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

2471 Sapper
Erskine Gilbert Collins

2nd Field Company Engineers



0770703O

2nd Fld.Coy.Engrs.
- A.I.F.

Collins.
E.G. 2471

Littlejohn.
R.J. 519

"Died of Wounds 1.10.17"

re L/Cpl.Littlejohn and Sapper Collins. I passed on the first letter referring to Littlejohn to L/Cpl.L.Ambler in this Depot, because he knew more of what happened than I did, being in the same section. The second letter I handed over to Gnr. Collins of the same section as Sapper Collins. I only helped to carry out Sapper Collins to the nearest Aid.Station. His eyes were glazing before we left him, and he must have died shortly after. I learned afterwards that he was buried at the side of the Menin Road in the graveyard there. Gnr.Collins and L/Cpl.Ambler will write and give more information as each of them were in their sections at the time (1) & (3) and I belong to (2). I only happened to be there to help a little.

Letter from:-
Cpl.G.Wallace
Brightlingsea
6.1.18. H.

London.
14.2.18.

Engineers. A.I.F.

Collins. E.G. 2471
2 Co.

D/W Oct 1/17 Dat D/B

"I saw Spr. Erskine Collins (2. 3 sect) hit on October 1 while we were going up to hold the line at Westhook Ridge. He was taken to the dressing station where I heard he died of wounds. He was buried in the cemetery on the Menin Road. I was carried out at the same time."

Eye-witness: He saw him wounded.

Description: A draughtsman from a suburb of Melbourne. Very well known by his nickname 'Mo'.

Informant: Spr. Alfred Beverley, 7277
Engineers, A.I.F.,2 Coy. 3 Sect.,
3rd Southern Gen. Hosp., Cowley Section
Oxford.

Home address: Thorn St, Ipswich, Queensland.

Jan 11/1918.
Janet M. Payne.

A. I. F. Engineers, 2. COLLINS,E.G. 2471.

D/W. October 1st, 1917.

Collins was in 2 Section. He came from Geelong(Victoria). The only other man of the name was a Lieut. He was in 3 Section. He was killed at Chateau Wood neat Westhoek at about 6 a.m.on October 1st. We were on a road about 2 miles behind the lines going up to build a D/S. Fritz was shelling pretty hard. A shell fell at the side of the road. It wounded 7. Collins was badly hit in the stomach. He never spoke. He was carried to a D/S on the Menin Road. He died there. He was buried by the RAMC in the Military Cemetery on the Menin Road. About a week later we put a cross up on his grave. It was a good one. It had his name &c. carved on it. A photo of it was taken at the time. Collins' people should be able to get a copy by writing to the Coy. He was temporarily bandaged by us before being taken to the D/S where he died.

NWH.

Reference:- Spr. V.L. Lamb. 10554. 3 Section.
No. 56 Gen. Hosp.

Wrote Spr. Lamb re photograph.
24-1-18

Etaples
1.1.18.

2nd Fld Engrs.
A.I.F.

COLLINS,
E.G. 2471

"Died of Wounds 1.10.17."

Re No. 2471, Sapper Erskine G.Collins, 2nd Fld Coy Engrs, A.I.F. through Cpl. Wallace of the same unit to whom your enquiry was directed. I have just written to the poor lads parents in Australia and gave them all the details I have available. Sapper Collins was in my section No. 3 of the above Coy, and whilst proceeding to work with the rest of the boys was unfortunately hit by a piece of shell which burst too close to us. Sapper Collins was hit severely in the side and rendered unconscious. He was carried to the dressing station but rapidly sank and died there. I had enquiries made re his burial place but could not glean definite information. The A.M.C. unit moving out, made it a difficult matter but I am quite sure that he was properly buried and had the Padre's attention at the last. The dressing station referred to is on the Menin Road between Hooge and Birr Cross Roads, the latter being fully a mile on the Hooge side of Ypres on that Road. The date of his death 1.10.17 is correct. I am perfectly sure that the sapper Collins in my section (late) is the one you refer to but will add the following brief description for your information. Age about 23. Architectual

draftsman, medium height, slim build, dark complexion and hair and possessed a nose which was slightly prominent. I cannot say if his grave was registered but am sure that it would be. For his splendid work at Polygon Wood on Sept. 20th he was awarded the military medal but unfortunately he did not know of this at time of his death. As I said just now I have written to his parents and besides giving them all the available details paid a tribute to the memory of the poor boy which he so deservedly won.

Letter from:- Lieut.Walter A.Collins,
2nd Fld Engrs,
Engrs Training Depot,
Brightlingsea, Essex.

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.

M.

NOTE TO MELBOURNE

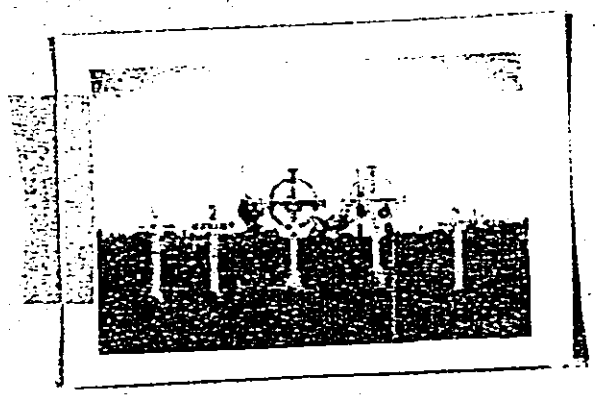
2nd Fld.Coy.
Engrs.
A.I.F.

COLLINS
E.G. 2471

"Died of Wounds 1-10-17"

176 Cpl.G.W.Paterson, 2nd Fld.Coy. Engrs. has sent us attached photograph of grave of above for relatives. Sapper Collins' grave is the last Cross on the left.

London
30-4-18



- Two prints sent Melbourne
1.5.18

NOTE TO MELBOURNE

2nd Fld.Coy.
Engrs.
A.I.F.

COLLINS
E.G. 2471

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176 Cpl.G.W.Paterson, 2nd Fld.Coy. Engrs. has sent us attached photograph of grave of above for relatives. Sapper Collins' grave id the last Cross on the left.

Cross erected by A.I.F. Engrs & Coy
to E.G. Collins 2471
[illegible]
A.I.F. Engrs
Note the last cross on left.

Photo given by Cpl G.W. Paterson
[illegible]

- Two prints sent Melbourne
1.5.18.

2nd Engineers
A.I.F.

COLLINS
E.G. 2471

"Died of Wounds 1-10-17"

at Westhoek Ridge, hit by shell in stomach. Died about 1½ hours after at Dressing Station on the Menin Road. We were both in the same shell hole at time we were hit. He was taken down to Dressing Station before me, more seriously hit.

Informant. Beverley 7277
Ward 33,
HAREFIELD.

D.P.Dickson
London
8-3-18

M.

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.

2nd Fld Coy, Engrs.
A.I.F.

COLLINS,
E.G. 2471

"Died of Wounds 1.10.17."

Re your letter concerning the photo of the grave of, Sapper, E.G.Collins 2471, 2nd Fld Coy, Engrs, A.I.F. I understand that the photo was taken by Cpl. Paterson of the company and handed into our Orderly Room. So I think that the best person to ask for it would be the O.C. Major Gould. Hoping that you have no further trouble in obtaining the same.

Letter from :- Sapper, V.L.Lamb, 16554,
Kitchener's Hospital,
Brighton. 29.1.18.

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.
28.2.18. NOTE Written to Adjutant for photograph 1.2.18.

M.

2nd Field Engrs
A.I.F.

COLLINS
E.G. 2471

"Died of wounds 1.10.17."

Refer to Cpl. Wallace 2nd Field Engrs who is now in France he saw him killed at Westhoek, and can give full particulars of death and burial.

Witness:- Spr. L. Clare 1661
2nd Field Engrs
3rd A.A.Hospital,
Dartford

W.Oman
London.
17.1.18

M

Notewritten Cpl. Wallace 14.1.18

2nd Engineers — Collins, E.G. 2471.

D/W. 1/10/17.

He lived about 2 days after being wounded and is buried in a cemetery near the Dressing Station, Menin Road, just outside Ypres. I saw the grave with cross etc.,

2nd Engineers — Pickering, V.J.Bpr. 419.

G. Southall. 28/12/17.

R. DR.

M.

16554 Sapper V.L.Lamb,
3rd Sect. 2nd Coy Engineers,
Kitchener War Hospital,
Brighton.

January 28th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We have been making enquiries on behalf of our Melbourne Bureau concerning

2471 E.G.COLLINS, 2nd Fld Coy Engineer. A.I.F.

Recently we understand you were interviewed by one of our Searchers at the 56th General Hospital, France, and in the course of that interview you told him that a photograph was taken of Pte. Collins' grave, a copy of which could be had by the late soldier's people on application to the Coy. On behalf of the next of kin we would be very glad if we could secure a photograph to forward to them, therefore we are writing to ask you to whom we should apply, whether to an individual, or direct to the Adjutant.

An officer of the Company Lt. J.P.Close, recently offered to help us at any time we needed him, shall we write to him?

In the ordinary course of events we should apply to the Graves Registration and Enquiry for a photograph, only on account of the enormous amount of work which that Society has to attend to it is a long time before they can send the photograph to Australia, and we thought that if we could get a copy of the one you mentioned

a great deal of time would be saved .

We regret to learn that you are in hospital, and trust you are not very ill, and are making a good recovery.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

Act'd P.C. 1-2-18

~~2471~~
~~E. G. COLLINS~~
2 Fld Co Engineers
D/pts 1-10-17
M 3 (cd)

Kitcheners Hosp
Brighton
29.1.18

The Secretary.
Australian Red Cross Society
London.

Dear Sir

Re your letter of the 28th concerning the photo of the grave of
2471. Sapper E. G. Collins Second Field Co Engineers A.I.F.
I understand that the photo was taken by Cpl. Paterson of the Company & handed into our Orderly Room.
So I think that the best person to ask for it would be the O.C. Major Gould.
Hoping that you have no further trouble in obtaining the same.

I am
Yours faithfully
Sapper V. L. Lamb 16554.

Note Written to Adjutant re photograph
1-2-18.

The Adjutant,

2nd Fld Coy Engr, Australian

Imperial Force, Abroad.

February 5th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We have been making enquiries on behalf of our Melbourne Bureau concerni-ng the death and burial of

2471 Sapper R.G.COLLIES, 2nd Fld Coy.Engrs.

We have recently received an unofficial report to the effect that there is a photograph of this late soldier's grave in the Orderly Room of your unit. We are very anxious to forward such a photograph to the relatives of this soldier, and would esteem it a great favour if you would send us a copy of the photograph, or lend us either the original or the negative, in which case we would have prints made and sent to Australia.

We have applied to the Graves Registration & Enquiry asking them to forward a photograph of the grave to the next of kin, but through this channel it takes many months, before the photograph is received, if ever it does reach the relatives, therefore we trust that you can meet our request in this matter. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully,

Ack'd Letter 3.24-2-18
17.

Engineers Training Depôt
Brightlingsea
Essex.

(C8)

2471.
E. G. COLLINS.
2 Fld Co Engineers
I/W 1-10-17
M3

To
The Secretary
W.M. Enquiry Bureau.

I am in receipt of an enquiry from your Bureau re No. 2471 Sapper Erskine G Collins - 2nd Field Coy Engrs A.I.F. - through Cpl Wallace of the same unit - to whom your enquiry was directed. I have just written to the poor lad's parents in Australia and gave them all the details I have available.

Sapper Collins was in my section - No. 3 of the above Coy - and whilst proceeding to work with the rest of the boys was unfortunately hit by a piece of shell which burst alas - too close to us. Sapper Collins was hit severely in the side and rendered unconscious. He was carried to the dressing station but rapidly sank and died there. I had enquiries made re his burial place but could not glean definite information. The A.W.C. unit moving out - made it a difficult matter but I am quite sure that he was properly buried and had the padre's attention at the last. The dressing station referred to is on the Menin Road between Hooge and Birr Cross Roads - the latter being fully a mile on the Hooge side of Ypres on that Road. The date of his death 1-10-17 is correct. I am perfectly sure that the Sapper Collins in my section (Lak) is the one you refer to but will add the following

brief description for your information. Age about 23. Architectural Draftsman - medium height - slim build - ~~dro~~ dark complexion & hair and ~~f~~ possessed a nose which was slightly prominent. I cannot say if his grave was registered but am sure that it would be - ~~the office~~. For his splendid work at Polygon Wood on Sept. 20th he was awarded the military medal but unfortunately he did not know of this at time of his death. As I said just now I have written to his parents and besides giving them all the available details paid a tribute to the memory of the poor boy which he so deservedly won.

Trusting the above will help you and welcoming any further inquiries.

I am

Yours Faithfully

Walter A Collins (Lieut)

2nd Field Coy Engrs.

PS/ His parents are residents of Geelong - Vic..

Lt.W.A.Collins,

2nd FldCoEngrs.A.I.F.

Engrs.TrainDepot,Brightlingsea.

February 5th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We wish to thank you for your letter in answer to our enquiry addressed to Cpl.Wallace, concerning :-

2471 E.G.COLLINS, of your unit.

It was very good of you to send us, the information and clear details about him, they will be of much assistance to us, and of value to our enquirers.

We are very glad to learn that you have written to the late Sapper Collin's people, knowing as we do how the letters are appreciated, and what a comfort it will be to them to learn of his splehdid work.

Again thanking you.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

Ack'd 2.12.18

E Company.
No 6. O.C.B.
St Johns College
Oxford.

Dec 1st 1918

The Secretary.
Wounded Missing Enquiry Bureau
Austr: Red + Society
London

Dear Madam/

Im anxious to secure a photo. if possible, of the grave of No 2471, Sapper Erskine. G. Collins. (Late) 2nd Field Company Engineers Austr: Imp: Forces. who died of Wounds 12th October 1917 & was buried in the Menin Rd Cemetary outside Ypres Iwish kind the photo to the parents of the later Sapper Collins. Can you give me please any information as to whom Ishould write re enquries expenses etc

Thanking you in anticipation

I remain
Yours faithfully.
(Cadet). Gerald. J. Douglas.

E.E.H.

Cadet Gerald Douglas,
E Coy.
No. 6.O.C.B.
St John's College,
OXFORD.

3/12/18.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your enquiry for a photograph of the grave of 2471 Sapper E.J.Collins,2nd Field Coy.Engineers A.I.F. We beg to inform you that we have already applied to the Graves Dept. A.I.F. Headquarters for a copy, which will be sent to his next of kin as soon as available.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.