

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

**Major  
Harold Charles  
Howden**

**48th Battalion**



1380213I

48th A.I.F.

HEDDAH Maj. H.O.

D/W 5th July 1917. Det D/B.

He was killed at Hoegsteert. He was shot in the neck and it cut the artery. Doctors came up at once. He lingered for an hour and was conscious to almost the last. He left no message. I took him to the 2nd A.C.C.S. and buried him there in the Graveyard. He gave him a nice funeral. The Revd Father Devine buried him with the C.E. Service at Major Burden's wish. He told me this was his wish if anything happened, Chaplain Devine was to bury him at Steen-velt Cemetery. His grave is the next one to General Holmes. I sent his Mother a photo of the grave.

Inf:- Colonel R.L. Leane  
Amb. T. 'Newhaven'.  
Calais. 18.1.17. RAK.

S  
b.  
Luff

48th Battn.  
A. I. F.

Howden.  
Major H. C.

"Died of Wounds 5.7.17"

With reference to the death of Major Howden, the unofficial report concerning my attendance on him was correct. Major Howden's death occurred early in the morning. We were in support dug-outs at Hill 63, at the northern end of the Ploegsteert Wood. Unfortunately our men's hut was not shell proof. The Major was seated at breakfast on the morning of the 5th July when a shell burst outside the hut. I was just entering the door at the time and saw him holding his right arm. I asked was he hit, and he replied "Yes" and got up, walking towards me. After taking 5 or 6 steps he suddenly became very pale and collapsed on the floor. I undid his tunic and saw blood pouring in great quantities from a small wound just below his right collar bone. A small shell fragment had evidently passed up beneath his collar bone into the root of his neck severing the large bloodvessels situated there. I soon checked the external haemorrhage but by this time all hope of his recovery was abandoned, for he was bleeding internally. We carried him to the Advanced Dressing Station of the 12th Field Ambulance where Dr. Woollard assisted me with him. He lived for about an hour, and retained consciousness until the end, surrounded by his friends. I never saw a man die more bravely.

48th Battn.  
A. I. F.

-2-

Howden.  
Major H.C.

We decided to bury him behind the line, which we did at the beautiful cemetery of the 2nd Australian Clearing Station. The funeral was carried out with full military honours, the 48th Battalion supplying the band and firing party. The coffin was borne to the grave by 6 officers, 2 each from the 48th, 45th and 13th Battalions. A beautiful service was conducted by Padre Devine. There were very few dry eyes at the graveside. By Major Howden's death, we lost a dear friend and a fine officer and we have never ceased to mourn him. Major Allan of the 45th Battalion has a photograph of the grave.

Letter from:-

Captain A. J. Collins  
France.

LONDON.  
16.10.17.

3.10.17.

S.

48th Batt. A.I.F.

Howden. Major H.C.

D/W July 5/17 Det D/B.

"I was at Major Howden's funeral - he was buried near No. 2 Australian Clearing Station at Steenwerck. There was some lovely wreaths sent and a cross is certain to have been put up; but I have not seen it. He died up the line and Dr. Collins was with him when he got hit and when he died. I don't know what his wounds were."

Eye Witness:-- Yes.

Description:--

Informant:-- I/Cpl W.H. Mankinell, 1965  
48th A.I.F. A.Co. 111 Plt.  
5th Southern Gen. Hospital,  
Portsmouth.

Home address:-- Kingston St,  
Koorings,  
South Australia. S

Sept 4/17.  
G.W.Gully.

Written Capt Collins 229-17

*Doctor  
Y...  
Capt  
W...*

A.I.F. 45th Btn

HOWDEN  
Capt. C.

*Also Major H.C.*

"111 Feb"

Adm. 3rd Ldn Gen. Hpl Wandsworth 2-3-17

Trans - Cobham Hall 19-3-17

Discharged - furlough and report Berham Downs 2-4-17  
Cert. by Epl Index

*Trans to 48th Batta.*

"D. of Wds 5-7-17"

*See under Major H.C. Howden*

Major H.C. Howden 48th Btn - died of wounds 5-7-17  
Cert. by A.I.F. Eprs 20-8-17.

5

London  
20-8-17

48th Australian Imperial Force

Howden, Major H.C.

( D/W. 5th July, 1917 ).

" Major Howden, who died of his wounds at the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station near Steenwyck, was buried in the cemetery at that Station. I have seen his grave. "

Eye Witness -

Description -

Informant :o Lt. Rose,  
48th Aus. Imp Force

Home address :- 3rd London General Hospital,  
Edithburg, Wandsworth, S. W.  
S. Australia.

19. Sept. 1917.  
J.R.Clark Hall.

S

A. I. F. 48.

HOWDEN, Maj. H.C.

D/W. July 5th, 1917.

I was on the firing party at his funeral. Father Devine (R.C) officiated. Do not know name of cemetery but it is same one where Genl. Holmes was buried. Father Devine is now with the 12th Bde.

PHE,

Reference:- L/Cpl. R.V.Lee. 2192. B.VII  
L.G.Schoel.

Staples  
11.9.17.

Havre

1st Oct. 1917

48th AUSTRALIANS

HOWDEN, Major H.C.

D/W 5th July 1917 det. D/B

I knew him well; he came from the 45th Btn to us, shortly before he became a casualty. He was badly wounded at Hill 63 and was taken to the Dressing Station at Steinwerke where he died. He was buried in the Military Cemetery there. I have here a photograph of his grave. (This has been seen by the Searcher)

Informant: 2te. J. H. Lester 2363  
48th Btn. A.I.F.  
D.Co. 16th Fltn  
Havre Hospital

140D

A.I.F. 48.

D/W. 5.7.17.

HOWDEN Major H.C.

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The Major was having breakfast when a shell burst quite close to H.Q. A piece penetrated his head. This was on Hill 53. He died in  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. He had a proper military funeral, Bds. and friends there as well, in the hospital cemetery at Baillieu.

BH.

Reference: Lt.G.A. Pavy.  
L.G. School.

Staples.  
3.10.17.

S



43  
48

*to be in care*

48th A.I.F.

Howden Major H.C.

(D/W July 15/17 Det D/B)

"I heard about Major Howden as I am at H.Q. He was killed in our support lines. They got him down to the D/S. He was buried in the Cemetery at Steinwerck near Messines".

Eye-witness: No, heard at H.Q.

Description:

Informant: Pte. W. Pope 2033,  
48th A.I.F., H.Q. Coy.,  
Fulham Military Hospt.,  
Hammersmith.

Oct. 9/17,  
V. Chomondley.

*Ed. Luff*  
*S*

48th A.I.F.

<sup>C</sup>  
Howden Major H.G.

(D/W July 3/17 Det D/B)

"Major Howden was wounded fatally by a shell at Hill 63. He was buried in the cemetery near Bailleul. A cross with particulars inscribed thereon was reected. He was buried with all Military Honours".

Eye-witness: Present at the burial".

Description: Small, blue eyed. Very popular.

Informant: 2nd Lt. J.D. Mitchell,  
48th A.I.F.,  
3rd London General Hospt.,

Home address: Wandsworth.

c/o Mr. F.B. Sandie,  
33 Roslyn Crescent,  
Edinbrugh.

Oct. 12/17,  
W.A. Davies.

5

Havre

15th October.1917.

48th AUSTRALIANS

HOWDEN, Major H.C.

D/W. July 5th.1917. Det. D/B.

I was at his funeral; he is buried in a Military Cometary near the Casualty Clearing Station where he died; it is near Etchenwerck. There is a cross on the grave.

Informant: Sergt. J. Fennell, 5092  
48th Australians, D.Co., XVI.Pln.  
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

RDM.

*S  
ed  
buff*

Havre

15th Oct. 1917.

48th AUSTRALIANS

HOWDEN, Major. H.C.

D/W. 5.7.17. Det. D/B.

I went to his funeral. He is buried in a Military Cemetery at Etchenwerck. Major General Holmes is buried in the same cemetery.

Informant: Pto. Sgt. Smith, 4704  
48th Australians, A Co., 1st Pltn.  
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

RDM

*S  
ed  
buff*

48th A.I.F.

Howden, Major. H.C.

D/W <sup>5</sup> July 1917.

"I was up at Hill 63 (Mr. Ploegsteert) the temporary batt. head quarters, when Major Howden was hit in the breast by a piece of shell, just as the batt. was going to have breakfast on the date named. The fragment is thought to have travelled upwards and severed a main artery. He died at the dressing station about an hour afterwards and was buried at the little cemetery just out of Steinwerck. There is a cross on the grave."

Eye-witness:-- Yes.

Description:--

Informant:-- Lt. Pritchard,  
48th A.I.F.  
3rd London Gen.Hos.  
Wandsworth.

Home address:-- Aberdeen House,  
Westerham,  
Kent.

19 Oct 1917.  
John R. Clark Hall.

S  
col  
Suff

Howden

22nd Oct. 1917.

48th AUSTRALIANS

HOWDEN, Major H.C.

D/W. 5.7.17. Det. D/H.

He was our Battalion Major, and was buried by the Battalion in a Military Cemetery about 2 miles from Steenwerck.

Informant: Pte. J. Brogan, 1887  
48th Australians, B Co., 8th Pltn.,  
Havre Hospital.

42 0143  
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45-9

L de D.

col Suff-  
9

48th Batn  
A. Coy.,  
A. I. F.

HOWDEN  
H. C. Major

"Died of wounds 5.7.17."

I saw him wounded at Ploegstreet He was caught by shell fragment in the neck. He was taken away to the dressing station on the Messines Road, where he died about 4 hours after from internal hemorrhage. I did not see his grave but think he was buried at Romain on the road near Messines. Refer to Lieut. Col. Lean 48th Batn who is now in France and who put him on the stretcher and also went to his funeral. He may be able to give particulars.

Witness:- Pte. W. Graninger 2908  
48th Batn A. Coy. 4th Pltn.  
3rd A.A. Hospital,  
Dartford.

W. Oman  
London.  
2.11.17.

S

Copy  
to  
5-10-17



MAJOR H.C. HOWDEN

4875  
DTW  
5-7-17



3 France  
3. 10. 17

The Secretary  
Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau  
East. Res. Com. Society

Dear Madam:

With reference to the death of Major H.C. Howden, the report concerning my attendance on him was correct.

Major Howden's death occurred early in the morning. We were in support dugouts at Hill 63, at the northern end of the Ploeg-straat Wood. Unfortunately our mess hut was not shell proof. The Major was seated at break.

fast on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> July,  
when a shell burst outside the tent.

I was just entering the door at  
the time, and saw him holding  
his right arm. I asked who  
he hit, and he replied 'yes',  
& got up walking towards me  
after taking 5 or 6 steps he  
suddenly became very pale and  
collapsed on the floor. I undid  
his tunic and saw blood pouring  
in great quantity from a small  
wound just below his right  
collar bone. A small shell  
fragment had evidently passed  
up beneath his collar bone  
into the root of his neck, severing  
the large bloodvessels situated

(3)  
there. I soon checked the external  
haemorrhage but by this  
time all hope of his recovery  
was abandoned, for he was bleeding  
internally. We carried him to the  
Advanced Dressing Station of the  
12th Field Ambulance, where Dr  
Woolard assisted me with him.

He lived for about an hour,  
and retained consciousness until  
the end, surrounded by his  
friends. I never saw a  
man die more bravely.

We decided to bury him  
behind the line, which we did  
at the beautiful cemetery of the  
2nd Australian Clearing Section.  
The funeral was carried out



(4)  
with full military honours, the 48th  
Battalion supplying the band and  
firing party.

The coffin was borne to the grave  
by 6 officers, 2 <sup>each</sup> from the 48th, 48th  
and 13th Battalions. A beautiful

service was conducted by  
Padre Devine. There were very  
few any eyes at the graveside.

By Major Howard's death, we  
lost a dear friend, and a fine  
officer, and we have never ceased  
to mourn him.

Major Allen of the 48th Battalion  
has a photograph of the grave.

Trusting that this is the information  
you require, I am

Yours faithfully,

A. J. Collins  
Capt.