, concerning

No 1656 H.E.L.Beke,
2nd Pioneers,

and for the trouble you have taken to obtain information for us.

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully,
V. Deakin.
Secretary.
P. L. L.

October 8th, 1917.

The Adjutant,
2nd Pioneer Battalion,
A.I.F.
B.E.F.

Dear Sir,

We are making enquiries concerning a man of your unit -

1656 Pte. H. E. L. BAKE - Killed 5.5.17.

We are anxious to obtain details of his death and burial, and it has been suggested to us that you might be able to give us some information in this direction, also adding a short description of the man's personal appearance, or any points which are likely to prove his identity.

We shall be very grateful if you will do this, and apologising for troubling you, and thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully,

Secretary. OS.

NOTE We have been informed by various C.O's and Adjutants that the receipt of notes of thanks only causes them unnecessary inconvenience. Unless you ask us to acknowledge your reply to the above, we will not do so, and we trust you will understand that we appreciate it none the less.

A.I.F. 2nd Pioneer Btn

BAME
H.E.L. 1658

"M. 5-5-17"

Killed in Action 5-5-17 - previously reported Missing
Cert. by A.I.F. Headquarters 26-6-17.

OFF.M.& P.I.

London
4-7-17

Staff.Sergeant S.A.Miles,
2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
Southall.

November 12th, 1917.

Dear Sir,

We regret to inform you of further evidence about

No 1656 Pte.H.E.L.BAKE,
2nd Pioneers Bttn,
A.I. F.

given by the Adjutant of the Battalion in a letter dated 17.10.17, Unfortunately he gives very few details.

He writes that Pte.Bake, was killed instantaneously. by a shell on May 5th at Bullecourt, and no further details are available. When he fell, his body was covered with loose earth, but he does not think that he was buried by his friends

We are continuing the inquiry and will let you know as soon as we receive further news.

Yours faithfully,

LAW
SECRETARY.