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

13066 Lance Corporal S Ratcliffe

5th Loyal North Lances



2240708N

5 Loyal Nprth Lancs. Nov. 30, 1917.

Our reports show that the 5 L.N. Lancs. were engaged in action on Nov. 30, 1917. They suffered most heavily in a German counter-attack which took place early in the morning to the right of Cambrai, close to Villers-Guislain. Previous to the attack the enemy put up a tremendous barrage for about ¾ hour. During the actual fighting, in addition to shelling, machine gun fire, and sniping, our men were subjected to fire from overhead, from German aeroplanes. The casualties in killed and wounded were very heavy, and the number of prisoners taken very large. Official lists of these prisoners have since been received. Statements made by eye-witnesses of the fighting on that day, are as follows:

"It was about 4.30 a.m. at Cambrai during the German counter-offensive, the Germans got in on both flanks and only about 33 of the whole Battalion got away."

"In the enemy counter-attack on Nov. 30, my company, D./ were outflanked, consequent on the Company to our right, B. having exhausted their ammunition and been forced to withdraw. The enemy then attacked my Company about 10 a.m. We decided by a Council of War to fight to a finish."

"We were on Stowe Road, Villers-Guislain, near Cambrai, during the bombardment early in the battle about 7 a.m. Later about 9 a.m. everypne in the Battalion Aid Post was taken prisoner, including doctors and stretcher bearers, also the Chaplain."

"It was in the early morning. Two Companies were in the Front Line Trench and two in support. A shell came and burst near the gun of a Machine Gun Team. There were many casualties. We lost most of our Battalion on that date."

M 1

TO - BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY

[illegible], S. Ratcliffe, 15th Battalion, Royal North Lancs., "Officially Missing 30/11/17" - "My tel: 8/4/18 Missing 30/11/17 - No reports received".

From:- A.R.C.S.,
36, Grosvenor Place,
S.W.1

Enquirer:-
A.R.C.S.,
Colonial Mutual Chambers
60 Market Street,
Melbourne,
Victoria.
by cable dated 8/4/18.

NOTE TO MELBOURNE.

15th Battn.
Royal North Lancs.

RATCLIFFE.
S. 13066.

"Missing"

Your cable 18-2-19. B.R.C.S. advise that they have no information. We have passed on your further enquiry to them.

London.
4-3-19.

M.

5th R.N.Lancs.

RATCLIFFE.
L/Cpl. S. 13066.

"In continuation of our letter of 6.3.19 we beg to state we much regret to say that notwithstanding constant and careful enquiries, we have not succeeded in hearing anything of L/C.S.Ratcliffe,13066.5th L.N.Lcs. His name was on our lists for months, and we asked all the men of his Unit whom we were able to see, both in English Hospitals and at the bases abroad, but none of them threw any light on his casualty. We have also questioned released prisoners but have learnt nothing. We can therefore only send you a General account of the action in which he was last seen, with sincere regret at our inability to help you any further.

We wish at the same time to offer our sympathy to the family and friends."

Letter from:- G.C.B for the Earl of Lucan.
B.R.C.S., Enquiry Dept.
for Wded & Missing.
17 Cornwall Gardens.
London. S.W.7.25.4.19.

London.
4.6.19.

M.

5th L.N.Lancs. RATCLIFFE.
L/Cpl. S. 13066.

"Missing 30-11-17"

We much regret that notwithstanding constant and careful enquiries, we have not succeeded in hearing anything of L/Cpl Ratcliffe. S. 13066. 5th L.N.Lancs.
His name was on our lists for months, and we have asked all the men of his Unit whom we have been able to see, both in English Hospitals and at the bases abroad, but none of them have thrown any light on his casualty. If any information should be got by our questioning of released Prisoners it will be sent on to you immediately. In the meantime we can only send you a General Account of the action in which he was last seen if ever we succeed in getting one.

We wish to offer our sincere sympathy to the family and friends.

Letter from:- B.R.C.S.
18, Carlton House Terrace.
London.S.W.1.

London.
13-3-19. M.

Telephone No.: REGENT 4640.
Telegrams: "NATIONALLY, CHARLES."

BRITISH RED CROSS
—AND—
ORDER OF ST. JOHN.

6.3.19.

ENQUIRY DEPARTMENT
FOR
WOUNDED AND MISSING,
18 Carlton House Terrace, S.W.1

M 20 11.17

Dear Sir

We much regret to say that notwithstanding constant and careful enquiries, we have not succeeded in hearing anything of L/C. S. Ratcliffe. 13066. 5 L N Lancs
His name was on our lists for months, and we have asked all the men of his unit whom we have been able to see, both in English Hospitals and at the bases abroad, but none of them have thrown any light on his casualty. If any information should be got by our questioning of released Prisoners it will be sent on to you immediately. In the meantime we can only send you a General Account of the action in which he was last seen, if we ever succeed in getting one.

We wish to offer our sincere sympathy to the family and friends.

Yours faithfully,

EOB

For THE EARL OF LUCAN.

Lee. Austr. Red X

M

BRITISH RED CROSS
AND
ORDER OF ST. JOHN.

ENQUIRY DEPARTMENT
FOR
WOUNDED AND MISSING.
17, Cornwall Gardens, S.W.7

25.4.19.

Dear Sir — In continuation of our letter of 6.3.19. we beg to state: We much regret to say that notwithstanding constant and careful enquiries, we have not succeeded in hearing anything of

2/C S. Ratcliffe. 13066. 5 L N Lcs.

His name was on our lists for months, and we asked all the men of his unit whom we were able to see, both in English Hospitals and at the bases abroad, but none of them threw any light on his casualty. We have also questioned released prisoners but have learnt nothing. We can therefore only send you a General Account of the action in which he was last seen, with sincere regret at our inability to help you any further.

We wish at the same time to offer our sympathy to the family and friends.

Yours faithfully,

GCB

for THE EARL OF LUCAN.

Sec. Aust.ⁿ R.X.