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

1945 Private
William Gilbert Grace

7th Battalion



12001026

A.I.F. 7. GRACE, W. 1945.

K. Sept 20th 1917. Dets.

William Grace was in C.XI. and his number was 1945. He was first of all wounded in Galipoli in the jaw and returned to Australia, after which he joined the Battalion in France. He was rather a stout man, short, clean shaven, I don't think he was very young. I was in a shell hole when I saw a shell fall amongst several men including Grace, Huntsman and Jack Schwarer. Grace and Huntsman were killed instantly and Schwarer was very dangerously wounded. Grace and Huntsman were buried where they fell. They were killed on the 20th Sept during the fighting round Ypres. A cross was put up to their graves and their discs were nailed onto them.

Inf: Cpl.A.Clapp. 1308. 7.C.XI.
Ho. 3 Can Gen Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 1.1.18. AGL

M
P.1

A.I.F. 7.

GRACE, W. 1945.
HUNTSMAN, H.R. 6509.

M. Ind. suff.

K. Sept 20th 1917. Dets.

Wechad just reached our third objective at Polygon Wood on Sept 20th and were digging in when Grace and Huntsman were killed by a shell which I saw fall on to them. Lt Attwood of C.Coy was killed by the same shell. I was near them. The same shell killed about five ~~altoegtehr.~~ altogether. Grace was in C.Co. aged about 40, had been wounded in Gallapoli, returned to Australia, and afterwards came to France. Huntsman was also in C.Co aged about 23, a good cricketer and footballer.

Inf: Pte M.Carmody. 2270. C.Co.
No. 8 Stat Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 15.1.18. WO

M. & P.I.

A.I.F. 7.

GRACE, W. 1945.
HUNTSMAN, H.R. 6509.

M. Ed. suff.

K. Sept 20th 1917. Dets,

At Black Watch Corner, Ypres sector I saw a shell let into a trench that was being made up. Green Grace, Huntsman and Lt Attwood of C.Co., were all killed by this shell on Sept 20th. I was about 50 yards away. The bodies were left until next morning when I and two others went up and buried them a few yards from where they were killed. These two mens had bombs in their pockets when they were hit. No mark was put on the grave to my knowledge.

Inf: Pte A.S.Wilson. 7091. C.Co.
No. 8 Stat Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 15.1.18. WO

M

A.I.P. 7. K. 20.9.17. GRACE E. 1945.

He was in C.Co. XII Pl. - mine, and the only man of the name I knew. He was about 5 ft.7 and dark. He attacked at the Menin Road on the morning of 20th. Sept. I saw him wounded in the leg. Lt. Attwood and CSM. Swearer? C.Co. went to attend to him. A shell burst near them. It is supposed that a splinter exploded the bombs that Grace was carrying. He was killed and also the Lt. The CSM. was badly wounded and afterwards died. I passed grace, going forward, after this. He was badly knocked about and must have been killed outright. We held the ground. I know nothing of his burial.

EWH.

Reference: L/Cpl.W.S. Rogers. 5187. C.Co.
56 Gen.Hpl.

P 1 Staples.
M 18.1.18.

7th.Batt. A.I.F. Grace.W.Pte. No.1945.

K.Sept.20/17. Det.D/B.

I saw him lying dead after we gained our objective beyond Polygon Wood.He was carrying a bomb in his pocket at the time,when a piece of shrapnel struck the bomb causing it to explode. Death was instantaneous.We buried him on the spot,and erected a cross bearing full particluars.We came over from Victoria together,with the 21st reinforcements,but I only knew him personally in the battalion. He had been to Gallipoli,and had an old wound in his jaw.

Description. Height.5-7. Complexion.Fair. Build.Sturdy.

Witness. McKenxie.G.Pte. No.7093."C" Coy.7th Batt.

Taken at
No.3.Command Depot
Hurdcott.
22-1-18,
S.W.

S.Whitmee,
No.4.Command Depot
Hurdcott.

M.
+ P.I.

7th.Battalion. A.I.F.

Grace.W.No.1945.

K.Sept.20/17.Det.D/B.

I saw him killed by a shell just beyond Polygon Wood.He was killed instantly,and we buried him about 40yards at the back of the trench along with three others.A temporary mark was erected with his disc on it.Afterwards a number of Pioneers came along and were putting crosses on the graves.I only knew him in the Company.

Description. Age.40yrs.Height.5-8.Comp.Dark.Stout Build.

Witness. Seimons. C.L. Pte. No.4313. 7th.Battalion.

Taken at
No.4.C.D.
Hurdcott.
23-1-18.
S.W.

S.Whitmee.
No.4.C.D.
Hurdcott.

M
4 P.I.

7th Battn.
A.I.F.

Grace.
W. 1945

Huntsman.
H.R. 6509

"Killed 20.9.17"

Was near them when they were killed at 3rd objective at Black Watch corner Polygon Wood. Helped to bury them on the spot in one marked grave along with another man - Pte.Ecott(?) Hamas Huntsman was killed by concussion. Grace was badly cut up. Both C.Coy. Cpl.Higgins of my section No.16.Pltn.12.C.Coy. helped me to bury them.

Witness:- J.W.Harding.Cpl. 2499
7th Battn.

L.P.J.

London.
25.1.18.

M.
P.I.

Written Cpl. Higgins 4.2.18.

7th Battn.
A.I.F.

GRACE
W. 1945

Killed Septr 20th D/B.

Was in C. Coy - 11th Platoon - called "Bill" - I saw him killed by shell - was blown to pieces - It happened during hop-over at Anzac Ridge (Ypres) in "No man's Land" - we had to advance on so don't know where he was buried. He was my mate, and came from Victoria Was in Gallipoli - I was just behind him at the time he was knocked

Informant:- 2048 Ward S.
7th Battn.
25.1.18

W.G.J.

M. & P.I.

London.
1.2.18

7th Battn.
A.I.F.

Grace.
Pte.W. 1945

Huntsman.
Henry Russell 6509

"Killed in Action 20.9.17"

re 6509 Pte.H.R.Huntsman reported killed in action, I am pleased that I can give you the particulars you require of his death as I happened to be near by when it happened. It was on Sept.20th about mid-day we had reached our final objective and consolidated our position. Pte.Huntsman was on posth,near him was Lieut.Attwood, Ptes.Grace and Bacott. A shell burst and killed the four of them and wounded three others. His personal belongings were taken from his pockets and handed into battalion office from there they would be forwarded to his mother, Lieut. Attwood's body was taken away from by the stretcher bearers and Ptes.Huntsman, Grace and Bacott were buried side by side near where they fell. It was just near Polygon Wood. We erected three little wooden crosses and attached the identity disc which is used for that purpose, so you will see they were buried on the field.

Letter from:-

E.H.Coningsby.

London, 14.2.18. France 23.1.18. M. & P.I.

7th Battn.
C.Coy,
A.I.F.

GRACE,
W. 1945

"Killed 20.9.17."

I saw him killed at Ypres. He was caught by a shell which blew ~~him~~ him to pieces. He was taking cover in a shell hole, with a man name Pte.H.R.Himtsman, 6509, at the time of casualty. I knew him very well, he came from Victoria. I did not see his grave, and I cannot refer to anyone, but he was buried at place of casualty with Himtsman and I feel sure the the grave would be marked.

Informant:- Pte.J.Audsley, 3009,
7th Battn, C.Coy, 11th Pltn,
3.A.A.H.
Dartford.

W.Oman.
London.
8.3.18.

NOTE We regret the delay in typing the above report, but we have been obliged to hold it up on account of pressure of work and shortage of machines.

P.1
M

7th Battalion.
A.I.F.

GRACE.-
1945.

"KILLED IN ACTION" 20.9.17"

He Pte W. Grace No.1945 7th Battalion, A.I.F. He was killed at Carlisle Farm, by a shell-he was buried there, and his own disd was taken off him and put on his cross. There are three of them buried together, he is not buried near a cemetary, but on the Field, I cannot say whether the grave has been registered or not as I have not been near theire lately.

Letter from;- Cpl.Higgins B.W.2678.
C.Coy.7th Battalion.
France,11.2.18.

Note;- We regret the delay in typing the above report, but we have been obliged to hold it up on account of pressure of work and shortage of machines.,

London.
19.3.18.

M. P.I.

7th Btn.

GRACE, W.
Pte. 1945.

Killed in action 20/9/17.

"I knew Casualty. He was a man about 5 ft. 7 ins. medium complexion, about 30 years of age, known as "Bill". Casualty was advancing at Polygon Wood near Zonnebeke and had gained the new objective. We were given orders to hold some block houses when a shell exploded in the centre of the party killing Casualty instantly and three others including Lieut. Attwood and Pte. Huntsman. I was 25 yds. away at the time. He was buried just near where he fell along with Huntsman. I was an eye-witness."

Informant:- L. W. Henderson,
No. 2669.

Private address:-
Sheppards Flat,
Daylesford.

T.C.F.
15/3/18.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU—MELBOURNE.

7th Btn.

GRACE? 7.
Pte. 1945.

K. in Act. 20/9/17.

"I knew Casualty. He was a stout built man, about 5 ft. 4 ins. in height, fair complexion, about 35 years of age. Casualty was in the advance at Passchendaele when an H.E. shell landed alongside killing him instantly. I saw his body shortly afterwards. He was buried where he fell. He was killed with Pte. Huntsman of the 7th Battalion."

Informant:- Q.M.S. R. McCallum,
No. 2393, 7th Btn.

Private address:-
c/o Mrs. R. Matheson,
Glengarry,
Casterton.

Subsent M.P.I.
CO Suff

H.A.T.
4/4/19.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU—MELBOURNE.

7th Batt
C. Coy
A & S.

~~Not on list~~ Negative
K 20-9-17

GRACE.
Pte W
1945

This boy is reported as having been killed on the 20-9-17, and I would be pleased if you would include him on your enquiry list, as I am very anxious to know details of death & burial.

Sister DORRINGTON.
3rd A A Hosp
Dartford

Mr. Oman
17.11.17

Reg. No 121, Pte A. Hague
1st Australian Dermatological
Hospital
Bulford Salisbury

To. Wounded & Missing Inquiry Bureau

Dear Miss
I

beg acknowledge the receip of your letter of the 5th inst. I now thank you for the trouble that I have put you too for I think no one could of helped me better in the finding out of The Grace. I will write to Sister H. Dorrington A.A.N.S. No 2 A.D.H. France & ask her if she has recived the information which you have sent to her addressed to No 2 A.A.H. Dartford & then I will write to you & let you know. Thanking you for Good wishes I now close

With Good Wishes, Yours Faithfully,
A. Oldgate

Ack
10.1.18

Reg. No. 121. Pte. H. Hague
Staff 1st A. D. Hospital
Balford, Salisbury
Wilts

To Manager Aust. Red Cross in [illegible] office
Sir
Finish

7 Bn

to inquire if there would be any chance of getting a photo of the following Soldiers Grave. Reg. No. 1945.

W. G. Grace
C. Company
21st Rein.
2nd Fl. Bgde.

If so could you possible send me one for the young lady he was engaged to would very much like to have one. She wrote some [illegible] me to make inquiries from Hoping you can oblige

I am
Your Trio
Pte. H. Hague
A.A.M.C.

assist you with in any way I am willing to do my best I will now conclude

Your Faithfully
Pte. Atholston. Hague
1st A. D. H. Staff

121 Pte. H. Hagge A.A.M.C.
Staff 1st A.D. Hospital,
Bulford
Wil s.

16th Jan 1918

Dear Sir,

In answer to your letter just received concerning the grave of

1945cPte. W. Grase 7th Battn

We will try to get a photograph for the lady to whom he was engaged, but we would like youto send us her name and address as we have to supply them to the Grave Registration Society.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Baker

SECRETARY

Rec'd 22-1-18

Bulford
20th Jan 1918

Reg 131 Pte A. Flague
A. A. M. C. Staff 1st A.D.H.
Bulford
Wilts

Dear Secretary

In answer to your letter just received asking for the address of the young Lady to whom he Reg. 6/6 1945 Pte W. Grace 7th Batn was engaged to is as near as I can find out. is this Sister A. Darrington A.A.N.S. 1/02 A.G.H France her Australian Address I could not Give without Sending out there for it Hoping that this will be able to fix it up for me. I now thank you for the trouble that I have put you to.

Your Faithly
Pte Atholston Flague
M. A. D. Hospital

Sister. A. Dorrington,
A.A.N.S., 3rd Australian Gen'l.Hpl,
B. E. F.

February 16th, 1918.

121 Pte. ... Hague,
A.I.F.,
1st A.D.Hospital, Salford.

Dear Sir,

Another unofficial report has been received about the death of - No 1945 Pte. W.GRACE, 7th Battalion, A.I.F. - which only confirms the evidence already sent you.

Informant - Pte. E.H.Coningsby, wrote from the Bttn, in France to this effect "I happened to be near when Pte.Grace was killed in action. It was on Sept.20th about mid-day we had reached our final objective and consolidated our position. Pte. Huntsman was on post, near him was Lt. Attwood. Ptes.Grace and Bascott, a shell burst and killed the four of them and wounded three others. His personal belongings were taken from his pockets and handed into battalion office from there they would be forwarded to his Mother. Lt. Attwood's body was taken away by the stretcher bearers and Ptes. Huntsman, grace and Bascott were buried side by side near where they fell. It was just near Polygon Wood. We erected three little wooden crosses and attached the identity disc which is used for that purpose, so you will see they were buried on the field."

Should we obtain further details of his death we shall forward them to you as we realise how anxious you must be for full particulars.

With our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

31st January 1918.

Sister Dorrington,
3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
Dartford.

Dear Madam,

We regret to inform you of further unofficial evidence o f the death No. 1045 Pte W. Grace 7th. Batt. A.I.F.

No.5307 L/Cpl. W.S. Rogers of the same Batt. writes from Hospital from France and tells us that Pte Grace was wounded in the leg during an attack at Menin Road on the morning of Sept. 20th. Lieut. Attwood and the Company Sergeant Major went to his assistance when a shell burst near them and it was through that a splinter of the shell exploded a bomb which Pte. Grace was carrying in his pocket instantly killing him and Lieut. Attwood and mortally wounding the Company Sergeant Major. L/Cpl. Rogers unfortunately knows nothing of Pte. Grace's burial.

No.7085 Pte. C.Mc.Kenzie of the 7th. Batt. A.I.F. writes from No.3 Command Depot Hurdcott, that he came from Australia with Pte. Grace, and knew him later in the Batt. his report corroborates that of L/Cpl. Rogers, but he adds that Pte. Grace was buried where he fell and that a cross bearing full particulars was erected.

We also have a report from No. 4513 Pte. Semons 7th Batt.

A.I.F. who writes from No.4 Command Depot Hurdcott who states that he saw Pte. Grace killed instantaneously by a shell just beyond Polygon Wood and that he was buried about 40 yds behind the trench with three others. A temporary mark was erected with his disc. on it, but a Company of Pioneers erected crosses on the graves later.

Pte. Selmons says he only knew Pte. Grace in the Company. Any further reports which may reach us will immediately be sent on to you.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary,

D.M.B. for Dr. D.S.

121 Pte A.Hague,

1st A.D.Hospital, Bulford.

February 5th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 28th ulto., referring to 1945 Pte.W.GRACE, 7th Battalion, A.I.F., officially reported Killed in Action on 20.9.17, and giving us Sister A. Dorrington's present address. We are applying to the Graves Registration Bureau for a photograph of Pte.Grace's grave and instructing them to send it to Sister A.Dorrington,

A.A.N.S., 2nd.A.G.H.,
France.

as soon as it is available.

We have already written to her several times to 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford, forwarding information concerning Pte. Grace, would you please advise us if she has not received these letters and we will have them repeated to her present address.

With good wishes.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

D.M.B. for M.R.

Ack p. 22.2.18

On Active Service

WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

1945 W. GRACE
7 Batt
R/A 20-9-17 Feb. 11-2-1918

To Mrs Deakin
Mr P.I.4 (CJ)

Your letter to hand inquiring after the where abouts of Pte. W. Grace No 1945 7th Batt. A.I.F. he was killed at Carlile Farm by a shell. he was Burried there. and his own Disc was taken off him and put on his Cross. There are three of them Burried there to getter. he is not Burried near a Cemetery but on the Field. I can not say wheather the Grave has been registered or not as I have not been near there latley.

I remain
Yours faithfully
B Higgins Cpl
2678.

Cpl Higgins. B. W.
Coy 7th Batt
No 2678. A.I.F.

121 Pte.A.Hague,
A.A.M.A. Staff,
1st A.D.Hpl,
Bulford.

Sister Dorrington,
3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
Dartford.

January 26th, 1918.

Dear Sister Dorrington,

We are sending further unofficial information which we have received concerning

1945 Pte.W.GRACE, 7th Battalion, A.I.F.

from men in his unit.

2270 Pte.H.Carmody, states as follows :- "We had just reached our third objective at Polygon Wood on Sept.20th and were digging in when Grace and Huntsman were killed by a shell which I saw fall on to them. Lt Attwood of C.Coy was killed by the same shell. I was near them. The same shell killed about five altogether. Grace was in C.Coy, aged about 40 had been wounded in Gallapoli, returned to Australia, and afterwards came to France."

7091 Pte.A.S.Wilson, also states as follows:-

"At Black Watch Corner, Ypres sector. I saw a shell let into a trench that was being made up. Grace, Huntsman, and Lt.Attwood of C.Coy, were all killed by this shell on Sept.20th. I was about 50 yards away. The bodies were left until next morning when I and two others went up and buried them a few yards from where they were killed. These two men had bombs in their pockets when they were hit. No mark was put on the grave to my knowledge."

We are pursuing our enquiries and will at once advise you of any further information we may receive.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

L. B.

SECRETARY.

Reg No 121
Pte. A Hague
1st A. D. H
Buford
28th

Rec'd 4.2.18

Dear Secretary

I have to now thank you for the letters Dated 23rd & 26th of this month concerning inquires of 1945. Pte. G. W. Grace y Battn A.I.F. I am so Sorry that I have put you all this trouble but I Know of no other way in which I could find out about Pte Grace. I have now also found out the correct address of Sister Dorrington it is as follow. Sister A. Dorrington.

A.A.N.S.
No 2 A. G. H
France

That is her correct address as I have had a letter from her. & She asks me to get as much Particulars as Possible Well I must now thank you again for the trouble & if there is anything I could

121. Pte. A. Hague,
A. A. M. C.
Staff 1st. A. D. Hospital,
Fulford,
Wilts.

23rd. January. 1918

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your letter of the 20th. inst. giving us the name of the enquirer for :-

1916. Pte. W. Grace, 7th. Battalion. A.I.F.

and beg to inform you that Sister Dorrington has now applied to us direct and we are sending her all the information we have of Pte. Grace.

She gives her address as 3rd. Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford.

Yours faithfully,

O.S

SECRETARY.

25rd, January, 1918.

Sister Dorrington,
3rd. Australian Auxiliary Hospital,
DARTOFRD.

Dear Madam,

In reply to your enquiry for :-

1945. Pte. W. Grace, 7th. Battalion. A.I.F.

we regret to inform you that this soldier has been officially reported killed in action on 20. 9. 17.

We also have an unofficial report of his death from :-

1508. Cpl. A. Clapp, 3rd. Canadian General Hospital, B.E.F.

who tells us that Pte Grace joined the Battalion in France on his arrival from Australia wither he had returned after being wounded in Gallipoli.

He describes him as being rather stout, short and clean shave

Cpl. Clapp says he was in a shell hole when he saw a shell fall amongst several men including Pte. Grace, who was killed instantaneously. He further states that the casualty occurred on Sept. 20.th. in the fighting around Ypres and that Pte. Grace was buried where he fell, and a cross was erected, to which his identification disc was attached.

We are continuing our enquiries and will send you any further reports we may get. Trusting it may be some comfort to you to know he was killed instantly, and assuring you of our sympathy

in your sorrow.

Yours faithfully,

O.S.
SECRETARY.