

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

**694 Air Mechanic  
Class II  
William Douglas  
Sloane**

**Australian Flying Corps**



2520803K

re Cable

DOUGLAS. is

• 694 A.M. W. Douglas Sloane

B Flight

69<sup>th</sup> Australian Squadron

Home / ~~London~~ ~~Certain~~.

No 2 A.G.H.

France K. 21.8.17

26/8/17. Beggar Hill Westham.

Father James Sloane -

Andover.

K. S. W.

Ans.

From Captain Hume Robertson

NO. 2 AUSTRALIAN  
GENERAL HOSPITAL  
BOULOGNE.

To the Secretary

For Misses Bessie Ann Red &  
Victoria W. Bonden -

No. 563

Date 26/2/17

Dear Madam

The G.C. of Biggin Hill sent me a wire to  
attend funeral of Lieut Chapin - I see by World's news  
a Lieut "Lapere" & 2<sup>nd</sup> air mechanic "Stoane" have been  
killed near Kent coast. 694 Av. Mechanic W.D.  
Stoane is my nephew. The G.C. Biggin Hill I suspect put  
in wrong name. The funny thing an air man might do -  
anyway he sent it to my London address a cheerfully  
wrong about way to find me when a military wire from  
Horseferry Road would have been in time to allow me to  
get across. - However, this is all by the way. I want  
you, if my nephew is killed. If you can easily find  
out for it was last week this Stoane was killed, to  
send the enclosed cable to Horseferry Road for me after  
filling in the date of his death. Of course if you are  
cabling my sister you could put it in one of yours - but  
I think it better she should have one from me - Amy is  
Mrs James Stoane - the mother of Douglas. He was a  
fine boy - She thought him safe in England. I put in  
"instantaneously" for I am led to believe by the account  
it was. I am sorry to trouble you -

Yours sincerely

Hume Robertson

Hume Robertson

NO 2 AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL

AUSTRALIAN



RED CROSS.

27  
8  
17

From Captain Home Robertson.

To Sec: Inquiry Bureau  
Care Red Cross

Would it be asking too much of you  
to advise 6421 Driver Alex Sloane  
10th Battery  
A.F.A.

of the death of his brother  
694 Art Mechanic  
H. D. Sloane  
69th Aust. Squadron

If it is true that he has been killed  
I have written Driver Sloane to tell him  
that I fear it is true.

Home / Robertson  
Chester A.I.F.

A.I.F. 69th Squad A.F.C.

SLOANE  
A.M.W. 694

"Bel: Killed"

Killed in Flying 21-8-17 - at Biggin Hill Westerham  
Cert. by A.I.F. Hqrs 30-8-17.

London  
31-8-17

.M

September 19th, 1917.

The O.C.,  
Wireless Testing Park,  
Royal Flying Corps,  
Biggin Hill, Kent.

Dear Sir,

We are deeply grateful to you for the letter from one of your officers about the death of <sup>W.P.</sup> Lt. Shapira and 2/Air Mechanic Gloane, R.F.C., which occurred on August 21st, 1917. We are sure that it will be the greatest consolation and comfort to their relatives to know that they met with an instantaneous death and will you convey to Lt. ~~Shapira~~ <sup>Shapira</sup> whose name we cannot decipher our sincere thanks for his courteous and detailed reply.

Yours faithfully,

V.D.  
SECRETARY.

LAW.

October 3rd, 1917.

No 6421 Driver A.J. Sloane,  
10th Battery, Australian Field Art,  
S. E. F.

Dear Sir,

We are requested by your uncle, The Rev. Hume Robertson, to send you an account of the death of your brother No 694 Air/  
Mechanic W.D. Sloane, 62th Squad, R.F.C., which occurred under such tragic circumstances on 21.8.17 and we regret to inform you of the following report given by Lt. Wilkinson, R.F.C., Biggin Hill, Kent, who witnessed the accident.

He writes - "The O.C. had handed your letter over to me to answer. He considers it a matter requiring more personal details than he could supply, and I was the last to speak to them and one of the first on the scene of the accident. Their machine landed on the Aerodrome about 12.10 p.m. on August 21st, last. Lieut Shapira was the pilot and 2/AH. Sloane, the gunner observer. They were on their way from South Carlton, Lincs. to France via Lympe. They were a little off their course and having had some slight engine trouble came down on sighting our Aerodrome to have this remedied and to find their actual position. Their engine was put right and petrol tanks refilled by our mechanics. Meanwhile Lieut. Shapira came to lunch with us and Sloane went to the men's dining hut for his. Shortly after lunch, having got full details of their course, they climbed aboard and their engine was "run up" for them. They expressed themselves entirely satisfied and it was indeed running perfectly. Just before they left a message came through from the Air Board to the effect that if Lieut. Shapira thought the weather conditions were not good enough, he was not to start. This message I delivered to him while he was in his machine with the engine running. The weather was perfectly fit for flying and he just smiled and said "that's alright cheer on" and proceeded to get away.

"He got off the ground perfectly and flew straight into the wind to get his proper height, having reached a height of some 600 feet, he turned to get on his course. Almost immediately ~~the~~ his machine started to spin slowly in flat circles, then ~~the~~ nose dropped and she went down in a spinning nose dive to earth. We heard the crash and saw a cloud of smoke descend from behind a clump of trees, and heard the popping of cartridges. Immediately an ambulance and a light tender proceeded to the spot, and, believe me, we lost no time in getting there, but we were unable to do anything for them. The machine was blazing from end to end, and it was impossible to approach her. A man who was working in the field in which she fell had tried, he told us, to drag them out with a long handled hay rake, but it was so obvious that they were dead that he gave up the attempt. The Doctor who reached the spot shortly after we did gave it as his opinion that their death was instantaneous. We got the fire out and took the bodies along to our Aerodrome where they were placed in a hut and a Guard mounted. An inquest was held, the verdict being accidental death when flying no one knows of course, what caused the machine to spin but it seems to be the general opinion here that it was due to an error of judgement as to the right amount of bank required. We sent wires to all the British addresses amongst their personal effects advising them of the accident and the place and date of funeral. These were all contained in a note book belonging to Lt. Shapin, which together with all the personal belongings of them both handed over to the Australian Administrative Hqtrs. The latter also undertook all arrangements for the funeral and would be able to give all details as to place etc. May I offer on behalf of all the officers here our sympathy with the relatives in their loss."

Trusting that it will be some slight comfort to know that his death must have been instantaneous and assuring you of our very sincere sympathy in your great loss.

Yours faithfully,

F. D.  
SECRETARY.  
Law