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

28017 Gunner
Reginald Hubert
Burnell

12th Field Artillery Brigade
14th December, 1917.

Mrs. Harvey Holt,
o/c Lady Longennes,
The Cottage, Berks.
Bisham Marlow, Berks.

[Signature]

Dear Madam,

We very much regret to confirm that we have heard officially the report of the death in action on 2nd October, 1917, of 28017 Pte. R. H. Burnell, 12 F. A. B., A.I.F.

We are continuing our enquiries for further information of his death and burial, and the details of which we shall send you when received by us.

With our Sincere sympathy,

yours faithfully,

[Signature]

Secretary.
Aus.F.A. 12 Bde.

K. Oct. 2/17, Det. D/B.
He was in the 45th Bty.
I saw his body. He had been killed at night, lying in a dug-out, after we had been shooting on a S.O.S. in a position right behind Sanctuary Wood. He was buried in a Cemetery on the left rear of Dikkebusch, quite close to the Church Artery, near the railway. It was a full Military funeral; the whole Bty. attended, including his brother, Lt. Burnell. He was a very smart fellow and had not long transferred from the 10th Bde.

Inf.: Davies, Bomb. P/L. 205111. 45th Bty.
1 T'V de Bières.
Calais, 11.11.18.

P.1

Burnell, R.H. 28017

K. Oct. 2nd. 1917.

I know that Burnell was in a dugout with others on this date near Halfway House Ypres. The corner of the dugout was struck by a shell and Burnell who was near was killed outright. Brr. S.C. Body 36497. 45 Bty. was in the dugout as well and is still with the battery. Burnell had a brother an officer in the Australian Pioneers or Engineers. He joined us about June 1917. I know nothing of his burial.

A
Inf. Gnr. F.J. Carpenter 3991, 45 Bty
SOULOGNE. 15.1.18.

A.F.A. 12 Bde.

BURNELL, R.H. 28017

G.I.
K.  Oct 2nd 1917.

The whole battery was present at Burnell's funeral which took place in a cemetery near Dickebusch. He was buried with full military honours by our brigade chaplain. I do not know any details about his death or about him personally.

Inf: Dvr J. Hudson. 21364. 12/45 Bty
No. 8 Stat Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 23.1.18.

WO

I saw him killed by a shell while we were in the battery position at Sanctuary Siding, near Zilteke. He was buried in the cemetery at Dickebusch by a party from the battery, a cross was erected bearing particular. I knew him in the battery, he came from Sydney.


Taken at
NO. 1. Number
3/C. 15th
2-2-18.
F.G.H.

Witness.
NO. 4. Command Depot
Harcott.

12th F.A.B.
A.I.F.

"Killed in Action 2.10.17."

My brother, R.H. Burnett, was killed instantaneously at 5 a.m. on the morning of 2nd October 1917 by a shell which came through the roof of the light shelter in which he was sleeping at the time. This was close beside the guns of his battery in Sanctuary Wood, Forward of Ypres. His body was brought back to the battery wagon lines the night following and b. tw. courtesy of his officers, I was found and his burial arranged so that I could be present. We buried him at 5 a.m. 3.10.17 in the military cemetery by the C.C.S. at Dickebusch. Grave Registration, Sheet 28. R. 27024, Plot 9, G. Box, Grave No 1. The foregoing particulars have, of course, been sent to his mother Mrs. E.Z. Burnett, Macquarie St, Ferrymetta. He was unmarried.

Letter from: Capt. J.C. Burnett.
5th Field Coy, Engrs. A.I.F.
France 28.1.18.

We regret the delay in typing the above report, but we have been obliged to hold it up on account of pressure of work and shortage of machines.

London.
26.2.18.

F.I.
12th F.A.D.  
A.I.F.  

Burnell,  
R.H.  
28017

"Missing"

Killed in Action 2.10.17

Cert. by A. I. F. Headquarters dated 6.12.17

London 10.12.17

P.I.
The 12th Brigade.

K. 2/10/17.

She was killed by a shell while in a dugout. There were 5 there at the time and the other 4 were not even wounded. I found his brother at Ypres and he came next day to the funeral. He is buried about a mile off Dickiebusch. I saw the grave.

12th Brigade.

F. Southall. 26/12/17.

Burnell, R.H. 23/017.

Key:

Key: R.J. Gr. 6380.  

R. D.F.
18th A.F.A.

Burnell Gnr. R.H. 28017 45 Bty.
(K. 2.10.17. Det. D/B)

"I was alongside of Gunner R.H. Burnell in a dug-out when a shell came and killed him outright in front of Zillebeke on the 2nd Oct. 1917."

Eye witness: Yes.

Description: Short, thickset, dark man, has brother an officer in Australian Engineers.

Informant: Cpl. A.A. Thomson 10586 18th A.I.P., Norfolk War Hospital, Norwich.

Home address: C/o W.B. Smith, 137 Farrell St., North Port, Melbourne, Australia.

P. 1


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A.I.P. AFA. 12/45.

BURNELL - BURNELL R.H.

2.2.17

We were just above Zillebeke and about 2 a.m. the guns had just ceased firing and Burnell had just gone into his dug-out with his crew when a shell broke over the dug-out, killing him instantly. He was taken back to the wagon lines for burial.

FJS.


Staples.
19.10.17.
A.F.ARTY. 12 Bde. BURNELL, R.H. 28017.


Burnell was in my battery, the 45th. He was killed in October in our gun position by the Menin Road. There were four of us in a gun pit, and a shell landed on it, and killed Burnell. He died practically at once. He was taken down to the transport lines next morning, and his brother an officer, in I forget what unit was sent for. All the men left in the transport lines turned out and he had a proper burial in the British cemetery in the field, about 20 minutes out of Dickebusch. He had a special cross, not an issue cross. There was only one Burnell in the brigade a dark complexion man of about 23. A corporal of our unit wrote to his people.

54 Gen. Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 15.11.18.


X. Oct 2nd 1917. Dets.

He got into a dugout at Menin Road. A shell hit the dugout and he was killed instantly. I helped to bury him at a cemetery on the Ouderdon-Dickebusch Road. There was a cross with his name. His brother who is a Lieutenant in the Australian Engineers, was present at the burial. He came from Queensland, he was always talking about Station work, not been long with the battery. I think he was killed by shock as the body was not knocked about much. He was in 45 Bty.

Inf: Gnr. J. Davis. 1605. 12/45.
No. 2 Gun Stat Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 2.1.18.
Havre.
12th A.F.A.

14th January 1918.
Burnell R.H. No.28017.

K. 2nd October 1917. Det D/S.

He had relatives at Camden, N.S.W. He came over with me in the 'Assonius' on the 16th October. He was fair, small, he was killed up at the battery. I attended his funeral at a Military Cemetery about half a mile this side of Dickebusch. There is a cross with his name &c. on it.

Inf:- Driver C.M.O'Brien No.28097
12th A.F.A. 45th Batty.
Australian Camp.
Ronelles.

O.L.T.
Capt. J.G. Burnell, M.C.
5th Field Co Engrs, Australian
Imperial Force, Abroad.
February 4th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We wish to acknowledge your letter in answer to our enquiry concerning your brother.

28017 R.H. Burnell, 12th Bde, A.F.A.
and thank you for the information it contains.

May we offer you our sincere sympathy in the loss you have sustained.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

Flora K.P. St. George
L. B.
Pt. R. H. Burnell 20017
45th Batt.

See under

Lieut. J. H. Barrow

54th Batt.

28/11/17
Dear Burnell

Aust. Cons.

B.G.T. J.C.

About

R.H. Burnell

28.01.17

12 Bugan
R. T. A.

A. 2.10.17

Sw.

11.11.18
January 17th, 1916.

Dear Madam,

In further answer to your enquiry for details of the
Death of No 28017 Cnr. R.H. BURNELL, 12th Field Artillery Brigade.
We regret to inform you of unofficial evidence given by men of
his unit.

No 6860 Cnr. R.J. Keys, when at the 2nd Australian Auxiliary
Hospital, Southall reported that Cnr. Burnell was killed by a
shell while in a dugout, his burial taking place next day at
Ypres, 6 miles from Dickebusch in the presence of his brother
Lt. Burnell.

Dr. P.J. Davies, when interviewed on a hospital ship at
Calais stated that Cnr. Burnell was killed at night lying in a
dugout behind Sanctuary Wood and he was given a military funeral
on a cemetery behind Dickebusch, near the railway and the church.
Army Department.

Dr. Davies adds "He was a very smart fellow".

1668 Cnr. J. Davis, while confirming the above report added
that he thinks Cnr. Burnell must have been killed by shock and
his body was not injured.

We are continuing the enquiry and when we obtain further
news of him will immediately advise you.

Yours faithfully,
2nd March, 1918.

Mrs. Harvey Holt,
C/o Lady Long Innis,
The Cottage, Bisham Harlow,
BERKS.

Dear Madam,

We beg to inform you of another unofficial report about the death of:-

No 28017 Capt. R.H. BURNELL, 12th Field Art. Brde., A.I.F.
given by his brother Capt. E.K. Burnell of the 7th Field Coy Engineers who wrote to this effect.

"My brother, R.H. Burnell, was killed instantaneously at 5 a.m. on the morning of 2nd October, 1917 by a shell which came through the roof of the light shelter in which he was sleeping at the time. This was close beside the guns of his battery in Sanctuary Wood, forward of Ypres. His body was brought back to the battery waggon lines the night following and by the courtesy of his officers, I was found and his burial arranged so that I could be present. We buried him at 3 p.m. 3.10.17, in the military cemetery by the C.C.S. at Diekebusch Grave Registration, sheet 38 H. 27064, Plot 9, B4Row, Grave No 1. The foregoing particulars have, of course been sent to his Mother Mrs. E.K. Burnell, Nascurrie St, Parramatta. He was unmarried."

Should we obtain further details of Capt. Burnell's death we shall immediately advise you.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

SECRETARY.
February 6th, 1918.

Mrs. Harvey Holt,
U/- Lady Long Ives,
The Cottage, Bingham Marlow,
Berks.

Dear Madam,

We deeply regret to inform you of further unofficial evidence about the death of

28017 Capt. R.H. BURNEILL, 12th Field Artillery Brigade,
A.I.F.

for whom we have now closed our enquiries although we shall immediately forward to you any additional information that we receive.

1548 Capt. J. Corbo, when in the 54th General Hospital, B.E.F.
stated "Burnell was in my nineteen battery, the 45th. He was killed in October in our gun position by the Monin Road. There were four of us in a gun pit, and a shell landed on it, and killed Burnell. He died practically at once. He was taken down to the transport lines next morning, and his brother an officer, in I forget what unit was sent for. All the men left in the transport lines turned out and he had a proper burial in the British Cemetery in the Field, about 20 minutes out of Dickebusch. He had a special cross not an issue cross. There was only one Burnell in the Brigade a dark complexioned man of about 25. A corporal of our unit wrote to his people."

This report is also confirmed by No. 10586 Cpl. H.A. Thomson,
when in the Norfolk War Hospital, Norwich. He was beside Capt.
Burnell in a dugout in front of Zillebekk when he was killed
instantaneously on Oct 2nd, and he describes him as short thickset
and dark.

Trusting that it will be some consolation to know that his death was instantaneous.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

SECRETARY.
February 11th, 1919.

Dear Madam,

Another unofficial report has been received about
No 28017 Gn. H. BURWELL, 18th Field Artillery Bde.,
informants being men of the unit.

30121 Gn. F. E. Mason, of the 15th Battery, when at No 4
Command Depot, Hurdocott, stated that he saw Gn. Burnell killed
by a shell when they were in the battery position at Sanctuar,
Siding, near Willibeeke, and he was buried in the Cemetery at
Dickebusch by a party from the battery, a cross being erected
to mark his grave.

21364 Dr. J. Hudson, when in the 8th Stationary Hospital,
B.H.F., stated that the whole battery was present at Gn. Burnell's
funeral in the cemetery near Dickebusch. He was buried with full
military honours by the brigade chaplain.

With our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.
Dear Sir,

My brother, R.H. Burnell, was killed instantaneously at 5.45 a.m. on the morning of 2nd October 1917, by a shell which came through the roof of the night shelter in which he was sleeping at the time. This was close beside the guns of his battery in Sanctuary Wood, forward of Ypres. His body was brought back to the battery waggon lines the night following, and by the courtesy of the officers I was found, and his burial arranged so that I could be present.

I buried him at 3 p.m. 3rd October 1917 in the military cemetery by the C.C.S. at Dikkebosch.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

28/01/18

European Red Cross Society
36 Grosvenor Place, London S.W.1.

To: R.H. Burnell
12 Byde, A.F.A.

[Stamp or seal with text: France]
Grave Registration

Sheet 28, H 27 c 24

Plot 9, Branch, Grave No.

The foregoing particulars have, of course, been sent to his Mother, Mrs. E. H. Burnell

Macquarie St., Parramatta

He was unmarried.

With thanks, faithfully yours

/ John E. Burnell, Capt.

5th Field Coy. Engs.

R. F.