

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT WAS FORWARDED TO THE GERMAN CONSULATE-GENERAL MELBOURNE ON 21 OCTOBER 2009 TO ACQUAINT DOCTOR ANNE-MARIE SCHLEICH OF THIS GROUP'S FROMELLES CAMPAIGN AND TO SEEK THE CONSUL-GENERAL'S HELP WITH COMPILING A BATTLE REGISTER OF HER COUNTRYMEN WHO WENT MISSING DURING THIS ASSAULT. DON'T FORGET ME, COBBER: THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES BY ROBIN CORFIELD CONTAINS A GERMAN ROLL OF HONOUR COMPRISING THOSE BELIEVED TO BE KILLED-IN-ACTION OR DIED-OF-WOUNDS AND REFERS TO SEVERAL DIVISIONAL RETURNS WHICH DETAIL BOTH THE GERMAN FORMATIONS THAT DEFENDED THE VILLAGE AS WELL AS THE CASUALTIES FOR EACH UNIT. IN RELATION TO THE MISSING SPECIFICALLY, CORFIELD RECORDS THE 16TH [BRIR] LOST 1 SOLDIER, THE 17TH [BRIR] 49, THE 20TH [BRIR] 5, THE 21ST [BRIR] 111, THE 17TH [BRIR] MINING COMPANY 5 AND 49 WENT MISSING FROM THE PIONEERS, TUNNELLERS, MEINENWERFER CREWS AND THE 2ND BAVARIANS WHO WERE IN SUPPORT.

CASUALTY FIGURES PUBLISHED BY PATRICK LINDSAY FOR THE 6TH BAVARIAN RESERVE DIVISION AT FROMELLES ARE GIVEN IN THE COMMUNICATION BELOW TO DOCTOR SCHLEICH HOWEVER IT SHOULD BE NOTED, THAT ALTHOUGH THIS DATA IN MOST RESPECTS COINCIDES WITH THE NUMBERS GIVEN BY CORFIELD, THERE IS A DISCREPANCY WITH CORFIELD SUGGESTING THERE WERE 452 NCOS AND OTHER RANKS KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF FROMELLES, WHEREAS LINDSAY RECORDS 425.

WHAT IS INDICATIVE OF THE RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN TO DATE IS THE FACT THAT BOTH AUTHORS GIVE 206 AS THE NUMBER OF GERMAN MISSING DURING THE ATTACK. THAT IS, 2 OFFICERS AND 204 NCOS AND MEN.

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In the letter to the Deutsches Generalkonsulat Melbourne the 20th Reserve Infanterie Regiment was mistakenly described as being of Saxon origin. Corfield correctly relates the 104th Saxon Infantry Regiment was involved in the battle to the extent that it was urgently transferred to the frontline to reinforce the 21st BRIR. From what is explained, III Battalion RIR 104 saw action on the night of 19 / 20 July 1916 when the Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment was kept back to consolidate and foil further Allied attacks on this particular sector.

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19-OCT-09

Dear Consul-General Dr. Anne-Marie Schleich,

**I represent Fromelles Discussion Group, an independent non-aligned community group which established a website known as FromellesDiscussionGroup.com at the beginning of 2008 to encourage the Commonwealth Government to investigate claims of a mass grave containing the remains of Australian Great War soldiers in northern France and then subsequently to have the remains recovered, identified and individually memorialized. Lately we have extended that campaign to seek the aggregation of the remains of all missing and unidentified First AIF personnel from the attack, including those buried as unknowns in local cemeteries like VC Corner, Rue David, Ration Farm, Auber's Ridge, "Y" Farm, Le Trou Aid Post, Rue du Bois, etc.**

Since its inception the group has posted a number of Discussion Papers, contributions and resources on the internet to promote public debate on the subject and progressively canvassed various issues relating to the forensic and archaeological investigation. For example during this period affiliates have discussed transparency, the need for broad public consultation, the importance of releasing project findings in a timely fashion as well as the role of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC). Though primarily concerned with focussing on the missing of the 5th Division AIF, our advocacy has been impartial and demonstrated concern for the missing of all combatant nations involved in the engagement.

For this reason we have uploaded two lists variously titled "Australian Roll of Missing" and "British List of Missing" on our website and now formally request the German Consulate in Melbourne to assist us obtain a similar commemorative register for 6 Bayerische Reserve Division which defended German positions during the assault of 19 / 20 July 1916 outside the village of Fromelles. From what I understand the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division was formed on December 8, 1914 and its order of battle included 12 bayerische Reserve Infanterie Brigade, 14 bayerische Reserve Infanterie Brigade, Kgl. Bayerisches 6 Reserve Kavallerie Regiment, Kgl. Bayerisches 6 Reserve Feldartillerie Regiment, Kgl. Bayerisches 6 Reserve Fußartillerie Bataillon and Kgl. Bayerische 6 Reserve Pionier Kompanie. A map posted by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) labelled Fromelles Campaign Map, suggests 16 Reserve Infanterie Regiment and 17 Reserve Infanterie Regiment (both units of the 12th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Brigade", opposed the British First Army XI Corps 61st (South Midland) Division; the 21st Reserve Infanterie Regiment, one of the two German formations of the 14th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Brigade, in general, defended against the Australian 8th, 14th and 15th Brigades and by so doing, helped to hold the village of Fromelles during the infamous assault. A reading of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 compiled by Charles Bean, suggests the 20th Reserve (Saxon) Infanterie Regiment, the second unit comprising the 14th Bavarian Reserve Brigade, was entrenched to the right of the 21st, opposite the New Zealand Division, and the 60th Brigade which was drawn from the British 20th Division.

If it is not too much trouble for you as Consul-General, Fromelles Discussion Group would appreciate receiving some background material on the German defence of the village during the historic attack which we could publish. Such an article or story might include further clarification of the German regiments, units and

companies which were actually drawn into the action. Should a list of German missing be available we would be grateful to be allowed to publish this record on our website to give a balanced overview of the battle and to ensure all casualties are given recognition.

Former ABC journalist Patrick Lindsay related in his widely-acclaimed book *Fromelles*, that after being commissioned by the Australian Army History Unit to inquire into the Bavarian archives in Munich, British historian Peter Barton found some important additional information to support the proposed dig on the mass grave at Pheasant Wood. Delivered in April 2008, Barton's report revealed German casualties were considerably less than those suffered by the Allies during the feint. "The 6th Bavarian Reserve Division", according to findings documented by Barton, "lost 17 officers killed, 26 wounded and 2 missing, along with 425 other ranks killed, 952 wounded and 204 missing for a total casualty list of 1626." According to Lindsay on Page 375 of his descriptive history, Barton's research confirmed the extent of the German victory at Fromelles as well as the valuable work undertaken in retrieving the dead from the battlefield.

In conclusion the group would encourage the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to support the recently disclosed Red Cross Museum proposal to digitize its Great War records by whatever means possible and to use its diplomatic channels to promote international cooperation with respect to this particular project.

**Please accept this communication in the spirit that it is intended. I look forward to receiving a reply and wish you our very best. Further contact can be made via the Email address shown above or through the website mentioned in this correspondence.**

**Kindest regards,  
Grant Triffett, Convenor/Administrator, Fromelles Discussion Group**

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