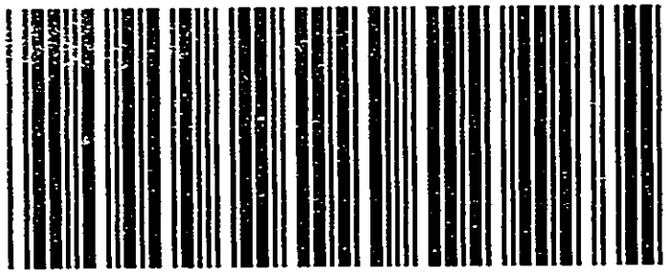
Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

804 Sergeant Edward Emerson Willis

30th Battalion



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30th Battn
A.I.F.

WILLIS.
Sgt. Edward Emerson, 804

"Killed"

Killed in Action 20.1.17.

Cert. by A.I.F. HdQtrs. 24.8.17.

S.

London.
27.8.17.

30th Batt.
A.I.F.

Willis,
Sgt.E.Emerson
804.

"Missing"

Killed in Action 20.7.16 - Court of Enquiry- Previously reported wounded and missing 20.7.16

Cert, by A.I.F.Headquarters 30.8.17 Ap M B 1.8.17 taken from man's attestation papers.

All previous information apparently incorrect.

S & P.1

London
1.9.17

30th A.I.F.

~~Edwards Pte. Tom 1547 D. XIII~~

Willis, Sergt. E.E. 804
(W & M. July 20th 1916)

Informant states "Willis was our platoon sergt. He was wounded in the advance on July 30th. We took the 3rd line of German trenches but had to retire as the division that was to advance on our left never got the order. I did not see Willis wounded myself, but three days after we retired volunteers were called for to bring in the wounded. They told me that they brought in Sergt. Willis with both his feet shattered. The best man to apply to would be Lt. Macfarlane who was in charge of the party. It was a matter of general knowledge that Willis was brought in. We all believed it and were much pleased. We heard that he had been sent to England. I remember now that two stretcher-bearers whose names I don't know saw him at the Dressing Station. I heard afterwards that he could not be traced in England. I can only suppose that he died somewhere on the way home. He had lain out in No Man's Land for three days and three nights badly wounded so he must have been very far gone."

Eye witness: No. refers to Lt. Macfarlane 30th A.I.F.

Informant: Pte. Tom Edwards 1547. 30th A.I.F., D. XIII
Mont Dore Hospital, Bournemouth.

6.2.17.
N.W. Lyle.

30th Batt. A. I. F. WILLIS Sgt. E. E. 804.

" W. & M. July 20th/'16 ".

Witness says soldier was badly wounded on July 20th'16. He helped to carry soldier back to our own trenches, but does not know what happened to him afterwards. This happened at FleurBaix.

Description.

Witness. Hoskins C. 1015.
30 Batt.

Worgret Camp,
WAREHAM.

March 13th., '17.
S. W.

~~10424~~

30th Battalion
A.I.F.

WILLIS
Sergeant Edward Emerson, No.804

K i a

~~Wounded and missing~~ 20th July.- 16

Informant states - I have made all the enquiries possible about Ted, and can only ascertain that he was wounded in the leg on the 19th July last, he was seen going down the "Sap" by two of his men, also that our M.O. Captain Longham (who has since left us) remembered dressing his wound, and sending him on to the 15th Field Ambulance, since then all trace of him appears to have been lost. He only arrived back from an N.C.O's School that day, and was wearing a new tunic, and it is quite possible he had no Pay Book or Identification Disc on him at the time. The reason I told Miss Galvain I thought he would be in England, was that all our wounded that day were sent across, and hearing he had been sent to the 15th Field Ambulance, and from what I heard not "dangerously wounded " I naturally thought he would have been cleared to England with the rest. I am very sorry I have not been able to give you any better news of him, as Ted was a particular friend of mine, and there are several of us here now who would gladly welcome some news of him."

Letter dated 27th April 1917 from -
E. F. ~~Warner~~, France.
12088. Walker

S
Time Cancel.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

A. I. F. 30. WILLIS, Sgt. E.E. 804.

W. & E/20th.July 1916.

Pte.Hardbattle (George) of the 58th. Battn. told me that he saw Sgt.Willis killed at Fleurbaix in July, hit in the head and shoulders during the retreat. He lifted him up, but saw that he was gone, so left him. Hardbattle was a despatch rider, but when I last saw him about a week ago, it was at Albert in the R.E.Stores, shortening rifles.

Reference: Lareor, 2437,13 Howitzer Batty, AIF., No.1 Canadian General.

Staples.
8.3.17.
RBA.

Written Pte. Hardbattle 23.3.17

Willis EE 804.

30th Battalion A.I.F., D. Co.

WILLS, Sgt. E.V. K in A

Wounded & Missing 20.7.16.

I knew Wells and was with him at Fleurbaix. He was a tall chap, fairly dark, and came from Queensland. I saw him in the charge when we were so badly cut up. He was shot through both ankles. We went over on a Thursday, and he was lying out till the following Monday in No Man's Land. I saw him when he was brought back, and he was quite cheerful, and able to talk. He was carried to a dressing station beyond our lines, and I have heard no word of him after that. This was the raid in which Colonel Norris was killed leading the charge.

Informant:-- Pte. WARD, 1001,
30th Battalion A.I.F. B. Co.
No. 4 Australian General Hospital, RANDWICK.

H.S.E.
14.6.17.

SYDNEY BUREAU.

30th Battn. A.I.F. WILLIS, 804, E.E. Sgt.
"D" Co. Item A.

"Wounded & Missing 20.7.16"

I knew Willis well. He was a Sergeant in "D"Co. and had charge of No. XIII Platoon. His initials were E.E, and was known as "Tit". He was in the original Battalion. I was at one time Company Sergt-Major of "D" Coy., and he was under me. After the stunt at Fleurbaix on 19/20th July, 1916, it was reported that Sgt. Willis was lying out wounded in both ankles in "No Man's Land". I was in charge of operations trying to get wounded men in, and sent men out to look for Sgt. Willis, but no trace could be found of him by my party. The report was that he was lying near the German trenches. This was not in the part where the Germans flooded the country. The Germans did not advance out of their trenches, but several were noticed in "No Man's Land" the following day i.e. 20th and I turned a Lewis Gun on them. It would be possible for Willis to be taken Prisoner.

Willis was tall, well built and about 24 or 25 yrs. of age and his people lived in Middle Harbour. He and I were at the Sydney Grammar School together.

Informant: Lieut. R.L. Cadden,
8 30th Battn. "A" Co.
No.4, Australian General Hospital,
RANDWICK.

A careful reliable witness.

H.S.O
29.8.17

SYDNEY BUREAU.

30th A. I. F.

Willis, Sgt E.E. 804,

(K. ~~Jan 1st/17~~. Det D & B)

"I saw Sgt Willis in March/17 when the King was in France and visited the Anzacs. I was on leave in Jan/17 and it was some time after I went back that I saw Sgt Willis and Sgt Whip together. Both got their commissions last year and are Lieuts. Willis is a son of the Speaker of the House of Parliament in Sydney. I knew him by sight in Sydney and I knew him when we were in Egypt."

Eye-witness:

Description:

Informant: Dvr E.C. Chandler, 857,
A. I. F., Div. H.Q.,
4th London General Hospital,
Denmark Hill, S.E.

Home address:
81, Glebe St,
Glebe,
Sydney, Australia.

19th Nov. 1917.
Lennox.

30th Battalion. A.I.F.

WILLIS, E.E.Sgt.
804 D.Co.

Wounded and Missing 20/7/16. K. in A. 20.7.17

I knew Sgt.Willis well, his initials were E.E. and he was in D.Co. XIII Platoon. He was known as "Tit" he was missing about 20/7/16 at Fromelles but he was brought in by Capt.Brown - then Pte. - a big Scotchman known as Jock. I did not see him brought in but Brown told me and others about it. Brown brought him in on about 21 or 22/7/16 from near the German trenches with his foot badly shattered. Brown knew Willis well, they were both N.C.O.'s together in the original D.Co. Brown is I believe still with the Battalion and is probably a Sergt. his No. would be in the 800 or 900 and was I believe the only Brown in the Co.at the time. I was surprised to find on returning to Australia that Willis was posted as Missing. We came out on the 20th to a mile behind the line. On the nights of 20.21 and 22nd Volunteers went out to bring in the wounded. Volunteers brought them back to the front line and stretcher bearers then took them as the Dressing Station was a long way back. Willis told me he had property at Roma Queensland.

Informant: Westaway, J.L. Sgt.
30th Battalion. D.Co. A.I.F.
No.4 Australian General Hospital, RANDWICK.
A careful reliable witness.

H.S.O. 16/8/17.

SYDNEY BUREAU

A.I.F. 30.

WILLIS. Sergt.E.E.
804.

K. Jan.1st 1917. Dats.D/B.

Sergt. Willis was with his Battn. on Jan 1st 1917 working behind the lines at Ranyenetain. At the time a spasmodic but heavy shell fire was turned on us and during one of those ~~f~~ strafes the Sergt. was hit and killed. He was buried at either the Burnefrey Junction or Stone Quarrey Cemeteries.

Inf: V.Clarke. 2606.
57. Gen.Hosp.
BOULOGNE. 17.10.17.

HH

30th Battn.
A.I.F.

Willis.
Sgt.E.E. 804

"Killed 20.7.16"

Pte.Bond's 8th Fld.C.Engrs, statement that I received a letter from Sgt.Willis written from hospital in England is quite untrue. I reported to him with a box of bombs at daylight about 2 minutes before we retired from the position at Fromelles near Fleurbaix on the night of 19-20.July 1916. No one in the Battn. saw him after that and I feel certain he was killed as all the men in that position were killed. The 2 S/Bearers who were alleged to have carried him back to a dressing station, afterwards admitted that the man they carried in was not Sgt.Willis. One of the S/Bearers name was Ford of D.Coy., but they have both been killed since. Sgt.Willis was doing exceptionally good work, cheering everybody up in spite of the dangerous position. Description:- Fairly tall, about 13 stone, dark complexion, son of the late Speaker.

This report was given in our office by the undermentioned soldier in answer to a letter written to him by us.

London.
27.2.18.

Cpl.N.N.Gulson 888
30th Battn.

S.

January 31st, 1918.

888 Cpl.Norman Gulson,
30th Infantry Battalion,
Australian Imperial Force,
Abroad.

Dear Sir,

We have been making enquiries on behalf of our Sydney office about :-

804 Sgt.E.E.WILLIS, 30th Battalion, A.I.F.

who is reported Killed at Fleurbaix on 20.7.16.

In November last 825 F.C.Bond, then in a Hospital at Sydney, gave the following report to our Searcher there.

"I saw a letter written to Cpl.Gulson of the 30th Battalion by Willis from hospital in England. Willis had been wounded on the 19th July 1916 at Fromelles and was carried in by the stretcher-bearers in the 20th badly wounded. He is a son of the late Speaker of the Legislative Assembly."

We would be much obliged if you could be much tell us anything at all about Sgt.Willis, or could let us know what man of the same name wrote the letter to which Pte.Bond refers. The only 30th Battalion. Willis we can trace in hospital during 1916 is 2778 G.Willis, who was in 3rd London General Hospital in Dec.1916, suffering from trench feet.

If it was not 804 Sgt.E.E.Willis who wrote to you, can you tell us whether either he, or your correspond is the son of the late speaker as mentioned in the report.

We are sorry to trouble you about a casualty which took place

so long ago, but you will realise how anxious we are that the report should be investigated carefully and any explanation you can suggest sent to Sgt.Willis' people.

With all good wishes.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY.

D. M. B. for M. B.

Pte George Hardbattle

5th Batt. A.I.F.

B.E.7

for

804 Sgt E. E. Willis

30th Batt. A.I.F.

W/M 20.7.16.

Y.M

2.4-17