

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

Lieutenant
William Robert Berry
Davis

8th Battalion



0891001J

8th Btn.

DAVIS, W. R. B.
2nd Lieut.

Y. in act. 7/4/18.

"I knew Casualty. He was a well built man, about 5 ft. 8 ins. in height, fair complexion, about 36 years of age. Casualty was in front line at Ketteria. He was out on a patrol when an H.F. shell exploded near killing him instantly. He was lost trace of for the time being. A search party afterwards went out and found his body. I saw his body when he was brought in. I do not know where he was buried."

Private address:-
Parriby Street,
Carlton.

Informant:- Pte. G. Munro,
No. 2734, 8th Btn.

M.A.T.
29/3/19.

S.B.

P. 1.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INFORMATION BUREAU-MELBOURNE.

8th Battn.
A.I.F.

DAVIS
Lt. W.R.E.

"Wounded & Missing 6-4-18"

I know that he was Intelligence Officer in this Battn., and that he went out on a raid. He was reported killed by shell. Two search parties went out for his body, but could only find a piece of his tunic. Everyone was thoroughly convinced that he was killed. I was there at the time but was not one of the raiding party.

Eye-witness: No
Description:

Home address:-	Informant. Munro. Pte.A. 5734 (Intelligent, but very weak)
31, Erskine Street, Aberdeen.	8th Battn. B.Coy., King George's Hpl.,

P.C. Parry
3-9-18
London
10-9-18

J.E.A.

Off.M.
P.I.

A. I. F. 8th Bn.

DAVIS, Lieut. W. R. B.

W/M. April 6/18. R/Enq.

On this day about 80 men went on a raid about 1.0 a.m. to take 3 pill-boxes. We left our trenches and took the pill boxes returning with 60 Prisoners in 8 mins. - supposed to be the record for the British Army. Our Division was the "first" and the record for similar work had previously been held by the "fifth" Division. All our Casualties - only 5 - were caused by our own barrage. Three, including this Officer, were killed and 2 wounded. The other dead were recovered and the 2 wounded were brought in. A search party was organised by our Officers about half an hour after but nothing was ever seen of him or anything belonging to him. The conclusion was arrived at and was generally accepted that the Lieut. was blown up by one of our own shells.

Reference: Pte. C. Kennedy, 1291,
Confirmed by Pte. F. J. Roberts, 1266,
Both of No. 1 Aust. General, Rouen, 26.8.18.

GPO.

(57)

ORIGINAL STATEMENT CONCLUSION.

LW.

Ref No. 4 arc. 93954.

COPY.

C.O.

Westham Camp,
WEYMOUTH.

20th August 1918.

Statement made by No. 6648. Pte. LEWIS, G.E. 8th Bn.
re. Lieut. DAVIS, W.R. 38th, Battalion.

Missing. 2.4.18.

At about 2-a.m. on the morning of the 2nd April 1918, a raiding party comprising of 3 officers and about 40 other ranks went over to the enemy lines at Wysehaete. Lt Davis, W.R. was one of the officers. After returning Lt Davis was found to be missing and as company Commander, Capt. Campbell, organized a search party at about 3-30 a.m. and made a search of No Man's Land but could find no trace of him.

Monte Video, Weymouth.

6/8/18.

Get Red Cross

(Sgd) G.E. Lewis.

J.C.O.

not cut on

(Sgd) H.E. Pearce, Capt,
C.O. 8th Company.

*P.I.
6/8/18
Ed
Balk*

Havre

10th June 1918.

A.I.F. 8.

Davis Lieut W.R.B.

W/M 6th April 1918.

On the night of the 1st April we were at Ridge Wood near Diekebusch. About 1 in the night about 50 of us went on a raid the Lieutenant being in charge of the right hand party. We got right in among the Germans but I did not see the Lieut after we had assembled at the start. I heard that he had come along. He did not return. We afterwards searched the ground but it was so broken up and swampy that if he had been hit I think he would not have had a chance. There is no probability that he is a prisoner.

Inf:- Cpl A.V.Cham No. 165.
A.I.F. 8. A. I.
Anstr. Conv. Camp.
Reuelles.

CWSS.

Ward

A.I.F. 8th Battn.

DAVIS
Lt. R.W.R.B.

Wounded & Missing 6/4/18

I was with him in a raid at Walschatte at 1.30 a.m. on Easter Monday /18 and a shell landed among us wounding a Cpl. of D Coy., who was brought out and died after giving information that Lieut. Davis was in the same shell hole as him and that he believed that he received the full contents of the shell. A detailed search was made but no trace of Lt. Davis could be found. Cpl. Chapman of A Coy., 8th Battn. A.I.F., was also fatally wounded by the shell but I don't know if he was able to give any information. Lt. Davis was the only officer of the name in the battalion.

Informant:- 364 Pte. J. H. Dahn 364,
8th. Battn., A.I.F., D XIII,
Harefield.

A. G. Campbell.

London
18/6/18.

P.I.
OFF.M.

A. I. F. 8th Battn.

DAVIS
Licut. WRB.

WOUNDED & MISSING 6/4/18.

I have promised to call on his people when I return to Australia. He was blown to pieces at Wynaete. In a trench raid he was supposed to go through our own barrage. He was never seen again. He was an over zealous intelligence officer.

Eye-witness:-

Description:-

Informant:- Licut. J. L. Foot,
8th Battn., A. I. F.,
3rd London General Hospital,
Wandsworth.

Home address:-

Warracknabeal,
Victoria.

W. E. Butcher.

25/5/18.

London

28/5/18.

P. I.
OFF. HQ.

8th Battn.
A.I.F.

DAVIS
Lt. W.R.B.

"Wounded & Missing 6-4-18"

Lt. Davis went out with a raiding party on the night of the 6th April. He was missing when they assembled to come back. Two of the Officers and some of the men searched the ground for nearly two hours, but could'nt find any trace of him. Some of the party think that he got too near our own barrage and was hit by one of our shells. There may be a faint hope of his being wounded and captured, but we hardly think so, as the raid was so well carried out, that we got all our wounded back. He was the only one missing, we are all hoping to hear of him being alive in Germany.

Enc. Letter from:- Lt. R. Woodhouse,
8th Battn.,
FRANCE. 17-5-18 - to
Mrs Larking.

London
22-5-18

Off.M.
P.I.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT BOHELOH.

C O P Y

Statement made by Lieut Foot J.L., 8th Bn:

re Lieut Davis W.R.,^B 8th Bn:

Wounded and Missing 2.4.18.

K-A

On 2.4.18, Lieut Davis W.R., 8th Bn; was in a raid at Wychchaete, and that he was blown to pieces by our own barrage most probably. This is the general opinion of his brother officers, though no one actually saw this casualty occur.

J.L.F.
Dated at, *3rd* 3rd London Gen: Hospital,
Wandsworth.

(Sgd) J.L. Foot
Lieut.

not written
Statement made and signed before me.

(Sgd) P. Heenan
Cpl
A.I.F Hdqrs, LONDON.

P.1
5/11
6/11
10/11

C O P Y

Statement made by No. 364 Ste DEHN. J.H. 8th Battn.

re Lieut DAVIS. W.R. ^B 8th Battn.
Wid and Missing 2.4.18.

^{K-1}
I was with Lieutenant Davis in a raid at Wytchaete on 1.4.18.

I can't say whether he was wounded or not, but we all thought he got blown up with a shell, we searched the ground for him but nothing could be found. He never came back with us.

J.H. not sent on

Dated at HURDCOTTE

Red X

(SGD). J.H. DEHN.

Statement made and signed before me

(SGD). J.M. FRANCIS.
Lieutenant.
15th Battn.

P/
W/
all
add
IK

8th Batt.
A.I.F.,

DAVIS.
Lieut. W.R.B.

"Wounded And Missing 6-8-18"

Lt Davis went over with a raiding party on April 6th at Mount Kemmel - a successful raid but he did not return. Sent out a patrol to see if we could find him but found no trace. The general opinion being that he was killed in the barrage.

Informant:- Lewis. G.E.6648.
8th Battn.D.Co.
Hut 9.WESTHAM.

W.R.Rend.
London.
7-6-18
J.E.A.

P I & Cff.M.

A.I.F. 8th Battn.

DAVIS
William Robert Berry
Lieut

"WOUNDED & MISSING"

Missing 8/4/18

Cert. by A.I.F. Hqrs List and A.I.F. Hqrs 17/9/18.

London
17/9/18.

O.F.M.
P.I.

8th Battn.
A. I. F.

DAVIS.
Lieut. W. R. B.

"Wounded & Missing 2.4.18."

Several boys were engaged in a raid at Wyschätz, and as we were coming back I saw him killed by a shell instantly (he was a little in front of me) Another man ^{the name of} Theo Kemait 8th Battn: C Coy., was killed by the same shell I did not see him after wards.

Informant:- Pte. J. Mangan, 62A,
8th Battalion C Coy.
No. 1 Command,
Sutton Veny.

E. T. Carter.
London.
3.10.18.
J.E.A.

OFF. M.
P. I.

8th Battn.
A.I.F.

DAVIS
Lt.W.R.B.

"Wounded & Missing 2-4-18"

Informant states that on 6-4-18 near Wychaete, Lt.Davis went out with a raiding party and was the only one who did not return. The party went from the same post where informant was stationed. T.Green went out again and tried to find him but was not successful. Green was with him when they lost him and could probably supply further details. Informant cannot give Green's number, but T.Green "M.M" 8th Battn., France, would find him.

Eye-witness:-
Description:-

Informant. Callander. Pte.N. 3023(reliable),
Home address:- 8th Battn.,
Dixon Street, 1st Birmingham War Hpl. Rubery,
Malvern,
VICTORIA.

R.Clegg
15-9-18
London
9-10-18

Note:- Written Green 25-9-18. Off.M.
P.I?

Letter returned marked "lost with unit" 1-10-18

A. I. F. 8th Btn

DAVIS

Wm. Robt. Berry Lieut.
late 1582 Cpl.

"MISSING"

Killed in action 2-4-18 - previously reported missing 2-4-18.
Cert. by A. I. F. Mgrs 14-1-19

London
16-1-19

OFF. H. &
P. I.

"Lieut Davies" 8th (A.M.) Wd

Missing please see Australia
Red Cross "to provide news"
extract from cable to Mrs
Larberry dated 4-5-18

Re: ^{fully} Melbourne 2-5-18
by Walker (J.P. Walker)

Per Mrs ~~Kent~~ =
late no 1582 Cpl W.R. B. Jones
of No 6 Bn. 1st Coy
2 Bn.

C/O M. G. 4-18 HQ 4-18
Done

June 1st, 1918.

Mrs. Larking,
Hospital, Room 3

Dear Madam,

We deeply regret to inform you that we have received an unofficial report about -

Lieut. W.R.B. DAVIS, 8th Battalion, A.I.F.

which we fear leaves little hope of his being alive although we would advise you not to accept it as conclusive in the absence more definite and official information.

Lt. J.L. Foot of the same unit, now at the 3rd London General Hospital, stated that Lt. Davis was killed instantaneously by shell fire in a trench raid at Eytshaete. He was not however an eyewitness and nor does he give an authority for his statement. He adds that he has promised to call on Lt. Davis' people on his return to Australia.

We are continuing our enquiries and will advise you immediately if any further details are received.

With sincere regret at having such sad and vague news to send you.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

SECRETARY.

F. J. G.

21st June, 1918.

Mrs. Larking,
Hospital Room,
36 Grosvenor Place,
London, S. W. 1.

Dear Madam,

We regret to inform you that we have received two more unofficial reports respecting Lieut. W. R. B. Davis, 8th Infantry Battalion, A. I. F. which confirm those already sent you. 564 Pte. J. H. Dohn of the same unit interviewed at Herefield, stated that he was with Lt. Davis in a raid at Wyttschaette on Easter Monday, when a shell fell amongst them, fatally wounding a Cpl. of D. Coy. who was brought out and died after giving information that Lt. Davis was in the same shell hole as himself, and that he believed he had received the full force of the shell. A detailed search was made, but no trace of Lieut. Davis could be found.

165 Cpl. A. V. Chan of the same unit, at the Australian Convalescent Camp, stated that he was one of the raiding party, but did not see Lt. Davis after they started. He heard that he was in charge of the right hand party, but did not return. They searched the ground

2.

afterwards, but it was so broken up and swampy that if wounded Lt. Davis would not have had a chance of getting back ~~without~~ ^{that there is no probability} help. Informant adds of his being a prisoner.

Should we obtain any further information we will at once let you know, as we realise how anxious his relatives must be.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Secretary.

F. J. G.

185 St. Vincent Street
Glasgow 1st July 1918.

Messrs The Red Cross Enquiry Department
18 Carlton House Terrace
London.

ans. 18

Gentn.

I will feel much obliged if you can give me any information regarding an Australian relative of mine who has been missing on the western front for some time, if you should have any means of getting me such information. His name and rank are as follows:-

Lieut. William Robert Berry Davis
8th Battalion
Australian Imperial Force
France.

So far as I can gather he was engaged about the end of March along with some men and another officer on a raid into the German trenches, and while the rest of the party returned safely without loss he did not, and has been missing ever since.

I am sorry I cannot give you his regimental number, company or platoon, the foregoing name and description are all I know.

I am

Yours truly

John Fraser

J. Fraser, Esq.,
185, St. Vincent Street,
Glasgow, N.B.

July 6th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 1st inst., which has been forwarded to us from B.R.C.S. Carlton House Terrace for our attention.

With reference to your enquiry for -

Lieut. W.R.B. DAVIS, 8th Battalion, A.I.F.

who is officially reported wounded and missing since 6-4-18, we regret to forward the following unofficial reports given concerning him by men of his unit.

354 Pte. J.R. Dohn, states :- "I was with Lt. Davis in a raid at Wytchaste on 1-30 a.m. on last Monday 1917, and a shell landed among us wounding a Cpl. of D. Coy who was brought out and died after giving information that Mr. Davis was in the same shell hole as he and that he believed he received the full force of the shell. A detailed search was made but no trace of Mr. Davis was found." This report is confirmed by Lt. J.L. Foot and Lt. R. Woodhouse.

Though we cannot of course ever vouch for the accuracy of any unofficial evidence, we are much afraid that these reports concerning Lt. Davis' fate may prove to be correct as there has never been any trace of him as a prisoner of War in Germany.

We are doing our utmost to obtain further news concerning him and will advise you as soon as we succeed.

regretting we are unable to send you more hopeful news
and assuring you of our sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

(MISS)

SECRETARY.

beck

185 St. Vincent Street
Glasgow 10th July 1918

The Secretary
Australian Red Cross Society
London.

Dear Madam,

I duly received your favour of 6th inst.
Relative to my enquiry regarding Lieut. W.R.B. Davis,
8th Batt. A.I.F. and have to ask you to accept my
sincere thanks for the report you have kindly sent.

I will send it on to his Father in Australia
as being the latest information we have been able
to get.

Reading between the lines of the report I
fear it means that the effect of the shell has been
such as to leave no trace of the body.

Again thanking you,

I am

Yours very truly

John Fraser

John Fraser, Esq.
185 St Vincent St.
Glasgow. N.B.

Mrs. Larking.
Hospital Room.

August 9th, 1918.

Dear Madam.

We deeply regret to inform you of another unofficial report given by a man of his unit about -

Lt. W. R. B. DAVIS. 8th Battalion. A.I.F.

who is reported wounded and missing since 6-4-18.

6648 Pte. G. M. Lewis when interviewed in Meschan Camp Weymouth, on 2-8-18 stated that Lt. Davis went out with a raiding party at Mount Mansel on 6-4-18 & that although the expedition was successful he failed to return. A patrol was sent out to make a thorough search of the ground but no trace of him was found and it was the general opinion among the men that he must have been killed in the barrage.

While again emphasising the purely unofficial character of this evidence we sincerely regret that it confirms that which we have already sent you and that there seems little hope of Lt. Davis being alive.

We are continuing our enquiries and will advise you immediately on receipt of further information as we fully realise how anxious his relatives must be.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Secretary.

L.B. for L.A.M.

185 St. Vincent Street
Glasgow 15th August 1918

The Secretary
Australian Red Cross Society
London.

Dear Madam,

I am in receipt of your favour of 9th inst.
relative to my enquiry regarding Lieut. W.R.B. Davis,
8th Battn. A.I.F. and have to ask you to accept my best
thanks for the further additional information you give
me. I fear with you that there can be very little hope
that he is still alive.

Your former letter I sent on to his Mother in
Australia, and this one I will also send, altho it will
be a sad one for her to receive.

I am

Yours very truly

John Fraser

copy
27.8.18

No 5 Squadron
A. F. C.
Highampton
Glos. 27. 8. 18.

The Deputy
Austn. Red Cross

London.
Dear Sir or Madam,

Can you please
give me any information regarding
a dear friend of mine - Lieut N. R. B. Davis
of the Battalion A. F. C. He was
reported wounded & missing last April.
Although I have written to this Battalion
for particulars, I have not been favoured
with a reply.

Trusting you can give me something
definite.

Yours very respectfully
Leslie Ross (Lieut)

August 31st, 1918.

Lieut. L.F. Ross.
5th Squadron. A.F.C.
Minchinhampton. Glos.

Dear Sir.

In reply to your enquiry for your friend -

Lieut. W.R.B. DAVIS. 8th Battalion. A.I.F.

Who is officially reported Missing on 6-4-18. We regret to inform you of several unofficial reports we have received about him.

Lt. R. Woodhouse of the same unit wrote from France and stated that Lt. Davis went out with a raiding party on the night of April 6th and was missing when they assembled to return. Two of the officers and some of the men searched the ground for nearly two hours but no trace of him could be found. Lt. Woodhouse added that there was very little hope of his having been wounded and captured as the raid was so well carried out that they got all their wounded back and he was the only one missing.

Lt. J.L. Foot interviewed at the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth stated that he was killed instantly in a raid at Wytshaete.

165 Cpl. A.V. Chain stated that on the night of April 1st - the official report is April 6th. Lt. Davis went out with a raiding party of which informant was a member at Ridge Wood near Dickebusch but did not return. The ground which was very much broken up and swampy was searched, but no trace of him was found. Informant added that there was no probability of his having been taken prisoner.

364 Pte. J.H. Dehn interviewed at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, stated that he was with Lt. Davis in a raid at Wytshaete on Easter Monday when a shell exploded - which wounded a corporal, who, before he died, stated that he believed that Lt. Davis was killed instantly by the same shell. A detailed

search was made but proved quite unsuccessful.

These reports are confirmed by several other men. We are continuing our enquiries in the hope of obtaining more definite information but we fear from the nature of the evidence already received that there is very little hope of Lieut. Davis being alive.

We will advise you as soon as any further reports reach us.

With sincere sympathy in your anxiety.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Law

Secretary.

5th Squadron, A. F. C.
Murchingham Aerodrome.

Glas.

9/9/18.

The Secretary.

Dear Madam.

Many thanks
for your letter — re —
Lieut W. P. B. Dawes.

Yours Sincerely

P. H. Ross. (Lieut)

The Australian Red Cross.

36 Grosvenor Place. S.W.

Mrs. W. R. DAVIS.
Windsor, Ont.

Sept. 24, 1918.
The Secretary, War Office,
Whitehall, London, W.C. 2.

John Pearson, Esq.,
135 St. Vincent Street,
Glasgow.

September 24th, 1918.

Dear Sir,

In further answer to your enquiry for - Lieut. W.R.B. DAVIS.
8th Battalion, A.I.F.

We regret to inform you of unofficial evidence given by men
of his unit from which we fear there is little hope of his being
alive.

1291 Pte. C. Kennedy - when interviewed in the 1st Australian
General Hospital, B.F.P. stated:- "On this day about 80 men went
on a raid about 1.0 a.m. to take 3 pill-boxes. We left our trenches
and took the pill-boxes returning with 40 prisoners in 8 minutes -
supposed to be the record for the British Army. Our Division was
the "first" and the record for similar work had previously been
held by the "fifth" Division. Three including Lt. Davis were killed
and 2 wounded. The other dead were removed recovered and the 2
wounded were brought in. A search party was organised by our
officers about half an hour after but nothing was ever seen of
him or anything belonging to him. The conclusion was arrived at and
was generally accepted that the Lieut. was killed."

This evidence we regret to say was confirmed by 5734 Pte.
A. Munro, 8th Btn. when in King George's Hospital, Waterloo. He
stated that Lieut. Davis who was Battalion Intelligence Officer went
out on a raid on 6-4-18, and he was reported to have been killed
by a shell. Two search parties went out for his body but were
unsuccessful in finding definite proof although everyone believed
at the time that he had been killed.

We are continuing our enquiries and as soon as we are
successful in obtaining further information we shall let you
know although there seems little hope of our obtaining definite
news of his ultimate fate.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

(MISS) Vera Deakin
SECRETARY.

(H.A.W.)

185 St. Vincent Street
Glasgow 26th Sept. 1918

The Secretary
Australian Red Cross Society
London.

Dear Madam,

I am in receipt of your further letter of 24th inst.
relative to ^{Wm. Robert} Lieut. Davis, 8th Batt. A.I.F.

I am extremely grateful for your attention and the trouble you have taken, and so I am sure will his Father and Mother be. I sent them your two former letters, and I will send this one also. This re-confirmation will be sad news for them as it extinguishes any hope of Lieut. Davis being still alive.

My relationship with Lieut. Davis is that I am a cousin of his mother, and along with my brothers and sisters, was the nearest relative he had in this country.

Again thanking you.

I am

Yours truly

John Fraser

Lieut. Leslie F. Ross.
5th Squadron. A.F.C.
Minchinhampton. Glos.

Mrs. Marking.
Hospital Room.
A.R.C.S.

October 7th, 1918.

John Fraser, Esq.
185 St Vincent Street.
Glasgow.

Dear Sir.

In further answer to your enquiry for - Lieut. W.R.B. DAVIS
8th Battalion. A.I.F. - We regret to inform you we have received
unofficial evidence from Pte. J. Morgan of the same unit who was
interviewed while in No 1 Command Depot, Sutton Vean. He states that
several days were engaged in a raid at Wytschate and as they were
coming back he saw Lt. Davis who was a little in front of him
killed instantly by a shell, but he did not see him again.

We regret that this evidence only confirms our worst
fears as to Lt. Davis' fate and should we receive further information
we shall immediately advise you.

Again assuring you of our sympathy.

Yours faithfully,

(Miss)

Mrs Deakin

Secretary.

Mrs Baker

185 St. Vincent Street

Glasgow 14th Octr. 1918

The Secretary
Australian Red Cross Society
London.

Dear Madam,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour with
further information regarding Lieut. ^{W. R. B. - 8 Bdr} Davis, A. I. P.

With all the cumulative evident you have been able
to collect I fear there is no shadow of hope, but that we must
accept as true the fact that Lieut. Davis falls to be added to
the long list of those who have given their lives for the great
cause of freedom and civilization.

Thanking you for all the trouble and interest you have
taken, I beg to remain,

Yours very truly

John Bass
