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

Lieutenant
John Simson

2nd Field Artillery Brigade



2510201B

1st. Div. Artillery. A.I.F. Simson. 2nd Lieut.

Killed July 31st 1917. Det. D.B.

I saw his grave in a military cemetry at Renninghelst. There was a temporary cross erectedat the time, it is quite likely that there would be a proper cross erected later on,as it was the day after he was buried that I saw his grave. I knew him well,he was a friend of mine. He came over on the transport Pera,leaving Australia,Oct 17th 1914.

Description. Age. Height. 5-10. Complexion. Dark. Well Built.

Witness. Bmbd. Dickson. NO.526. 2nd Batty. 1st Bgde.

S.Whitmee.
NO.4.Command Depot.
Codford.

Taken at
NO.4.C.D.Codford.
5-10-17.
F.C.H.

A.I.F. AFA, 1 Div. SIMSON 2 Lt.J.

K. 31.7.17.

He was one of my chums and had been right through the Peninsula with me. He and I were together in the 5/2.Bde. at the time of his death. He was hit by a piece of H.E. shell in the chest, at Zouave Wood, on 31st July and died in about 2 minutes. I saw him killed and saw his dead body. The body was buried in the Reninghelst Cemetery, not far from Poperinghe. I was present at the funeral. A cross was put on his grave with his name on it. I have already supplied this information to his people.

SA.

Reference: Lt.J.E. Staley. 5/2. Bde.
Hotel des Anglais,
Etaples.
10.10.17.

1st Aust. Div. Arty. 2nd Lt. J. SIMSON.

K. 31.7.17. Det. D & B.

Informant said he used to be groom to Lt.Simson who was in 5 Bty. He was hit by a shell while on the gun and killed outright, and Informant was a few yards away at the time. He was buried on August 3rd at Renninghelst Cemetery together with Gnr. Lampit and another gnr. of the 5th Bty. The Chaplin on the 2nd Bde. buried him and the officers and men of the Bde. were present. His grave is next to that of Brig.Gen.Gordon.

Reference: Gnr. G. W. Payne, 3212.

No.6 General, Rouen. 16.10.17.

DLF.

Written to the Chaplain 25. 10. 17.

1st.D.A. Artillery.
A.I.F.

SIMSON.
J. 2nd Lieut.,

"KILLED IN ACTION" 31.7.17".

A letter from you addressed to the Chaplain of the 2nd Brigade and dated 25.10.17" has come into my hands. It is in reference to the death of 2/nd Lieut J. Simson of the 2nd brigade who was killed in action on the 31st July. He was buried in Renninghelst cemetery, Belgium. the Military cemetery. The grave is in good order rails round it, and a cross above it. It is registered. Colonel Riggall of the 1st.D.A.C. has given full particulars to his relatives by letter and has also personally seen them in England since Mr Simsons death. He was a 1st. Lieut. at the time he was killed. (P.S) Colonel Riggall told me that -Mrs Reynolds Binclesve House. Weymouth could give you any information you wish for.,

Letter from;- H.Dymond Piel.
No.1. Group.
France.
25.11.17

Note;- We regret the delay in typing the above report, but we have been obliged to holdit up on account of pressure of work and shortage of machines.,
London. 9.3.18.

P.I.

Havre

10th Sept.1917.

AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY
1st Div.

SIMSON. 2nd Lt. J.

X. July 31st.1917. Det. D/B.

He was in the 6th Batty. He came from N.S.W. He was a Sergt. in the 22nd Batty. with me, and I know him quite well. I did not know of any other Officer of this name in the Division. I saw his grave in Poperinghe Military Cemetery. There is a cross on his grave with his name, ~~Regiment~~ Rank, and Batty. on it.

Informant: Gunner J. Mc.Donald.66
2nd Batty., 1st Brigade,
Australian Field Artillery.
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

D. of P.I.

CMR.

Havre

26th Sept. 1917.

FIELD ARTILLERY, A.I.F.

SIMSON, 2nd Lt. J.
1st Division.

K. 31.7.17. Det. D/B.

I knew 2nd Lt. Simson of the 2nd Bde, 5th Battery. He was killed at Zillebeke on the 31st July, 1917 at the gun pits. I was close to him. He was my Section Commander. He is buried in the Military Cemetery at Dickebusch.

Informant; Gunner O. Thomas, 1519
2nd Brig., 5th Bty., A.F.A.,
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

RDM

1st Div. Artillery Killed 31.7.17. Simson 2/Lieut John (late Sergt 522)

I am now mainly prompted to write to you, however, in consequence of having to-day met Lieut. Staley who by chance I find was in the same battery and apparently very intimate with Jack. I understand that Staley knew him in his school days, and they were together in the same Battery for twelve months. I understand Major Riggall has already written to you on the subject, but in case I have got any details that he has omitted I am sending them on. Staley tells me that Jack was hit about 8.a.m. on the 31st July during an advance in the Ypres Salient. Major Riggall called out to him "Hullo, Jack, they have hit you". The only words he said in reply were "You bet they have" and two minutes later he passed away with a smile on his face. They were able to take his body to Reminghelst Cemetery, some nine or ten miles behind the lines, and he was buried there when their Padre, the Revd. Oakley officiated. Staley was present at the ceremony, others who were killed at the same time being also buried. I gather that a small piece of shell hit Jack in the chest which caused internal bleeding. Staley went on to say that had Jack lived Major Riggall was going to recommend him for a decoration. He had done excellent work all along and specially on the fatal morning.

Copy of letter from Major Lamb ~~received - forwarded by~~ to Mrs Simson (Mother) ~~Sydney and~~ not sent on.

3.10.17.

London.
4.10.17.

S
P.1.

Havre 17th Oct. 1917.

FIELD ARTILLERY, A.I.F. SIMSON, 2nd Lt. J. 1st Bty.
Affleck, Cpl. H. 1st Bge., 3 Bty.

K. 31.7.17. Det. D/B.

They were both in the 1st Brig., No. 3 Battery and were buried in the Military Cemetery at Cuderdoni. I did not see the graves but I heard this. Lieut. Simson was transferred from the D.A.C. (after he got his commission) to the 3rd Battery and was killed at Villeboke.

Informant: Dvr. H.J. Broadhurst, 252
1st Brig., 101 Howitzers, A.F.A.,
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

S

KDH

A. F. A.

Simson, 2/Lt J.,
1st Div.

(K. 31.7.17. Det: D & B)

"Simson was killed by a shell at Lillebeck and his body was taken down and buried on August 2nd at Reinghelst Cemetery. Capt. Seare of 5 Battery was at the burial and the service was read by the Chaplain of the 2nd Brigade. Gunner Proctor and Aitken were in the burial party. His grave is next to Gunner Lampet who was buried on the same day. Lt. Simson was in charge of the sub-section to which I belonged."

Eye-witness: No, but I saw his grave

Description:

Informant: Gunner G.E. Payne, 3212, A.F.A. 5 Battery.
Home address: Beaufort War Hospital, Ward 2, Bristol.
c/o C.R. Hall & Son,
Scoot St,
Newcastle, N.S.W.

24th Oct. 1917.
F. Gardiner.

S

Havre 10th November.1917.

AUSTRALIAN FIELD ARTILLERY SIMSON, 2nd Lt. J.
1st Div.

K. July 31st.1917. Det. D/B.

He was a full Lieut. in the 5th Batty. He was killed by a shell out in the open, in the afternoon, whilst laying out [illegible] of fire at Zillebeke, in front of Sanctuary Wood. His remains were taken to Reninghelst Cemetery. When I left they were making a railing to put round the grave.

Informant: T.O'Dwyer, 5578
Australian Field Artillery,
2nd Bgde., 5th Batty.
Ambulance Train 24, Havre.

P1 Sd
Cd
Suff

RDS.

1st Div.
A. Fld.Art.

Simson.
2/Lieut.J.

"Killed 31.7.17"

We were in action and at about 7.30.a.m.Lieut.Simson was killed by shell fire at Ypres. He was buried at Reniechielst. He was killed outright. He came over from Australia the same time as myself.

Remmichelst?

Witness:-
Pte.H.Ryan 598
6th Bty.Fld.Art.
France.

F.Mackay.

London.
15.11.17.

S.
P.I.

5th A.F.A.

Simson. Lt: J.

(K. July 31/17)

"Lt: Simson was killed in an attack at Ypres on July 31. The battery advanced to Sanctuary Wood under very heavy machine gun and shell fire. Lt: Simson was very cool and urged the men on and did everything he could to help, the firing was terrible and the division suffered badly. After the attack had settled down they were sitting in a shell hole and he got hit. He was buried at Rellinghurst by a padre, Mr Oakley, and just before I came over I saw they had made a splendid grave."

Eye-witness: No. Told by O.C. Major Riggall who was sitting in the shell-hole with him.

Description: Heavily built, athletic, very popular, slightly deaf, great boxer.

Informant: Lt: H.E. Roach.
6th A.F.A.
No. 3 London Gen: Hos: Wandsworth.

15.11.17. Home address: c/o Miss Hunter,
W. Arnoll Davis. Glebe Mount. 211 Camberwell Grove.
S.E. 5.

1st Div. Aust. Field Art.

Simson, 2/Lt J.,
5th Battery

(K. 31st July 1917)

"Lt Simson's Major (Major Riggall) told me that Simson was killed instantaneously by a piece of shell which pierced his jugular vein. He said "Well, they've got me, but I'll go out game" as he dropped. It was about 300 yards in front of Zillebeke and the time would be about mid-day. He was buried in the cemetery at Reninghelst."

Eye-witness: Told by Major Riggall, 5th Battery, A.F.A.

Description:

Informant: Capt. W.H.G. Segrave,
2nd Battery, A.F.A.,
3rd London General Hospital,
Wandsworth, S.W.

Home address:
Hqrs, A.I.F.,
Horseferry Rd, S.W. 1.

16th Nov. 1917.
John R. Clark Hall.

6d S
Suff P.1

25.10.17

The Chaplain
2nd A. Brigade A.I.F.
B.E.F.

Abt.
2/Lt. J. Simson
1st Austr. Div. Arty.
A.I.F.

K. 31-7-17

25.10.17
A.I.B.

FM 30.11.17

1st Australian Field Artillery Brigade
B. E. F.
23rd Nov/17

2/Lt
J. SIMSON
1 Div. Artillery
R.A. 31-7-17

Dear Madame,

A letter from you P.1 (a) addressed to the Chaplain of the 2nd Brigade, & dated 25.10.17 has come into my hands. It is in reference to the death of 2nd Lieut. J. Simson of the 2nd Brigade, who was killed in action on the 31st July.

He was buried in Reninghelst Cemetery, Belgium, & the Military Cemetery. The grave is in good order, rails round it & a cross above it & it is registered. Colonel Riggall of the 1st D.A.C. has given full

particulars to his relatives by letter & has also personally seen them in England since Mr. Simson's death. He was a 1st Lieutenant at the time he was killed.

Yours truly,
H. Dymond Peel,
C.F

Miss Vera Deakin. No 1 group.

P.S.
Colonel Riggall told me that
Mrs. Reynolds,
Bincleaves House,
Weymouth,
could give you any information you wish for.

P.1.

G-C

36, Grosvenor Place.

December 2nd, 1917.

Capt.H.D.Peel,
C.F., 1st F.A.B.,
A.I.F., B.E.F.,

Dear Sir,

We have to thank you very much for your letter in answer to our enquiry concerning

2/Lieut.J.SIMSON,
1st Div. Artillery,
A.I.F.

"Killed in Action 31.7.17"

The information you have sent will be of much assistance to us and of value to our enquirers.

Yours faithfully

V.D

SECRETARY.

F.L./A.L.B.

General Corps

Simson

2/Lieut J.

1 Div Art.

Miss Deakin

3rd October, 1917.

Mrs. R.J.C. Simson,
Moreduval
Quirindi
N.S.W.
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mrs. Simson,

It was with the greatest possible regret I heard yesterday that Jack has fallen, and I hope you will forgive me sending a few lines to offer you my sincerest sympathy. I know what your children are to you, and am sure that you must feel quite heartbroken. But I hope as time goes on you will be able to realise more the glory of his death and less of your own personal loss.

I am now mainly prompted to write to you, however, in consequence of having to-day met Lieut. Staley, who by chance I find was in the same battery and apparently very intimate with Jack. I understand that Staley knew him in his school days, and they were together inthe same Battery for twelve months.

I understand Major Riggall has already written to

to you on the subject, but in case I have got any details that he has omitted I am sending them on.

Staley tells me that Jack was hit about 8 a.m. on the 31st. July during our advance in the Ypres Salient. Major Riggall called out to him "Hallo, Jack, they have hit you" The only words he said in reply were "You bet they have" and two minutes later he had passed away with a smile on his face.

They were able to take his body to Reninghelst Cemetery, some nine or ten miles behind the lines, and he was buried there when their Padre, the Revd. Oakley officiated. Staley was present at the ceremony, others who were killed at the same time being also buried.

I gather that a small piece of shell hit Jack in the chest, which caused internal bleeding.

Staley went on to say that had Jack lived Major Riggall was going to recommend him for a decoration. He had done excellent work all along and specially on the fatal morning.

With kind regards, and much sympathy,

Yours sincerely,

Ralph Lewis.