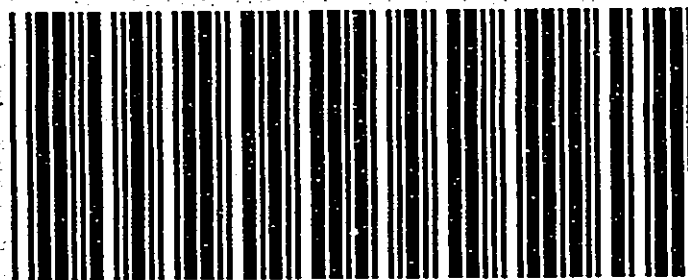


Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing  
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War  
1DRL/0428

4780 Private  
Boyd Cunningham  
Campbell Thomson

23rd Battalion



2740107L

A.I.F. 23.

THOMSON Sgt.B.C.O.4780.

K. 10.11.16.

I saw him killed at Fiers on 10th.Nov. He was sitting in his dug-out when a big shell came over and buried him and a man called Cochran. His body was blown almost to pieces, his head was practically severed from his body. I saw the whole affair and helped to bury his body in the trench.

SA.

Reference: Sgt.W.R.F. Love. 590. G.Co.  
2 A.D.B.D.

Staples.  
3.3.17.

P.I.

A.I.F. 23.

THOMSON Sgt.B.C.O. 4780.

K. 10.11.16.

He belonged to C. XII of which I am in charge. He was killed at Fiers on 10th.Nov. I heard about it soon after the casualty occurred. Sgt.A. Mounier, H.Q. 23rd. Bn. could supply eye-witness details. He and Thomson were together at Fiers on 14th.Feb.

SA.

Reference: Cpl.V.S. Smith. 4190. B.Co.  
2 A.D.B.D.

Staples.  
3.3.17.

Written Sgt Mounier 12.3.17

P.I.

H 172

16th March, 1917.

23rd AUSTRALIANS

THOMSON, Sgt. B.C.C. 4780

K. 10.11.16 Det. D/B.

He was killed in our front line at Flers by a shell about 3 p.m. on Nov. 10th. He was blown to pieces. We were relieved the same night.

Informant: Pte P.G. Hamstad, 4407  
23rd Australians, C Co.,  
H.S. Grantully Castle.

P. I.  
RBS

23rd A.I.F.

Thomson Sgt. B.C.C. 4780,

(K. Nov. 10th 1916 Det. D. & B)

"Thomson was killed by a shell on Nov. 8th at Fiers. It was about 4.30 in the afternoon in the front line trench. He was blown to pieces. He was on the next post but one to me".

Eye-witness: Close to

Description:

Informant Pte. R. Hamstead 4407,

23rd A.I.F.,

War Hospt.,

Home address:

Duston, Northampton. *P.I.*

Ward h. Duston.

Mar. 21st 1917,  
G. MacKinnell.

Evre

20th April, 1917.

23rd AUSTRALIANS

THOMSON, Sgt. B.C.C. 4780

K. Nov. 10th. 1916. Det. D/B.

Sergt. Thomson was in B. Co., VII. Pltn. He was killed at the same time as Sergt. Tilley of B. Co., V. Pltn., by the same shell at Fiers early in December.

Informant: J. Cooper 4079

23rd. Batt., B.Co., VI. Pltn.

Australians

B. S. "Panama"

GRB.

*P.I.  
Suff  
G.*

K. in A. 10-11-16

Regarding my comrade, Sgt B.C.C. Thomson, well I have written to his mother and also to several other friends, that have made enquiries regarding his death. You ask me to supply information, I will do my best. He was a man about 5ft 10 ins., highly coloured, blue eyes, reserved and slightly built. He was killed on the morning of the 8th November 1916 at "Flers" in the front line at 10-15 a.m. I was in charge of the Platoon. At 10 a.m. the order came along the line that the 5th Brigade were going over in a charge and we were the supporting Battalion. The charge did not last long about 10 minutes then the order ran along our line "Stand to" five Bayonets "Prepare to charge". It was then my duty to see that my 60 men were O.K., and that took about 10 minutes, for I had to travel about 300 yards to see that all my men were right, and in doing so, naturally I had to pass my old Comrade - Thomson. I stopped spoke to him and passed the order, and spoke a few words to him, I had left him and went about 15 yards when a terrific bombardment opened and I called to my men to take cover. Just as I gave the order, I came back to where my pal Thomson was, and he and five others were blown to pieces. I then did the next best thing I could at the moment think of, and that was to bury my pal and other Comrades - that was breaking the order, but all the same I was ready when the order rang along the line, charge, and I was satisfied that my pal was buried as a soldier for he was

a brave man. After that I could not truthfully speak, for we were like mad men, we gained the objective we were after, and when I called the roll after the charge I cried, for I had only 12 men and myself left out of 60 brave men. It was a terrific day, and we were glad when we were relieved, but that is not what you have asked for, you have asked about my pal. No, Sgt Thomson is not buried in a soldiers Cemetery, but on the battle field - after the charge and things had quietened, I got the Pioneer Sgt to make a cross and it was erected in place of the little one I made for him. I gave the map reference to Lt. Boyd who also enquired. The position of the grave is 4 miles from Longueval, or about 2 miles directly in advance of Flers (N.19 8½.5) This is the Military Map reference, it may seem dutch to you, but if you should meet anyone who knows Military, they will understand and know where to find the place. You would look for "Le Barque" Trench Map Edition 2 I am sorry if I have taken up too much space in my description of Sgt Thomson's death, but you can well understand it when he was a very dear Comrade of mine. - Since then I have been very lucky for I have been right through it and I was with our Battalion when we entered Bapaume. I am very sorry to have kept you waiting so long in answering your letter, but it has been impossible for me to write while in the line lately - I received a letter to-day from Sgt Thomson's mother -.

Ref. letter recd. from - A. H. Mounier Sgt 23rd Btn.

LONDON 23-4-17.

6th Bgde. A.I.F. B.E.F. 5-4-17. P.I.

23rd Australian Imperial Force

Thomson, Sgt. B.J.C. 4780

( K. 10/11/16.Dets D & B )

" Sergt. B.J.C. Thomson was killed by shell at Fleurbaey on the 10th Nov. 1916 "

Eye Witness - Yes. Saw dead body.

Description Tall, thin, medium complexion, was an Architect.

Informant :- Pte. Percival Marzham, 4735,  
B Coy. 8th Pltn. 23rd Aus. I. F.  
Norfolk War Hospital,  
Norwich.

Home address :-  
Katanning,  
W. Australia.

14. 4. 17.  
E. Reid.

P.I.

Havre.

17th April. 1917.

23rd Batt. AUSTRALIANS.

THOMSON, Sergt. B.O.C. 4780

S. Nov. 10th. 1916. Det. D/B.

He was in B. Co. He was killed by a shell at Flurs.  
Full details can be got from B.S.M. Monier of the 23rd  
Battalion; he helped to bury Thomson, and put up a cross  
to him. Monier was a very great friend of Thomsons.

Informant: Cpl. T.F. Mason 4730  
23rd Australians,  
A. Co.  
No. 2 Gen. Hqs. (Pelais).

P.G.P.

P.1  
G.2

ack  
EM 13/4/17

Somewhero in France

2/4/1917

to Miss Vera Beakin  
from Sgt A. St. Mounier

Dear Lady,

Just a line in answer to yours of the 13th March 1917. Regarding my Comrade. Sgt. B. C. C. ~~Thomson~~ <sup>Thompson</sup> well I have written to his mother and also to several other friends that have made enquiries regarding his death. - you ask me to supply information I will do my best. - He was a man about 5ft 10 inches high, Coloured, Blue eyes, reserved, & slightly built; - He was killed on the morning of the 8th November 1916 at "Flers" in the front line at 10.15 am - I was in Charge of the Platoon. At 10 am the order came along the line that the 5th Brigade were going

was in a charge and we were  
the supporting Battalion - The  
Charge did not last long about  
10 minutes then the order ran along  
our line "Stand to" "fix Bayonets"  
"prepare to charge" It was then  
my duty to see that my 60  
men were OK and that took  
about 10 minutes for I had  
to travel about 300 yards to  
see that all my men were right  
and in doing so naturally I  
had to pass my old comrade  
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I gave the order, I came back  
to where my pal Thomson was  
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did the next best thing I could at the moment think of and that was to bury my pal & other comrades that was breaking the order, but all the same I was ready when the order rang along the line Charge and I was satisfied that my pal was buried as a soldier for he was a brave man after that I could not truthfully speak, for we were like mad men, we gained the objective we were after and when I called the roll after the Charge I cried for I had only 12 men and myself left out of 60 brave men. It was a terrific day, and we were glad when we were relieved. But that is not what you have asked for you have asked about my pal - No, Sgt Thomson is not buried in a Soldiers Cemetery but on the Battle field - after the Charge and things had

4

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position of the grave is 4 miles  
from Longueval, or about 2  
miles directly in advance of  
F. Hrs. (N. 19. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ . 5.) This is the  
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seem dumb to you but if  
you should meet any one  
who knows Military they will  
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to find the place. You would  
look for "Le Barque Trench  
map" ~~2~~ Edition 2. - I am  
sorry if I have taken up  
to much space in my  
description of Sgt. Thomsons  
death, but you can well  
understand it. When he  
was a very dear Comrade  
of mine - Since then I

J

have been very lucky for I  
have been right through it and  
I was with our Battalion when  
we entered Bapume. - I am  
very sorry to have kept you  
waiting so long in answering  
your letter but it has been  
impossible for me to write  
while in the line lately - I  
received a letter to day from  
Sgt Thomson's mother - Well Lady  
I will close now wishing you  
and the institution you are  
so bravely helping every possible  
success - I also wish you  
every possible happiness -

Believe me to be

Yours Truly

*R. J. Morrison* Sgt.

4/100

Sgt. B.C.C. THOMPSON 23rd Battalion

KA 10.11.16 23 Batt. 6th Brigade  
(Hamp) a.s. 7.11

P.I. 2

Any further Communication should be addressed to:  
**HEADQUARTERS,**  
and the following letter and number quoted—

Telegraphic Address :  
"SALAUSTRALIA, TIDWORTH."  
Telephone No. : TIDWORTH 54 (3 lines).



RECEIVED  
10 FEB 1917

BHURTPORE BARRACKS,  
TIDWORTH,  
SALISBURY PLAIN.

8th Febr. 1917.

HEADQUARTERS

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**  
DEPOTS IN UNITED KINGDOM.

*C.O.R. 1/70*

Dear Sir,

Could you please obtain for me any particulars as to the death of 4780 Sgt. B.C.C. <sup>Thompson</sup> Thompson, 23th Battalion, reported killed in action 10.11.16. If you could supply me with any information I would be most grateful.

Yours faithfully,

  
Lieut.  
Camp Commandant.

Secretary,  
Australian Branch, British Red Cross Society,  
54 Victoria Street,  
L O N D O N. S.W.

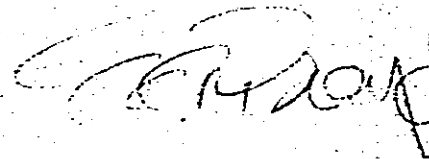
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Camp Commandant.

Secretary,  
Australian Branch, British Red Cross Society,  
54 Victoria Street,  
L O N D O N. S.W.

13th March

7

- 4780 Sgt B.C.C. Thompson. 23rd Battn, A.I.F.  
Killed - 10-11-16. -

Sgt B.C.C. Thompson,

Sgt A. Mounier.  
23rd Aust: Inf: Battn:  
B.E.F.

J.H.

*B to  
Thompson*

16th March

- 7.

Lieut. E. G. Baye,  
Camp Commandant,  
Bharatpore Barracks,  
Midworth,  
Salisbury Plains.

Dear Sir,

*B E*

Re your inquiry for No. 4780, ~~Sgt. Boyd Cunningham~~  
*Thompson*  
Campbell ~~Thomson~~, 23rd Battalion A.I.F. we beg to advise you  
of two unofficial reports that we have received.

No. 590. Sgt. W. R. Lowe saw him killed and buried  
by a shell at Flers on Nov. 10th. while sitting in his dugout.

No. 4190. Cpl. V. S. Smith, says that Thomson was killed at  
Flers on Nov. 10th. and suggests our writing to Sgt. Mounier  
for further details.

This we have done and will advise you of his reply.

Yours faithfully,

*V.S.*

Secretary.

*L.A.M.*

28th March 1917.

Lieut. E.G. Bays,  
Camp Commandant,  
Bhurtore Barracks,  
Fidworth,  
Salisbury Plains.

Dear Sir,

Re your inquiry for No. 4780, Sgt. B.G.C. Thompson, 23rd  
Battn. A.I.F. who was killed in action on 10.11.16. we regret to  
advise you of an unofficial report from No. 4407, Pte. P.G.  
Hemstad, who was on a hospital ship at Havre when he gave it.

He says that Sgt. Thompson was killed instantaneously by  
a shell in the front line at Flers about 5 p.m. on Nov. 10th.  
1916. They were relieved that night so he knows nothing about  
the burial.

We are continuing the inquiry and will advise you of  
further information that may come to hand.

Yours faithfully,

V.A

Secretary.  
A.W

11th April 1917.

The Camp Commandant,  
Bhurstpore Barracks.  
Tidworth.  
Salisbury Plains.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your inquiry for No. 4780. Sgt. B.C.C. Thomson, 23rd Batta. A.I.F. we have to advise you of the receipt of, an unofficial report from a man in his battalion - No. 4407. Pte. R. Hamstead.

Informant says, that he was close to Sgt. Thomson when the latter was killed instantaneously by shell fire at Flers on Nov. 8th. 1916, the casualty taking place about 4.30 p.m. in the front line trench.

We are pursuing our inquiries and will advise you immediately on receipt of further information about Sgt. Thomson.

Hoping these details will be of some help.

Yours faithfully,

V.D.

Secretary.  
(K.A.N.)

18th April 1917.

Sgt. H. W. Mounier,  
25rd Australian Inf. Batin.  
B.E.F.

Dear Sgt. Mounier,

Very many thanks for your letter of April 5th. in answer to our enquiry for:-

No. 4780. Sgt. B.C.C. Thompson, 25rd Batin. A.I.F.

The very clear and detailed information you have sent will be of great assistance.

We regret having troubled you to write again so fully when you had already written to so many in the same case, but our enquiry was made on behalf of a friend in England to whom these details will be very valuable.

We are glad to hear that you have received a letter from Mrs Thompson in acknowledgment of your own.

We know how greatly the relatives prize letters from friends in the Battalion.

Wishing you a continuance of Good Luck.

Yours faithfully,

V.P.  
Secretary. J.L.

3rd May 1917.

Lieut. E. C. Baye.  
Camp Commandant,  
Bhurtpore Barracks.  
Tidworth.

Dear Sir,

We are now in possession of a full and detailed  
account of the death of No. 4780. Sgt. <sup>Thomson</sup> B.C.C. Thomson, 25rd  
Battn. A.I.F. given by his great friend Sgt. Mounier.

He says that, while they were waiting in the front line  
trench for the order to charge he spoke to Sgt. Thomson.

When about 15 yards distant a bombardment opened and the men  
took cover. Just then Sgt. Thomson was killed instantaneously

by a shell and informant buried him in the trench. After  
the charge the Pioneer Sgt. erected a cross over the grave which  
is situated four miles from Longueville and two miles directly  
in advance of Fiers. The Military Map reference is H.19. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$   
5 in the "Le Bargue" Trench Map. Edition 2.

He describes Sgt. Thomson as reserved in disposition, with  
blue eyes, and bright coloring. He was of slight build and 5 ft.  
10" in height.

Trusting that these details will be useful. W.B. Law.

Yours faithfully, Secretary.