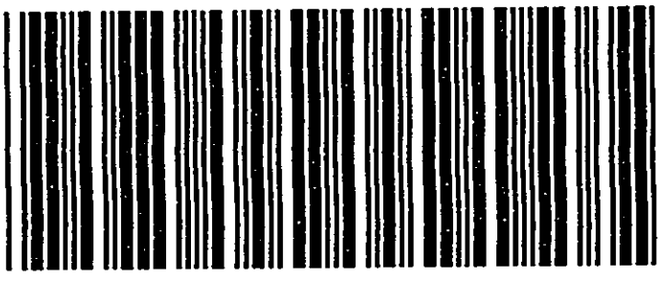
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

6603 Sergeant Austin Sylvester Lawrence (Robert Roberts)

8th Field Ambulance



2320206F

A.I.F. 8th Fld.Amb. ROBERTS
R. 6603

"D/Wds 24-10-17"

Gas shell Septicaemia, cardiac failure 53rd Gen.Hpl.
Cert. by A.I.F.Hqrs 10-1-18.

S

London
10-1-18

8th Fld. Amb
AIF

ROBERTS
Pte. R. 6603

"Died of wounds"

Reference your letter dated 11.1.18
Pte. Roberts was admitted to this Hospital on 17.10.17 suffering from the effects of Mustard Gas Poisoning.
On admission he was suffering from severe Bronchitis, with a quick and feeble pulse. There were severe burns on the arms, legs, back, hips and groins, and to a less extent on the face and chest. His eyes were also very h markedly affected. A note sent with him showed that at the C.CS. vomiting had been severe.
For the first five days the condition of the patient gave rise to no undue anxiety but on the sixth day his respirations became more hurried and his pulse irregular and feebler. There were no fresh signs of chest trouble. In spite of stimulation the pulse became worse and he died on the 24th October 1917, of Cardiac Failure, the primary cause being Septic Absorption from the large surfaces affected by burns.
He was buried in Wimereux Cemetery which is about a mile from this Hospital. The number of his grave is 2252 and the name of the officiatin clergyman is the Rev R.W.W. Traill C.F.

Letter from:- O.C. No 53rd Gen. Hpl.
A.P.O.S. 38
14.1.18

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London.23.1.18

Army Medical Corps. ROBERTS R.A. Sergeant. No.6603
8th Field Ambulance

"Died of wounds 24.10.17"

I knew Roberts, his name was Bob and he was a Sergeant in 8th Field Ambulance in A or B. Section. Roberts was gassed at Passchendaele in October 1917 - by Mustard Gas - and was taken through the Casualty Clearing Station. About a week later news came through that he had died at a hospital - I believe in France but did not hear which Hospital. He was tall, thin, fair, inclined to be reddish, his Christian name was Bob and he had been a Shearer. After his death whilst I was in the Sergeant's mess I was informed that he had enlisted under an assumed name. Sergeant Price who is now either with the 8th Field Ambulance or an Officer's School can I believe supply full information as they were intimate friends. He may have been buried under his correct name. Price knew his correct name

INFORMANT Sergeant G. Van Heockelum, No.6690
8th Field Ambulance

Home address c/o Augustus Morris & Co.,
Bridge St.

H.S.O.
No.4 Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK
23.8.18

SYDNEY BUREAU

A.M.C. 8th. FIELD AMBULANCE.

Sergeant R.A. ROBERTS.
No.6603.

"Died of Wounds 24/10/17."

Informant knew Roberts. About the 21st. October 1917 the 8th. Field Ambulance was working near Hooge Crater East of Ypres. At night-fall Roberts picked up an old overcoat and put it over him for warmth. It turned out that this overcoat had been saturated with gas, and next morning Roberts was taken to No.6(?) casualty clearing station in an unconscious condition.
Informant did not see him after his removal. Roberts appeared to be about 30 years of age, medium height and build fair complexion.

Informant:- L/Corporal L. Townsend, 6753,
8th. Field Ambulance.

D.W.
6/9/18.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

Army Medical Corps.
8th Field Ambulance.

ROBERTS, R.A.
Sergeant, No.6603.

"Died of Wounds, 24.10.17".

Informant described Roberts as about 5'10" high, medium build, medium complexion, aged about 32/34. Was a shearer in civil life. Married. Christian name Robert.

Informant states that they both belonged to the 8th Field Ambulance. On 21.10.17 the 8th Field Ambulance was in the town of Ypres. At night on that date Roberts and Informant were on the ramparts and Roberts, who was very tired picked up an overcoat and lay down on it. The overcoat had been saturated with gas, and had been spread out to air, but there was enough gas left in it to affect Roberts, and when he woke up next morning he took ill, and was taken to the Hospital at Boulogne. Informant was also gassed and saw Roberts again at the Hospital just mentioned. They spoke to each other and Roberts got up next day apparently alright. He took bad again, however, that night and died before morning. He and Informant were in the same Ward and Informant saw him after he had died. Informant left for England next day so could not say where Roberts was buried, although there is no doubt whatever that he was buried somewhere in Boulogne.

According to Informant Roberts was well liked by his mates.

Informant:- Private T.W.Howard, NoL 6721,
8th Field Ambulance.

Home Address:- Raglan Street,
Long Bay, Sydney.

W.E.G.
No.4, Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK.
15.11.18.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

8th Fld. Amb.

ROBERTS, R.
Sgt. 6603.

D. of wounds 24/10/17.

"Casualty died from the effects of gas received about the 20th October during the Passchendaele Ridge stunts. He died in England."

Informant:- Pte. L. W. Colley-Priest,
8th Fld. Amb.

Private address:-
"Braemar"
Sutherland Street,
Neutral Bay, Sydney, N.S.W.

17/9/19.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

Register Jan 11th

Theo-c.

53rd Gen: Hpl.

B. R.T.

6603 R. Roberts gnr Fld Amb.

A Ame

died of illness. 24.10.1

No. 53 General Hospital.
A.P.O. S.38.

14th January 1918.

Dear Madam :-

No.6603 Pte. R. Roberts, A.I.F., AMC 8th Fd.Amb.

Reference your letter dated 11.1.18.:-

Pte.Roberts was admitted to this Hospital on 17.10.17 suffering from the effects of Mustard Gas Poisoning.

On admission he was suffering from severe Bronchitis, with a quick and feeble pulse. There were severe burns on the arms, legs, back, hips and groins, and to a less extent on the face and chest. His eyes were also very markedly affected. A note sent with him showed that at the C.C.S. vomiting had been severe.

For the first five days the condition of the patient gave rise to no undue anxiety, but on the sixth day his respirations became more hurried, and his pulse irregular and feebler. There were no fresh signs of chest trouble. In spite of stimulation the pulse became worse and he died on the 24th October 1917, of Cardiac Failure, the primary cause being Septic Absorption from the large surfaces affected by burns.

He was buried in Wimereux Cemetery which is about a mile from this Hospital. The number of his grave is 2252, and the name of the officiating clergyman is the Rev. R.W.T.Traill, C.F.

Yours faithfully,

A. Elliot

Major RAMC TF, Registrar
for Officer Commanding No.53 General Hos.

