Lee, Gerald Roy
ASC 1905

Cemetery or memorial details: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France

War Grave Register notes: Lee, Sgt Roy, 4454. 26th Bn. 3rd May, 1917. Son of William and Florence Lee, of Zante, The Avenue, Birrell St, Waverley, Born at Kelso, NSW.

Note, from original document below, that Gerald was brother of #1979 Lance Corporal Gordon Scott Lee M.M. 2nd Bn (ASC 1905-9).

Also his sister Doris Linda, a Staff Nurse, served from 29/10/15 and returned to Australia 29/3/1919.

Note also the historical notes in the biographical details below:

_The great great grandfather of Roy Lee came to NS W in 1788 in Imperial Service and his son William was one of the first 13 settlers in the Bathurst district and founder of the family known as the Bathurst Lees._

University Junior Examinations.

**LIST OF PASSES IN BATHURST.**

The lists of passes at the University Junior Examinations were posted yesterday.

All Saints College—Allan Darvall Barton, 2 B, 4 0, 60, 8 B, 9 B, 10 0, 13 B; Gerald Roy Lee
In early 1917, the 26th Battalion joined the follow-up of the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line and attacked at Warlencourt (1-2 March) and Lagincourt (26 March). For his valorous actions at Lagincourt, Captain Percy Cherry was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. On 3 May, the Battalion was also involved in the second attempt to breach the Hindenburg Line defences around Bullecourt. Later that year the focus of the AIF’s operations switched to Belgium. There, the 26th Battalion fought in the battle of Menin Road on 20 September, and participated in the capture of Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October.

Lee was thus killed on the first day of the “Second Bullecourt” battle. Below are a few copies from the wider correspondence resulting from his sister’s attempts to find, through the Red Cross, the circumstances of her brother’s death? Here there was confusion as to which “Lee” was
26th Battn.
A.I.F.

"Killed in Action"

I have been afraid there was no hope about my brother being alive for a long time, as I have heard from Captain Lloyd of the 26th Batt'n, who was a friend of my brothers and I met two men who were wounded in the same charge and they all told me that there was no hope. The only thing that is peculiar, their story in no way corresponds with this man's - and the description is not very exact as he was a very slim man anything but stout.

Letter from:
Doris L. Lee
No.1 A.A.Hpt.
Harefield.

London.
14.2.18.

9.2.18.

s.
"Wounded and Missing 3.5.17."

I saw him with his Unit 18.5.17. and he was then quite well, and was a gas M.O.0, attached to 10th Bn and from France. I know him quite well. I was in the same tent as he was, and he was the only man of that mess in the Coy, He came from Ballina, N.S.Wals. He was a man of fair complexion, height about 5'6" fairly thick set, clean shaven, age about 28 years. I believe he had been wounded on this date, but is now with his Unit in France.

Witness:- Pte. W. Marquess 6220
26th Bn. C. Coy., 10th Bn.
Sr. A.A. Hospital.
Bartford.

"At Bullcourt on March 23rd the night before the charge we were out on a carrying party. The enemy were shelling us heavily, and he got hit and instantly killed. He belonged to B. Coy, 2/6th Bn."

Age Witness: Yes

Description: A C. Comander, about 5'10", stout, medium colouring, clean-shaven

Informant: Col J.W. Bolingbroke, 1st.
26th A.I.P., B. Coy, XVI Bn,
5th Southern General Hospital.
Ballymena, CO. Antrim.

Home Address:
O/o Mrs. Jones.
Port Antrim.

A.I.P.
26th Bn. 5th Platoon - "A" Company.

"Killed 3/5/1917."

Informant described Lee as about 5'8", medium build, rather dark complexion, aged about 23/4. Informant states that they both belonged to "A" Company, Lee being in No.4 Platoon and Informant in No.3.

On 3/5/17 the Battalion was in action at Bullcourt. They hopped over at daylight. That afternoon informant saw Lee lying dead at a dressing station well back from the spot where they had hopped over. He had apparently been brought out wounded and died at the dressing station. Informant had no doubt that Lee was buried, although he could give no particulars. He had seen Lee earlier in the day.

According to Informant Lee was a very popular chap.

Informant:- No. 4099, Private J.T. Lavery,
"A" Company - 26th Battalion.

Private Address: 3 Darlington Road, DARLINGTON.

Victoria Barracks.
SYDNEY 12/5/19.
26th A. I. F. 

Lee, Cpl R. G 4454

(W & M May 3/17)

"Cpl Lee is with the Battn and is working as an Instructor in the Brigade Gas School at Renexure."

Eye-witness:

Description: He is from Queensland

Informant: Sgt J. Whiting 26th A. I. F.

End Birmingham War Hospital
Northfield.

Home address: Burketown, N. Queensland.

W & M May 3rd, 1917.

The Corporal R. Lee with this number, is with the battalion still, and is Gas S.Q.O. I saw him last week, and we have had a stunt since then, but I don’t think he went over himself. He may have been wounded on May the 3rd, that I cannot say, but he is certainly not missing.

Informant: Cpl O’Brien 139.

On leave, BOULOGNE 25.9.17.

26th Batt
A.I.F.

"Wounded and Missing 3.5.17.

Any later report? No later report.

Cert. by A.I.F. HdQtrs. 2.9.17.

London, 10.9.17.
Sept. 20th, 1917.

Capt. C. Bond M.C.
26th Battalion, A.I.F.
B. E. F.

Dear Sir,

We have been asked by the sister of 4454 Cpl. Roy Gerald Lee 26th Battn. to make all possible inquiries concerning him, as he has been reported wounded and missing since 3.5.17.

We hesitate to trouble you in the matter but feel ourselves obliged to do so as we are anxious to allay her anxiety as soon as possible even if it be to give her definite news of his death.

Miss Lee tells us that you had very kindly suggested writing to Sgt. Paton and Plt. Woods, both of the 26th Battn., as they were special friends of Cpl. Lee and might possibly know something of him and what happened on May 3rd. If you were able to find time to do that we fear your letters have miscarried and we should be most grateful if you could interview these men with a view to obtaining some news of Cpl. Lee's fate.

With apologies for troubling you and thanking you in anticipation,
The Adjutant,
26th Australian Infantry Bttn.
A.I.F., B.E.F.

Dear Sir,

We are making enquiries on behalf of our Sydney Office about 4154 Cpl. R. G. Lee, 26th Battalion, who was officially reported Wounded and Missing 7.5.17. We have received numerous unofficial reports stating "L/Cpl. G. Lee" is with his unit, a gas corporal, that he was reported Missing in May but has since rejoined on 26th October. Head Quarters here had no later report than Missing 3.5.17.

We will be glad if you would let us know whether 4154 R.G. Lee is still posted as Missing on your battalion records, and, if so could give us the particulars of the Cpl. Lee in the gas section with whom our informants are confusing him.

With apologies for troubling you.

Sister Lee, January 11th, 1918.
Croydon War Hospital,
Croydon.

Re 4154 ROY GERALD LEE, (CPL) 26th Battalion, A.I.F.

Dear Madam,

We deeply regret to inform you that the above soldier who was previously reported Wounded and Missing is now reported Killed in Action 3.5.17.

We are making further enquiries in the hope of learning full details of his death and will immediately forward to you any information we receive.

Assuring you of our sincere sympathy in your loss.

Letter dated 24/4/24 over 5 years after the war:

Mother: Florence Australia McPhillamy b: 1855 in Bathurst.

Married: 3 Jun 1879 in Kelso, NSW. Children:

1. William H Lee b: 1881 in Bathurst, NSW.
2. Gladys Hope Lee b: 1884 in East Macquarie, NSW.
3. Doris L Lee b: 1886 in East Macquarie, NSW.
4. Gerald Roy Lee b: 1888 in East Macquarie, NSW.
5. Gordon Scott Lee b: 1893 in Bathurst.

Gerald Roy Lee, who was on the staff of the Bank of Australasia, Peak Hill, in 1907, was killed in action in France.

Western Champion (Parkes) 21/2/18 P.25
The First Battle of Bullecourt

The First Battle of Bullecourt, 11 April 1917, was an Australian attack on German trenches east of the village of Bullecourt. The plan was to advance some three kilometers north, taking the village of Hendecourt, two kilometers north east of Bullecourt. Operations of this kind were usually supported by a prior artillery bombardment of the German trenches. However at Bullecourt the Australian 4th Division attacked without artillery support, in an attempt to surprise the Germans, but with the assistance of a dozen tanks. In spite of the failure of most of the tanks to reach the German line, the Australian infantry advanced northwards, with Bullecourt on their left flank, and seized two lines of German trenches. There they were halted by increasing German resistance. Let down a second time by the failure of their own artillery to fire on the German counterattacks, the Australians, having held the enemy trenches for several hours, were driven back to their starting line with the loss of over 3000 men. Poorly planned and hastily executed, the first battle of Bullecourt resulted in disaster.

The Second Battle of Bullecourt

Three weeks after the first battle of Bullecourt the Australian 2nd Division, now with the British 62nd Division attacking on their left towards Bullecourt itself, assaulted over the same ground where the Australians had met defeat on 11 April. This time the Australian infantry attacked without tanks but was well supported by artillery. On the first day of the battle, 7 May, one Australian brigade on the right flank was unable to reach the German first line, and the British obtained only a foothold on the southern edge of Bullecourt, but the main Australian attack was successful in capturing the same German trenches the Australian 4th Division had been ejected from on 11 April. The battle continued for two weeks, the Australians and British committing four more divisions (the Australian 1st and 5th Divisions, and the 7th and 58th British Divisions). The Germans, also reinforced, made numerous unsuccessful counterattacks. By 17 May the Germans admitted defeat by ceasing attempts to recover their lost ground. Of 150,000 men from both sides who fought at Second Bullecourt, some 18,000 British and Australians, and 11,000 Germans, were killed or wounded in battle.