

A Soldier of the Great War

Corporal Robert Daly

60th Battalion AIF



Corporal Robert Daly

Place of birth Toombullup, Victoria Roman Catholic Religion

Occupation **Farmer**

Address Omeo, Victoria

Marital status Single Age at embarkation 21

Next of kin Mother, Mrs Margaret Daly, Tatong, via Benalla, Victoria

Enlistment date 1 September 1916 Date of enlistment from Nominal Roll 29 August 1916

Rank on enlistment Private

Unit name 60th Battalion, 6th Reinforcement

AWM Embarkation Roll number 23/77/4

Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A71 **Embarkation details**

Nestor on 2 October 1916

Rank from Nominal Roll Corporal Unit from Nominal Roll 60th Battalion

Fate Died of wounds 25 April 1918

Place of burial Vignacourt British Cemetery (Plot I, Row D, Grave No. 21),

> France 169

Panel number, Roll of Honour, Australian War Memorial

Other details

Robert William Daly

War service: Western Front

Medals: British War Medal, Victory Medal

Robert Daly was a 21 year old young man from Omeo in Victoria when he enlisted in the AIF on the 1st September 1916.

He was initially placed in the 60th Battalion as a reinforcement.

After training he would depart for the Great War on the A71 NESTOR on the 2nd October 1916. He and his 60th Battalion reinforcements were fortunate to have missed the horror of the AIF's first engagement of the war, Fromelles.

The 60th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 24 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 8th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. The majority of both groups were Victorians. The new battalion formed part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Having only arrived in France on 28 June, the 60th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front on 19 July, without the benefit of an introduction to the trenches in a "quiet" sector. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster for the battalion. In a single day, it was virtually wiped out, suffering 757 casualties. These losses meant the battalion saw little further offensive action in 1916.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but it was spared having to assault it. It did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 60th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September. This assault was a success - a product of the systematic way in which the early actions during the third battle of Ypres were fought.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. During this defence, the 60th Battalion participated in the now legendary counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April. When the Allies launched their own offensive around Amiens in August, the 60th Battalion was amongst the troops in action on the first day.

By September 1918, however, the AIF was considerably under-strength and one battalion in each brigade was ordered to disband to reinforce the other three. The 60th Battalion was so ordered, and the men mutinied. After being addressed by Brigadier H.E. 'Pompey' Elliot they complied with the order and the battalion disbanded on 27 September 1918. Their actions are indicative of the high regard in which Elliot was held, and of the high standard of discipline within the 60th; it was the only Australian battalion ordered to disband in September 1918 that did so.

Robert would arrive in England as the long winter approached, on the 16th November 1916 and would be part of the 15th Training Battalion undergoing various exercises. He became proficient at the Lewis Gun, was appointed as an Acting Corporal during this time, and later as an acting Sargeant . He would continue training at the AIF Hurdcotte base in England before finally joining his 60th Battalion, moving to Le

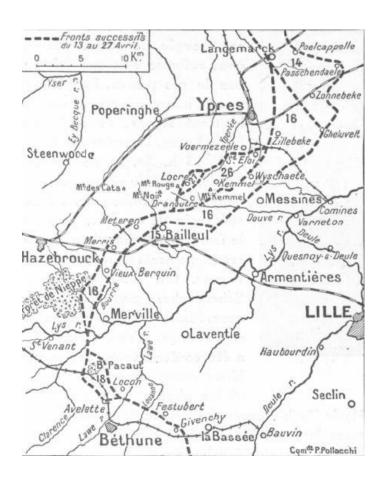
Havre in France on the 16th September 1917 and eventually in the field "taken on strength" on the 5th October 1917. Shortly afterwards on the 12th October he was promoted to Lance Corporal and then Corporal. The Salient had been the site of horrific battles at Passchendaele and Polygon Wood and Menin Road during September and October. Robert had managed to miss these occasions.

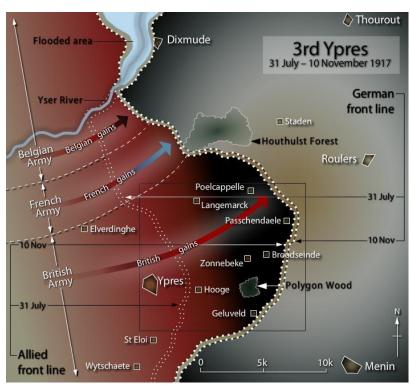
During October 1917 the Battalion was located at Dominion Camp in Belgium and was rotated in and out of the front line in the Ypres area. During the entire war the front line of the Salient moved very little with close range trench warfare the norm for almost 4 years. It was here that Robert would spend considerable time in those trenches as well as reinforcing other Battalions and working behind the lines.

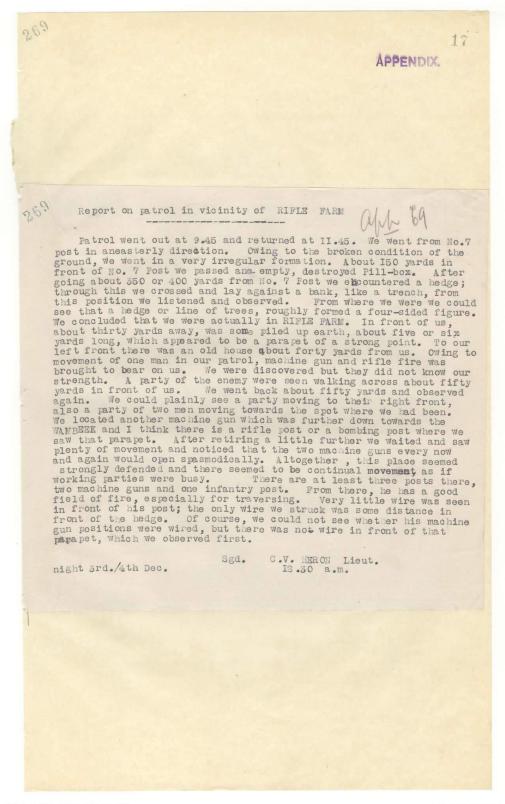
November and December saw the Battalion located at Kemmel and in ongoing training. The battalion would often be rotated through the trenches with little action taking place. The winter conditions meant that the battle conditions were often quite stable with only shelling and spasmodic machine gun fire taking place. Raiding parties took place to often try to achieve some type of advantage. The trenches were often only meters apart. Communication, trenches and general maintenance of the battlefield were all achieved at this time. It was also a time of respite from war to some degree. Soldiers were billeted behind the lines and enjoyed a small moment of peace. The Xmas truces were often encountered with both sides sharing cigarettes and even playing soccer. The English commanders frowned severely on this while Australian Generals were a little more lenient.



Beussent, Locre and Doudaville were areas frequented during this time.







AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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The above account from the 60th Battalion Diary indicates the type of activity Robert may have been involved in during November and December 1917.

During January to March the Battalion continued to hold the line in Belgium in and around the Messines Ridge and Wytscharte area. This area had seen great loss of life in 1917.

By the spring of 1918, the Allies knew that there would be a major German attack – they just did not know where it would come. The British reinforced their positions near the coast while the French strengthened their positions to the south of the British. However, this left a weakness in the British line to the west of Cambrai. Here the British trench system had not been completed and those that had been dug were inadequate. Sir Hubert Gough, who commanded the Fifth Army in this area, was well aware of his predicament and more conscious of the fact that he had few reserves to call on if the Germans did attack the sector where the Fifth Army was stationed. German reconnaissance had made them aware that the area was less well defended.

On March 21st, 1918, Luderndorff launched the offensive. In just five hours, the Germans fired one million artillery shells at the British lines held by the Fifth Army – over 3000 shells fired every minute. The artillery bombardment was followed by an attack by elite storm troopers. These soldiers travelled lightly and were skilled in fast, hard-hitting attacks before moving on to their next target. Unlike soldiers burdened with weighty kit etc, the storm troopers carried little except weaponry (such as flame throwers) that could cause much panic, as proved to be the case in this attack.

By the end of the first day of the attack, 21,000 British soldiers had been taken prisoner and the Germans had made great advances through the lines of the Fifth Army. Senior British military commanders lost control of the situation. They had spent three years used to static warfare and suddenly they had to cope with a German onslaught. Gough ordered the Fifth Army to withdraw. The German attack was the biggest breakthrough in three years of warfare on the Western Front. Ironically, the British gave up to the Germans the Somme region – where so many British and German soldiers had been killed in the battle of 1916.

The German advance also put Paris in the firing line. The Germans had built the world's largest artillery gun. Three Krupps cannons were moved to the front line and used to shell Paris. Paris was 120 kilometres from the front line but a shell from the huge guns only took just over 200 seconds to reach the city and 183 huge shells landed on the capital of France causing many Parisians to leave the city.

The first few days of the attack were such an overwhelming success, that William II declared March 24th to be a national holiday. Many in Germany assumed that the war was all but over.

With this offensive taking place the 5th Division of which Robert's 60th Battalion was a part of was rushed south to the Somme to reinforce and assist in holding back the German advancement.

On the 29th March the Robert was stationed around La Neuville and Corbie and billeted at Bonnay near the Somme.

Corbie had been evacuated with the advance of the German forces and homes were left at short notice. Shelling was continuing at a very heavy rate. The 60th Battalion was stationed here to hold the advancement.

April was to be a turning point in the war. On the 11th April 1918 Robert and his battalion advanced to Blangy Tronville and prepared to hold the line. 2 officers and 150 men were sent to Aubigney to reinforce the line. On the 16th April word came that the enemy was likely to advance on Villers Bretonneux. Gas and shelling had been experienced at Aubigney and the line was reinforced. It was from Blangy Troville that the Villers Bretonneux campaign would be directed.

On the 23rd and 24th the enemy attacked. If Villers Bretonneux were to fall the Amiens and the supply lines were an easy target.

On 24 April 1918 the Germans had taken Villers-Bretonneux and were pushing out west of the town in the direction of Amiens. As soon as this grave news was relayed to British headquarters 'orders showered down', in Charles Bean's words, to retake this vital position from whose commanding heights north of the town the spires of Amiens Cathedral were clearly visible. Along with some British battalions, the job of retaking Villers-Bretonneux was assigned to two Australian brigades of the 4th and 5th Divisions—the 13th, commanded by Brigadier-General William Glasgow, and the 15th, commanded by Brigadier-General Harold 'Pompey' Elliott.

The plan to recapture Villers-Bretonneux was relatively simple, but difficult and dangerous. The Germans had been able to place a significant number of men and machine guns in the town and along the railway embankment to the south and west. Strong enemy elements had also established themselves in the woods to the west of the town. The Australian plan was for a surprise night attack, with no preliminary artillery bombardment. Two battalions (the 51st and 52nd Battalions, about 1500 men) of the 13th Brigade, 4th Division, would attack to the south of Villers-Bretonneux towards the east. Three battalions (the 57th, 59th and 60th Battalions, about 2400 men) of the 15th Brigade, 5th Division, would similarly attack from the north of the town towards the east and then swing south-east to the old Roman road heading out of Villers-Bretonneux. Thus would the Germans be encircled and trapped.

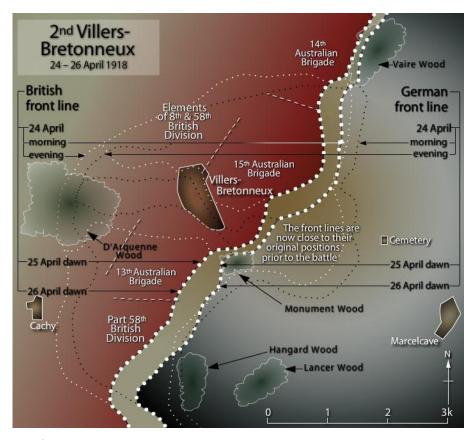
The northern attack battalions formed up in the dark along the Fouilloy-Cachy road to the west across the fields from the entrance to the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery and the Australian National Memorial and did not begin their advance until an hour after the appointed time. The battalions then moved up out of the valley, and over the ground on which the cemetery and memorial now stand, through to the Villers-Bretonneux-Le Hamel road not far beyond the back of the memorial. And so, by the morning of 25 April 1918 the men of the AIF, with some assistance by British units, had virtually surrounded

Villers-Bretonneux. It took the rest of that day and into 26 April to completely secure the town and to establish a new front line east of it. This, the Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, had been a remarkable achievement and a clear-cut success for the AIF. It marked the end of the great German offensive on the Somme which had begun so successfully on 21 March 1918.

Robert was part of this historic and momentous battle as he and over 2400 Australian soldiers of the 5th Division attacked from the north towards the east.

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On the 25th April 1918 during the advance on Villers- Bretonneux, Robert was to suffer gunshot wounds to the side, hip and abdomen.

He was attended to by the 13th Australian Field ambulance and then transferred to the 61st Casualty clearing station located at Vignacourt.

The Casualty Clearing Station was part of the casualty evacuation chain, further back from the front line than the Aid Posts and Field Ambulances The job of the CCS was to treat a man sufficiently for his return to duty or, in most cases, to enable him to be evacuated to a Base Hospital. It was not a place for a long-term stay. CCS's were generally located on or near railway lines, to facilitate movement of casualties from the battlefield and on to the hospitals. Although they were quite large, CCS's moved quite frequently, especially in the wake of the great German attacks in the spring of 1918 and the victorious Allied advance in the summer and autumn of that year.

The 20th and 61st Casualty Clearing Stations were in Vignacourt when the German advance began in March 1918. The cemetery was opened in April and closed in August, after 584 soldiers had been buried there.

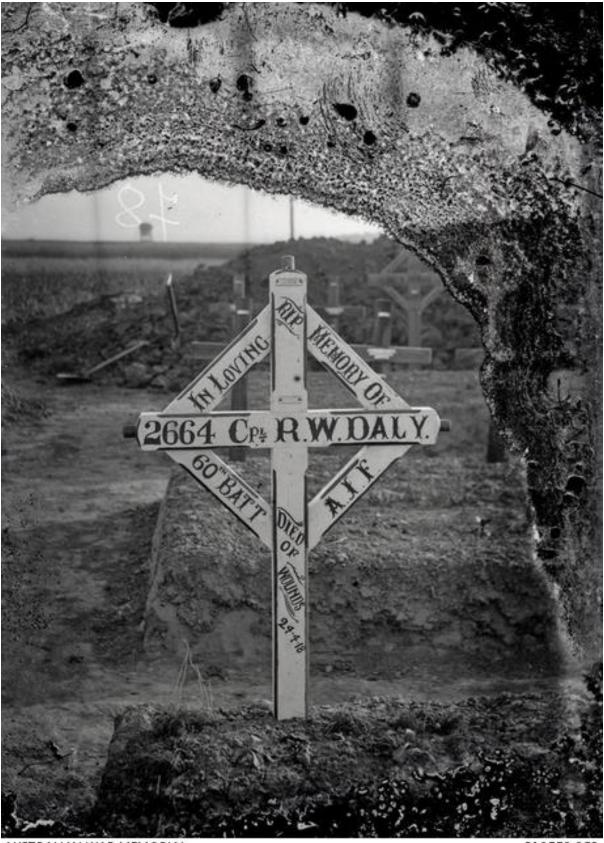
Robert was to die on the 26th April 1918 from his wounds and subsequently be buried in Vignacourt cemetery where he is remembered today.

h	Sgt .	Casualty Form Active	Service	mental Nu	mber 2664
Ti Pi	Reg	iment or Corps 6th-Rfets-601	h-Bn.		
Rank.	Surnam	ie. DALY	siction Name	Robert	William
Religion.		Age on Enli	+		
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Date of p	romotion to presen	nt rank Date of appo	intment to lance	e rank	*
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ecupatio	n			Sign	ature of Officer
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	O.C.Troops	A.71"Nestor" Embarked	Melbourne	2.10.16	
		Disembarked	Plymouth	16.11.1	6.)B.R.8640.
.6.17.	C.O.15th Trng	Reverts to Ranks on	Hurdcott	16.11.1	6 0 D 4793 /2 /20
	Battalion.	marching in from Australia		20,120,1	6. C.R.4331/1/18 D.0.59,8.8.17.
.6.17.	ďo	Appointed Acting-Corporal	do		6.C. R 4331/1/10
					D.0.5888.17.
2.17.	A.I.F.Depots	Obtained 1st class quali-	England	25.7.17	.D.0'14,24.2.17.
	orders Pageo.	a Lewis Gun at 6 Rifle Con	mea		
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7.17.	C.O.15th Trng	Appointed Acting-Sgt	Unudesti		
	Bettalion.	President Adding-Sgc	Hurdcott	21.7.17	L.R.5966. D.0.62E,
9.17.	do	Reverts to Ranks on pro-			18.8.17.
		-ceeding Overseas.	do	17.9.17	L.R.8256. 0.0.72E,22.9.17.



Vignacourt Cemetery

Report	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, for during active service, as rejected on Army Ferm B.273. Arms Form A. M. or in other official documents.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B.213, Army Form A.36, or other-afficial
Date From whom received	The authority to be quoted in each case.			documents.
16.9.17.No.12 Camp.	Proceeded Overseas to Freez 15th Trng Bn via South	nce-Hurdcott ampton.	17.9.	17. L.R.8256. D. 72E,22.9.17.
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27.9.17. do	Marched out to join Unit	do ·	25.9.	17. A.X.11586.
5.10.17.0.0.60th Bn B.213.	Taken on Strength	Field	29.9.	17. E 23/40.D.0.41/5870.
12.10.17. do	Appointed Lance-Corporal	do	4.10	.17.E 23/41.D.0.43/6319.
11.4.18. do	Promoted Corporal vice 11 Cpl Blair J.J. Pay Book No.145943.	22 do	11.4.	18. E 23/67.D.0.16/1307.
3.5.18. do	Wounded in Action	âo	25.4.	18. E 23/70.
25.4.18.14th Aust Field Amb.	Admitted & transferred t	g do	25.4.	18. A.K.2651/2.
27.4.18.61st Cesual Clearing St	ty Admitted (G.S.W.Hip pens	trated do	25.4.	18. A.K.2651/5.
26.4.1B. do	DIED OF WOUNDS	In the Fiel France,	d 25.4	A.T.21371.D.A.A.G.(2) D.O.20/1989.
AUSTRALIAN SECTION British Expe	N. 3RD ECHRICH, G.H.Q.,		(Sg	F. T. LUKIN Lieut, For C.1/c Records.
4.18 Director of	Buried Vignacourt B Cemetery, Smiles North	netish		131476



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P10550.069



Attestation Paper of Persons	Enlisted for Service Abroad.
No. 2664 Name (Surname D)	ALY
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151967 Unit 6 Ring. 60%	in
Joined on	-
Questions to be put to the Person	0
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(hD)	2. In the Parish of in or
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born?	near the Town of Joombullup
	in the County of Nector ca
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.)	shalural Bombutash Rugeet
4. What is your Age! Certifical produced	. 21 years 4 mouths
5. What is your Trade or Calling?	5. Janner
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period?	6. 100
7. Are you married !	7. Norugle
moth,	Anomargares Daly
8. Who is your next of km ! (Address and relationship to be stated)	TATONG
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The answer to this question shall not be	9. Ones
9. What is your permanent address in Australia !	Victoria!
10. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Recurve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces I If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge	io No Reg ST hulbourne 7915
11. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service?	11.50
12. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds?	12. Nv
13. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)— Do you understand that no separation an amount which in respect of your service beyond an amount which	13
together with pay would reach eight shillings per day? 14. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox	14. Yes
and enterio fever?	N5 1.020
by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and her Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Co	
two 66ths	the pay payable to me from time to time during my service
for the support of my wife and children	
Date 29 . 8. 16	XN Laly 10
* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried m D.849/3.16. C.3307. † Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are child	Signature of person enlisted. en or widowers without children under 18 years of age. tren three-fifths must be allotted.

PB. 60145943

B103 France 17-9-07 LR8256

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Statement of Service of N	10. 2667 Name UAL	, Cover I warns

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	& A.D.B.D.			

I have examined the above details, and find them correct in every respect.

(611)—V	Vt. W1751-1103. 500,	0005-15C. & G. Forms B. 103/1.			Army Form B. 103.	
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Date o	Date of promotion to present rank Date of appointment Numerical position on roll of N.C.Os.					
Extend	ded	Re-engaged Qualification (b)				
	Report	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as	District Name	The same	Remarks	
Date	From whom received	reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.	
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(b) e.	g., Signailer, Shoei	ing Smith, etc., etc., also special qualifications in tech	nical Corps duties.		[P.T.O.	

REPORT OF GRAVE REGISTRATION.

Vignascurt British Cometery,

Plat / How II Crave 2/

Nof. to 54/921 - Register

Order form despatement 27.2.23

B.W.

VL

XXX 4780

DESEATCHED

16th March, 1922.

Dear Madam,

With reference to the Memorial Form "A" completed by you in respect of your son, the late No. 2664, Corporal R. W. Daly, 60th Battalion, it is noted that the personal inscription submitted

"Silence is no certain token. That no hidden grief is there. Phinofilm token. That no hidden grief is there. Phinofilm token. That no hidden grief is there. Spinofilm token. That no hidden grief is there is the hardest griphofilm token in isolifor in the hardest griphofilm token. That no hidden grief is there is no certain token. That no hidden grief is there is no certain token. That no hidden grief is there is no certain token. That no hidden grief is there is no certain token. That no hidden grief is there is no certain token. That no hidden grief is there.

contains over 100 letters and spaces, whereas the available accommodation on the headstone will not permit of more than 66 letters (less the number of spaces between words, each space counting as a letter) being cut. If you do not desire to abbreviate the above, kindly choose a shorter inscription.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs.W. Daly, Post Office TATONG,

Major. Officer i/c Base Records.

Argeralian Imperial Force.



O. H. M. S.

A.I.F. KIT STORE, 110. GREYHOUND ROAD, HAMMERSMITH, LONDON, W. 6.

Inventory of Effects of - No. 2664. Daly R.W. 60th. Btn. A.I.F.

Forwarded to - LEGATEE. Mother, Mrs Margaret Daly, Tatong,
Via Benalla,
VICTORIA.

45926.

EFFECTS.

Ex. 3rd Echelon France. (3/1155) 3.6.18.

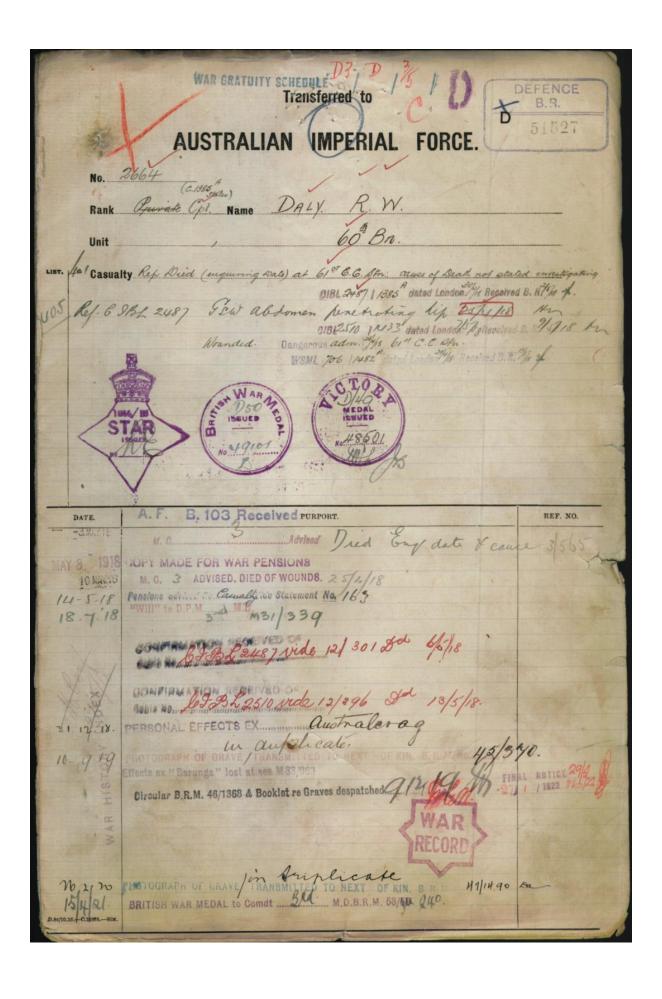
Disc, Religious Medallion, Religious book, Rosary, Scissors, Metal watch and cover, 2 Note books, Letters, Photos, Card, Coin, Gold? ring (damaged).

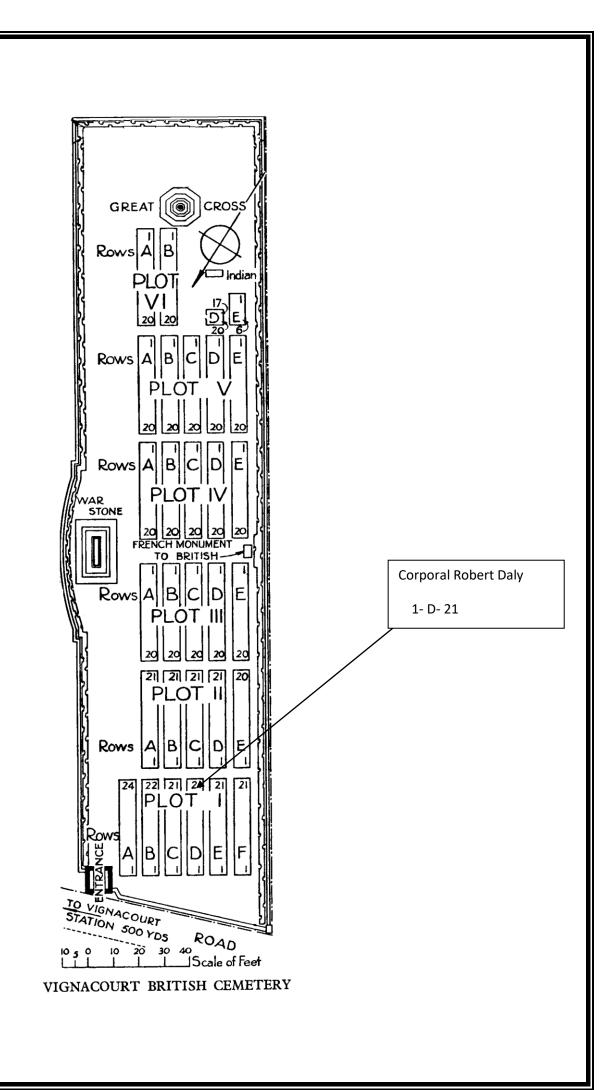
Per "Barunga" 21.6.18. In Case No. 1253.

D/S. 35750.

Checked by

No. of Package





In Memory of

Corporal

Robert William Daly

2664, 60th Bn., Australian Infantry, A.I.F. who died on 25 April 1918

Remembered with Honour Vignacourt British Cemetery





Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission