Thompson, Hubert Gordon Thompson

A.S.C. Britten

Rank: Captain

Unit: 56th Battalion

Date of death: 26 September 1917

Place of death: Belgium

Cemetery or memorial details: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium

Thompson has announced engagement to Miss Suttor of Erona.

The following were admitted to practice as solicitors in NSW in the Full Court sittings this morning ---Hubert Gordon Thompson.
Name: Thompson, Hubert Ed
Unit: A Coy
Joined on: 17.5.15

In or near what Parish or Town were you born?

Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.)

What is your age?

What is your trade or calling?

Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period?

Are you married?

Who is your next of kin?

Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power?

Age: 28 years 2 months
Height: 5 feet 10 inches
Weight: 143 lbs.
Chest Measurement: 38 inches
Complexion: Fair
Eyes: Light, Good
Hair: Chestnut

Transferred to 4th Batt. 11/11/15.
19/11/15 Promoted to 2nd Lieut.
22/11/15 Transferred to 4th Bn. from 20th Bn.
2/12/15 To Hospital. (Oedema)
8/12/15 Sick Adm. 21st Gen. Hosp. Alexandria
2/12/15 To Hospital. Oedema.
2/12/15 To Hospital Sick
11/2/16 Rejoined Battn. ex Sick at Tel-al-Kebir
16/2/16 Trans. to 5th Bn. from 4th Bn. at Tel-al-Kebir.
26/3/16 Rejoined 56th Bn from school of Instr. Zeitoun A.D.

Embkd. at Sydney N.S.W. on H.M.A.T. A 35 Berrima on 26/6/15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/11/15</td>
<td>Embarked at Alexandria 13/8/15 to Join M.E.F. Gallipoli Campaign</td>
<td>Disembarked...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/11/15</td>
<td>WO List No 11 From &amp; Appots</td>
<td>To be 2nd Lieutenant</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/11/15</td>
<td>C.O. Bn 2/13 (20th Bn)</td>
<td>Trans from 20th Bn</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/11/15</td>
<td>4th Bn B213</td>
<td>Trans from 20th Bn</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/12/15</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>To hospital Ossama</td>
<td>Gallipoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/12/15</td>
<td>H.S. Gloucester Castle</td>
<td>Admitted</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/12/15</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Disembarked &amp; trans to</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/12/15</td>
<td>21st Gen Hosp</td>
<td>Cardiac admitted</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/1/16</td>
<td>21st Gen Hosp To Sirdarib Con Home</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2/16</td>
<td>4th Bn B 213</td>
<td>Rejoined Bn from sick</td>
<td>Tel-el-Kebir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/2/16</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Trans to 58th Battalion</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/2/16</td>
<td>56th Bn B 213</td>
<td>Taken on strength 56th Bn</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/3/16</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>To school of Insth Zeitoun</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3/16</td>
<td>ALF List 36</td>
<td>To be Lieutenant</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/4/16</td>
<td>56th Bn B 213</td>
<td>Rejoined from school</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5/16</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>To 14th Training Battalion</td>
<td>Ferry Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/7/16</td>
<td>HMT Arcadian</td>
<td>Embarked</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8/16</td>
<td>14th Trng Bn</td>
<td>Disembarked</td>
<td>Marseilles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/9/16</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Marched in</td>
<td>Lark Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/16</td>
<td>ALF List 125</td>
<td>To be Captain vice Fanning KIA</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/12/16</td>
<td>ResALF Depot UK Proceeded overseas France England</td>
<td>do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/1/17</td>
<td>5th DSD B 213</td>
<td>Marched from England</td>
<td>Staples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/1/17</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Marched out to Unit</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2/17</td>
<td>56th Bn B 213</td>
<td>Rejoined from seconded with Field</td>
<td>14th Training Bn England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/2/17</td>
<td>1st Anzac Ord</td>
<td>Resumed duty from Dec List</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/6/17</td>
<td>56th Bn B213</td>
<td>On leave to Paris</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Action/Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>22/3/17</td>
<td>Rejoined from leave to England</td>
<td>Do</td>
<td>20/3/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>30/3/17</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>On leave to England</td>
<td>27/3/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>14/9/17</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rejoined from leave</td>
<td>8/10/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>20/9/17</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Killed in action</td>
<td>26/9/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/10/17</td>
<td>ALP List 243</td>
<td>Killed in action is struck off strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 14th Brigade had easily seized the main objective, together with some 200 prisoners and 34 machine-guns. Its casualties were not heavy. Other officers who lost their lives were Lieut. A. O. Correy (53rd) Capt. R. V. Single and H. G. Thompson (56th).
Below are two unsuccessful recommendations for Mention in Despatches and Military Cross.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Regt. No.</th>
<th>Rank and Name</th>
<th>Action for which recommended</th>
<th>Recommended by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56th Australian Infantry Battalion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Captain Hubert Gordon Thompson</td>
<td>During the period February to September this officer has commanded a company. He particularly distinguished himself during the battalion's attack at Louverval on 2nd April by commanding the battalion's left flank, which had been left by the advance in rather a weak position. His coolness and bravery, together with a quick grasping of the situation, was undoubtedly of very great value. Captain Thompson again showed very fine leadership during the time the battalion was occupying the trenches near Bullecourt in May. At many times during very heavy hostile shelling he moved about his sector regardless of personal danger and set a very high example to all men under his command, I cannot recommend this officer too highly for a mention.</td>
<td>M. Montgomery A.H. Scott, D.S.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Battle of Polygon Wood

26 September 1917

The battle of Polygon Wood was the I ANZAC component of a larger British and dominion operation staged as part of the third battle of Ypres. This operation was the second of the "Plumier battles", a series of well-planned, limited advances supported by large volumes of artillery, masterminded by the British general Herbert Plumier. The name "Polygon Wood" derived from a young plantation forest that lay along I ANZAC's axis of advance.

Scheduled to begin on 26 September 1917, the attack was almost derailed by a German attack on the British X Corps to the south of I ANZAC. A day earlier, Australian troops of the 15th Brigade, preparing for their attack, took part in fending off the Germans; however, their advance the next day began with continuing uncertainty as to the security of their flank.

The British and dominion advance began on schedule at 5.50 am on the 26th, with
the 4th and 5th Divisions, on the left and right respectively, taking the lead in the I
ANZAC sector. The infantry advanced behind a heavy artillery barrage - the noise of
this was compared to a roaring bushfire - and they secured most of their objectives
without difficulty. To the south, the 15th Brigade, which after its efforts the previous
day had been reinforced by two battalions from the 8th, secured not only its own
objectives but those allocated to the neighbouring 98th British Brigade. The Germans
launched several counter-attacks but these were thwarted by the heavy defensive
artillery barrages used to protect the infantry consolidating on their objectives; this
was a feature of the Plumer battles. The battle cost 5,770 Australian casualties.

Extra AWM Notes on 56 Battalion:

The 5th Australian Division would attack with its 14th and 15th Brigades. One of the
14th Brigade’s four battalions involved was the 56th. This battalion had been raised
in February 1916 in Egypt, with half its establishment coming from the older 4th
Battalion and the remainder being new recruits. Most of the battalion were New
South Welshmen. Their first taste of action as a unit was the disastrous Battle of
Fromelles in July 1916, where having the good fortune of being in reserve, their
casualties were light. Then in early 1917 they saw their next lot of fighting before the
Hindenburg Line and at Bullecourt. In early August they moved north to Flanders for
the great offensive at Ypres.

The 56th Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Humphrey Scott, DSO of
Wahroonga, Sydney, only 26 years old and a hero of Lone Pine, Gallipoli. This much
admired young leader was ably supported by a host of similarly young officers, all
talented and brave leaders in their own right. In charge of A Company was the
youthful Captain Vernon Smythe, just 23 years old, but a veteran of the Gallipoli
Landing and Fromelles where he won the Military Cross. B Company was
commanded by Temporary Captain Raymond Single a 31 year old accountant from
Mudgee. C Company was led by Captain Hubert Thompson, also 31 and a
solicitor from Bathurst. D Company was commanded by Captain Norman Plomley,
25 years old from Manly in Sydney. Plomley also held the Military Cross for his brave
and resourceful leadership at Bullecourt earlier in 1917. In fact all four company
commanders had cut their teeth at Gallipoli and rapidly risen through the ranks. On
account of their battalion number, they adopted the nickname ‘The Half
Hundredweights’ (i.e. a hundredweight being 112 pounds, and 56 being half that).
At 7:30 pm on the evening of 25 September, Scott held a conference with his company commanders. At this meeting he informed them that zero hour for the attack was 5:30 am the next morning, Wednesday 26 September. This was later postponed to 5:50 am. He also gave instructions regarding the methods to be adopted in the attack, what to do when resistance was encountered, and particularly stressed that the attacking troops must follow their protective artillery barrage closely. Raymond Single had been wounded in the arm a couple of days before, but chose to remain on duty.

During the night of the 25th, the battalion moved up for the attack through Glencorse Wood and Nonne Bosschen through continuous shelling. Shortly after 1:00 am whilst moving up to their jumping off point, the battalion suffered a bad setback when a shell killed two members of the headquarters staff including their medical officer, Captain George Elliott, the younger brother of the 15th Brigade’s commander Brigadier ‘Pompey’ Elliott. Pressing on, the battalion set up headquarters in a blockhouse just behind the line. By 3:46 am they had made it to the start line for the attack and wired the codeword ‘Manly’ to brigade headquarters indicating their arrival and readiness.

The attack commenced at 5:50 am with a mighty barrage, the most powerful and awe-inspiring any of the men had ever seen. Next, the men stood up, fixed bayonets, and as one man described, shook off their nerves and tension of the past few hours with nearly every man lighting up a pipe or cigarette they’d been craving. They advanced in waves behind the barrage, which the Official Historian likened to a massive ‘Gippsland bushfire’, roaring slowly and inexorably across the landscape. The men following closely behind this creeping barrage quickly overran the German defenders, who were stunned and depleted by the intensity of the barrage. A few sharp fights occurred around some concrete pillboxes but these were quickly dispensed with. No quarter was given except to those who surrendered quickly, while the more resolute German machine gunners and snipers were ruthlessly hunted and killed.

The German defenders in the Polygon Wood area comprised elements of the 3rd Reserve and 220th Divisions, and later in the day the 50th Reserve Division. The morale of the 3rd Reserve Division in particular was very poor even before the battle. This division had until only a few weeks ago been exclusively on the Eastern Front, and were now getting their first taste of the intensity of battle on the Western Front. In particular the division’s 49th Reserve Infantry Regiment had problems with a high desertion rate and among some of their number, a refusal to attack on this day of battle. Australian battlefield intelligence confirmed this, describing the prisoners taken from the 3rd Reserve Division as ‘rather rattled.’
The second phase of the attack commenced at 7:30 am with the 55th and 56th Battalions pushing further on and capturing the Flandern I line and clearing the enemy pillboxes immediately beyond it. In this final action Captain Smythe led an attack with some of his men on a troublesome pillbox and cleared it. Also prominent was Colonel Scott’s younger brother, Lieutenant Lee Scott, who led a party to secure the battalion’s right flank, which was for a while dangerously exposed.

At 8:20 am a runner from D Company delivered a message to battalion headquarters confirming that Captain Single had been killed in action. One of his lieutenants had taken charge of his company. It was also reported that Captain Thompson of C Company was ‘OK’. Only later was it learned that Single had been killed by a shot through the head, presumably from an enemy sniper prior to the commencement of the attack.

According to Company Sergeant Major Sidney Dewey of C Company, this happened sometime shortly after 5:00 am, before the attack commenced. He wrote,

‘A captain from B Company [Captain Single], a noted cricketer, came to visit the company commander of C Company [Captain Thompson], and had a luminous watch on his wrist. He was being told about how his watch showed up in the dark when crack went a bullet. The thought of the company commander and his company sergeant major was that he had yawned, but as he seemed to stay in the sitting position something was said to him, but no answer. He had been shot dead, and there is no doubt it was his watch that directed the fire of the vigilant Hun sniper.’

(Private papers of CSM S. C. Dewey, 3DRL/6620).

Although there were the usual variations on how he died, most witnesses supported Dewey’s account.

With their objectives met, the men of the 56th and their neighboring battalions spent the remainder of the day consolidating and strengthening their newly won positions. During the afternoon the Germans made a concerted effort to counterattack but this was broken up at length by the protective artillery fire and the machine guns immediately set up in the forward posts and atop the Butte. At 7:30 pm the battalion reported they had sustained 109 casualties including nine officers so far. At 8:30 pm, 56th Battalion established its headquarters at the Butte on the eastern edge of
Polygon Wood. **But later that night it was reported that Hubert Thompson, commanding C Company had been killed by a shell.**

Surrounding the Butte de Polygonie, an earth mound that before the war had been the butt-stop of a rifle range. By 1917 with the Germans on the defensive in the Ypres Salient, the Butte was a strategically important position dominating the immediate area, and blocking any further advance towards the Passchendaele ridge. It was the 5th Division's first major engagement since the costly assault at Fromelles in July 1916. The successful taking of Polygon Wood and the Butte was a proud moment in the division's history. Success, however, came at a price. Overall the the Australians suffered 5478 casualties in the battle, the majority being in the 5th Division (3723) and the 4th Division (1729) which was attacking immediately alongside the 5th, just north of Polygon Wood.

The Butte at Polygon Wood looms in the background and dominates the area over which the Australians attacked. E01912

**56th Battalion at Polygon Wood: a Unit and a Family’s Sad Loss**

The next push was set to commence on 26 September with the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions taking the lead this time. Australians would come to know this battle as ‘Polygon Wood’. The objectives on this occasion were to advance approximately 900 yards, capturing the remainder of Polygon Wood in the first stage, then a few hundred metres more to capture a section of the main German defensive line known as ‘Flandern I’.

The 5th Australian Division would attack with its 14th and 15th Brigades. One of the 14th Brigade’s four battalions involved was the 56th. This battalion had been raised in February 1916 in Egypt, with half its establishment coming from the older 4th Battalion and the remainder being new recruits. Most of the battalion was New South Welshmen. Their first taste of action as a unit was the disastrous Battle of Fromelles in July 1916, where having the good fortune of being in reserve, their casualties were light. Then in early 1917 they saw their
next lot of fighting before the Hindenburg Line and at Bullecourt. In early August they moved north to Flanders for the great offensive at Ypres.

At 7:30 pm on the evening of 25 September, Scott held a conference with his company commanders. At this meeting he informed them that zero hour for the attack was 5:30 am the next morning, Wednesday 26 September.---. Battalion was to take the first objective (Red Line), which included all of Polygon Wood and the important Butte feature (a prominent earthen mound), at its eastern end. After a short pause to consolidate and reorganize, the 55th and 56th would then press on and take the second objective (Blue Line). This second objective was the capture of the major German defensive line (Flandern I), portions of which had the codenames Jetty and Jubilee.

The attack was progressing very well indeed. But shortly after 6:00 am a message arrived at headquarters from B Company stating that they had ‘lost Captain Single---.’

It was also reported that Captain Thompson of C Company was ‘OK’.

Company Sergeant Major Sidney Dewey of C Company, this happened sometime shortly after 5:00 am, before the attack commenced. He wrote,

“--- 8:30 pm, 56th Battalion established its headquarters at the Butte on the eastern edge of Polygon Wood. But later that night it was reported that Hubert Thompson, commanding C Company had been killed by a shell.

14th Brigade had taken this important ground, capturing 439 Germans and 34 of their machine guns. The remainder had been killed or put to flight. Ultimately 14th Brigade suffered 1,100 casualties, with the 56th Battalion losing 255 of those.

For their actions at Polygon Wood, Smythe was awarded a second Military Cross, Lee Scott a Military Cross, and Plomley a second Military Cross. Hubert Thompson was recommended for a Military Cross as well, but unfortunately this was not granted. With the new positions consolidated, preparations began in earnest for the next push scheduled to begin on 4 October, with the vital Broodseinde Ridge as its objective. Sadly, only a few days later on 1 October as the 56th was about to come out of the frontline, their much loved commander Humphrey Scott was shot dead by a sniper at the Polygon Wood Butte whilst showing the front line positions to a relieving British unit.
The deaths of Scott; the two staff officers and two company commanders was a grievous loss to the battalion. But the loss of Captains Single and Thompson would be more keenly felt back in Australia, for Raymond Single and Hubert Thompson were cousins. And to further compound a disastrous day for the family, another cousin, 23-year-old Wilfred Single was also killed on 26 September, serving with the 29th Battalion, operating just a few hundred yards away on the 56th’s flank.

(Acknowledgement: Direct Extract of Text from A.W.M.)

Australian troops occupying trenches and shell holes won from the enemy at Polygon Wood in the Ypres sector, during the battle on 20 September 1917.
I saw Capt. Thompson killed, not many yds from me. He was shot through the head with a rifle bullet. His body was put on one side, and I believe it was taken back to be buried by a party afterwards that came out to take all the dead back. There was no doubt that he was killed instantaneously. It was at Polygon Ridge, Ypres Sector, abt. S p.m. on Sept. 26th/17 in the counter attack. I knew Capt. Thompson well. He went to France about last Feb.

Eye-witness: Yes

Description: Tall, fair, very quietly spoken. He was in training camp in England after he left Egypt until he got his Captaincy.


Home address: Chickester. 24th Nov. 1917.

56th AUSTRALIANS THOMPSON, Capt. H.G.
Single, Lt. 42

K. 26.9.17 Det: D/B?

I knew them both from the time I was in Egypt, May, 1916. Lt. Single was short, stout, dark, 29 years of age, Capt. Thompson was medium height, strong, fair, 29 years of age. At Ypres on the 26th Sept. they were in the 1st line. A German shell hit the trench. Lt. Single was carried to the Dressing Station and died soon after. Capt. Thompson was killed outright and had a Field Burial. Pte. W. Graham of D Co., 13th Pltn. would give fuller information.


A.I.F. 56th Bn.

Killed in Action 26.9.17.

He trace Germany.

Cert. by Capt. Hills 10.10.19.
Killed 26.9.17.

Polygon Wood on a line of our own Trenches killed by a shell.
Killed at once, piece of shell went through his head. I was quite
close to him when killed and saw him buried close where he was
killed. There was no cross up then. He was not my Coy Officer
but I knew him well.

Inf:- Bailey, 6484,
W. 39, Barefield.

Havre
24th Nov 1917

56th AUSTRALIANS

THOMPSON; Capt H.G.
SINGLE; Lt. R.


I knew them both from the time I was in Egypt; May 1915.
Lt. Single was short, stout, dark; 29 years of age, Capt.  
Thompson was medium height; strong; fair; 29 years of age;
at Ypres on the 28th Sept they were in the 1st line. A German
shell hit the trench. Lt. SINGLE was carried to the Dressing  
Station and died soon after. Capt. THOMPSON was killed outright.
and had a Field Burial. Pte. W. Graham of D Co. 13th Bn.
would give fuller information.

Informant; Pte. C.T. Mortimer; 5265
56th Australians; D Co.; 13th Bn.
Australian Camp; Rouelles.
56th A. I. F.  Thompson, Capt. H.G.

(Z. Sept. 26/17. Set D & B)

"At Polygon Wood on the Ypres front. We had gained our objective on Sept. 28th when a shell coming along killed Capt. Thompson and 2 privates. Capt. Thompson was hit in the head and body fell dead within 10 minutes. He was buried in a shell hole in Polygon Wood and a cross was put up. The Capt. was O.C. of C. Coy and a grand man."

Witness: Yes

Description: Rather fair, medium height, spoke slowly, bold

Headed, known as "Old Jack" because of this

Informant: Pte Harold Woodley, 6490,
56th Infantry, A.I.F. C. XII,
6th Southern General Hospital,
Hilton Section, Portsmouth.

Note. Written Lieut. H. McDonald.
20/11/17.
"Capt. Thompson was killed about September 25th and was buried in Polygon Wood. I did not bury him but saw his grave with the cross on it."

Eyes-witness:  
Description:  
Home address: Bath War Hospital.

23/12/17.  
John E. George.  
Havre  
39th Nov. 1917.  

56th AUSTRALIANS  
THOMPSON, Capt. H.G.  


I knew him since the battalion was formed. He was medium height and build, fair, about 35. At Polygon Wood in the Ypres Sector, on the 26th Sept. we were in the front line. One of our own shells made a direct hit, and Capt. Thompson was blown to pieces. I saw this happen; I was 20 yards off.

Informant: Pte. J. Whitehead; 4928  
56th Australians; D Coy.; 13th Pltn.;  
Australian Camp; Rowelles.
55th A. I. F.  

Thompson, Capt. H.G.  

[X. Sept. 26/17. Det D & B]  

"I have seen two separate crosses made for Capt. Thompson and Lieut Single. I understood that their graves are near the big mound at Polygon Wood. On Sept. 26th we advanced and took our objective and held it. When we came out for a rest the crosses were made by the Pioneers and I saw them."

Eye-witness: Informant saw the cross  
Description: Informant could give no particulars  
Informant: Pte Percy Sellar, 4904,  
56th A. I. F., D. XV,  
3rd Southern General Hospital,  
Town Hall, Oxford.  
Home address:  
Dutreux St,  
Randwick,  
Sydney.  

30th Nov. 1917.  
Hilda M. Pickard-Cambridge.  

HAVRE  
30th Nov. 1917.  

56th AUSTRALIANS  

Havre  
4th Dec. 1917.  

THOMSON, Capt. H.G.  


I knew Capt. Thompson by sight. He was tall, slim, fair, about 30, and was a very good cricketer. At Ypres past the Race Course, we were holding our line in the evening.  
Capt. Thompson came along to see us in C Co. Two or three of us lay in a shell hole, and he was on the bank talking to Machine Gunners. A shell dropped in. I was in the next shell hole about 6 foot off, and saw him lying dead. Two Machine Gunners were killed by the same explosion.  

Informant: Pte. W. Kneale, 2960  
56th Australians, C Co., 4th Pltn.  
Australian Camp, Roulers.  

HAVRE  
13th December, 1917.  

&lt; 56th AUSTRALIANS  

HAVRE  
13th December, 1917.  

6 56th AUSTRALIANS  

THOMSON, Capt. H.G.  

[X. Sept. 26th. 1917. Det. N/B.  

He was in E Company. He came from Bathurst, N.S.W. He was a married man. He was killed by the same shell that killed Capt. Single in Glencoe Wood, in a house of Bucquet. He was buried in the same spot with Capt. Single in separate graves.  

Informant: C. Ward, 958  
56th Australians, D Co.  
E.S. "Essequibo", Havre.

Capt. Thompson's case was singularly that of his fellow officer, Capt. Single. He took his company over on Sept 26th for the same attack on the German line, trench at Polygon Wood, and was also slightly wounded before the 1st objective was reached and would not come out. And then like his fellow Captain he was hit later on by a piece of H.E. shell and killed instantly. He also lies in the same cemetery as the other officers, in one of the cemeteries at Ypres. He too was a popular officer.

Inf: S. Usher. 2400. 56th. D.XVI.
No. 37 Gen Hosp.

56th Batt. A.I.F.

Thompson H.G. Capt.
C Coy.

Killed Sept. 26th 1917. Det. D. B.

I saw him killed by a shell, just as we reached the final objective at Polygon Wood. He was buried by a party from the coy. I could not say where. I knew him in the coy. He came from W. S. W.


Taken at
No. 4. C. D. Hurcott.
19-12-17.

56th Batt. A.I.F.

Killed Sept. 26th. 1917

W. G. J. London 27/12/17
56th Battn.
A.I.P.

"Killed in Action 26.9.17"

Re the death of Capt. H.C. Thompson. Captain Thompson was killed on the 28th of September 1917 and was buried where he fell. I am at present not placed in a position to give you the location of his grave, but as soon as possible I will forward same along. Probably in a week’s time I am also in possession of his photograph which will be useful for identification purposes. He was a great pal of mine and I miss him very much. A fine soldier and greatly liked and admired by all that came in contact with him.

Letter from:-
Lieut. C.M. McDonnell
56th Battn. A.I.P.
France 24.11.17.

London 28/12/17

56th Battn.
A.I.P.

"Killed 26-9-17"

Polygon Wood 26th Sep., I saw him hit by shell. He was very badly hit, killed at once. I got hit just after and don’t know when buried. He was an original man, was a fine chap, one of the whitest.

Informant, Bartlett 4740
W.20
HAREFIELD.

D.P. Dickson
London
2-3-18

Note:- We regret the delay in typing the above report, but we have been obliged to hold it up on account of pressure of work and shortage of machines.

56th Battn.
A.I.P.

"Killed Sep. 26th 1917"

Captains Single and Thompson were killed between the race course and east of Polygon Wood and I presume they are buried there as we took the ground and held it but I don’t know for certain.

Witness:- A. Page 2259
56th Battn
Bat 51
Westham

W.A. Rand, London. 15,11,1917
Lieutenant C. McDonnell,
56th Australian Infantry Battalion,
A. I. F., E. E. F.

2nd December, 1917.

Dear Sir,

We have to thank you very much for your letter in answer to our enquiry concerning

Capt. H. C. Thompson
56th Battalion,
A.I.F.

and for your promise to forward later the location of his grave. We should be very grateful for the rough location as we understand from the Graves Registration and Enquiries that this is of great assistance to their work, if it could be supplied in each case when we submit an application for a photograph to be sent to the next of kin. But please do not trouble to forward us your friend’s photograph as we know you must value it and there is always the danger of letters going astray in the post and in our work we do not find photographs of so much use for identification as such points as hometown in Australia, in civil life previous to enlistment, whether an original

that with each report we forward to the relatives some such fact might be embodied that would satisfy them the man about whom our informant is speaking is indeed their son, husband or brother etc. Possibly you may be known to Capt. Thompson’s relatives and this would in itself be sufficient proof of identity.

Please accept our sincere sympathy in the loss of your friend.
"Killed 26.9.17"

I was present when the Captain was sniped through the heart. He dropped straight down dead. I do not where he is buried.

Witness:

Pte. H. Meredith 5164
56th Bn.
Dartford.

19.11.17

London

Havre 13th December, 1917.

To 56th AUSTRALIANS

THOMPSON, Capt. H.G.

X. Capt. 26th, 1917. Det. D.B.

He was in H Company. He came from Bathurst, N.S.W., he was a married man. He was killed by the same shell that killed Capt. Single in Glencorse Wood, in a ring of dugouts. He was buried in the same spot with Capt. Single in separate graves.

Informant: C. Yard, 958
56th Australians, D.C.O.

"Mesquibo", Havre.

56th Bn.
A.I.F.

THOMPSON, Capt. H.G.

"Killed in Action 26.9.17."

Re your enquiries made to Pte. W. Graham 56th Bn A.I.F. in regard to Capt. W.G. Thompson. This man knew little or nothing about the particulars you ask for and has asked me to supply the required information. Capt. H.G. Thompson 56th Bn A.I.F. was buried on the field. His grave has been registered. Location sheet 28.1 10. 27.90 time 5 p.m. 26.9.17. I should very much like to know why these enquiries have been asked for and by whom as official notification was sent at the time of their death and also the location given above was sent to next of kin.

Letter from: - Lieut. D.F. Penniefather,
Headquarters,
16th A.I. Brigade

NOTE: We regret the delay in typing the above report but we have been obliged to hold it up on account of pressure of work and shortage of machines.

A.I.F. 56th Bn.

THOMPSON, Capt. H.G.

Killed in Action 26.9.17.

He trace Germany.

Capt. by Capt. Hills 10.10.19.

London 22.10.19
Havre
4th Dec. 1917.
56th AUSTRALIANS
THOMPSON, Capt. H.C.


I knew Capt. Thompson. He was in our company, C Co. He was tall, slight, fair, about 32, and was a solicitor in civil life at Ipswich, near the Seaburne; we were holding our line in the evening. A shell landed a little way from where I was. Capt. Thompson was hit and died in the trench, and was buried in the shell hole behind the front line. I saw the grave - unmarked then. Shelling went on. I was wounded on the 30th and came out. I know nothing else.

Informant: Pte. R. Clifton, 2803

2. THOMPSON.
SOLICITOR.
COMMISSIONER FOR AFFIDAVITS.

City Bank Chambers.

Bathurst. 31st Dec. 1917.

Officer in Charge.
Base Records.
Victoria Barracks Melbourne.

Dear Sir,

Mrs. M.A. Thompson has handed me your letter of the 14th inst. and asked me to inform you that the late Captain H.C. Thompson of 56th Bn. was never married and that his father died on the 8th July 1808.

Will you kindly, therefore, forward the Medal to her. Her address is Mrs. M.A. Thompson, 7 Montana Flats, Wilson Road, Cremorne.
COMMONWEALTH OFFICES,
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,
STRAND,
LONDON, W.C.

1st May, 1922.

Officer 1/a Base Records,
Department of Defence,
Melbourne.

Captain H.G. THOMPSON, 56th Bn., A.I.F.

Although exhaustive searches and investigations have been made with the object of locating the grave of the above named, it has not been possible either to locate his actual burial place or obtain any information which might indicate his probable original or present resting place.

Therefore this office's records in connection with that late member of the A.I.F. are being marked "No trace on research." Similar action has been taken by the Imperial War Graves Commission, London.

For your information and notation, please.

[Signature]
Major.

[Handwritten note: "2/O Australian Graves Services"]