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

2429 Private
John William Watkins

21st Battalion



2870311M

21st Batn
A.I.F.

WATKINS
John William (H Q)
2429 (H.Q)

"Missing"

Killed in Action 9.10.17. prev. reported Missing

Cert. by A.I.F.HdQtrs 12.11.17.

P.I. Off. M.

London.
26.11.17.

21st Batn
A.I.F.
D. Coy.

Watkins
T.W. 2429

"Missing 3.5.17."

I saw him dead at Bulle court death being due to a machine Gun bullet. I was wounded myself and the last I saw of him was lying in a shell hole in the Hindenburg Line. We lost the ground so I do not know place of ~~casualty~~ burial and cannot refer to anyone for particulars. I took the pay book and personal papers and put them in my haversack.

Witness:-
Pte. C.G. Cole. 4395
21st Batn C. Coy., 9th Pltn.
3rd A.A. Hospital,
Dartford.

W. Oman
London.
3.10.17.

P.I.
Offr. M.

ORIGINAL STATEMENT ECHELON. 2777/19/2

(COPY)

Statemwnt made by No.4393 Pte Cole C.G. 21st Btn

re No.2429 Pte Watkins J.W. 21st Btn
Missing 3.5.17

At Bullecourt, on May 3rd 1917 about noon, I saw No.2429 Pte Watkins J.W. Lying dead in a shell hole actually in the enemy line. I could not see how his death actually occurred but was probably dus to machine gun or rifle bullet. We had to retire about 100 yards and the enemy followed us and took possession of the ground where his body was lying. Before retiring I took his paybook and wallet from his body but before I had opportunity to hand same on I was myself wounded and had to leave my haversack which contained the articles on the sunken road.

Dated at Littlemoor Camp this 18th day of October 1917.

(Sgd) C.G. Cole

Statement made and signed before me

(Sgd) D.H.L. Hawkin.
2/Leiut.
14th Btn.

Miss Winifred S. Banks
Wage Office, M M Dept.
Sheffield Simplex
Jinsley
Sheffield

re 2429 Pte J. W. Watkins,
21st Batt
A.I.F., B.E.F. France.

A.I.F. 51st Btn 10th Rfts

JONES
A.O. 3673

9.10.11

Trial Mapl. to.

C

Miss Winifred P. Banks
Wage office M.M. Depart.
S.P.M. Works Ltd
Tinsley
Sheffield.

about
2429 Watkins J. W.

C 2121 Batt.

Information obtained locally (if any) or from letters.

193 May 22 1918

Enquiry included in W.S.M. Cable — No. ____ of ____

Enquiry included in Deferred Cable — No. ____ of ____

Name and Address of Enquirer

Mr E Cullen
111 Blackbrook Rd.
Bond Perth

Relation of Enquirer to Enquiree.

Father

State if Next-of-Kin.

Yes

Onwards
Inc

Henry Craig Secretary.

Wage Office, M. M. Dept.,
S. S. M. Wks Ltd.,
Tinsley,
Sheffield.
June 14th 1917.

RECEIVED
CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE

Dear Sir.

I am writing to ask if you can please give me any information as to whether the following soldier is a Prisoner of war or not?
"Pte. J. W. Watkins, 2429. 21st Battalion Australian Imperial Force, 2nd Australian Division, B. E. F. France.

I may say that I have received a letter from the Chaplin stating that this soldier has been reported "missing" since May 3rd whilest in an attack at Bullecourt, but feeling really more than anxious concerning him I should feel very grateful if you could give me anymore definite news regarding him, I would much rather know the worst at its beginning than wait in suspense month after month.

Trusting you will pardon the liberty on your time.

I remain,

Yours truly,
Winifred G. Banks.

Wage Office, M.M. Dept.,

"Sheffield Simplex",

Tinsley,

SHEFFIELD.

16/7/1917.

Dear Sir,

I wrote you some little time ago asking if you could give me any information as to the whereabouts of the following soldier, Pte. J.W. Watkins, 2429. 21st Batt. A. I. F.,B.E.F. France, who has been reported as "Missing" since May 3rd 1917.

I received a Card from you on the 21st of June saying you would make all possible enquiries, but up to the time of writing I have had no further news.

I should be very grateful if you could let me have a reply as soon as possible. Thanking you in anticipation.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Winfred G. Banks.

October 25th, 1917.

Miss Winifred G.Banks,
Wage Office M.H.Department,
S.S.H. Works Ltd,
Tinsley, Sheffield.

Dear Madam,

In further answer to your inquiry for

No 2429 Pte.J.W.Watkins,
26th Battalion,
A.I.F.

we deeply regret to inform you of an unofficial report which has been received from No.4393 Pte.C.G.Cole, of the same unit when in the 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford.

Informant stated that he saw.Pte.Watkins lying dead in a shell hole in the Hindenberg line at Bullecourt, and he removed his paybook and other personal effects which he presumably handed in to Battalion Head Quarters.

His death was caused by a machine gun bullet. Informant who was himself wounded knows nothing of his burial, as the ground was lost.

We are continuing the inquiry and will advise your immediately

on receipt of any further news although we greatly fear that there can be little hope of his being alive after all these months.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy in your great anxiety and regretting that this news is so distressing.

Yours faithfully,

SECRETARY. V.P

36, Grosvenor Place,

December 3rd, 1917.

Miss Winifred G.Banks,
Wage Office M.M.Department,
S.S.M. Works, Ltd, Tinsley,
Sheffield.

re 2429 John William (HQ) WATKINS, 21st Bttn, A.I.F.

Dear Madam,

We regret to inform you that the above soldier who was previously reported Missing is now reported "Killed in Action on 9.10.17."

We are making further inquiries in the hope of learning details of his death and will send you any information that we receive.

Regretting the distressing character of this news.

Yours faithfully,

LAW

SECRETARY.