

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

**5087 Sergeant
Claude Lindsay
Russell**

23rd Battalion



2380502K

23rd Battn
AIF

RUSSELL
Cpl. C.L. 5087

"Wounded and Missing 3.5.17."

Killed in Action 3.5.17 prev. reported wded and Missing
Cert. by AIF HdQtrs 3.1.18.

P.I & OFF. M.

London.
9.1.18.

Havre

19th June. 1917.

23rd AUSTRALIANS

RUSSELL, Cpl. O.I. 5087

W. & M. May 3rd. 1917.

He was in D. Co., I believe XIII. Pltn. He was Acting Sergeant *7 Sergeant*
May the 3rd. 1917. I was alongside of him at Bullacourt on
that morning, about 7a.m., daylight, when he was sniped
through the stomach; he lived for about 15 minutes and was
conscious. He had been hit previously in the arm about 4a.m.
I spoke to him; he knew that he was finished. We did not
hold the ground. He lay about 500 yards from our front line.

Informant: Pt. B. Allen 668
23rd Australians, D. Co., XV. Pltn.
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

ADM.

Off. M.

Bayre

14th July, 1917.

23rd AUSTRALIANS

RUSSELL, Cpl. O.L. 5087

5657

W. & M. 3.5.17.

He was Acting Sergeant of D Co., 13th Pltn. I was with him on the morning of the 3rd May after we had taken the 2nd line German trench. We were advancing farther between 7 and 8 a.m. He was shot in the arm and had it bandaged. We were in the same shell hole along with Lieut. Maddrell of D Co. Acting O.C. Russell was told to go back but insisted on carrying on. We had to retire shortly after and I did not see any more of him. It is generally stated in the company that he was killed.

Informant: Pto. D. Pearce, 806
23rd Australians, D Co., 14th Pltn.,
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

Written by Maddrell
10.2.17

Lt. Maddrell
in hospital?

RM

P. 9.
off m

23rd A.I.F.

C.L. ?
Russell Cpl. C.P. 5087,

(W. & M. May 3/17)

Informant states that on May 3rd 1917 to the right of Bullecourt, Cpl. Russell was killed. He was in charge of the Plt. at the time. I went over with him. He was wounded by shrapnel in the arm but was killed soon afterwards with about a dozen others by a shell. I saw him killed. It was between 7 & 8 in the morning".

Eye-witness:

Description:

Informant: Pte. C. Gardiner 4707,
23rd A.I.F.,
British Red Cross Hospt.,
Home address: Richmond.
Berwick,
Victoria,
Australia.

Aug. 10/17,
A.D. Shore.

64.17.

(COPY)

Statement made by No. 4707 Pte Gardiner C.E. 23rd Btnre No. 5087 Cpl Russell C.P. 23rd BtnW. Missing 3.5.17

On May 3rd 1917 I saw No. 5087 Cpl Russell C.P. 23rd Battalion, lying in a shellhole badly wounded. I did not see his dead body but was afterwards told by several that he had attempted to follow up the battalion and had been killed by a shell. This happened at Bullecourt.

Dated at Monte Video this 8th day of October 1917.

(Sgd) C.E. Gardiner.

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) H.J. Stoery.

Off ch
P1
b d
Juff
H

Avre

16th Aug. 1917

23rd AUSTRALIANS

RUSSELL, Opl. O.L. 5087

W & M. 3.5.17

He was in D Co., 13th Pltn. He came from Victoria. I knew him well. His christian name was Claude. He came with the 13th Reinforcements to the 23rd battalion and was Sergt. Major of the Reinforcements. I was told by Pte. McGrath of C Co. that he had been with Russell when he was severely wounded at Bullecourt and assisted to put him into a shell hole. McGrath is servant to Capt. Neal of C Co. McGrath is with the battalion now.

Informant: Pte. E.J. Westcott, 5699
23rd Australians, D Co., 16th Pltn.,
Australian Camp, Rouelles

Pil
J. J. 1

Written by Pte. McGrath 31.8.17

CMR

23rd A. I. F.

Corpl. C. L. RUSSELL, 5087

Wounded & Missing 3.5.17.

In the attack on Bullecourt on May 3rd I saw him get wounded in the arm and I heard his mates urging him to go back but he insisted on carrying on. I heard that he got knocked later and I know he did not come out of it. Russell was a 13th Reinforcements- that would be his No. and initials.

Reference: Pte.G.Auty, 5297,

No.11 Con.Camp, Buchy nr. Rouen, 13.8.17.

FEP.

P.1
off db
1

23rd A.I.F.

Russell. Cpl/Sgt. C.L. 5087.

W & M. May 3/17

"I knew Cpl Claude L. Russell intimately. He belonged to my Coy. and Plt. He was made a Sergt just before the stunt. We were together at Bullecourt on the 3rd of May/17. We were both wounded that day. Those cases, wounded, who could not walk had all to be left behind. I however saw "Russell" in the hospital at Rouen on the 8th of May/17. He told me got badly hit in the spine; but managed to get back. I came to England on the 13th and did not see him again."

Eye Witness:--

Description:--

Informant:-- Sgt Patrick Wm. Connelly, 1890,
23rd A.I.F. D.Coy. XVI Pltn.
Harborne Hall V.A.D. Hospital,
Birmingham.

41.
no trace at India 31.8.17

Home address:-- Broken River,
Benalla,
Victoria.

17 Aug 1917.
Geo Bullock.

12/20

P.I. 10/11/17

23rd A.I.F.

Cpl. C. E. RUSSELL, 5087.

W & M 3.5.17.

About 8 or 9 a.m. on May 3rd in the thick of the attack on Bullecourt I was taking a message to Lt. McSweeney. I found him wounded in a shell hole 500 yards past the German 2nd line. In the same shell hole I saw Cpl. Russell. He was lying with a blanket over him. He said he had a wound in the stomach and asked me to get a stretcher bearer. It was impossible for stretcher bearers to reach him but that night volunteer stretcher bearers went for him but found him dead. The Q.M. of the Coy. - Q.M.S. Parsons - told me this. He was still there when I left. When I saw Russell I was pretty sure his case was hopeless. Lt. McSweeney got back alive. Cpl. Russell had been made I/Sgt. on going in to the Bullecourt attack. He had been wounded earlier in the engagement but insisted on carrying on. A D.C.M. for him has come through orders since. His name is Claud. That is about his number. He comes from near Melbourne, aged about 25, about 5 ft. 6 and thick set, dark. He was in the 3rd Reinforcements of the 23rd Bn. but did not come away with them, but came later. I am an original and do not know another Russell in the Battrn.

Reference: (Signed) S. Matthews, 778.

Witnessed by F.E. Palsford, B.A.C.S.
No. 11 Con. Camp Buchy Nr. Reuen. 23.5.17.

P. I.
64-17
REP.

23rd Battn.
A. I. F.

Russell.
Sgt. C. L. 5037

"Wounded & Missing 3.5.17"

Regarding 5037 Sgt. Russell. On the 3rd May the Battalion attacked the Hindenburg line near Bullecourt. About ten minutes after Sgt. Russell reported to me that he was wounded in the arm, but would continue in the advance. A little later he again reported a wound in the leg and still insisted on staying with his men. The next I saw of him was in a shell hole wounded through the stomach. At this particular period we were well in advance and later had to retire to a stronger position, and it was impossible to bring back any stretcher cases. Personally I do not give much hope, and I feel certain he was not taken a prisoner. For his splendid behaviour he was awarded the D.C.M. Regarding his appearance. Height 5'8 - 5'9". Build solid, loose limbed, Age about 25 years, complexion, medium. Weight 12 stones. He had at one time been a Sgt. Major, that was before he joined the Unit.

Letter from:- Lieut. Haddrell, [?] Maddrell
6th Training Battn.
Rollestone.

London.
6.9.17.

27.8.17. Off.M.
P.I.

(COPY)

Statement made by No.- Lieut Maddrell L.S. 23rd Btnre No. 5087 Cpl Russell C.L. 23rd Btn
Missing & Wd. 3.5.17

On the morning of May 3rd, the 23rd Btn in co-operation with other Btms attacked the Hindenburgh line near Renicourt and Handicourt. About 5 minutes after zero Sgt Russell (platoon Sgt of my platoon) was wounded in the left arm but carried on his duties. A little while and still in rear of O.G.2 Sgt Russell was again wounded, but this time as far as I can remember he was wounded in the leg. He still advanced with the platoon. On getting past O.G.2 and near the six cross roads a German Machine Gun opened and Sgt Russell was wounded in the stomach. Afterwards we had to form a flank guard and Sgt Russell being a stretcher case had to remain in a shell hole. We afterwards had to retire to O.G.2, it was impossible even at this stage to obtain stretchers and only those who had strength enough to crawl in could be looked after. He was reported wounded and missing. Regarding rank I am not certain, he may have been Temp. Sgt.

P.1

Dated at Rolleston this 1st day of September 1917. (Sgd) L. Maddrell

Statement made and signed before me

Ant. Hunt on

(Sgd) E.H.E. Neil

23rd Btn.

RUSSELL, C.L.
Cpl. No. 5087

Wounded & Missing. 3/5/17.

"I left Casualty in a shell hole about 200 yards past the 2nd line in No Man's Land at Bullecourt on the 3rd May, 1917. He was wounded in the abdomen. He could not be moved. I heard him groaning. I was wounded at the time. I crawled away. This was the last occasion I saw or heard of him."

Informant:- S. McCullagh,
Private address No. 4022, 23rd Btn.
41 Rathmines Road,
Auburn.

H.A.B.
9/10/17.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

offcl
6d
buff

P.1

Extra

5087 Cpl C. L. Russell

23rd Battⁿ

3074 Lee Under

Sapper F. Masters

5th Field Coy.

Engineers

Cpl. C. L. Russell 5082
23 Bn.

See under.

Sap. H. Masters 3074.
5th La. Inf.

9/8/17.

8-8-17

Leil MADRELL

D Co

~~Det~~

23 Batt AIF

~~B~~ BEF

for

5087

Cpl C. L. RUSSELL

23 Batt AIF

W+M. 3.5.17

E. C. M.

11.8.17

(C) (C) 29.8.17
Pte M'GRATH
C. Co
(batman to Capt NOAL)
23 Batt AIF
BEF

Log

5087 Cpl C. L.
RUSSELL

23 Batt AIF

W & M. 3. 5. 17

August 27th, 1917

Pte. W.J. Russell,
8th Battalion, A.I.F.,
C/o Mr. Whitmore,
No 4 Command Depot,
Serres Downs. *Widford*

Dear Sir,

In further answer to your inquiry for your brother

No 5087 Cpl. C.L. Russell,
23rd Battalion,
A.I.F.

we very much regret to inform you of an unofficial report
given by a man of the same unit when in Camp in France.

Informant No 806 Pte. D. Pearce stated that your brother *who*
was acting Sergeant of D. Coy, was with him on the morning of
May 3rd, after they had taken the second line trench and
during the advance between 7 and 8 a.m. *He* was shot in the
arm. He was told to return but insisted on having it
bandaged and carrying on. Shortly afterwards they were forced
to retire and he saw no more of him, but it was stated
generally in the company that he was killed in action.

We very much regret to have to send you this sad information
and are making exhaustive inquiries in the hope of obtaining

definite news which we are sure you will appreciate.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy in your suspense.

Yours faithfully,

V A

SECRETARY.

A. J. W.

ack
FM 29.8.17

August 27th 1917

Lt. L.S. Haddrell.
6th Training Batta.
Rollestone.

S. R. C. N.

Wounded & Missing Inquiry Bureau.

In reference to some
inquiries regarding P.O. 5084, Sgt. Russell, L.S.

On the 3rd May the Batta attacked
the Hindenburg line near Bullecourt.

About ~~the~~ ten minutes after two, Sgt.

Russell reported to me that he was
wounded in the arm, but would
continue in the advance. A little

later he again reported, a wound
in the leg & still insisted on
staying with his men. The next

I saw of him was in a shell-hole
wounded through the stomach. At

this particular period we were well
in advance & later had to retire

to a stronger position, & it was
impossible to bring back any stragglers
except.

Personally I do not give much
hope, & I feel certain he was not
taken a prisoner.

For his
splendid behaviour he was awarded the D.C.M.

Regarding his appearance.

Height - 5'-8" - 5'-9"
Build - solid, loose
fitted.

Age - about 25 years.
Complexion - medium.
Weight - 12 stone.

He had at one time been a staff sergeant,
that was before he joined the unit.

I hope I have been of some
assistance to you.

Yours etc.

D. Addrell

5087. Sgt. C. L. RUSSELL,

W + M. 3.5.17

23rd Nov 17

OFFM
P. 1.5

30.8.17

Lieut. L.S.MA

Lieut. L.S. MADORELL
23. Battn A.I.F. 6 Training Battn. Rolleston Camp. Salisbury
Plain.

Dear Sir,

We have to thank you very much for your letter in answer to our
enquiry, concerning: Sgt. C.L. RUSSELL.
23 Battn. A.I.F.

The information you have sent will be of assistance to us and o
gains to our enquirers who will greatly prize what you have said of
Sgt. Russell's gallantry and devotion to duty.

All the evidence we have so far collected tends to prove his
death on that date.

With repeated thanks,

Yours faithfully,

V.D.
Secretary

September 22nd, 1917.

Pte. W. J. Russell,
8th Bttn A.I.F.,
No 1 Command Depot,
Perham Downs, Hants.

Dear Sir,

We are very sorry to send you further unofficial
information about No 5087 Sgt. C. J. Russell,
~~25th~~ Battalion,
A.I.F.

and we quote two reports as being the most detailed.
Unfortunately they only serve to confirm our worst fears
as to his fate and we feel there is little hope of his
being alive.

Lt. Maddrell wrote to us from the 6th Training Battalion
Rollestone, Salisbury Plains to this effect:-

"On the 3rd Oct the battalion attacked the Hindenburg
line near Bullecourt. About ten minutes after Sgt. Russell
reported to me that he was wounded in the arm but would continue
in the advance. A little later he again reported a wound in the
leg and still insisted on staying with his men. The next I saw

of him was in a shell hole wounded through the stomach. At this particular period we were well in advance and later had to retire to a stronger position, and it was impossible to bring back any stretcher cases. Personally I do not give much hope, and I feel certain he was not taken prisoner.

For his splendid behaviour he was awarded the D.C.M."

No 778 Pte. S. Matthews, gave further unofficial information when he was in a convalescent camp in France. He stated:

"About 8 or 9 a.m. on May 13th in the thick of the attack on Bullecourt I was taking a message to Lt. McSweeney. I found him wounded in a shell hole 500 yards past the German 2nd line. In the same shell hole I saw Cpl. Russell.

He was lying with a blanket over him. He said he had a wound in the stomach and asked me to get a stretcher bearer. It was impossible for stretcher bearers to reach him but that night volunteer stretcher bearers went for him but found him dead. The Q.M. of the coy - C/M/S. Parsons - told me this. He was still there when I left. When I saw Russell I was pretty sure his case was hopeless. Lt. McSweeney got back alive. Cpl. Russell had been made L/Sgt. on going in to the Bullecourt attack.

"He had been wounded earlier in the engagement but insisted on carrying on. A D.C.M. for him has come through orders since. His name is Claud".

Both informants describes your brother as 25 years of age about 5ft 8ins in height and thick set in build with dark hair.

Regretting the sad news contained in these reports
~~Trusting that these reports are of some help to you and~~
assuring you of our sincere sympathy *in your great anxiety -*

Yours faithfully,

V.P.

SECRETARY.

Telephones: (8578
Tot.: VICTORIA 8856: 8577
8578

ALL COMMUNICATIONS
TO BE ADDRESSED TO
"THE SECRETARY,"
WOUNDED AND MISSING
— ENQUIRY BUREAU —

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:
"QUESTMAN, LONDON."



AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY.

36, GROSVENOR PLACE.

~~54, VICTORIA STREET.~~

LONDON, S.W. 1.

Pte. W. J. Russell,
8th. Battalion,

12th. January, 1918.

~~Aust. Imp. Force, A.I.F.,~~
~~E.I.F.~~

Bulford.

Type again.

Dear Pte. Russell,

We deeply regret to inform you that your brother :-

5087. Cpl. C.L. Russell, 23rd. Battalion, A.I.F.

~~is now reported officially as killed in action on 8. 5. 17.~~

having been previously reported as wound and missing on
that date.

This sad conclusion had already been forced upon us
by the nature of the unofficial reports we have sent you from
time to time.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

Vera Beattie

SECRETARY.

(L.H.)

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY
WOUNDED & MISSING
ENQUIRY BUREAU

38, GROSVENOR PLACE
LONDON, S.W. 1

WAR
NOTES

UNDELIVERABLE

RETURNED TO SENDER

RETURNED FOR REASON STATED
RETURN TO SENDER

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL

12

London

SW-1

8th March 1918.

Pte W.J. Russell,
8th Battalion,
A.I.F. Depot,
Bulford.

Dear Pte. Russell,

We deeply regret to inform you that your brother :-

5087 Cpl. C.L. Russell, 23rd Bn. A.I.F.

is now reported officially as Killed in Action on 3-5-17
previously
having been/reported as Wounded & Missing on that date.

This sad conclusion had already been forced upon
us by the nature of the unofficial reports we have sent you
from time to time.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy,

Yours faithfully,

L. R. H.

Secretary