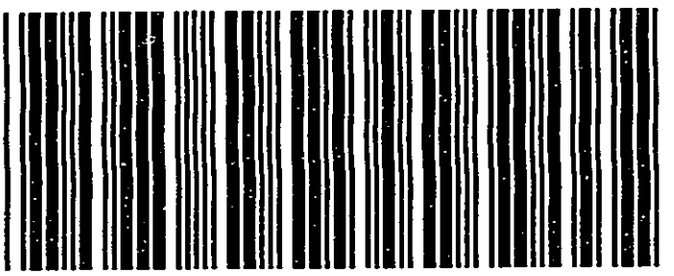
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

6933 Private Charles William Maurice Ricks

35th Battalion



2300107D

A.I.F. 35th Btn

RICKS
Chas. Wm. Maurice 6935

"MISSING"

Killed in action 4-4-18 - previously reported Missing 5-4-18
Cert. by A.I.F.Hqrs 31-7-18.

OFF.M. &
P.I.

London
2-8-18

35th Battn.
A.I.F.

RICKS
C.W.M. 6933

"Missing 5-4-18"

During the bombardment on the 4th April he was buried by a shell up to his shoulder, and wounded about the face and head. I tried to pull him out but owing to the enemy being right on top of us, had to leave. He said, "Let me go, let me ade". He may be a prisoner or dead. The Huns were only a few yds. away. He belonged to a firm of florists in Sydney, but his people are in England, his Father being a barrister.

Informant. Cahill Sgt.R.F.
35th Battn.,
HAREFIELD.

W.Alison
London
15-5-18
1

Off.M.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT SOUGHT 8559/18/16

C O P Y

Statement made by No 948 Sgt Cahill R.P, 35th Bn;

re No 6933 Pte Ricks C.W. 35th Bn.

Missing 5.4.18.

On the morning of the 4th of April 1918 at about 8.30, a.m, I saw No 6933 Pte Ricks, C.W.M, then "under my Command" buried up to the shoulders. He was bleeding about the face.

After giving the order to withdraw to the Platoon I stayed behind to assist the above-named man. He recognised me, and said "Let me die Sergeant, I'll be alright . Let me die" On looking towards the enemy, I saw them almost upon me. Finding my efforts useless, in saving the man, I withdrew to safety.

That is the last opportunity I had of seeing Pte Ricks.

The enemy having captured the ground.

Datedat, Sutton Veny (Sgd) R.P. Cahill

Statement made and signed before me (Sgd) R. Dooley
Lieut & Adjt

Havre. 13th. May. 1918.

6q33

35th. Australians. Rickm, C. W. M. 6889.
Springer, S. 6884.

M. April. 5/1918.

I knew them both they were in B. Coy; new transfers. They were both hit by the same shell during the bombardment at Villers Bretteneux and nothing more was seen of them. I saw this happen.

Inf:- R. P. Gilboy. 2696.
35th. Australians. B.
H. S. "Carrisbrooke Castle".

RMS.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. 2559/18/16

COPY

Statement made by No 2596 Pte Gilbey R.P, 35th Bn:

6re No 6933 Pte Ricks C.W, 35th Bn:

Missing 5.4.18.

K~A 4-4-18

I last saw No 6933 Pte Ricks C.W, 35th Bn; in the front line Villiers -Brettoneux on 4th April 1918, about 7a.m. dut during an enemy bombardment. A shell landed in the bay, he was in, and buried all with the exception of one, Pte Gordan Walsh of "B" Coy, 35th Bn.

There was no time to dig these men out as we found it was impossible to hold the line being nearly surrounded.

I do not know Pte Walsh's number.

X 6856 Pte Walsh G W 35 Bn written to. Off Me. P.I.

Dated at, Hurdcott. not sent on J.A.

Ch. Suff

(Sgd) R.P. Gilbey.

Statement made and signed before me. (Sgd) P. Fallick Lieut.

35th Battn.
A.I.F.

"Missing 5-4-18"

RICKS C.W.M. 6933
Moore S.J. 3768
now P/W. → Ryan J. 6618
Springer G. 6884

They were about 5 Yds. from me in a trench at Villers-Bretton-neux at 7 a.m. on April 4th, and were buried by practically a direct hit from a shell. It was a shallow front line trench and there were just the 5 of us in it. I was the only one who got out. Sgt.Cahill of B.Coy. 8th Pltn. 35th Battn., came up after it happened and we could see some of the helmets, etc., cut to pieces, lying on the dirt. They were not dug up as we retired 5 minutes later. They were all B.Coy. 8th Pltn. Moore, name Sam, tall, thin, only Moore in Coy., people live in England. Ricks, short, black hair, curious walk. Ryan, name Jack, 5'9"., well built, original 2nd Battn. man, had been in Gallipoli, and had re-enlisted. Springer, name Sid, 5'8", fair , nuggety, about 28, came with 20th Rft. of 19th Battn., the only Springer in Coy.

Informant. Walsh Pte.J. 6856
35th Battn. B.Coy. 8th Pltn.
Confirmed by Gilbey Pte.R.F. 2596
35th Battn. B.Coy. 8th Pltn.,
(who was in the next bay and knew Springer and Ricks)

A.G.Campbell
Dondon
29-4-18

note Reports of Gilbey & Sgt Cahill

Off.M.
Of. more copy. P.I.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. CR/2559/18/16/

C O P Y

Statement made by No.6856 Pte Walsh G.W. 35th Btn.

re No.6933 Pte Ricks C.W. 35th Btn.
Missing 5.4.18.

K.A. 4-4-18

On the morning of the 4th April, 1918, about 6.a.m. during the barrage at Villers-Brettoneux, France, No. 6933 Private Ricks, C.W. was killed. Three othees also were killed at the same time.

F.A. not sent on

Off Mr. G.I. Ch. Supp.

For Red Cross

Dated at Monte Video, Weymouth.

(SGD). G. Walsh.

Statement made and signed before me (SGD). H.E. Pearce.
Captain.
C.O. 4.Company.

35th Battn. B.Coy. 8th Pltn.
A.I.F.

RICKS C.W.M. 6933
Moore S.J. 3768
Springer S. 6884

"Missing 5-4-18"

At Villers-Bretoneux in front line, about 6 o'clock in the morning, a 5.9 shell landed in the bay of trench, burying the 3 and another, Pte.Jack Ryan, number unknown, of same Coy. I was in the same bay, but about 5 yds. away and was myself buried with exception of head, shoulders and one arm. I dug myself out with shovel that was lying near. The top of the heads of the 4 men were just visible with helmets lying about. No effort made to get them out. They showed no signs of being alive, and in witness's opinion they were undoubtedly dead. Had to retire from the line almost immediately after the shell fell. Pte.A.P.Reece, 35th Battn. 8th Pltn., still in France, was the only other witness of what occured, Bodies were left where they were. Was not hit myself.

Informant. Walsh Pte.G. 6856
35th Battn. B.Coy. 8th Pltn.,
WEYMOUTH.

A.D.G.
London
11-6-18

Off.M.

Written Pte. Reece about these three men 13.6.18.

35th Battalion. A.I.F. Ricks. C.W.M.Pte.No.6933

Missing April 5th 1918.

He was killed whilst in his dug out .The dug out was blown in on top of him by a shell.This happened whilst we were in front of Villers Bretteneux.Sgt.Cahill tried to sig him out but did not succeed as the firing was too hot.We thought he must be killed ,and we had to leave the line at thetime and retire so there was no chance of him being dug out. I knew him well and we worked together in thecook house.

Description. Height. 5-7. Comp.Dark. Medium Build.

Witness. Danellls. L.A.G. Pte. No.5006. 35th Battalion.

Taken at
No.3.C.D.Hurdcott.
June 15th 1918.
S.W.

S.Whitmee,
No.4.Command Depot,
Hurdcott.

See reports by S-Y Cahill

P.1

1 more

CL/IS

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. 4ARC/8559/18/16.

C O P Y

Statement made by No.5006.Pte DANELLS.L.A.G.35th Btn.

re No.6833 Pte RICKS.C.W.35th Btn.
Missing 5.4.18

K in A 4-4-18

On the morning of the 4th April, 1918 "B" Company, of the 35th Battalion was in the front line at Villers Brettonneux. Private Ricks was in a dugout about 100 yards from me, which was blown in by a shell. That was the last I saw of him. Every endeavour was made to rescue him, but owing to a heavy bombardment nothing could be done.

J.E.A. not sent on

For Red Cross

Off. M. P.1.

Ca Suff.

Dated at SANDHILL.

(SGD). L.A.G.DANELLS.

Statement made and signed before me

(SGD). W.H.McCULLOCH.
Lieut.

Cd

Uffdb
P.1

35th A.I.F. Ricks. C.W.M. 6933

(M. Apr. 5/18.)

"He was wounded in the early morning of April 4th but when we advanced next day we recovered him and he was sent to hospital in France. He had not returned to the Regt. when I left on May.30th."

Eyewitness:

Description:

Informant: Pte. J. J. O'Brien. 2866.
35th A.I.F. C Coy.
Beaufort Hospital,
Bristol.

Home address:
Tallwood,
Walgeth, New South Wales.

20.6.18.
F. Gardiner.

35th. Battn. A. I. F.

Ricks. C. W. M. Pte. No. 6933.

B. Company.

Missing April 5th. 1918.

He was in a dugout when a shell came over, which landed on the dugout blowing it inon top of him. We tried to recover his body but failed to do so. This happened in front of Villers Brettonneux on the 4th. April. He joined up in January. I knew him in the Company. He came from N. S. W.

Description. Age. 18. Height. 5-6. Complexion. Dark. Medium Build.

Witness. Pte. Danells. L. H.-E. No. 5006. B. Company. 35th. Battalion.

Taken at.
No. 3. C. D. Hurdcott.
11. 7. 18.
S. W.

S. Whitmee.
No. 4. Command Depot.
Hurdcott.

35th A. I. F. Ricks. C.W.M. Pte. 6933. B. VIII

K.A.
(~~M.~~ April 5. 1918.)

"I was in the 7th General Canadian Hospital at Etaples. A Red Cross man came to me and asked me if I ever knew a man called "Riches" who was in my Battalion and who was now in Ward 39 of the same hospital. I said I knew a man of that name but who spelt his name "Rix". I asked what he was like The Red Cross man said he was a little chap and not quite right in his head. I was then sure it was the same man. He was in my Platoon, we used to spell his name "Rickes" but he did not like it and said his name should be "Rix". We thought he was killed because he did not answer at "Roll Call" after the "stunt" and I never heard of him again until the Red Cross man asked me, he was a man who went round the hospital asking questions about missing, he had a book like this. I never saw Rix in hospital, as I was moved early in May".

Eye-witness. - No.

Not Sent on -

P.T.O.

Description: Little man, slight, medium colouring "terrible nervous and frightened", clean-shaven, ago about 20. Australian. "not quite right in his head".

Informant: Pte. George M. Naylor. 914.
35th Batt. A.I.F. B.Coy. VIII Pl.

M.L. Macmerian.
12.7.18.

Still M. Now K in A / Examined at H.Q. 26.7.18
Not sent on

35th Battn.
A.I.F.

RICKS
C.W.H. 6933

"MISSING 5-4-18"

He was of B.Coy. 7th Pltn. In Viller-Bretonneux village on morning of 4th April, he was in the lines, and was shot through the head alongside me, sniper of M.G. bullet. He died instantly. I don't know anything of burial. Enemy took the village in their attack and we had to retire out of our line. We counter attacked in afternoon and retook the ground. He came from N.S.W., known as "Ricksie", age 27, small, about 5'2".

Informant. Ryan. Pte.J.J. 3746
35th Battn. B.Coy. 6th Pltn.,
HAREFIELD.

A.D.G.
London
24-7-18
N.D.

Off.M.
P.I.

Note:-
Not sent on.

Etaples.20.5.18.
Acknowledged.

Memorandum.

Acknowledged 21. 5. 18

16th May 1918

FROM C. H. RICKS,
Grove House,
Cookham Road,
MAIDENHEAD.
Berks, England

TO The British Red Cross Society
Order of St. John
Enquiry Department
A.P.O. 7.79 B.E.F. France

Dear Sir,

May I appeal to you to make some enquiry concerning my son, a member of the Australian Imperial Force, who is reported as missing since the 5th April 1918, as it is possible he may be wounded in Hospital in Germany?

His full name & is:-

Private Charles William Maurice Ricks
No. 6933
35th Battalion
A.I.F. France

Yours truly
C.H. Ricks

Memorandum.

29th May 1918

FROM C. H. RICKS,
Grove House,
Cookham Road,
MAIDENHEAD.

TO The Secretary
Wounded & Missing Enquiry Bureau
Australian Red Cross Soc.

Dear Madam

We are very grieved at the sad news conveyed by your letter of yesterday, but beg to thank you for all the trouble taken on our behalf.

We shall be grateful for any further particulars you may be able to furnish.

Yours truly
C.H. Ricks

6933 Pte Ch Wm Maurice Ricks
35 Bttn

Memorandum.

5th Augt 1918

FROM

C. H. RICKS,
Grove House,
Cookham Road,
MAIDENHEAD.

TO The Secretary
Australian Red Cross Society
36 Grosvenor Place
S.W.1

Dear Madam I beg to thank you for your further letters, and regret to say that we have now been officially informed that my son Private C. W. H. Ricks 6933, 35th Batt'n A.I.F. is now reported as having been killed on 4th April last the date upon which he was stated to have been missing.

We thank you for your kind expressions of sympathy in our loss, also for the great trouble you have taken.

Yours truly
C. H. Ricks.

13.6.18

Pt. A. P. Reece
VIII Pltn B Coy
35th Battn G.I.T.
abroad

att.
6933

Pt. C. W. M. Ricks
VIII Pltn B Coy
35th Battn G.I.T.
M. 5.4.18

13.6.18
G.I.B.W

C.H.Ricks, Esq.,
Grove House,
Cookham Road,
Maidenhead, BERKS.

May 28th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your enquiry handed on to us from B.R.C.S. France concerning your son -

6933 Pte.CHARLES WILLIAM MAURICE RICKS, 35th Bttn, A.I.F.

We deeply regret to inform you of the following reports given by two of his comrades. We would emphasise the fact that these reports are entirely unofficial and we would not advise you to accept them as final in the absence of further reliable and official information.

2596 Pte.R.P.Gilbey of the same unit stated that he knew Pte. Ricks and he saw him wounded by shellfire during the bombardment at Villers Brettoneux and nothing more was seen of him.

Sgt.R.P.Cahill, 35th Bttn, interviewed recently in the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield stated that during the bombardment on April 4th. Pte. Ricks was partially buried by a shell and badly wounded about the face and head. Informant endeavoured to extricate him, but owing to the near approach of th enemy had to leave him. He them seemed to be very ill but Sgt. Cahill knows nothing of his ultimate fate as the Germans were only a few yards away at the time. He adds that your son "belonged to a firm of florists in Sydney, but that his people live in England, his father being a barrister."

We regret that we are unable to supply you with more definite details but we are continuing our enquiries and hope to send you further particulars at a later date as we fully realise how great must be your distress about him.

Assuring you of our sympathy in your anxiety.

Yours faithfully.

(Miss)

SECRETARY.

C.H. RICKS, Esq,
Grove House,
Cookham Road,
Maidenhead. Berks.

June 5th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We very deeply regret to inform you that we have received another unofficial report respecting your son -

6933 Pte. CHARLES W.M.RICKS. 35th Battalion, A.I.F.

which confirms the information already sent you.

6856 Pte. Walsh of the same unit, stated from him in a shallow front line trench at Villers-Brettoneux April 4th, when a shell fell and killed all but himself. Sgt. Cahill came up directly after, but they were unable to extricate men and had to retire.

2596 Pte. Gilbey of the same unit who was in the next bay and knew your son and another of the men, confirms the above.

We greatly fear that though these accounts are unofficial they may prove to be correct and that there is little hope of his being a prisoner.

We are continuing enquiries and will at once send you any information we may obtain and with our deepest sympathy in your great anxiety and sorrow.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

SECRETARY.

7. Sq.

July 31st, 1918.

C.H.Ricks. Esq.
Grove House. Cookham Road.
Maidenhead.

Dear Sir,

With further reference to your enquiry for your son -

6933 Pte. C.W.H. RICKS. 35th Battalion, A.I.F.

We regret to inform you of further unofficial evidence, which unfortunately only confirms the reports previously sent you.

5006 Pte.L.F.H.Daniells of the same unit interviewed recently at No 3 Command Depot, Hurdcott, stated that your son was in a dugout at Villers Bretonneux on April 4th when he was buried by the explosion of a shell. Sheila They tried to extricate him but failed to do so. Informant described your son as aged 18, about 5'6" in height, of dark complexion and medium build stated that he knew him in the company which he joined in January.

We fear further enquiries would only lead to confirmation of the reports already received, but if any fresh information reaches us we will immediately advise you as we realise how anxious you must be.

With our sincere sympathy and emphasising the unofficial nature of this evidence.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss) [signature]

Secretary.

August 2nd, 1918.

C.H. Ricks. Esq.
Grove House.
Cookham Road.
Maidenhead.

Dear Sir.

We deeply regret to inform you that, as we feared from the nature of the unofficial evidence already sent,

6933 Pte. C.W.H. RICKS. 35th Battalion. A.I.F.

is now reported officially as Killed in Action on 4-4-18 having been reported previously as Missing on that date.

Should we obtain further information we shall immediately advise you and assure you of our sincere sympathy in your loss.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Secretary.

(24.8.)