

Transcriptions of letters sent to Mrs. Barrett. The transcriptions are likely to have been done by Christopher Barrett, Billy Barrett's brother. Written by Billy's comrades, they describe his last days.

B.E.F.

France

8th July 1917

Dear Madam,

I have received your letter of the 6th inst. and sincerely regret that I was unable to reply by return especially as I know how anxious you must be about Billy.

I am afraid I cannot give you any definite information but I have made enquiries and will try and tell you the result.

Billy was wounded about 4 on the 7th June after he had advanced about 2 miles. He was picked up, his wound dressed and taken away by stretcher bearers inside 13 minutes and as far as I can learn the stretcher bearers belonged to an English Battalion, not to the Dublin Fusiliers.

I reported him wounded to the adjutant & this was afterwards confirmed by the list of casualties received from the Field Ambulance where all the wounded were brought by motor from the advanced dressing stations. Finally the orderly room have been notified by the War Office that he was wounded and admitted to hospital at the base. The orderly room people have written to the records office for his exact location and as soon as the reply comes I will let you know.

If Billy had died from his wounds in any of the hospitals, the Battalion would have been notified immediately. Either Pte. Hornblow or the Field Ambulance have made a mistake and as the Field Ambulances only report casualties actually received by them I cannot see how they could report Billy wounded unless he had passed through their hands. I may say the Field Ambulance was about 5 miles behind the line. I honestly believe that Billy is in some hospital but is too ill to write and that [there is] some other explanation as [to] how his letters were found by Pte. Hornblow

Perhaps one of the stretcher-bearers took them off Billy to send them home & was himself killed & was buried by Pte. Hornblow.

In conclusion I can only say how sorry I am about Billy. He and I were chums from the same platoon from the [time] the Battalion was formed, and we all miss him. However we hope and trust he will soon be with us again. I know you must feel anxious but I am sure Billy himself would not like you to worry too much. Keep hoping for the best and I am sure you will hear good news of him shortly. I regret so much that I cannot give you any definite news, but should I hear anything you can rest assured I will let you know.

Believe me dear Madam,

Yours very sincerely,

H Lewes Pratt

(QrMaster Sergt)
