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

218 Private William Henry McLaren

9th Machine Gun Company



1940504N

9th M/Gun Coy
A.I.F.

Mc LAREN
W.H. 218

Killed in Action 21.7.17"

Refer to Sgt L. R. Fletcher, 29, 9 M/G Gun Coy, Transport who is now in England in Ward A1 Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester, and also to 85 Driver H. Morrie, Ward 25 1st London General Hospital, Camberwell, both of who m were with him at time of casualty and can give you particulars.

Witness:- Pte T. Ryan 1218
9 M/Gun Coy
3rd A.A. Hosp Dartford.
Hove written to Sgt Fletcher 25.9.17

W. Oman
London 26.9.17

S

A.M.G.O. 9. McLAREN, W.H. 218.

K. July 21st 1917. Dets.

At Messines on July 31st I heard from Pte Williams now with the 10th MGC he saw a shell burst and killed McLaren outright. The same shell wounded Sgt Fletcher and Ptes Norrie and Wright. Williams was one of them the men who helped to carry away the wounded and shifted the dead body of McLarne for the S/Bs. I never heard where he was buried. McLarne was in the Transport company of the 9th MGC, was a little chap, fair, joined the 9th MGC while in England.

Inf: Dgt. L. Collan, 36
No. 8 Stat Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 17.10.17. PRBL

S

Written Williams
30.10.17.

9th Mc/Gun Coy.,
A.I.F.

MCLAREN
W.H. 218

"Killed 21.7.17."

I saw him killed by a shell at Messines Ridge. He and I were leading pack mules at the time when a shell landed near him killing him instantly I was only a few yards away at the time of casualty and was very badly mutilated wounded by the same shell so cannot give any details of burial. Refer to Dr. J. O'Connor 9th McGun Coy., who is in France and can give particulars I heard that he was buried at Neuve Eglise.

Witness:- Dr. H.A. Morris 83 NEUVE
9th Mc/Gun Coy.,
3rd A.A. Hospital,
Dartford.

W. Oman
London.
18.10.17.

Note · written Dvr. O'Connor 20.10.17.

S

9th Mc/Gun Coy.,
A.I.F

McLaren
W 218

"Killed in Action 21.7.17."

Re W.H McLaren 9th mc/gun Coy., Killed in action 21.7.17. McLaren were with me on the night of that date conveying ammunition by pack animal to adv. positions on Messines Ridge were he was unfortunately killed. I had just joined McLaren and the other Dvrs after receiving instructions from the officer or Adv. HdQtrs and where the ammunition had to go and had taken the reins of my horse from McLaren when a shell exploded quite near killing McLaren almost instantly and wounding two other drivers and myself. I was told by Captn. Carey then O.C. of our Coy., two days later that McLarens body was brought down from the Ridge and buried in a soldiers cemeteryI think at a place called Wulverghem near the main Messines Road but if you were to write to the Coy., they would be able to give you all particulars. McLaren was a lad of a cherry disposition fresh complexion, about 5'5" in height and I should think about 17 or 18 years of age. He was transferred from the 33rd Batn 3rd Div. to the 9th Mc/Gun Coy., before the Div. left for France last Nov. 1916 by what McLaren told me I believe his father to be deceased and step father was then on his way to the front.

Letter from:- L.R. Fletcher late Tpr. Sergt.
9th A.M.G. Coy., Q.A.I. Ward.
Graylingwell War Hpl.
Chichester Eng. 12.10.17.

ndon. 22.10.17.

5

9th M.G.Coy.
A.I.F.

MCLAREN.
W.H.218.

"KILLED IN ACTION" 21.7.17"

Reference your enquiry of 12th inst. I beg to inform you that No.218 Driver W.H. McLaren was killed on the night of the 21st July, 1917. at Messines. & buried the following day in a soldiers' cemetery & the grave is registered.

Informant;- J.Wood. Lieut.
9th M.G.Coy.
France.
19.11.17.

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.
9.6.18.

S.

9th Australian Machine Gun Company. McLaren, Pte. W.H. 218

(K July 21. 1917
Dets D / B)

" I knew Harry McLaren very well. He was killed by shell while bringing up ammunition after the attack at Vimy Ridge. He was a great chum of mine and I made enquiries about his grave as I wished to see if it was fixed all right. I was informed that it was just by the Dressing Station, between Neuve Eglise and Vimy Ridge, but I had not time to go to see it, as we were moved on. "

Eye Witness - No. Report from many sources.

Description - Good looking lad, about 19/20. Came from Stanmore, New South Wales.

Informant :- Driver Edward A. O'Connor, 1418, Headquarters Sect. 9th Aus. M.G.C, Horton (County of London) War Hospt Epsom.

Home address :-
Belmore, Sydney,
New South Wales.
21.10.17.
P.L. Waterhouse.

S

AUST M.G.C. 9. McLAREN, W.H. 218.

K. July 31st 1917.

He was struck by a shell and died about ten minutes la later whilst on transport work at advanced H.Q. on the Messines Ridge. I came up with the rations just after this occurred and I saw his dead body. He was buried in the military cemetery near the Strand, Red Cross Dressing Station at Ploegsteert. He came from one of the northern rivers of N.S.W. and had worked on a farm. I know he was an only son.

Inf: C.E.Howe. 48.
No. 1 C.C.
BOULOGNE. 17.11.17. FD

S

9th Machine Gun Co. McLAREN. Pte.W.H., No.218

Late 33rd Bn K/A. 21/7/17.

McLaren was a Driver to the 9th Machine Gun Co. at Lark Hill, before the Co. left for France he was transferred from the Transport Section of the 33rd Battalion. He was only a boy of about 19 years. At Messines when we were holding the line we had captured about 6 weeks previously, he with the Transport Sergeant and another Driver brought ammunition up on pack mules, when he was killed by a shell just outside my dugout on the fringe of the town of Messines. The Sergeant, whose name was Fletcher and Driver Morrie, were also severely wounded by the same shell. I was there at the time, and saw the three of them as x they were picked up. McLaren died within a few minutes, without regaining consciousness; he had one severe wound in the head, and was also wounded in other places but I am sure he did not suffer. He was buried on the field near where he fell, and the usual cross erected. Morrie, I understand, is returning to Australia, and is expected to arrive soon.

Informant - Lt. O.L.Harden, M.C.
9th Machine Gun Co.,
No.4 Australian General Hospital,
Randwick.

Home Address - C/o R.O'Brien, Bondi Rd., Bondi.

H.S.O.
11/2/18. A careful reliable witness SYDNEY BUREAU.

Havre 26th Oct. 1917.

MACHINE GUN COMPANIES,
A.I.F.

McLAREN. W.H. 218
9th Co.

K. 21.7.17. Dot. D/B.

I was in hospital at that time. He was killed in the 2nd Messines stunt by a shell. I was told this. Lieut. Wood of the 9th M.G.C. was in the line at the time, and would know something of his death and burial. I think McLaren was in the trenches at the time. We were all one happy company.

Informant: Pte. R.W. Wallis, 281
9th M.G.C., A.I.F.,
Conv. Depot, Havre.

JTK

S

Written Lt. Wood 10.11.17.

FRANCE

9th AUST. M.G.C. McLAREN. W.H. 218.

K.July 21st.1917. Det.

He was a driver and was struck full by a shell and killed instantly while coming up with stores. He was at the HQtrs advance machine gun station, Messines. I was quite close to him and saw him killed. I was getting rations out of the stores at the time. Cpl Clark M.M.C with the company, and another man, Forman, since dead or away from the company, carried him back and buried him in a burial ground not far away.

WSI

Ref ---Pte A.S.Klein. 469.
No 2 Can. Gen. Hospital.

NOTE. Informant gave me four reports in all. He was with the company when all the casualties happened. It is not a large company and he knew most of the men. He is an elderly man and his evidence is reliable. He assured me that in each case the relations had been sent a full report.

Le Treport. Oct 26th.1917

Aust. Machine Gun Co. McLaren. W.H. 218.
9 Co.

K. July 21/17 Det DS

" I know McLaren was killed outright on July 21st at Messines. I was about 21 yards away at the time, he was carried out by our people and as far as I know was buried at the dressing station at Kandahar on the Neuve Eglise Road."

Eye-witness:

Description:

Informant: 2nd Lt. S.W. McNulty,
Aus. Machine Gun Co. 9 Co.
3rd London Gen.Hos.
Ward C.9. Wandsworth.

Home address: Royh Leh, Ross Hill, Inverell, N.S.W.

Oct 31/1917.

A.E.Long.

Machine Gun Coy., 9th
A.I.F.

McLaren
W.H. 218

"Killed July 21st 1917"

"Killed on Messines Ridge.
Was driver of Machine Gun Transport he was just coming out of a dugout and a shell exploded killed him at once brought him down and buried him at old Ration Dump Cemetery. I saw him killed but did not actually see him buried. He was only a youngster about 17 and first time in the line.

Witness:- Dalley 22,
Ward 31 Herefield.

D.P. Dickson
London.
5.11.17.

S

18.10.17

Dr. wer E. O'CONNOR

9 Mach Gun Co.

A-1F

BEF

abt 218 W. H. McLAREN

9 Mach Gun Co

K. ~~21.8~~

21.7.17

19.10.17

C.P.B.

Sgt L. R. FLETCHER (24.9.17)

9 Mach. Gun Co
A 1 F
B E+

about

218, W. H. McLAREN.

9 Mach Gun Co.
A 1 F

KA 21. 7. 17

A.C.
29.9.17

Pte WILLIAMS GC
10th A.M.G. Coy
B.G.F.

about

W.H. McLAREN
218
9th A.M.G. Coy

Killed 21.7.17

Gw
30.10.17

10.11.17

9C

Lieut. Wood

9th M. G. Coy. A.I.F.

B.E.F.

abt.

218 Pte. W. H. McLaren

9th M. G. Coy. A.I.F.

K. 21-7-17

T

Ew.
12.11.17.

FM 27/11/17

218/ W. H. McLAREN 19-11-17

9 M. G. Co

KA 21.7.17 S. 3 (cd)

The Secretary

Australian Red Cross Society

Reference your inquiry of 12th Inst I beg to inform you that No 218 Driver W. H. McLAREN was killed on the night of the 31st July 1917 at MESSINES & buried the following day in a Soldiers Cemetery & the Grave is registered

[signature]

9 M. G. Co

218. W. H. McLAREN.

Q. M. G. Co.

K/A 21-7-17

S

3

218. W. H. McLAREN

Q. M. G. Cy

K/A 21-7-17

S

3

Driver L. R. Fletcher,
9th Aust.M.G.Company,
2.A.1.Ward,
Graylingwell War Hospital,
Chichester.

Oct.16th, 1917.

Dear Driver Fletcher,

We have to thank you for your reply in answer to our enquiry concerning -

218 Driver W. H. McLAREN 9th M. G. Company.A.I.F.

The information and details you have given will be of much assistance to us and of value to our enquirers, who will be comforted to learn that at least Driver McLaren died almost instantaneously. We are sorry that our enquiry found you in hospital, and trust that you are making good progress and will soon be able to enjoy your furlough.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary.

GC

November 28th, 1917.

Lieut.C.J.Wood,
9th Machine Gun Coy,
A.I.F., B.E.F.

Dear Sir,

We have to thank you very much for your letter in answer to our enquiry concerning

~~218 W.E.McLAREN~~
9th Machine Gun Coy,
A.I.F.

Yours faithfully,

V.D

SECRETARY.

J.Mc.