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

544 Private
John Joseph Roberts

9th Light Trench Mortar Battery



2320109H

A.I.F. 3rd Div: L.T.M.Bty

ROBERTS
J.J. 544

"WOUNDED"

Killed in action 16-7-17
Cert. by A.I.F.Hqrs 22-8-17.

London
23-8-17

3rd Divisional Light
Trench Mortar Battery A.I.F.

late 36 Bty

ROBERTS
Gnr. J.J. 544.

Killed 16/7/17.

Informant described Roberts as about 5 ft. 10 inches high, of medium build, with grey hair, aged about 38 years. He came from Blayney, where he drove a cab.

Informant states that on or about 16/7/17, the Battalion was in action over Messines Ridge, after it had been captured. Roberts' gun team was in a dugout, resting, when a shell lobbed through the dugout. Two of its occupants were killed outright, and Roberts and five others were wounded. This occurred about 11 a.m. and Roberts died the same night. Informant helped to bury Roberts in a cemetery along the Neuve Eglise Road. He was sure that a cross would be placed on the grave.

Roberts was described as very popular and "One of the best."

Informant:-- Gunner A.C.Buxton, 1621,
9th Trench Mortar Battery, A.I.F.
No. 4 Australian General Hospital, RANDWICK.

Private address:-- Lawrence St., Belgravia, Inverell.

W.E.C.
29/1/18.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

TRENCH MORTAR BATTERY
3rd Divisional Light Trench Mortar Battery.

ROBERTS.
Gunner J.J. 544.

KILLED. 16.7.17.

Informant states that Roberts was in the 9th Light Trench Mortar Battery which formed part of the 3rd Divisional Light Trench Mortars. He was about 5ft 8 inches high, stout, grey hair, aged about 35/40. He came from Blayney and fought in South Africa.

Informant states that on 16.7.17 the 9th Light Trench Mortar Battery were at Messines holding the line. Roberts and four others were in a concrete dugout and Informant was near by. The Germans put a naval shell right through the dugout. Two of the men were killed outright and the other two wounded. Informant saw the four men being carried out, Roberts being on a stretcher and dying, though conscious. He said to one of his mates "Tell my wife I died game" and died before reaching the Dressing Station. He was buried at Wolvringham, behind Messines.

Informant states also that he wrote the above particulars to Roberts' wife at Blayney. He added that Roberts was the best liked chap in the Battery. Every one, from the highest officers downwards was sorry to lose him.

INFORMANT:- Corporal E.A. Fraser, 1647,
9th Light Trench Mortar Battery,
No.4 Australian General Hospital, RANDWICK

W.E.C.

Home address:- 123 Station Street, Petersham.

A.I.F. 9.Light T.M. 3rd Div. ROBERTS J.J. 544.

K July 16/17.Det.D/B.

I dug his grave and helped to bury his body. We buried him on Kandahar Farm half way between Messines and Nieuve Eglise. He was killed early on the morning of the 16th July between 7.30 and 8.a.m. He was sleeping at the time in a captured German Pill Box through which the Germans put an armour piercing shell. Roberts and two other men were killed by it and 4 men wounded. Cpl. Hopwood of the 3rd Div. Light T.M. was in the Pill box at the time, but escaped injury. Roberts came from Blainey N.S.W.

Informnt. Pte G.Fisher. 922. 9 Light T.m.
2nd Army Rest Camp.
BOULOGNE. 26.9.17.

HMH.

Written Cpl. Hopwood. 16.10.17. S.

3rd L.T.M. Battery
A.I.F.

ROBERTS
J.J. 644

"Killed 16.7.17."

I saw him wounded by a shell at Messines. I was with him in a concrete dugout at time of casualty. He was conscious for a little while after he was hit, and told me to tell his wife that he died game. As I was wounded at the time I do not know particulars of death and burial, but refer to Cpl. Hopgood 9th L.T.M. B. who is in France and who burried him at Kandar Farm cemetery and can give particulars. I knew him well he belonged to the 9th L.T.M.B and not the 3rd as per inquiry list.

Witness:- Gnr. J. McLaren 511
9th L.T.M. Battery,
3rd A.A. Hospital,
Dartford.

W Oman
London.
16.10.18. Note written Cpl. Hopgood. 16.10.17. S

9th L. T. M. Bty
A. I. F.

Roberts,
J. J. 544

"Killed July 16/17"

I saw him after they got him out of the German dugout where the Germans put a naval shell, 7 men were killed with him, He died on the way to the Dressing Station, about 2 hrs after - He was buried somewhere near Wölkeringhâma? behind Messines in a Cemetery Prayers sure to have been said. His last words were" Tell my wife I died game" He was one of the most amusing men I ever met and one of the best. Poor old Joe! Officers and men alike were sorry. He was a man of many humerous inventions. All they got out of his pockets wase a broken Bible. He came from Blazney N. S. W. and was a S. African man.

Witness:- Corp. E. A. Fraser, 1647
9th L. T. M. Bty,
Harefield, M 26

W. Allison 22.11.17

London 3.12.17

S.

16. 11. 17

GC

Cpl. Hopwood
3rd Div. Light T.M.
C. I. F.
B. S. F.

IJ

abt.
544 J. J. Roberts
3rd Div. Light T.M.
C. I. F.
B. S. F.

K. 16. 7 - 17.

16.10.17.
A.I.B.