

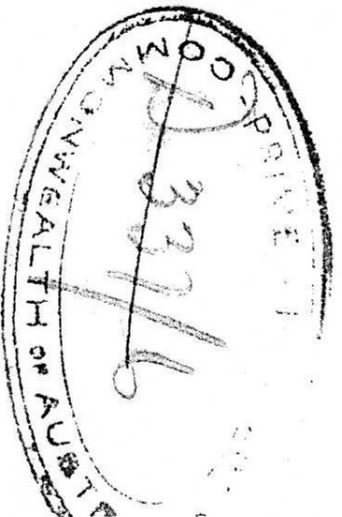
PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

X. 404/7/1. ✓

SUBJECT: DEFENCE.

GRAVES

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY GUEDECOURT



Xcopy

Commonwealth Offices,
Australia House,
Strand, LONDON W.C.2

.S. 2/2/18.B.

MEMORANDUM TO:-

4th August, 1921.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
Melbourne.

(For transmission to the Department of Defence)

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY, GUEUDRECOURT.

I enclose herewith for your information and notation copy of correspondence which has passed between this office and the Imperial War Graves Commission with regard to the loss of identities of certain A.I.F. personnel during the process of concentrating the above cemetery into Grevillers British Cemetery.

This correspondence is self explanatory and requires no further elaboration.

It will be appreciated if steps can be taken to amend records where necessary and forward suitable explanations to the next of kin concerned.

H. B. J.
OFFICIAL SECRETARY.

Orig. sent to Defence 15/9/21.

✓

7

DUISANS,
12-10-20.

Inspector,
Australian Graves Services,
A M I E N S.

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY, GUEUDECOURT.

Attached please find Comprehensive Report for Bayonet Trench Cemetery, Gueudecourt, 57c.N.20.c.9.6., which has been concentrated into GREVILLERS BRITISH CEMETERY.

I have endeavoured to trace the deceased A.I.F. personnel in the above-mentioned Cemetery in Grevillers British Cemetery, but can only account for the following :-

87a	HOLLINGWORTH	R.G.	1st Battn., A.I.F.
3381	LUCAS	A.	Do
5293	McKENZIE	G.A.	Do
3251	BURNS	G.E.	Do
5226	SCOTT	T.C.	Do
5756	POLLARD	C.A.N.	Do
----	STEEL 2/Lieut.		Do.
----	LANSER 2/Lieut.		Do.

There are thirteen (13) unknown Australian soldiers shown on "A" Forms for Grevillers British Cemetery with whom the remaining deceased members of the A.I.F. could be identical, but the person who sent the reports shows a different map reference in nearly every case which makes it extremely difficult to trace exactly what graves the bodies from Bayonet Trench Cemetery were put into.

It appears as if the same thing has happened to this Cemetery as Noreuil British Cemetery No. 1; purely and simply carelessness on the part of the person in charge of the Exhumation Party who exhumed the Cemetery.

The attached Comprehensive Report was compiled three weeks after the Armistice, 29.11.18, and if the crosses were damaged when the exhumation took place it would have saved a lot of trouble if they had used the Comprehensive Report which shows each man's particulars and the number of his grave.

For your information, please.

(sgd) A.H. WILSON

Australian Graves Services.
DUISANS.

I have made enquiries and have found out that the above Cemetery was exhumed by the 182 Labour Company between October and December 1919 under some technical arrangements between D.A.D. "A" Branch, No. 1 Area, and D.A.D. "West", No. 6 Area

(sgd) A.H. WILSON

Australian Graves Services.
DUISANS.

14-10-20.

" B "

GRAVELLERS BRITISH CEMETERY.

(All Personnel of the 1st Battalion. A.I.F.)

87a	Pte	MOLLINGSWORTH	R. E.	K.	In A.	5.11.16.
3381	L/Cpl.	EDGAS	A.	"	"	"
5293	Pte	MCKENZIE	G. R.	"	"	"
3251	"	BURNS	G. E.	"	"	"
5226	"	SCOTT	P. E.	"	"	"
5756	"	POLLARD	C. A. N.	"	"	"
	2/Lt.	STEEL	A. V.	"	"	"
	"	LANSER	H. M.	"	"	"

H.5/9/1.

AUSTRALIAN GRAVES SERVICES

(France and Belgium)

Inspector's Office,

Amiens,

Somme, France.

20th October, 1920.

S. 5/6/2

O.C.,

Australian Graves Services (France & Belgium)

VILLERS BRETONNEUX.

(For transmission to C.O., A.G.S. LONDON).

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY, GUNUDECOURT.

Herewith please find copy of reports furnished by A/Sgt. A.H. WILSON, stationed at Duisans, relative to the above-mentioned Cemetery.

It is suggested that the matter be taken up with the Imperial Authorities as in the previous case reported.

(sgd) C.J. COLE Lieut.

Inspector.
Australian Graves Services.

Commanding Officer,
Australian Graves Services,
Australia House,
Strand, LONDON. W.C.

Forwarded

(sgd) W.T. MEIKLE Captain.

O.C., Australian Graves Services.
(France and Belgium)

Villers Bretonneux.
22.10.1920.

2/2/18.B.

3rd November, 1920.

The D.G.G.R. & E.,
 War Office,
 33-38, Baker Street,
 London. W.1.

Bayonet Trench Cemetery.
 Gueudecourt.

With reference to my memorandum 2/2/18 of the 12th ultimo relative to Moreuil British Cemetery Nos. 1 and 2 you are advised that a further report has been received from my representative in France to the effect that the above cemetery has been concentrated into Grevillers British Cemetery.

The attached Schedule marked "A" is an extract from the comprehensive report of Bayonet Trench Cemetery - you will note that there were 21 Australian officers and soldiers buried therein and that each grave was numbered and registered. I regret to state that my representative now advises that he has systematically searched Grevillers British Cemetery in the endeavour to trace these 21 soldiers grave therein but can only trace the 8 enumerated in the attached Schedule "B" which means that the identify of 13 soldiers graves was lost in lifting the cemetery. Further that there are 13 unknown Australians buried in Grevillers Cemetery (who are no doubt the 13 soldiers whose graves could not be traced) but from the evidence available it is impossible to identify any one of the 13. As the comprehensive report for Bayonet Trench Cemetery was compiled three weeks after the Armistice, viz. 29.11.18 it may appear, if the facts are as reported, that reasonable care was not taken in this case and the person in charge of the lifting of this cemetery did not exercise sufficient care in the work entrusted to him.

In the circumstances it would be much appreciated if an enquiry could be made in order that the next of kin of these 13 deceased soldiers may be advised of their exact place of burial.

With regard to future concentrations it would be also appreciated if you could arrange to instruct your representative in France and Belgium to advise my representative in France (O.C. Australian Graves Services, Villers Bretonneux, France.) when all future concentrations where A.I.F. graves are involved will take place, in order that an Australian representative may be detailed to attend for the purpose of assisting the work necessary from a point of view of records, when transferring from one cemetery to another.

The favour of your early attention will oblige.

(sgd) G. L. PHILLIPS

Major.

C.O. AUSTRALIAN GRAVES SERVICES.

COPY.

2/2/18B

9th November, 1920.

O.C.,

Australian Graves Services,
Villers Bretonneux, France.
(Southern Sector).

Bayonet Trench Cemetery, Gueudecourt.

With reference to your H.5/9/21 of the 22nd ultimo forwarding S.5/6/2 of the 20th idem, I have to thank you for bringing this matter to my notice and as suggested by you have taken it up with the Imperial Authorities and on receipt of their reply will again communicate with you.

(sgd) H.F. Coleman Lieut.

For Major.

O.O. Australian Graves Services.

Officer Commanding,
Australian Graves Services,
Commonwealth Offices,
Australia House,
Strand, W.C. 2.

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY, GUEUDECOURT.
57c. N. 20. c. 9. 6.

Reference your 2/2/18, dated 3rd November, 1920.

This matter has been carefully investigated with all available records.

On the original report of the above-mentioned cemetery there appeared the names of twenty one Australian and one unknown British Soldier, the report being dated 29th November, 1918

On consulting exhumation reports, eight of the same names appear as being re-buried in GREVILLERS BRITISH CEMETERY. The report also shews seventeen unknown A.I.F. as being in the latter cemetery.

An examination of the Captain Thomas Registers for the Bayonet Trench area has been made, and it is found that all the names shewn on the Gueudecourt Report appear on these registers under the heading of "Memorial Cross", which would go to shew that the crosses in question could never have been anything better than in the nature of memorials especially having regard to the fact that Captain Thomas, when registering this area, would almost certainly investigate below the crosses before reporting them as memorails.

We hold a burial return of the First Australian Divisional Burial Officer shewing these names as being interred at 57c. N. 25.d.8.2. and marked by Divisional Disc, nineteen being shewn under Disc 325, one officer under Disc 326 and the others under Disc 327.

It is felt that if Bayonet Trench Cemetery was in the condition shewn by our report dated 29th November 1920, then it is difficult to surmise how thirteen of the crosses could have been destroyed between that date and the date of exhumation. It is considered most likely, however, that the report was compiled in the office of the D.A.D. some time earlier than this date and did not accurately represent the position on the ground.

In this connection it is observed that the names appear on the report in the exact order in which they are given on the burial return. Moreover, no reference is made on the report to Australian Divisional Disc numbers.

If no information becomes available, it is suggested that a special cross reading "Buried in this cemetery, individual graves unknown", should be erected over the names in question in Grevillers British Cemetery, as there seems to be little doubt that the bodies were found on exhumation, were not identified and re-buried as "Unknown".

Prior to definitely deciding in the matter, however, we are forwarding full particulars of the case to D.G.R. & E.

France for local investigation which may possibly throw some further light, and you will be advised as soon as the report is to hand.

With regard to your fourth paragraph, your suggestion is agreed to and instructions are being forwarded to D.G.R. & I. France, accordingly.

(sgd) C. MISKIN.

Captain.
Staff Captain.
for Brig.-General.
D.G. G.N. & I.

War Office,
33-38, Baker Street,
Portman Square,
W.1.

18th November 1920.

2/2/18 B.

6th December, 1920.

The D.G.G.R. & E.
WAR OFFICE,
33-38, Baker Street, W.1.

Bayonet Trench Cemetery, Gueudecourt.

Please refer to your G.1-2-3/131 of 18th November, relative to the transfer of the remains of late members of the Australian Imperial Force from the above named cemetery to Grevillers British Cemetery. It is noted that the statements made in paragraphs 5 and 9 are a little conflicting as in one mention is made of "Memorial Crosses" yet later you state that there is little doubt that the bodies were found on exhumation.

You will appreciate that the circumstances in this case are very distressing to the relatives as location sheets received from you have shown the personnel to be buried in Bayonet Trench Cemetery and through the process of "lifting" many identifications have been lost.

It is imperative that every effort be made to positively identify the graves of the thirteen "Unknown" A.I.F. in Grevillers British Cemetery who were previously identified and interred in recorded graves in Bayonet Trench Cemetery.

The report of your representatives in France on the matter is anxiously awaited as it is desired as early as possible to advise the Department of Defence in order that they may be made fully cognisant of the facts.

I have to thank you for issuing instructions to the D.G.G.R. & E., France to enable our representatives to be present at all future concentrations.

(sgd) G.L. Phillips.

Major.
C.O. Australian Graves Services.

COFY.

2/2/18/B

18th March, 1921

Director of Records,
Imperial War Graves Commission,
82, Baker Street, W.1.

Bayonet Trench Cemetery, Gueudecourt.

With reference to your memorandum G.1-2-3/131 of the 18th November last, it would be much appreciated if you could now furnish a reply to my memorandum 2/2/18 of the 6th idem, as you will realise that this matter is extremely urgent.

(sgd) G.L. PHILLIPS
Major .
C.O.Australian Graves Services.

3/21900.

6th April 1921.

The Officer Commanding,
Australian Graves Services,
Australia House,
Strand, W.C. 2.

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY.

Reference your A.G.S. 2/2/18/B of 18th March, 1921.
received on 31st March, 1921.

An urgent reminder on the above matter has been
forwarded to France and a further communication will be
sent you at the earliest possible moment.

(sgd) C. Miskin.

for Director of Records.

I.W.G.C.
82, Baker Street,
LONDON, W.1.

COPY.

Reference:- G.R. & E. 44.

3/21900A.

19th May, 1921.

The Officer Commanding,
Australian Graves Services,
Australia House,
Strand, W.C.2.

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY, GUEUDECOURT,
57c.N.20.e.9.6.

In continuation of this office G.1-2-3/131 dated 18.11.20 and your 2/2/18 dated 6.12.20. and 2/2/18/B dated 18.3.21. This matter has again been very carefully examined, and a reply from the Deputy Controller, France has also been received.

It is greatly regretted that little can be added to the first letter referred to. The exhumation reports reveal 8 identifications out of 21 originally reported buried in the Cemetery. A thorough ground search has been made at the map reference for Bayonet Trench, but no trace of any graves can be found, the ground being under cultivation.

The graves of 20 Unknown Australians in Grevillers British Cemetery (the Cemetery of concentration) have been opened with negative results. Whether the originally reported crosses were of a memorial nature, or otherwise, cannot now be definitely decided, but it appears to be certain that the soldiers in question were buried in this area and are now in this cemetery.

In view of the fact that the identified graves are located in Grevillers British Cemetery, and having regard to the number of likely Unknowns in that Cemetery it seems a clear case for a Special Cross inscribed with the regimental particulars of those whose names do not at present appear on the reports, and prefaced by the words "Believed to be buried in this Cemetery", and instructions are being forwarded to France to carry this into effect. It is assumed that further particulars are not available in your office regarding these burials, although of course, if you have any information recorded which is likely to be of use to us it would be appreciated if this could be forwarded here as soon as possible.

(sgd) C. Miskin.

for DIRECTOR OF RECORDS.

I.W.G.C.,
82, Baker Street,
London W.1.

COPY.

A.G.S.2/2/18B

13th June, 1921.

Director of Records,
Imperial War Graves Commission,
82, Baker Street, W.1.

BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY, GUEUDECOURT.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your memorandum G.R. & E. 44 3/21900A of the 19th ult. and regret to note that your investigations have failed to disclose the exact place of burial of the 13 A.I.F. soldiers who were originally buried in Bayonet Trench Cemetery, Gueudecourt, prior to that cemetery being concentrated into Grevillers British Cemetery.

With regard to the last paragraph of your memorandum I am to state that you are already in possession of all the information held in this office concerning this case, and it would appear therefore that the only action possible is to accept the "Special Cross" action suggested by you.

At the same time, after taking all the facts into consideration I think you will agree that there is scarcely any doubt that these 13 soldiers were buried in Grevillers British Cemetery as unknowns and it is therefore considered that the inscription on the Special Cross "Buried in this Cemetery" should be substituted for "Believed to be buried in this Cemetery."

Will you please let me have your decision on this matter and also advise when the Special Cross has been erected in order that the Department of Defence, Melbourne may be fully advised of all the circumstances surrounding this case.

OFFICIAL SECRETARY.

COPY.

Reference G.R. & E. 44.

3/21900.

The Official Secretary,
Australian Graves Services,
London, W.C.1.

1st July, 1921

**BAYONET TRENCH CEMETERY,
GUEUDECOURT.**

Reference your A.G.S. 2/2/18B dated 13th June
1921.

In accordance with your wishes it has been
decided to substitute the words "Believed to be
buried" on the Special Cross to the 13/A.I.F.
soldiers with the words "Buried in this Cemetery".

You will be advised of the amendment of the
cross in due course.

(sgd) F. DAVIDSON.

for Director of Records.

I.W.G.C.,
82, Baker Street,
London, W. 1.