

Arthur Valentine Steel



Second Lieutenant Arthur Steel
1st Battalion, AIF
Service Number: 606

Born: 1896 Wangaratta, Victoria

Died: 5 November 1916, Gueudecourt, France

Arthur Valentine Steel was born in 1896 at Wangaratta, Victoria to George and Maria Steel. Prior to his enlistment he was working as an assistant at St Marys Post Office and was an active member of the St Marys Presbyterian Church and Fellowship. Steel enlisted on 17 August 1914 and was sent to Egypt. He joined the Dardanelles Campaign as a signaller but was wounded and sent to Malta to recover. Afterwards Steel was sent back to Egypt for further training.

After recovering from an accident in Egypt, he was sent to France and was there given a commission. From all accounts Steel was a daring soldier with leadership qualities. During his service overseas Steel wrote many his letters to friends in St Marys, full of enthusiasm for the cause of 'truth and honour for which he was fighting'.

The village of Flers, in the Somme valley in France, gave its name to a series of attacks launched by 1 ANZAC in November 1916. By this time the Somme battlefield had been deluged with rain and the attacks were made in atrocious conditions. The first Flers attack was launched on 5 November. Both attacks managed to capture some of their objectives but were eventually forced to withdraw.

Steel went missing during the charge on Gueudecourt on 5 November. The men went over the top at Flers on 5 November and it was believed that Steel was killed and left in 'no man's land'. By April 1917 the search for Steel continued. On 18 April, a report from the Red Cross stated Steel's body was among 27 soldiers found. They were identified by their paybooks and discs. All had been killed by machine gun fire. The men were re-buried at the place where they were found, a wooden cross on each grave.

Memorial Details:

- Grevillers British Cemetery, France
- Honour Roll, Victoria Park, St Marys

Sources:

- [National Archives of Australia: B2455, STEEL ARTHUR VALENTINE](#)
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- [Red Cross Wounded and Missing](#)
- Penrith City Library Biography files