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

370 Sergeant
William John Stead

36th Battalion



2610405I

36th A. I. F. W. J. STEAD, 370

Killed 7.6.17. Det.D/B.

I was told by a comrade whose name I forget, that during the advance at Messines, Stead was hit by a shell and his head blown off. My Informant said he saw this. Stead was a Sergt. Those are his initials and his No. would be about that. He came from a suburb of Sydney where his Father is an Estate Agent. He was working with his Father.

Reference: L/Cpl.Hickey, 470,

No.11 Con.Camp, Buchy nr. Rouen, 8.8.17.

FEP. S.

36th A. I. F. W. J. STEAD, 370.

Killed 7.6.17. Det.D/B.

I knew Stead and heard he was killed. He was a Sergt. The report given by J.C.Carey, 2541, is correct. He had worked a lot in offices in Sydney. He was expecting his Commission shortly. He was a very decent chap. I have been under him and he was very well liked by his men. He left Sydney last May 12 months.

Reference: R.Viant, 586,

No.11 Con.Camp, Buchy nr. Rouen, 8.8.17.

S. FEP.

36th A. I. F. W. J. STEAD, 370

Killed 7.6.17. Det.D/B.

He was killed in the St.Ives Avenue (Communication Trench) on the way up to the front line at Messines on the morning of June 7th before the great attack. I came round the corner of the bay a few minutes after and saw his body. His head was blown right off. He must have been killed instantly. One of the men told me that just before he was killed he was showing him a wound he had just got in the fingers. He was a Sergt. and was an original. He was very tall, medium build, florid complexion, aged about 25. He looked as if he might have been a clerk. He was well liked by his mates. Pte.Albert was alongside of him when he was killed. Albert is in Hospital somewhere.

Reference: J.C.Carey, 2541,

No.11 Con.Camp, Buchy nr. Rouen, 8.8.17.

Written Pte Albert 18.8.17. FEP. S.

-36 Batt. A I F.

Stead, Sgt. W J. No.370.
36 Batt.

Killed June.7/17.Det. D /B.

I saw Stead killed by a piece of shell, He had his head cut off, this happened near an Engeneers dump behind the trenches at Dead Horse corner,Plug Street Wood.Messines, He was buried on the spot. I could not say whether any cross was erected,Stead was my platoon Seargeant,Ido not know of any other Stead in the Batt,I know this man was an original Batt man. he came from Sydney and worked at a house and land agents at Fivedock.

Description. Height 5'IO, Complection, Fair bright hair, well built.

Witness Pte Ready. J.D. 36Batt. B Coy

I4th August,I9I7
S.W.

NO 3,Command Depot
Hurdcott

36th Battn.
B. Coy.
A. I. F.

Stead.
Sgt. W, J. 370

"Killed 7.6.17"

I saw him killed by a shell at Ploegsteert Wood, which hit him on the head, death being instantaneous. He was killed behind our lines and although I did not see his grave I think he would be buried at place of casualty. I knew him well, there being no other of the same name in the Coy.

Witness:-
Pte. H. J. Sergeant 2397
36th Battn. B.Coy.8th Pl.
3rd Aust.Aux.Hospital.
Dartford.

W.Oman.

London.
15.8.17.

S.

36th Battn.
B. Coy.
A. I. F.

Stead.
Sgt. W.J.R. 370

"Killed 7.6.17"

I saw him killed by a shell at Dead Horse Corner Ploegsteert Wood, I was ~~was~~ only 4 yards away when it happened. His head was cut clean off. I saw him buried at Ploegsteert Cemetery and his grave was marked by a cross, bearing his No. name and unit. I knew him well, we were always great friends.

Witness:-
L/Cpl. F. M. Williams 595
36th Battn. B. Coy. 8th Pl.
3rd Aust. Aux. Hospital
Dartford.

W. Oman.

London.
15.9.17.

S.

36th Bttn,A.I.F.
B.Coy,

STEAD.
Sgt.W.J. 370.

"Killed 7.6.17".

I saw him killed by a shell at Messines, death was instantaneous. I do not know place of burial and cannot refer to anyone. I knew him well, there being no other of the same name in company.

Witness:-
Pte.C.W.Gray, 2573,
36th Battn, B.Coy, 6th Pltn,
3rd Aust,Aux.Hosp,
Dartford.

W.Oman,
London.
16.8.17.

S.

36th Australian Imperial Force

Stead, W.J. 370

(K. June 7, 1917 Dets D & B).

" I saw Stead killed on the morning of June 7th. He was buried in Ploeg Street Wood. "

Eye Witness - Yes.

Description - Very tall, thin man, fair hair, estate agent in Sydney before joining the war.

Informant .- Sgt. L.F. Dalziel, 417, B Coy. 6th Pltn. 36 Aus. Imp Force 1st London General Hospital, Camberwell, S.E.

Home address :- Canley Vale, Sydney, New South Wales.

20. 8. 17.
A. Baldwin.

S.

56th Battn
A.I.F.

Stead
W.J. 570

"Killed in Action 7.6.17."

Regarding the late W.J. Stead B. Coy., I must first inform you that the man you are enquring about was a Sergeant. I was not far from him on the morning of the seventh when he was killed, and I am almost certain that he was buried in a soldiers' cemetery at a place called "Dead Horse Corner" in Ploegstreet Wood. Sergeant Stead who was killed on the morning of the 7.6.17. is of the same number and initials as the man you are enquiring for as a Private. He was about 6'lor"2 in height, fair and thin features.

Letter from:----
Pte. F.J. Albert.
56th Battn A.I.F.
France. 26.6.17.

London.
19.9.17.

S

36th Battn.
A.I.F.

STEAD
370, Sgt. W.J.

K/A 7/6/17.

At Messines the 33rd & 35th were the "hop over" Battalions, the 34th was in reserve, and the 36th was the Brigade reserve. Early in the morning of the 7th June, the 9th Brigade attacked at Messines; about 8 or 9 of the 36th Battalion men had to go forward, to ~~xxx~~ reinforce the 34th, who had reached the German 2nd line, on the downward slope, over the Messines Ridge. Stead was Sergeant of the 7th Platoon, which was next to the 8th Platoon, on the left of our line. As we were advancing, and were between the German 1st & 2nd lines, informant saw Stead fall, and of course had to go on with the rest of the Platoon, but heard that night that Stead was killed.

Stead was well liked by the men of his Platoon, and by his Officers; he was a fair haired man, tall and thin.

Informant - WALLACE,J., 2404 (now Sgt., then a private)
7th Platoon, "B" Co.,
36th Battalion.
Red Cross Information Bureau,
115 Pitt Street, Sydney.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

H.M.S.

36th Battalion.

STEAD, W.J.
370 Sgt

Killed in Action 7/6/17.

Sgt.Stead and I were in B.Co. We were in the trenches at Messines. On 7th June about 10 a.m. a shell burst and killed Sgt. Stead outright. He was close to me at the time.

Informant: Quirk, R.A. 33 447
36th Battn.
No.4 Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK.

B.M.
30/11/17.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

S. Ca Smith

36th Battn.

STEAD, W.J.
370 Sgt

Killed in Action 7/6/17.

Stead was in charge of a Munition dump at Messines. A High Explosive shell killed him at once. I carried him out of the trench but do not know where he is buried.

Informant: Ball, W. 1799
36th Battn.
No.4 Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK.

J.V.M.
3/12/17.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

S. Ca Smith

36th Battn.

STEAD, W.J.
370 Sgt.

Killed in Action 7/6/17.

Stead was killed on the first day of the advance at Messines. We were advancing over the open when he was hit directly by a shell and killed at once. I do not know what happened to him as I went on. He was a fine young chap and very well liked by all.

Informant: Guthrie, R.W. Cpl. 36
36th Battalion.
No.4 Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

J.V.M.
10/12/17.

S. Cd Syd

36th Battn.
B.Co.

STEAD, W.J.
370 Sgt

Killed in Action 7/6/17.

I knew Stead byt not very well. He came from Leichhardt. I knbw his people. He was killed at Messines at a place called Dead Horse Corner. It was just after the hop over. He died instantly. I was beside him and was knocked over by the same shell.

Informant: Jones, Pte 5078
No.4 Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

H.S.N.
12/12/17.

S. Cd Dny

17. 8. 17.

Pte ALBERT,
36. Battn A. I. F.
B. E. F.

For
370
Pte W. J. STEAD,
36. Battn

N. Y. 6. 17.

21. 8. 17
K. H. M.

Ack.
Lyp.
F.M. 10.7.17

26/8/17

France.

370 W. J. STEAD
KA. 7.6.17

36 Batt AIF

S 3 =

To the Secretary,

Dear Miss,

Your note to hand enquiring for information regarding the late W. J. Stead (No 370) B.Co. I must first inform you that the man you are enquiring about, was a sergeant, I was not for sure due on the morning of the second when he was killed, and I am almost certain that he was buried in a soldiers cemetry, at a place called Bois Grenier in Plowstreet Wood, but if you care to make absolute certain on the matter, you could write to the following address regarding his burial and registration:

Officer in Charge.
2nd Army Burial Registration
Bailleul. France.

Sergeant Stead was killed on the morning of the 5/7/17 as of the same number and ~~rank~~ enlisted as the man you are enquiring for as a private. He was about 6 ft 1 or 2 in height, fair and dark features. I would rather not tell you his condition after he was hit. Hoping this little information may be of some use to you.

I remain yours Sincerely
Pte. [illegible]
36 Batt. A.I.F. Wounded