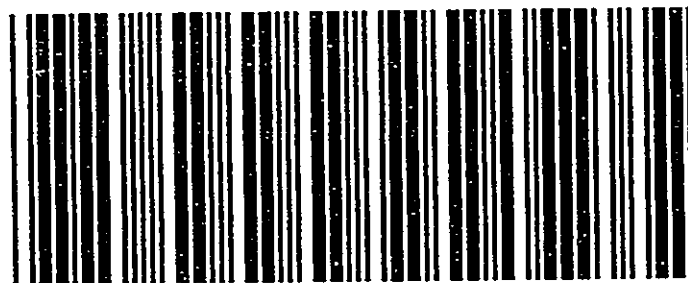


Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files, 1914-18 War
1DRL/0428

**4537 Private
Stanley Witcombe**

20th Battalion



3000702C

20th Battn. C.Coy.
A. I. F.

S. Whitcombe.
4537.

"Killed 25.2.17."

This man was wounded on 25th Feb. 1916 at Butte de Warlencourt, a fragment of shell hit him, but he was only slightly wounded. He was killed instantly however, by another shell which caught him while he was lying on stretcher, on way to dressing station. This was in Main Road of village of Le Sars and occurred a few hours after he was first wounded. I was hear him when he was first wounded and saw him being brought away from dressing station for burial. We were preparing to attack and were going over the top when he was first hit. He was 21 years 5 feet 8", sallow complexion, medium build, Came from New South Wales.

Witness:-

Cpl. J. Inskip. 898.

C.Coy. 20th Battn.

Perham Downs Camp.

A. R. McPhee.

London.

5.6.17.

S.

20th Battn.
A. I. F.

Witcombe.

S.

4537

"Killed 25.2.17."

Referring to the death of Pte. S. Witcombe. He was wounded by the same shell that wounded several others, including myself, but died just as he reached the dressing station, only a very short interval elapsing. I was being dressed myself when his pay-book and papers etc., were brought into the dressing room. He did not regain consciousness after being hit, which fact may help to soothe the wounds of his parents. As I remember him he was a rather reserved lad, his dark eye-brows were the most striking feature that impressed me, and if I remember rightly he was rather sallow complexioned. From inquiries I have made since receiving your letter, he was buried in the village of Le Sars, on the right of the Bapaume Road, just about 100 yards past what is known to us as the sunken road. It can easily be found, as our old information sap opens out into it. I believe there is not a soldier's cemetery just in this immediate vicinity, and our soldiers are buried generally behind our lines, whenever it is possible to bring the bodies in. His resting place is marked by a small cross, bearing his name, No. etc., so it should not be difficult at any time to trace the spot, should any of his people so desire.

ok
Non

20th Battn.
A. I. F.

-2-

Witcombe.

S.

4537

Letter from:-

S. A. Bishop.

C. Coy.

21st Battn. A.I.F.

B. E. F. 12.5.17.

London.
28.6.17.

S.

Havre

2nd June, 1917.

20th AUSTRALIANS

WHITCOMBE, S. 4537

X. 25.2.17. Det. D/S.

He was in C Co., 11th platoon. I think his name was Stanley, and was a Sydney boy, and was a cigar maker. I saw him hit at Le Sars on the 24th Feb. 1917, and I heard that he was hit again, and killed, and buried near the Dressing Station at Le Sars; there is certain to be a cross on his grave. We held the ground.

Informant: Pte G. Horton, 4209
20th Australians, C Co., 11th Pltn.
Australian Camp, Rouelles.

Horton's Home Address:
COALBROOK STREET,
LITTON.

RDM

S

A. I. F. 20.

Whitcombe
WHITCOMBE, S. 4537.

X. February 25th, 1917.

I knew him before we came over. He belonged to Mossmans Bay, Sydney, and I have already written to his mother to say he was killed. He was sitting in a trench when a shell came over badly wounding him in throat and chest. He died on the way to D/S. Cpl. Bishop, A. Coy. could substantiate this.

FJE.

Reference:- Sparks. Cpl. S.H. C.XI. 4520.
St. Johns Hosp.

Staples
W.5.17.

Written Cpl Bishop 16.5.17

S

20th A.I.F.

WHITCOMBE S. No. 4539.

K. 25th February 1917. Det D/B.

At Le Sars on the 25th February I was told by a S/B and it is common knowledge in the Batta that Whitcombe was wounded while holding the line just after the attack, was put on a stretcher and while being carried to the Dressing Station a shrapnel shell burst above him severely wounding him in the abdomen, and he died within 5 minutes of admission to the dressing station.

Inf:- Pte B. H. Cohen No. 5552.

H. S. "Newhaven".

Calais. 12.5.17. RMR.

S

Havre

29th May, 1917.

20th AUSTRALIANS

WHITCOMBE; S. 4537

K. 25.2.17. Det. D/B.

He was killed by a shell in the daytime at Le Sars while going up the line. His body was recovered and buried in the village of Le Sars. I knew him, but do not know any particulars about him.

Informant: Pte W. Prior; 5329;
20th Australian; B Co.;
H. S. Basequibo.

RBS

S

20th A.I.F.

Whitcombe Pte. S. 4537,
C. Company.

(K. Feb. 25/17 Det. D/B)

"I saw Whitcombe hit in the head by shrapnel about mid day
on Feb. 25th. We were advancing at the time".

Eye-witness: Yes

Description: Small dark man.

Informant: Pte. Melville Harrigan 3814,
20th A.I.F., C. Coy., XI Plt.,
1st London General Hospt.,
Camberwell.

Home address:
Dorega,
N.S.W.

*Soft
S b d*

June 19/17,
A.F.M. Baldwin.

Cpl BISHOP. A Co.

20 Batt AIF
BEF

from

4537 S. WITCOMBE

20 Batt AIF

K. 25. 2. 17

~~4537~~

6. 6. 17

FM.

ACK-SS-17
16.6.17

France

S. WITCOMBE

May 12th 17

K 25.7.17

20 Ball AIT

S 2

Dear Madam

In answer to your letter of inquiry
 written on the 6th of this month, I am pleased
 to be able to give you some detail, referring to the
 death of Mr. H. H. H. He was wounded
 by the same shell that wounded several others
 yesterday myself, but died just as he reached
 the dressing station, only a very short interval
 elapsing. I was being dressed myself when
 his things & papers etc were brought into the
 dressing room. He did not regain consciousness
 after being hit, which fact was very sad to both
 of us & his parents. As I remember him
 he was a rather reserved lad, his dark eye-
 brows were the most striking feature that
 impressed me, & if I remember rightly he was
 rather rather complexioned. From inquiry
 I have made since receiving your letter, he was
 killed in the village, Le Sars, on the night of
 the Japanese Raid, just about midnight.

yards past what is known to us as the
broken road. It can easily be found,
as our old communication says if you cut
into it. I believe there is only a single
line, but in this immediate vicinity,
and all soldiers are buried generally behind
our lines, whenever it is possible to bury
the bodies. This resting place is marked
by a small cross, bearing the name, and
it can't should not be difficult at any
time to trace the spot, should any of
his people so desire.

I hope this letter will
will give you the information you require
and also bring some consolation to his
parents. Unfortunately a lot of our men
at times marked missing, it is
feel sympathy for relatives of these men.
With all good wishes

Believe me

Yours sincerely

L. C. Roberts

L. Coy 20th Bat

20th June 1917.

Cpl. S.A. Bishop,
C. Co,
20th Battalion, A.I.F.
B.E.F.

Dear Pte Bishop,

Thank you very much for your letter of May 12th,
in reply to our enquiry, concerning:-

S. Witcombe, 20th Battalion A.I.F.

The information and description you have sent, will be of much
assistance and the relatives will be comforted to learn through
you the details of his death and burial,

Yours faithfully,

V. D.

Secretary,

Flu.

4537