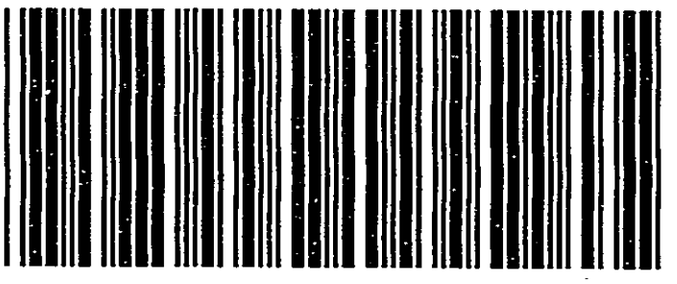
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

391 Private
Leslie Russell

37th Battalion



2380610K

A.I.F.
57th. Battalion.

RUSSELL. 391.
Lesker.

"Killed in Action 27.2.17".

No trace Germany.

Cert. by Capt. Mills.10.10.19.

London.
28.10.19.

Off. [illegible]. P.I.

A.I.F. 37th Btn

RUSSELL
L. 391

"M. 27-2-17"

Killed in Action 27-2-17 - previously reported Missing
Cert. by A.I.F.Headquarters 30-6-17.

OFF.M

London
4-7-17

37th Battn.
A. I. F.

Russell.
L. 391.

"Missing 27.2.17."

Was with me in same Machine gun team was wounded on night of 27th Feb. by shell, fell into a shell hole with water in it. Was wounded in the shoulder. H. Perkins pulled him out of the shell hole and then went on. He told me this when we got back.

Witness:-
Willingham. 428.
D. P. Dickson. W. 37. Harefield.

London.
15.6.17. Note Written Pte. Perkins 12.6.17. Off.M.

A.I.F. 37. RUSSELL, L. 391.

M Feb 27th 1917.

Russell - name Leslie - was in my platoon IV, but was in a different platoon for the raid ? the big raid at Houplines on the night of Feb 26/27th. He was wounded in that raid, and it came to us two days afterwards that he had died - at Steenwerck I believe it was or a hospital to which he was taken from there. It was a Sergt deputed to make enquiries who brought the news. Q.M.S. Berry or Turner would be able to give information.

Inf: Sgt. H.J.Martin. 341. A.IV
No. 14 General
BOULOGNE. 8.6.17.

Written QMS Berry or Turner } 23.6.17 JT

FRANCE

37th BATT. A.I.F. RUSSELL. L. 391.

M.Feb.27th.1917

He was in A.Coy, 4 Platoon and came from Abbotsford, Victoria. He was a fine chap. He disappeared in a big raid which we had in February. The German wire was not cut and only a few of us got through it. I saw him on the parapet of the German trench; he was then all-right. But just at that time the order came to retire and I did not see him afterwards, so I don't know if he got hit at the German trench or while coming back.

JHA

Ref ---Cpl Allen. 1785.
No 2 Can. Gen. Hospital.

Le Treport. June 12th.1917

37th Australian Imperial Force Russell, Pte. L. 391,

(M. Feb. 27. 1917).

" I heard a general report from the men who came back from the big raid on February 27th Last at Houplines, near Armentieres, that Pte. Russell had been killed, said to be badly smashed up. Can give no further particulars. "

Eye itness - No; General report.

Description - Was in Lewis Gun Section. Medium build, rather fair.

Informant :- L/Cpl. Edmund Bottrell, 6, D Coy. 16th Pltn. 37th A.I.F. Horton County of London War Hospt Epsom.

Home address :- Chiltern Valley, No. 2. Via Chiltern, Victoria.

26. 6. 17.
P.L.Waterhouse.

37th Battn,
A. Coy. 4th Pl.
A. I. F.

Russell.
Pte. L. 391.

"Missing 27.2.17."

I saw him hit by a machine gun ball at Armentières Houplines on No Man's Land late in the evening of the 27th. He was hit on the chest and called out "I'm hit and done for". We were in a raid at the time and I could not stop to help him. The country was very rough. I never saw him again. I'm sure he was wounded seriously. No other of same name in Battn. We called him Leslie.

Witness:-
W. Oman. Pte. J. Keefe.303.
37th Battn. A.Coy.
3rd Aust. Aux. Hpl.
Dartford.

London.
27.6.18.

Off.M.

37th Battn.
A. I. F.

Russell.
L. 391.

"Killed in Action 27.2.17"

re 391 Pte. L. Russell. The only information I can get about him is, He was a member of a raiding party that visited Fritz on 27.2.17 and some of the lads who were in the raid seem to think that he was blown up by a shell, as searchers have not been able to find either his disc or other property of his. I don't think he could have been taken prisoner as Fritz has been unable to occupy these trenches since the raid. He (Pte. Russell) was about 5'7" in height, complexion ordinary, considered to have been very good looking.

Letter from:-
C.Q.M.Sgt. R. Berrie
37th Battn.

London.
25.8.17.

Off.H.

57th Battn
A.I.F.

Russell
L. 391

"Killd in Action 27.2.17."

It gives me much pleasure in relating any details concerning my most unfortunate comrade who on the night of the 27.2.17. met his sad fate. Immediately after leaving our lines at midnight for the purpose of raiding the enemy trenches an hostils machine gun opened fire on us wounding and killinga considerable numberr of the boys amongst whom was 591 L. Russell. To the best of my belief. He fell backwards on to me knocking me into a shell hole, where he lay for a while bleeding from a bullet wound under the temple-during this time the machine gun had been silenced. I then pulled him out of the hole which was half full of water and laid him on the bank where I left him mortally wounded. When I had finished my work in the enemy trench I retraced my steps as well as possible under the circumstances for by this time the enemy shelling was very heavy. I could not find my conrade so - come to the conclusion he had been picked up by our stretcher bearers. Before I go any further I would like to make it clear to you that his face was blackened so a very difficult thing in the drak to without a doubt recognise his as L. Russell; But to the best of my belief was the unfortunate

Lad. So I have concluded that he was killed and died the bravest lad on that fatal night. As I cannot supply you with any more information I will conclude wth the deepest sympathy to all concerned.

Letter from:- H. Perkins.
France 6.7.17.

Description:- About 5'8", medium complexion, Strongly built, brown Hair, dark eyes.

London.
12.9.17.

Off. H.

ack Pte 7.17
F.M.

391 L. RUSSELL
37 Battn A.I.F
France

KA 27.2.17 Off 11 29 6/9/1917

4. The Secretary of wounded & missing

Dear Miss.

I It gives me much pleasure in relating ~~to~~ any details concerning my most unfortunate comrade whom the night of the 4th/5th met his sad fate Immediately after leaving our lines at midnight for the purpose of raiding the enemy's trenches on the left we were fired upon from a machine gun & on encountering & shelling a considerable number of the boys amongst them was

391. L. Russell. At the first burst of machine gun fire fell forward and to me himself one into a shell hole where the boy for a while able lying from a bullet

wound and at the temple during
this time the machine gun had been
silenced. I then pulled him out
of the hole which was half full
of water and laid him on the
bank where I left him apparently
mortally wounded. When I had
finished my work in the enemy trenches
I reloaded my rifle as well as possible
under the circumstances for by this
time the enemy were falling back in
heavy. I could not hold my comrade
so I came to it. Sometime during
then pricked up my ears & breathed
heavily. Before I go any further I
would like to make it clear to you
that his face was blackened as many
difficult thing in the dark to without

no doubt recognise him as J. Hunt,
but to the best of my knowledge the
unfortunate lad, so I have
concluded that he was killed and
fell the bravest lad on that fatal
night. As I cannot supply
you with any more information
I will conclude this with my deepest
sympathy to all concerned...

I am

Yours Faithfully

H. Perkins.

Chief Officer

Aberdeen Steamship

Brown Hair

Shortly Hill.

Dark eyes.

12.6.17

Pte H. PERKINS
37 Battn AIF
BEF

Effr

391 L. RUSSELL
37 Battn AIF

M. 27.2.17

C

M. S.
13.6.17

23.6.17

QM S. BERRY
37 Batt AIF
BEF

Sgt. TURNER
37 Batt AIF
BEF

391 L RUSSELL
37 Batt AIF.

M. 27. 2. 17

6.17

July 13th, 1917.

Pte. H. Perkins,
37th Battalion, A.I.F.
B. E. F.

Dear Pte. Perkins,

Very many thanks for your letter of 5.7.17 in answer to our enquiry concerning -

391 L. RUSSELL, 37th Battalion, A.I.F.

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

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

V.D

Secretary.

July 25th. 1917.

C.Q.M.Sgt. R. Berrie,
37th Battalion, A.I.F.,
B. E. F.

Dear Sgt. Berrie,

Very many thanks for your letter in answer to our enquiry concerning :-

391 L. Russell, 37th. Battn., A.I.F.

The information you have sent will be of much assistance.

With best wishes,

Yours faithfully,

V. D

Secretary.

15.8.17.

Sapper G.A.Russell,
C.Co. Engineers Depot, Brightling Sea, Essex.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your enquiry for your brother 391 Pte L.Russell 37th. Australian Infantry Battalion we regret to have to inform you that he is officially reported "killed in Action 27.2.17"-

We have received unofficial evidence concerning his death from men of his battalion. One informant 428 Pte. Willingham said:"Russel was with me in same Machine gun team, and was wounded on night of 27th. Feb. by shell and fell into a shell hole with water in it. Was wounded in the shoulder. H.Perkins pulled him out of the shell hole and then went on. He told me this when he got back"-

We wrote to Pte. Perkins but have had no reply.

341 Sgt. H.J.Martin said that Leslie Russell was in his platoon but was in a different platoon for the big raid at Houplines on the night of Feb 26-27. He was wounded in that raid and it was reported two days afterwards that he had died.

1785 Cpl. Allen stated Russell was in A.Coy, 4 platoon and came from Abbotsford, Victoria. The informant said he was a fine chap. He disappeared in the big February raid, the German wire was not cut and only a few of them got through it. Informant saw him on the parapet of the German trench but the order then came to retire and he does not know if Russell got hit in the German trench or when coming back.

303 Pte. J.Keefe gave the following report,- "I saw him hit by machine gun ball at Armentieres, Houplines in No Man's Land, late in the evening of the 27thHe was hit in the chest and called out "I'm hit andone for"- We were in a raid at the time and I could not stop to help him. The country was very rough. I never saw him again. I'm sure he was wounded seriously. There was no other of same name in the battalion. We called him Leslie".

If any further evidence comes to hand we shall advise you. We

Sapper G.A.Russell C.Coy.

regret that this news is all so distressing and would like to offer our very sincere sympathy in your loss,

Yours faithfully,

V.D. [illegible]

Secretary.

answered
14-8-14

Spr G A Russell
C Company
Engineers Depot
Brightling Sees
Essex
2/8/1914

Sir

I ask a favour will you kindly buy and send
me one where my Brother is in France whether he
is still alive or is still missing. I only arrived in
England and I would like to know. the address on his
letters were.

Private Les Russell
3911
3/7th Bath
Regt
Braal

Will you let me know as soon as possible please.

Yours Sincerely
Spr G A Russell

Sir G. H. Rumbold
6 January 1791
Field Lieutenant
Brentford Dep
Essex

Dear Sir

I received your letter of the 2nd Inst
Re X Lincoln, Reg. 37th Foot & I beg to
inform you that I have given the
Recruiting Party proper Directions
to enlist no more Men in your Division
Brentford Dep

I am
Dear Sir
Your most obedt
Sir G. H. Rumbold

391 L. RUSSELL
37 Bat AIF
KA 27.2.17
OHM 4

C&R
F.M. 23.7.17

To.
Miss Deakin
c/o Aust Red. Cross Society
54 Victoria St
London. S.W.1.

Dear Miss Deakin

Re your enquiry for No 40 or 391. Pte Russell L. the only information I can get about his is :-

He was a member of a raiding party that visited Fritz on 27-2-17, and some of the lads who were in the raid seem to think that he was blown up by a shell, as searchers have not been able to find either his disc or other property of his I don't think he could have been taken prisoner as Fritz has been unable to occupy these trenches since the raid.

He (Pte Russel) was about 5ft 7 in in height, complexion, ordinary, considered to have been very good looking.

I am
Yours very sincerely
H. Bevis
Q.M.S.
34th Bn AIF

Ack
F.M. 23.7.17

391 L. RUSSELL
37 Balloon Coy
KIA 27.2.17
OFFM 4

To.
Enquiries Dept in
the Aust. Red Cross Society
54 Victoria St
London. S.W.1.

Dear Cross Deaf in

Re your enquiry for No 391. Pte Russell L.
the only information I can get about
this is:-

He was a member of a raiding
party that visited Fritz on
27-2-17, and some of the
lads who were in the raid
seem to think that he was
blown up by a shell, as searchers
have not been able to find either
his disc or other property of his
I don't think he could have been
taken prisoner as Fritz has been
unable to occupy these trenches
since the raid.

He (Pte Russell) was about 5ft 7 in in
height, complexion, ordinary, considered
to have been very good looking.

Yours very sincerely
H. Bevis
Lt. M.S.
37th Balloon Coy.