

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

**952 Private
Alfred Wiley Nettle**

20th Battalion



1990705V

20th Battalion.

NETTLE A.W. P'te.
No 952

"Killed 16/9/17"

I knew Nettle very well. He was on Gas guard in the town of Ypres on a Sunday night in September. A shell came about midnight and killed him instantly. The stretcher bearers came round at once but he was dead when they found him. He was very well liked and a good sort. I knew that he would have a grave, but I did not see him buried.

Informant: P'te Shiel, 6415,
4th Australian General Hospital
RANDWICK.

H.B.N.
19/3/18

SYDNEY BUREAU.

No Enq.

20th Battalion, A.I.F.

NETTLE.
Private A.W. 952.

"KILLED. 16.9.17."

Informant described Nettle as about 5 feet 7 inches high, stout build, medium complexion, aged about 30/35.

Informant states that they both belonged to "C" Company. On or about 16.9.17 the Battalion was in billets not far from Ypres waiting to go into the line. He was told by eye-witnesses that Nettle and another chap were on gas guard during the night, sitting just next to the Company's Travelling Kitchen which was inside an old Mill, when a shell came over, portion of which hit him and killed him outright. Informant did not see him hit, but saw his body after the Pioneers had prepared him for burial. He had seen him alive earlier in the day. He had no doubt that Nettle had been decently buried.

INFORMANT:- Private W. H. McGuarr, 5051,
C.Coy, 20th Battalion, A.I.F.

Home address:- 89 Alnaby Road, STANMORE.

W.E.G.
No.4 Australian General
Hospital, Randwick.
21.3.18.

No Enq.
SYDNEY BUREAU. ✓

A.I.F. 20.

NETTLE. A.W 952.

K. Sept 18th 1917. Dats D/B.

Nettle was an original member, and I had known him ever since I was in the Battalion. He was killed one night about Sept 18th on bridge guard behind the lines, and would be buried by our pioneers. I cannot give particulars myself but they said he was killed outright. He would be sure to be buried as it was before the Sept 20th stunt started, and was behind the lines. I cannot give the name of anyone as reference but it is not mere rumour. We always enquired carefully about any of the old hands.

Inf: Pte J.A.Pratt. 3651. B.Transport.
No. 54 Gen Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 23.7.1918.

JT

P.1

J.A.

Hayre.

26th. July. 1919.

20th. Australians.

Hettle. A. W. 952.

K. September 16/1917. Dets. D/B.

I knew Private Hettle, C. Company, an original man, about 30, short, thick-set, fair, clean-shaven. I was with him on Gas Guard at the big Hill at Ypres in September 1917 when he was killed instantly by a shell. Our S/Bearers took him across the Canal to our Pioneer & I saw them sewing his body up the next morning. Captain J. Shakespeare, 20th. Battalion, C. Company, Pioneers, will be able to say where the grave is.

Inf:- Private. G. A. Fritchard, 3859.
20th. Australians. C. 10.
Australian Conv. Camp.
Rouelles.

RDH.

J. A.

P.1

Written Shakespeare.
6.8.18

20th Batta.
A.I.F.

A.W.

98.1.

LE

2

Killed 16-9-17

I was at Ypres on Sept 16th 1917. we were in Reserves. Pte Mettle was and another man were on guard over German prisoners in a ruined house about 40 yards from where I was. A shell came over and made a hole in the wall of the house. Mettle and the other chap ran out to see and they were wounded. Mettle was very badly wounded. I saw him carried away on a stretcher and heard he died before reaching the dressing station. We were both in the same platoon. of A.G.O.

Informant:- Pte. Whatley 4541. 20th Batta
A.C.O. DARTFORD.

C.H.B.
London.
26-7-18.

P I.

A reliable witness.

A. I. P. 20th Bn.

NE. LE. A. W. 952.

X. Sept. 16/17. Det. D/B.

He was killed by a shell at the Cloth Hall at Ypres. He was sitting on a heap of rations. I did not see him killed but I often passed the place carrying rations, and was shown the place the next day and saw a pool of blood on the ground. He was buried in the Cemetery near, by our Chaplain, who has since then returned to Australia. I knew Pte. Cater, since killed, who made a cross for Nettle's grave. Nettle was in the original draft from Australia and wore the "A" badge which marked the men of the earlier drafts. He was fairly big and tall (5'10") about 20, weighed about 11 stone, clean shaven with light brown hair.

Reference: Pte. A. Drysdale, 5569, C.XI.

N.W

No. 11 Stationary, Rouen, 1.8.18.

ABHH.

P.1

A.I.F. 20.

HETTLER, A.W. 952.

K. Sept 16th 1917. Dets.

A.W.Hettler was I believe an officer's batman in B.Co and his number was about 952. He was rather, short, thick-set, inclined to be dark, clean shaven and about 27 or 28. I heard he was killed whilst on gas guard duty on the 16th Sept on the Ypres sector. I have seen his grave which is on the road side near Ypres, and there is a cross put up with his name, number and unit.

Inf: Dvr J.A.Pratt. 3651. Transport
Ho. 1 C.C.
BOULOGNE. 3.8.1918.

AGE

J.A.

P.11

20th Battn.
A.I.F.

NETTLE.
A.W. 952.

"Killed 16-8-17"

He was in C.Company. I did not see the casualty, but he was killed at Ypres by a piece of shrapnel which struck him on the head and death followed almost instantly. He lived but a few moments, but never spoke. We were in reserves at the time. I knew him well and he came from New South Wales. There was no other man of same name in Company. I did not see his grave, but think he was buried at the Battery Corner at Ypres, where he was killed. I cannot refer to anyone for further details concerning death and burial.

Informant:- Dvr. Mo Shane. H.15.
Transport, 30th Battn.
No 3.A.A.H.DARTFORD.

W.Oman.
London.
6-8-18.
N.W.

P.I.

20th Battn.
A.I.F.

NETTLE.
A.W. 952.

"Killed 16-8-17"

He was of C.Company. At Ypres about this date, was on gas guard about 11.0'c at night. Was killed by shell, lived about 10 minutes, but was unconscious. This happened in the town, I was a few yards away at the time. He was hit in both thighs, both legs, nearly severed. Buried early next morning near the old canal - was not at burial.

Informant:- L/Vpl. C. Chauncy. 842.
20th Battn. C.Co. XI Pl.
ANZAC BUFFET.

A.D.G.
London.
8-8-18.
N.W.

P I.

20th. Battn. A. I. F.

Nettle, A. W. No. 2.

No. II Platoon. C. Company

Killed. Sept. 16th. 1917. Det. D/B.

He was killed by a shell whilst on sentry outside the billett at Ypres, about 1 a.m. on Sept. 17th. He was buried near the dressing station in Ypres that day. I detailed the party off to bury him. A temporary cross was erected bearing all particulars. I knew him well in the company. He came from Sydney, N. S. W.

Description. Age. 30. Height. 5-7. Complexion Fair. Nuggety Build.

Witness. Sgt. Welch, E. No. 1786. C. Company. 20th. Battalion.

Taken at.
No. 4. C. D. Hurdcott.
9. 8. 18.
C. H. B.

C. H. Brown,
No. 4. Command Depot,
Hurdcott.

P. 1
6d
6d

20th Australian Imperial Force

Nettle, Pte. A.W. 952

(K. Sept. 16. 1917) Dets
D & B

" I knew Nettle of XI Platoon, his initials were A.W. I saw him killed instantly in billets in Ypres by a shell. He was on gas guard. I went up and looked at him. The boys took him down and buried him in a cemetery at Ypres. He came from New South Wales."

Eye Witness - Yes.

Description - As above.

Informant :- Pte. Chas. Kent, 6445,
C Coy. 20th Aus Imp Force,
Fulham Military Hospital,
Hammersmith, London, W

Aug. 9. 18.
V. Cholmondeley.

P.1
Ed
Buff

Havre.

15th. August. 1918.

20th. Australians.

Nettle, A. W. 952.

K. September 16/1917. Dets. D/B.

I knew him well; he was about 5 feet 6, fair, thick set, & was an Officer's cook. He was in billet at Ypres. The Germans shelled us & he got killed on September 16th. 1917. He was buried at Ypres

Inf:- Private. E. W. Burgo. 3013.
20th. Australians.
Hospital Ship.

IAHI.

P.1
Ed
Buff

CP.

20th Battn.
A.I.F.

NETTLE
A.W. 952

"Killed in Action 16-9-17"

Re 952 Pte. A.W. Nettle, 20th Battn. He was killed whilst we were in reserves at Ypres about Sept. 1917. I am positive about this matter as I dug his grave and helped to bury him at the 1st dressing station, Ypres. He was about 5'6" in height, broadly built, and very dark in complexion. He was a personal friend of mine.

Letter from:- Shakespears. Cpl. J. 3672
E. Coy. 20th Battn.,
No. 4 Command Depot,
HURDCOTT. 20-10-18.

London.
25-10-18
J.E.D.

P.I.

Shakespeare Gpe

20th Bldg

Present address wanted

3672 Joe Shakespeare 20th Bldg

Received from Mrs. Sutton Aug. 9. 18

On Capt. Henry Shakespeare 20th Bldg

File under 1 Mrs. Stanford 18. 9. 18.

908
Vto. Mr. L. H. Hether

20th Bldg

Min A. Sept 16-17

Report section

To
3672 Mr Joe Shakespeare
20 Bacon A.I. 7
Cent. Mid. Y Hosp.
Sutton Verney
Wilts

About
952 Mr A. W. Nettle
20 Bacon A.I. 7

K Sep. 16/17

Written 7.10.18
MRS

Ld
367 Pt Joseph Henry
Shakespeare
200 Balthus A. 77

1st Class 4 Hrs.
Harefield

about
952 Pt A. W. Nettles
200 Balthus
A. 77

K Sep 16/17
written 7.10.18
MRS

FRONT OF THE

S. C. C. C.

To

Cpl J. Shakespeare

C. Co (Pioneers)

att'd 20th Batt'n

A. J. F.

about

952 Pt A. W. Nettie

20th Batt'n

A. J. F.

K. Sept 16/17.

Written 6-8-18.

MRS

ack.
p.c. 21.10.18
J.E.D.

952
A.W. Hettle
20 Bn

"E" Coy.
No 4 Command Depot
Hewdclott.

KinA. 16.9.17

Miss Vera Deaton

Pl. (ed)
2

Re your enquiries about No 952 Pte A.W. Hettle - 20 Bn -
He was killed whilst we were in Reserves at Offres
about September 1917. I am positive about this
matter as I dug his grave and helped to bury him.
At the 1st Dressing Station, Offres.

Pte Hettle was about 5 feet 6 inches in height, broadly
built, and very dark in complexion.

He was a personal friend of mine & I deeply
regret having to convey this information to you.

Yours sincerely,

3672. Cpl J. Shakespeare
20th Bn.

20/10/18.

P.S. I am at present at this Depot, and will
be pleased to furnish you with any further
information as the 20th Bn up to 9th Aug 1918
J.S.

J.E.D.

Bulford.
June 29th 1918.

✓
OVS
4-7-18
20/ The Secretary
B.P.S.C.
36 Grosvenor Place.
London. W.1

Dear Madam/

Would you be so good as to give me any particulars available, concerning the death of do. 952 Pl. A. Little, 20th Bn. who was killed in action in France in November (I think) of last year.

This soldier, was my brother-in-law and for my own information, and to answer numerous enquiries from home should be very grateful for any details, which you may have at hand.

Apologizing for any inconvenience this may cause you.

I am
Yours truly,
do. 955.

Pt. L. B. Hickson
(Staff) 1st Ad Hospital
Bulford, L.P.

9155 Pte.L.B.Hickson,
(Staff) 1st A.D.Hospital,
Bulford.

5th August, 1918.

Dear Sir,

In further reply to your enquiry regarding your brother-in-law, the late:-

952 Pte.A.W.Nettle, 20th Battn. A.I.F.

We beg to inform you that we have received the following unofficial reports from two men in the same Battalion.

4541 Pte.Whetley stated:-

"I was at Ypres on 16-9-17 when we were in reserve. Pte. Nettle and another man were on guard over German prisoners in a ruined house, about 40 yards from where I was. A shell came over and made a hole in the wall of the house, Nettle and the other chap ran out to see, and they were wounded. Nettle was very badly wounded, I saw him carried away on a stretcher, and heard he died before reaching the dressing station. We were both in the same Platoon, of A.Coy".

3651 Pte.J.A.Pratt, when in hospital in France, reported:-

"Nettle was an original member, and I had known him ever since I was in the Battn. He was killed one night about Sep.18th, on bridge guard behind the lines, and would be buried by our Pioneers. I cannot give particulars myself, but they said he was killed outright. He would sure to be buried as it was before the Sep.20th stunt started, and was behind the lines. I cannot give the name of anyone as reference but it is not mere rumour. We always enquired carefully about any of the old hands".

We are continuing our enquiries, and hope that the above unofficial reports may be of some assistance to you, and again assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,
(MISS)

SECRETARY.

E.B. Munn

1st A.D. Hospital, A.I.F.,
Bulford, Wilts.
6th August, 1918.

To -
The Secretary,
Aust. Red Cross Society,
36, Grosvenor Place,
London, S.W.1

Dear Madam,

I have to thank you for your further kind letter
of the 5th inst. regarding my brother-in-law, No. 952 Pte.
A.W. Nettle, 20th Battalion.

Your previous letter I have already forwarded
to his Mother in Australia, who, I know will greatly appreciate
your very kind enquiries. I know it will set her mind
very greatly at rest to know all that is possible concerning
him.

Yours faithfully,

Leonard A. Hickson P.O.

August 30th, 1918.

9155 Pte. L.B. Hickson.
(Staff) 1st A.D. Hospital.
Bulford. Wilts.

Dear Sir.

In further answer to your enquiry for -

952
951² Pte. A.W. NETTLE. 20th Battalion. A.I.F.

We beg to inform you of the following unofficial evidence given by men of his unit.

1627 Pte. A.A. Bishop and No 1785 Sgt. E. Welch who were interviewed at No 4 Command Depot, Harlecot stated that Pte. Nettle was killed by a shell whilst on sentry duty outside their billet at Ypres on the night of Sept 16th and they helped to bury him in the dressing station at Ypres a cross being erected over it.

3859 Pte. G.A. Pritchard when in an Australian Camp in France stated that he was with Pte. Nettle on gas guard at the big mill at Ypres when he was killed instantly by a shell. Stretcher bearers took his body across the canal and he was buried next morning by the Pioneers.

842 L/Cpl. C. Channey ^{was} confirmed this report stating that he was a few yards away from Pte. Nettle when he was killed instantly by a shell while on gas guard about 11 p.m. at Ypres. He was wounded in both thighs and was buried early next morning near the old canal. Other men of the unit give similar evidence and stated that they have seen Pte. Nettle's grave in a cemetery near the Ypres Road.

Should we receive further particulars we shall immediately advise you and trust that this information will be of some assistance to his relatives.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully, *HW*

1st November 1918.

9155 Pte. L.B.Hickson,
Staff, 1st A.D.H.
Bulford.

Dear Sir,

In further reference to your inquiry for details of the death and burial of your brother-in-law -

952 Pte. A.W.Nettle, 20th Btn A.I.F.

We beg to inform you that we have received an unofficial report from - 3672 Cpl. J.Shakespeare, 20th Btn A.I.F., No.4 Command Depot Hurdcott. He stated that your brother-in-law was a personal friend of his and that he was 5'6" in height, broadly built and very dark in complexion. Cpl.Shakespeare stated ^{to} that Pte.Nettle was killed while ~~they~~ were in reserves at Ypres, Sept./17 and that he helped to dig his grave and bury him at the 1st dressing station then at Ypres.

As it is now so many months since the casualty occurred we think there is little chance of further information being received, but should we obtain any we will at once advise you.

With sincere sympathy and good wishes to yourself,

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

SECRETARY.

J. W. P.