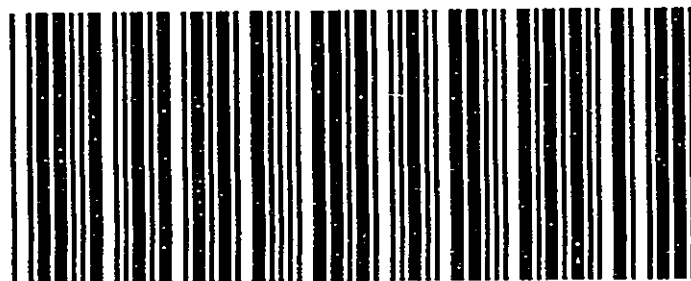


Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

**783 Corporal
Henry Townsend
Wilkins**

41st Battalion



2950104L

FRANCE

41st BATT. A.I.F. D.

WILKINS. Col H.T. 783.

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

He was in D. Coy. I did not know him particularly well. It was on the Tuesday opposite Warneton at the end of July when he got buried by a shell; he was two days away from me. Two other men, a friend of mine named Dickson and another man named Leawood, went to get him out. but another shell came and killed all three of them. They were laid in a dug-out but since it was found to be impossible to carry them back, they were buried on the Friday by the Padre, beside the trench. JMA

Ref --- Fte Renton. 2945. D. Coy
No 47 Gen. Hospital.

P.1

Le Treport. Oct 16th. 1917

Havre

11th October 1917

41st AUSTRALIANS

WILKINS, Col. H.T. 783

K. 31st July 1917 det. D/B

He was buried by a shell in the support line at Werneton about 10 a.m. Two men went to pull him out when another shell burst almost in the same spot and blew ~~him~~ to bits. His head was blown clean off and that was all that could be recognised of him. ~~There~~ Their remains were buried a few yards away.

Informant: J. F. Tunis 869

41st Australians D.Co.

No. 24 Train No. 2 Gen. Hospital Havre

RBS

P.1

41 A.I.F.

Wilkins. Cpl H.T. 783.

K. 31.7.17. Det D/B.

"Cpl. Wilkins was signaller of D.Coy. In support at the back of Warneton about 11 or 12 mid day at the end of July a shell fell close to us and killed Wilkins and two others, whose names I do not know, instantly. We were on the point of moving up. The remains were put into a blanket and I do not know what happened later. I was actually with Wilkins and escaped without a scratch."

Eye-witness:-- Yes.

Description:--

Informant:-- Cpl. Abs Robertson, 960.

41 A.I.F.

Southmead Hosp. 10 Ward,
Bristol.

Home address:-- Beatrice Street,
Stones Comer,
Queensland.

14.10.17.

H.W.Ward.

P.1

41st A.I.F.

Wilkins. Cpl. H.T. 783.
D Coy:

(K..July 31/17)
Det D/B.

"I saw his body; he was buried first with 1 shell and then blown up and the second shell killed him. He was buried by Capt: Mills. C.F. in front of Warneton. Warneton does not belong to us yet but it is close to our front line trench."

Eye-witness: No. but I saw his body.

Description: Rather tall - good looking; on the dark side.

Informant: Pte. Henry Renton. 2946.
41. A.I.F. D Co: 15 Pl:
Exeter War Hospital. No.III.

Home address: Galland St.
North Ipswich.
Queensland.

25.10.17.
A.E.Jervis-Smith.

P.1

A.I.F.

Wilkins Cpl. H.T. 783.
41 Battn: D Co:

(K July 31/17.)
Det D/B.

Informant states that on July 31/17, in the support line at rear this man was buried by a H.E. shell. Two men went to pull him out when another shell burst and killed Wilkins and the other two men. Wilkins was blown to pieces. He would be buried in a shell-hole near where he fell."

Eye-witness: Yes - of death.

Description: He was H.Q. (D Co:) Signaller.

Informant: Cpl. J.T. Innis. 899.
A.I.F. 41 D.
2nd Birmingham War Hospital.
Hollymoor.

Home address: Two Mile Gympie.
Queensland.

21/10/17.
H. Norman.

B. R. C. S. B. 10/1

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

This was east of Messines near Warneton. He was buried by explosion from shell first and two S/Bs tried to dig him out, but before they could do so another H.F. shell lobbed on top of him and killed them all. I saw this myself. He was Cpl. of my section. They were buried in the supports with six other signallers. We tried to put up a sort of cross made from duck boards, but the ground was ploughed up with shell fire soon after, and there would not be much trace left. Description: came from Brisbane, worked in the Post Office, 5ft 6, rather thick-set, 21 or 22, medium build, clean shaven, parents living, has a brother, I think in A.I.F. 49, who knows the particulars.

Inf: Sig.B.Egelstaff. 861.

No. 83 General

BOULOGNE. 26.10.17. WG

FRANCE

41st BATT. A.I.F. D.WILKINS. Cpl H.T. 783.

K. July 31st. 1917

He was signalling corporal of D.Coy. On July 31st we were opposite Warneton and were the pivot of the advance that day. We were in the support line. Cpl Wilkins was in the bay of the trench where I was; it was in the morning and he was fixing up a signal lamp. The Germans began to shell us very heavily and we scattered a little. A shell buried Cpl Wilkins in the trench, and two men who were nearest went to get him out, but another shell came and caught all three. I saw Cpl Wilking when we got him out; he had been killed instantly and was a good deal knocked about.

JMI

Ref ---L/Cpl R.L.Waddell. 1918. D.

No 15 Gen. Hospital.

Le Treport. Oct 26th. 1917

P.1

41 A.I.F.

Wilkins. Cpl: H.T. 783.

(X. July 31/17)

Det D/B.

"I was told Wilkins was wounded in the trenches at Warneton and two of his mates went to help him out and all three were blown to pieces. Capt: Mills the Chaplain could give information as to his burial."

Eye-witness:

Description:

Informant: Pte. W.J.T. Carter. 832.
41 A.I.F. D Coy: 13 Pl:
Queens Hospital. Birmingham.

Home address: c/o G.H. Kinelton (?)
Macclesfield.
Cheshire.

7.11.17.
F.Jervis.

ba

p.1.

41st Batn
A. I. F.

WILKINS
Cpl. H.T. 783

"Killed July 31st 1917"

Wilkins was a Corpl. Signaller D. Coy., Sig. and in charge. I was with Hdqtrs Sig. Coy., and was informed at Headquarters he was blown to pieces and I understand he was buried at least or Westham. The stunt he was killed in lasted about 18 days altogether.

Witness:-

Sapper A.H. Kerlin
3rd Sig. Coy.,
72 Hwt Westham

London.
9.11.17.

P.I.

The Secretary,
Enquiry Bureau,
39, Broad St, Bristol.

January 10th, 1916.

Dear Sir,

In answer to your enquiry for

783 Cpl. H.T.WILKINS, 41st Battalion, A.I.F.

We beg to further inform you that we have heard from

2946 Pte. R. Renton, 41st Battalion, who, in his own words

says "I saw his body, he was buried first with 1 shell
and a second killed him. He was buried by Capt. Mills,
C.F., in front of Warneton".

Another man 832 Pte. W.J.T. Garter, 41st Bttn, confirms

this report saying two of his mates went to help him out
and a second shell killed all three.

(We shall continue the enquiry and send you any information
as it comes along.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

L.B.

October 31st, 1917.

The Secretary
Enquiry Bureau,
39, Broad Street,
Bristol.

Dear Sir,

In answer to your inquiry for

No 783 Cpl. H. T. Wilkins,
41st Battalion,
A. I. F.

we regret to inform you of unofficial evidence given by men
of his unit and trust that it will be some consolation to know
that his death was instantaneous.

Informants all agree in stating that Cpl. Wilkins was buried
by shell explosion, and when two of his friends went to his rescue
all three were killed by the explosion of a third shell.

The casualty occurred in the trenches at Warneton on Thursday
July 31st, and their bodies were removed to a dugout but they were
afterwards buried by the Padre beside the trench.

We are continuing the inquiry and will let you know when
we receive further. Trusting that it will be some consolation to
his people to know that his death was instantaneous.

Yours faithfully V. D.

SECRETARY L.A.W.