

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

224 Private
Leslie Edward Lee

10th Machine Gun Company



1580105K

10th Mach. Gun Coy.
A. I. F.

Lee.
L. E. 224

"Wounded & Missing S.6.17"

I regret to have to tell you that I, as well as most others in my company, have come to the conclusion that L.E. Lee of whom you were enquiring died of wounds sustained at Messines and that he was buried near the spot where he received his injuries. He was an intimate friend of mine and his disappearance for a long time mystified me. I was continually making enquiries but received no tidings whatever of him until recently when we received some information, which while not quite convincing, must, I think, be accepted as final and conclusive proof of his decease. My association with him in those last hours came about as follows. On the night of Messines when all the objectives had been taken, a carrying party arrived with ammunition at the place where was located No. 1 Section of our Coy., of which Lee was a member. I was one of the party and we learned that there were only two men left of No. 1. Section some had been killed and the rest wounded. Of these latter Lee was one. On the first opportunity I set out to find him, and he seemed to be very badly wounded. There were no stretchers and no stretcher bearers to be found anywhere. It was some time before we were able to requisition a stretcher in charge of a volunteer bearer.

10th Mach. Gun Coy.
A. I. F.

-2-

LEE.
L. E. 224

With the aid of a volunteer from the infantry, Lee was got out of the trench where he was lying on to the parapet ready to be put into the stretcher and it was then that I left him. Our numbers had been sadly depleted and not a man could be spared from that position. I had been convinced that, since he was carried out, we would eventually hear of him from some dressing station. It was not until some little time ago that a report came through our Headquarters that Lee was not carried out, that he was carried only a little way and was then dropped because he was too weighty for the bearers. Further enquiries brought another report to the effect that a badly wounded machine gunner answering to Lee's description had been found next day by some engineers in whose hands he died some minutes later. Their description of the place where they buried him was very close to where I last saw him. No identification disc, no papers, nothing but a description which was not very particular or complete. These are all the facts I have in my possession concerning the end of as brave, affectionate and lovable a comrade as was ever numbered in the ranks of the A.I.F. He was a fine man standing 6'1" and was broad in proportion. He had no facial or physical characteristics - unless his hair be excepted, which was red, but not vividly red in colour and which was thick and inclined to curl. Humorous and witty he earned for himself many nick-names, the most popular of which was "Leggo" well known in Melbourne football circles. London.

Better from:- F.I.J. Coffey

17.10.17.

France. 2.10.17.

Off.M.

10th M.G. Coy, •
A.I.F.

Lee,
L.E. 224.

"Wounded & Missing June 8th 1917"

He was knocked by the same shell as me. Was badly hit about the body - We were both lying in the trench together. It happened at Messines on June 8th - He was carried out on a stretcher (Before me) and died on the way to the Dressing Station I don't know where he was buried. 1000 Smith A. 10th M.G. Coy France told me he died on the way to the Dressing station

Reference:- 243. McGrane M.J.
10th M.G. Coy,
A.I.F.

W.G.J. 7.8.17

London 17.10.17

Off M

(10 Machine ~~Gun~~
~~10 Machine~~ Gun Companies. A.I.F.

Lee, L.E. 224.

W. & M. June 8/17.

" I was told by Frank Coffee (10 M.G.C.) that he saw a man called Lee (10 M.G.C.) very badly wounded, during the attack on June 7th at Messines. Some stretcher-bearers were sent up to bring him back, but he has never been heard of since. He cannot be a prisoner, as we never fell back at all. We took our objective and held it. I know our officers were enquiring for him."

Eyewitness:- No, told by Frank Coffee (10 M.G.C.).

Description:- From Melbourne, out since May 1916. We called him Dick, but this may have been a nickname.

Informant:- Pte. Herbert Duxson, 1276,
10, M.G. Companies, 3 Sect. A.I.F.
3rd. Southern Genl Hosp., The base, Oxford.

Home address:- Wallaboo Post Office,
via Stawell, (Stawell)
Victoria.

26/10/17.

H.M. Pickard-Cambridge.

off M

See 1.10.17 page 14/15

C O P Y

Statement made by No. 111 Pte RUDDICK C. 10th M.G.Cre No. 224 Pte BEE, L.E. 10th M.G.C.W. Missing 8.6.17

From letters received from his comrades. Private Lee was wounded at Messines and died from the effects of his wounds. Also states that no trace of Lee could be found as passing through the Dressing Stations. No. 25 Private A.A. Barker, 10th M.G. Coy informed me of the above facts.

Dated at SOUTHALL this 29th day of October 1917.

(Sgd) G.H. Ruddick,

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) T. Letham

Off all
Bel K

10th M.G.C.
A.I.F.

Lee L.E. 224.

(W. & M. June 8/17)

"On June 8th 1917 about 5 p.m. on the right of Messines in the Black Line (3rd Objective) at the same gun as myself, Lee was shot through the head and in the side by machine gun bullets. He was lying alongside our gun and just breathing when we had orders abt. 7.30 the same day to move up to the front line. Lee was left there with Pte. Thomas Fergusson of the same Coy. I never saw him again".

Eye-witness:

Description:

Informant: Pte. W.L. Walters 141,
10th M.G.C. A.I.F.,
3rd Western General Hospt.,
Cardiff.

Home address:
Billin,
Victoria,
Australia.

2/11/17,
C.A. Comb.

OK
6
Belt

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHMLOW.

8332/7/5

C O P Y

Statement made by No.141 Pte Walters W.L. 10th M.G.C.

re No.234 Pte Lee L.E. 10th M.G.C.
Wid and Missing 8.6.17

I last saw Private Lee, 10th M.G.Coy. at Messines in second line trench wounded the in the head, chest and legs. This is the last I saw of this man and do not know what became of him after that.

*led out
and sent on
wounded
killed*

Off: M.

Dated at Longbridge Deveroll this 30th day of December 1917.

(Sgd) W.L. Walters.

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) J.C. Mountford.
Lieutenant

10th Aust. M.G.C.

Lee I.E. 224.

(W. & M. June 8/17.)

"I remember that Lee was first reported missing, then that he had been wounded and passed through the C.C.S. Enquiries were made and it was then found that he had not been passed through any Casualty Clearing Station - lastly it was reported that he had been killed and buried at Messines by one of the Pioneers who had neglected to remove his identity disc. This was read out to us in Orders one night by the Capt."

Eye-witness:

Description:

Informant: Pte. W.A. Orchard 727,
10th Aust. M.G.C.,
Home address: King George Hospt., Stamford St.
c/o Mrs. Hunt,
Forrestus Hill,
West Tamar,
Tasmania.

3.11.17,
P.C. Parry.

*all ed
bid K*

Machine Gun Coy.,

A.I.F.

LEE
L.E. 224

"Wounded and Missing June 8th 1917"

He was in same Coy., I think he was wounded at Messines but I heard from Sgt. Kelly 10th M.G. Coy., now in France that he had died or was wounded and buried on the way out.

Witness:-

McNeil Gnr. L.A. 98
10th M.G.C.
Ent 47
Littlemoor

London.
14.11.17.

Off.m.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON.

C O P Y

30 NOV 1917

2332/7/5

Statement made by No.1276 Pte DUXSON H. 10th M.G.C.

re No.224 Pte LEE L.E. 10th M.G.Coy
Wd and Missing 8.6.17

On June 7th at Messines, Private Lee was badly wounded. That a stretcher bear was brought to take him away, and that I never heard any more of him after that

*Yell
Hb
Bel K*

Not sent on

S Dated at 3rd S.G.H this 23rd day of November 1917.

(Sgd) H.H. DUXSON

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) J. FREEBORN.
Major.
R.A.M.C

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON.

17 DEC 1917

2332/7/5

C O P Y

Statement made by No.727 Pte ORCHARD W.A.10th M.G.C.

re No.224 Pte LEE L.E. 10th M.G.C.
Wd and Missing 8.6.17

The only men missing from my company on the 7th June were Private R.REVEL and Private LEE (regimental number and initials unknown). A few weeks later I heard that from Private R.REVEL by post from a hospital in France. Six weeks to two months after 7th June, it was announced on parade that one of our men with our colours on had been buried by the pioneers, but that the body was too decomposed to be recognisable. No identification was taken from the body.

Not sent on

*Yell
Hb
Bel K*

Dated at King George Hospital this 27th day of November 1917.

(Sgd) W.A. ORCHARD

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) G. HOFFMANN.
Lieut.
R.A.M.C

10th Mac. Gun Co.

LEE, L. E.
Pte. 224.

"Wounded & Missing" 8-6-17

"Casualty was wounded by the same shell that wounded me at Messines on the 9th June, 1917. He was wounded in the face. He was left there when I was taken away as there were not enough stretchers."

Informant:- Pte. L. L. Stacey,
No. 6079, 10th Mac. Gun Co.

Private address:-
Sea Lake, Vic.

H.A.B.
28/11/17.

11/11/17
Ld
P. i. K

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

A.M.G.C. 10.

LEE, L.E. 224.

W/M June 8th 1917.

I knew L.E. Lee very well. He was one of the 1st Reinf. and belonged to No. 1 section. We came over from Melbourne together on the 26th May 1916. He was a tall man about 6ft 1, with light red hair and he ~~was~~ fair with a pleasant appearance and about 22 or 23 years of age. I do not know anything about his private life but I think he came from Richmond near Melbourne and that he played football for Richmond. I was told by Pte F.I.J. ~~De~~ Coffey, 27 of Section 4 who knew Lee that he had ~~seen~~ him lying in a trench badly wounded about the 7th or 8th June during the attack on Messines. Coffey thought that Lee could not recover from his wounds. We retained possession of our ground.

Inf: QMS A.R.V. Symons. 123.

No. 7 C.C.

BOULOGNE. 14.9.17 AGL

written by Coffey 21.9.17

A.M.G.C. 10.

LEE, T.E. 224.

W/M June 8th 1917.

Pte Moulton, of the same company told me that, though wounded himself, he carried Lee back on the 8th June from the Green Line to the Black Line. Lee was badly wounded and Moulton was too done up to carry him further, so left him in a trench in the Black Line. Moulton went to the Horton War Hospital, Epsom, but is now in Salisbury Plain.

Inf: Pte E.H. Barnett . 1789.
No. 2 Army Rest Camp.
BCULCGHE. 15.9.17.

HMH

off M.

Written Pte Moulton 9.17

A.I.F. 10th M.G.C.

Lee, L.F.
224.

W/M. June 8/17.

"I knew L.F. Lee well, as he was on my gun. I have had a letter from my chum, Pte. Barker of 10 M.G.C. A.I.F. now in France to say that L.F. ("Dick") Lee died on his way out after the push at Messines on June 8th."

Eye-witness. No. Pte. Barker, 10 M.G.C. A.I.F.

Description:- Knew him well. His father's address is 40 Gardiner Street, Richmond, Victoria.

Informant:- Pte. Ruddick, 111, 10 M.G.C. A.I.F.
Richmond Military Hospital, Grove Road.

A. Campbell.
27.9.17.

Written by Pte Barker
2.10.17

AUST. M. G. C. 10th

LEE. L.E. 224.

W & M. 8.6.17.

I knew L.E. Lee well. He came from Richmond near Melbourne. I do not think his No. was as high as 224. As far as I know he was the only Lee in the Coy. He was a very tall, massive man with light red hair, and about 24 or 25. I was told by Lee's great friend named Frank Coffey, that the last he saw of Lee was on a stretcher with two stretcher bearers. Lee was then badly wounded. I have heard nothing about him since.

Reference: Pte. R. B. Hunt. 68. No.3 Sect.
No.1 Con.Camp.
Boulogne. 29.9.17.

AGL.

U.H. 11

E. 6. 11. 1917

10th Mach Gun Coy.
A. I. F.

Lee.
L. E. 224

"Wounded & Missing 8.6.17"

Re L.E.Lee. All I can do is to tell you all I know concerning him to the best of my ability as I was wounded a few hours later myself. 224 L.E.Lee 10th Machine Gun Coy. was about 6 feet in height, well built, with auburn hair. His age I cannot state, but he was something like 20. He was wounded very badly on the 8.6.17 at Messines and as he was alongside of me, I was able to attend to his wounds. He couldn't be moved at that time as we had no stretchers I was attending him up till the time when I got hit myself, so I had to leave him there with other wounded men. As far as I know they were all moved back, meanwhile I don't think he could have been taken prisoner, although he may have been buried.

Letter from:- F.J. MOULTON (P)

Grantham
2.10.17.

London.
4.10.17.

Off.M.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHOLON.

2332/7/5

(COPY)

Statement made by No. 1250 Pte Moulton F.J. 10th M.G.C.

re No. 224 Pte Lee L.E. 10th M.G.C.
Missing & Wd. 8.6.17

On 8.6.17 I was in company with No. 224 Pte Lee L.E. 10th M.G.Coy at Snitchells Farm Messines. A shell landed in the trench close to where I was standing and severely wounded Pte Lee. I attended to his wounds to the best of my ability but could not get him out of the trench as he was a very heavy man and in a bad way. Some hours later I was hit and went to the dressing station. Before I left the trench Pte Lee spoke to me. I know nothing further than this about him.

Dated at Belton Park Grantham this 10th day of October 1917.

(Sgd) M.J. Moulton.

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) W2 Repin. *Leitch*

A.M.G.C. 10.

LEE, L. E. 224.

W/M June 8th 1917.

This was at Messines. He was carrying up ammunition and was wounded by shell. I heard the same night that but cannot remember the name of informant. There was a report afterwards that he had been taken to hospital, but this was an error and we could obtain no trace of him when the enquiry was taken up later. Description; tall, fair, 13 or 14 stone.

Inf: Pte W.A.Orchard. 727.
No. 14 General
BOULOGNE. 13.10.17.

WG

Uff/ab

ORIGINAL STATEMENT FORKTON.

9 NOV 1917

2352/7/5.

G O P Y.

Statement made by No. 727 Pte Orchard. 10th M.G.C.

re No. 224 Pte Lee L.E. 10th M.G.C.
Wounded & Missing 8.6.17.

I first heard Pte Lee was Missing and a prisoner, then that he was wounded and admitted to a Casualty Clearing Station: finally that one of the Prisoners had buried a man of our Machine Gun Company, but had not taken off his Identification Disc.

Only two men were Missing from my Company that day, and I have since received a letter from the second man by name Bob Revell, (Private).

Dated at King George's Hospital this 1st day of November, 1917.

Statement made and signed before me.

(SND) W.A. Orchard.

(SND) G. Hopson,
Lieut. R.A.M.C.

6/11/17
6d
Bel K
2 etid

ack. by
letter O.S.
9-10-17

France.

October 2, 1917

The Secretary 224 L.F. LEE
Amer. Red Cross Society, 10 M G Coy
London. 10/18-6-17

4
6/11/17

Dear Messrs. Deaton,

In reply to your
letter of the 21.9.17 I regret to have to
tell you that I, as well as most others
in my company, have come to the conclusion
that L. E. Lee of the 10th Machine Gun
Coy. of whom you were enquiring died of
wounds sustained at Messines & that he was
buried near the site where he received his
injuries.

He was an intimate friend of mine
& his disappearance for a long time mystified
me. I was continually making inquiries but
received no tidings. Blatant of him until recently
when we received some information which while
not quite convincing, must, I think, be

(2)

accepted as final & conclusive proof of Lin
age. My association with him in close
times came about as follows.

On the night of November when all
objectives had been taken a company -
arrived with ammunition at the base
which was located No 1 Section of our Coy.

which he was a member. I had one of
the party & we learned that there were only
two men left of No 1 Sect. One had been
killed & the other wounded. Of these latter
there was one. On the first opportunity I
went to find him & he seemed to be very badly
wounded. There were no stretcher-bearers
because he had found anywhere. It was some
time before we were able to requisition a
stretcher in charge of a volunteer driver. With
the aid of a volunteer from the infantry he
got out of the trench where he was lying
and he walked ready to be put on the stretcher.
It was then that I lost him. Our numbers
had been badly depleted & not a man could be
spared from that position.

I had been convinced that, since he

(3)

was carried out, we would eventually learn of him from
some dressing station. It was not until some time ago,
that a report came through our Headquarters that he
was not carried out; that he was carried only a little
way & was then dropped because he was too heavily for
his bearers. Further inquiries brought another report
to the effect that a badly wounded machine
gunner answered to his description had been found
some days by some engineers in whose hands he died some
minutes later. Their description of the place where they
found him was very close to where I had seen him & at
place called Bethgal Farm. But these engineers did
nothing but in which to identify him - no identification
disc and paper, nothing but a description which was
not very particular or complete. These are all the
facts I have in my possession concerning the end of a
brave, collectionate & deserving a Comrade as well
ever numbered in the ranks of the A. I. F.

(4)

He was a fine man, standing 6' 1" in & was
broad in proportion. He had no facial or
physical characteristics - unless in hair
he accepted, which was red, but not
unusually red, a colour, and which was at
times inclined to curl. Humorous & witty
and for himself many nicknames. He
most popular of which was "Boggy" - well
known in Melbourne football circles.

While regretting the occasion of your
letter I ~~am~~ am glad of the
opportunity of expressing my appreciation of
your work in trying to locate those forgotten
missing. With best wishes,

I am, dear Miss Deakin,

Yours sincerely,
F. B. G. Cooper

10th M. G. Coy.

A. I. F.

6.10.17

P⁶ BARKER

(10) 10⁵ M.G.C.

A.I.F.

B.E.F.

about

224 L.E.LEE

10⁵ M.G.C.

A.I.F.

W/M. 8.6.17

10.10.17.
A.I.F.

21
F. I. J. (OFFEEY) (21.9.17)
Section 4

10 Mach. Gun Co
AIF

BET

about

224 / E. / EE

10 Mach. Gun Co.
AIF

W. & M. 8. 6. 17

AP.
21.9.17

Pte F9

MOULT GC / 21.9.17

10 Machine Gun Co. AIF
No 1 Command Depot

Perham Downs

Andover

Hants.

about224 / E. / EF

10 Mach. Gun Co.

W/M. 8. 6. 17

A.C.
21.9.17

copy
letter
3-10-17

224
L. E. LEE
10 M. G. Co.

W/M 8-6-17

Grantham
2 October 1917

Dear Madam.

Your letter to hand this morning,
asking me to forward on information of one
of my Section who has been Posted as missing.
All I can do is to tell you all I know concerning
him to the best of my ability, as I was wounded
a few hours later myself.

224 L. E. Lee, 10 M. G. Co. was about six foot
in height, well built with Auburn Hair, his age
I cannot state, but he was something like twenty.

He was wounded very badly on the 8/6/17
at Messines and as he was along side of
me, I was able to attend to his wounds.
He couldn't be moved at that time as we had
no stretchers, I was attending him up till the
time, when I got hit myself so I had to
leave him there with other wounded men.
As far as I know they were all moved
back, meanwhile I don't think he could
have been taken a Prisoner, although he
may have been buried. This is all the particulars
I have, hoping that this information will bring
you success. I remain Yours.

H. J. Powell

October 4th, 1917.

Pte. F.J. Moulton,
10. Machine Gun Coy, A.I.F.,
Machine Gun Training Battalion,
Belton Park, Grantham.

Dear Pte. Moulton,

We wish to thank you for your reply in answer to our
enquiry concerning 224 Pte. L.E. Lee,
10th Machine Gun Coy.
A.I.F.

The information and details you have sent will be of much
assistance to us and of value to our enquirers.

We regret to learn that you were wounded at the same
time as Pte. Lee and sincerely trust that you are now making
good progress towards recovery.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

Miss Sandford

GC

October 10th, 1917.

Pte. F.I.J. Coffey,
10th Machine Gun Coy,
A.I.F.

Dear Pte. Coffey,

We have to thank you for your letter in answer to
our enquiry concerning 224 L.E. Lee,
10th Machine Gun Coy,
A.I.F.

The clear and detailed information you have sent will be
of much assistance to us, and of value to our enquirers.

We thank you very much for the high tribute you have
paid to the late soldier's memory, we are sure that his
relatives will be very comforted to learn of it,

Please accept our sincere sympathy in the loss of
your friend.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY