

*Letters from
Pte Charles Herbert Stewart*

A. I. F. 7572

from

Sutton Veny

1917 & 1918



NO.7572 PRIVATE CHARLES H. STEWART- 6TH BATT
KILLED IN ACTION 9TH AUGUST 1918
WAS BORN AT BYADUK, VICTORIA 1889
THE YOUNGEST SON OF JULIA AND THE LATE
WILLIAM STEWART OF "VIEW BANK" BYADUK
HE ENLISTED IN 1917 AND SAILED OVERSEAS ON 4TH AUG 1917
RELIGION - PRESBYTERIAN
DEARLY LOVED SON OF JULIA AND THE LATE WILLIAM STEWART OF BYADUK VIC.
LOVED & RESPECTED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM
GODS WILL BE DONE

Letters with thanks to [Downs Folk](#) – Lives & Times of Folk from Toowoomba & the Downs
(Transcribed as spelled)

No.7572;
Old Address,
31/10/1917

Dear Mother & Lizzie,

I received Liz's letter from Auburn dated Aug.9th which needless to say I was pleased to get. I seem to have so many to write to that I forget just what I have told you & just where I left off. So don't mind if I should happen to tell you the same thing again. We arrived here from glasgow hospital a fortnight ago, & have been waiting & hanging about for orders to finally join our units, we are in a hut alongside them. They are out of isolation for mumps now & we expect to join them today. The huts are all wooden & lined inside with a stove in the middle to keep them warm. The first few nights I felt the cold but were exceptionally cold nights as the water taps were frozen up. We have straw mattresses and 4 blankets, waterproof sheet-& overcoat & sleep on the floor. Our tucker is fair but not quite enough of it. Last night Mitchell, I & another chap had a blowout at Weselyne hut. Three cups cocoa cake and biscuits for supper so while a man can buy it he won't starve. Everything is very dear to buy & food is very cheaply dished up and not too much of it.

We are camped now on one end of Salisbury Plain called Sutton Veny Camp on account of being round an ancient little old village of the same name. It is very pretty with green hills all around & pretty old oak trees all along the roads. The lads are at present playing football in hut with one' of their blown up air pillows. We have one or tow wealthy sons in one lot. One chap named Lindsay I think they have a station between Warnambool & Port Fairy somewhere. He is a wild little scamp. Another chap named Irvine, I forgot where he belongs to. Well I can't write any more just now will give you more as soon as we join up or after we get 6 days leave. We expect to get 6 days embarkation any day now, so I will have something to tell you when I return. I may go back to Scotland & up as far as Aberdeen & see if I can find the old haunts of our forefathers. I am O.K. only have had one of those heavy colds and am just getting rid of it. Well I hope this finds you keeping well.

With love to all

From your affectionate son

Charlie H. Stewart

10/11/1917

Dear Lizzie

I cabled to you today to cable me a few pounds to Commonwealth Bank London. I also mentioned in one of my letters written from Glasgow to send a few pounds, I thought by writing you may have time to get the letter before we were given our leave, but as we expect to get our leave next week you will not have received it hence the cable today. I hope you won't think there is anything wrong with me as I didn't mention it was alright in the cable. I will go to London first to see if money there & then up to Scotland. I

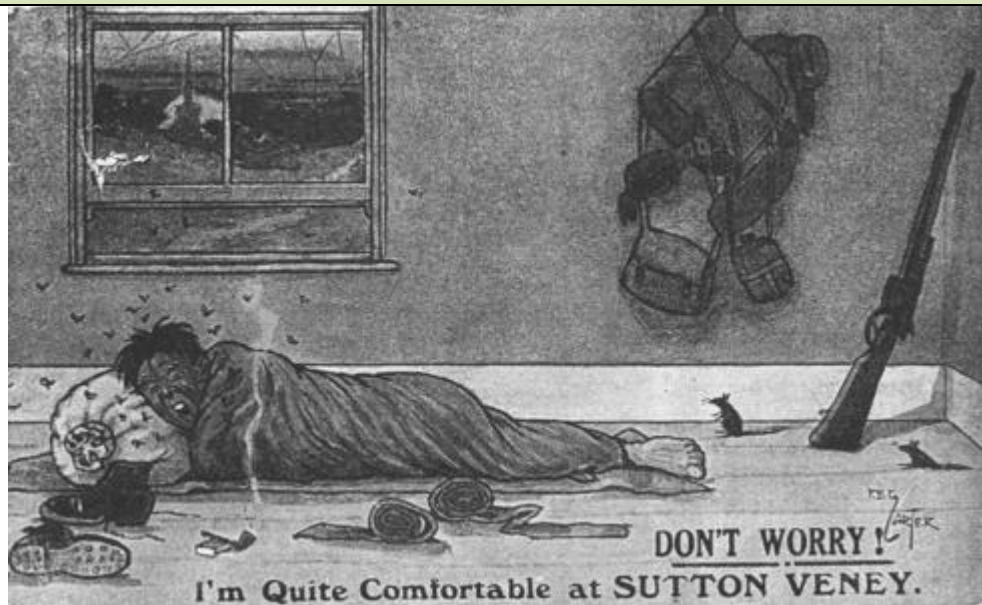
might mention that I will keep the Commonwealth bank 'posted with any change of address I may get so if Jack or any other kind friends wish to send money you can let them know where to send it too. I am only mentioning this for safety as I will leave my signature there for them to identify me by. Hope you got my cable saying we arrived safely in Glasgow. They charged 3/-per word. My last one for money - a weekend cable-only 9d per word, which of course is subject to delay. We were inoculated yesterday for second time but have not felt any effect from it. Apart from a bit of a cold I am O.K.I weighed the other day and made 12st.8. Have only done a few days training so which is rather interesting as they don't keep us too long on the one subject. There are plenty of aeroplanes flying round here have seen 6 & 7 up together. One chap gave us a bit of an exhibition yesterday in looping the loop, but guess I' wouldn't care to have taken his place. All of our chaps have got fat since we landed the results of a long sea trip. Mitchell is 13st. and Kenucky is fat as a butcher. The last letter I got from you was dated Aug.9th I think there must be a lot of letters somewhere that we are not getting. I hope you are getting all mine as it is not to easy writing with the noise etc. that goes on in the huts. Don't bother sending many parcels as I don't think many will reach me. You mentioned having sent one but so far have not received it. Hoping this finds you and Mother &

all well as it leaves me.

With love from your affectionate brother

Charlie H. Stewart

P.S. Have been making use of your helmet-it is just the thing. The nights are very cold but no snow. I also wear the mitts on parade for bayonet fighting. Hope conscription passes this time.



Sutton Veney Camp

England

31/12/1917

Dear Jack,

Just a few lines to let you know I am still O.K. & learning to dodge parade(or work)with the next one. Our job today is four men to go to the Rifle range to put up four danger flags come back & go down again tonight to take them down again quite a good stunt. The country reminds me of our Banks pad very steep hills & smoothed in grass but the wind 'by Cly' she's some cold. We have had snow & the ground & roads quite frozen & ice inches thick on the pools. Guess you would enjoy skating more on them than the old woolshed at Warralong. Have not seen anything of J.G. Barrart since but had a letter from him. He is still alright but not likely to go to France so you may get him back in time. I don't know ho long we will be here yet but have just absout finished our training have a course of machine gun & barb entanglements to go through yet and then we are finished. I am heavier now than I have been in my life -12st 10lbs. I think the sea trip and physical training has a wonderful effect and the cold makes us eat like horses. All the same, I wou1dn't mind going out to the Shaw mustering with a mob of Niggers for a change. I am quite satisfied now one gets quite hardened to this game & you can take things as a matter of course & if a man gets a knock well its his misfortune. However I am not worrying a scrap about it & am quite prepared to take what s dealt out to me. I am applying for a few days leave & hope to have another fly round before we are put on draft. We had fine time in Scotland the..... There are great & are mad on the Ausy's & can't do enough for us. It is about a month since our last Ausy letters came think the tin fish may have got a few, so far have not received any letters from W.A. can't make it out as I have had some record time ones from Vic. Well I guess we are now due to go and pull down these flags so will close this scrawl & bplay the game 'as we call it. With love to Aimee and self from your affectionate brother

Charlie

P.S. Have still 16 pounds in 'the bank to fall back on.

England

Jan. 13th, 1918

Dear Lizzie,

I am enclosing a couple of p.c. snaps. They were too cheap & haven't turned out too good but doubtless you can pick me. I was pleased to receive your letter dated 21/10/1917 yesterday. You can guess I was pleased to get it also one at the same time from Aunt Grace and Aunt Eliza. Up to the time of receiving these we had been without any letters for over 5 weeks, so if you can have written every week there are a few astray or sunk. So far I have acknowledged all I have received with either a P.C or letter & mentioned having received them so you will get an idea if all mine how many I have got of yours. I was glad to hear you are getting the 2pounds2/- alright. The money you sent has been great to get a few odds & ends which I need. I have 15 pounds left yet to have another trip on. when we get to France our letters will be censored so if you remember this I will be able to tell you of anything in this way. Read the last word in every sentence. I may just say anything to start with till the message is worked in. (for instance) word. If there is no sense in it well I have nothing special to tell you. To make it easy to know if there is any sentence in it I will write Date 2/1/18 if not no date just Jan. 2nd 1918. We may not be going to France for some time yet but just mentioning this so as to have a way out for Censor. I have a bit of a cold & went to the Quack this mor instead of going to Church & he gave me 2 days light duty which means work of any sort (fatigue) & I am in the Officers Mess all day washing dishes & smelling the different courses they have but we get a very good feed which makes up for it. There is a rumour floating around that we may all be moved to Egypt or Palestine but can't tell how much truth there is in it. I wouldn't mind as I don't care too much for this climate its some cold at times but we get well fed under the circumstances which keeps us up to it. Well must close this short note. Hoping you are all quite well.

Charlie

P.S. Tell J.B.K. I haven't seen anything of Sandy Mac.

Sutton Veny

England

24/1/1918

Dear Mother,

I was so glad to receive your letter yesterday and to know you had received two of my letter cards from Panama Canal also that my Yank friend had carried out his promise to write. I thought by getting him to write he could tell you a bit more about us without the risk of being censored & perhaps torn up. He was a nice quiet decent chap. I must drop him a line & let him know you got his letter. I told him to send you his address so you could write and thank him. They were all sports and treated us well while coming through the canal. You also got the snapshots of us on the boat the little one taken of me on the winch was taken by Owen Gaze and the other one by one of the stewards on the boat. Yes I really did get to Scotland and have been back there to Glasgow since on leave but the time was too short. I hope I have longer next time you should have received my account of this leave by now. I just at thought the other day you never mentioned having received the big group photograph of our company with us in it. It was taken in Broadmeadows before we left and the chap inly came round taking orders for them the morning we left. We were having our last feed at the tiem breakfast about 4 in the morning. I gave him your address and paid him for it. So if you haven't received it write to Darge, Collins St., Melbourne about it and tell them it was paid for 2/6d. I had a real nice letter yesterday from Ada the first W.A. letter I have received she had received my photo and letter, she writes a very nice letter. She mentioned Edgar having more bad turns & has died since she wrote. I should have got some of Mrs Goughs relations addresses to go & visit but there are so many sights to see it is not hard to fill in time there. This is a very historic ancient old place here but once seen it is

about sufficient. London I don't care a scrap for its too overrun with soldiers and people are sick of soldiers & war & darkness air raids etc. So to get the most enjoyment out of your leave we get away up to the northern parts where people are not sick of soldiers. This is what the scotch lassies think about the Ausstralians when they go up there & I thought it wasn't bad. I was talking to 2 very nice girls & they said they often stood at the Railway & saw the soldiers returning from the front & all their friends & people there to meet them & the Ausys would get Out & not a soul to greet them. They said they often felt like going upo and filling the gap & I might say a lot of the less bashfull do & give them a real good time. Take them home and show them around the sights. They are a fine lot of girls & know how to talk Scotch. Well I must close for this time

With love from your affectionate son

Charlie H. Stewart



ENGLAND

8/2/1918

Dear Mother,

I was glad to receive your letter dated 14/12/17 today and to hear that you are all well. You got my letters from Belvidere alright. The cable was sent by the secretary .His name was Hutchison he used to come round with cigs and post our letters for us, etc. The nurse promised to write perhaps it went astray. We were there a month altogether & came down here, you will have my letters by now telling of our trip down. I have been faring not too bad for letters lately. I have got one from nearly all including one from Jack & one from Gordon. Ada's was the first W.A. letter I received. Yes I hear from J.W. Evans he has charge aof our stock (George) and lives close to our farm. I joined up with my 2 mates alright and have been with them since Nov.6th the day started my first training in England and my first birthday in the Army. We are getting a bit split up now put into different huts on account of measles breaking out, Bob & Ken are in one hut & I on the opposite side in another. They have started calling out drafts for France out of our company so dont be surprised if my next letter is from france. Yes I got the money alright from Commonwealth B. I still have 10 pounds of it as a standby. Yes poor old Edgar did go off sudden & Mrs J. Christie. I hope Jack gets round to see you all again he deserves a good spell, away from his worry. I think Rohrs must be on his way over here by now. I had one letter from him he was saying he thought he was going to

lose his wife she took ill but was better when he wrote. Garye I haven't heard from since we left the boat. Aria will have a large family if she keeps going. I still have Miss Whites lucky coin will carry it to France with me for luck. I hear from Wattie now & and again he was alright last I heard from him. Also had a letter from Lyne Walter tell him to expect one shortly how like his father he writes. I thought it was from him til I saw Walter at the end of it. It was just as well we were not anchored in Halifax when that explosion took place, it must have been a terrible affair, it is such a pretty spot too with the hills all covered with plnes. I hope you get the Robbie - Burns P.C. I sent (Tamoshanter Brig 0 Ayre etc they were very nice & more interesting still when you know .1 saws them all walked over the Old Brig and sailed on Loch Lomond.I hope you get letters with account of our leave to Scotland we had a fine time. I would like to have it all over again, will go up to Scotland next leave I get that will have to be furlough if I am lucky. However I am not worrying what sort of place France is we all have to face our allotted time & that will come whether in France or elsewhere. Hoping this finds you well as it leaves me With love from Charlie

P.S. Remember me to Mr Houston when you see him & tell him I haven't forgotten his kindness in asking his brother to dig me up

FRANCE

Aug.16th,1918

Dear Mrs Stewart,

I expect you have only had a bare statement from the military authorities that Charlie was killed in Action & I hope I will be able to supply the news that I know you will be anxiously looking for.

As you will know the 9th August was the second day of the advance & we had been moving forward from 8a.m.til late in the afternoon. Charlie Company got in touch with the enemy & then dug themselves in. There was no shelter & Fritz was keeping things very warm. One of the officers was hit in two places and Charlie got out his field dressing and was binding him up and it was while he was bending over and binding the officer, in full view of the enemy & with no thought of his own danger that a sniper picked poor Charlie off with a rifle bullet, and he fell without a moan. I think it was a glorious death and a feeling of pride runs through one all the time I am thinking of Charlie's disregard of danger and the way he died. I have seen Charlie under all conditions & I must say that he never knew what fear was & every man in his company can say the same.

He fell near the small village of 'Roisiers' and lies in a soldier's grave about half a mile east of that village & near the railway line.

I have been with Chas nearly all the time for over a year and I owe a lot to him .He was so honest and straight in all he did that it was a pleasure to know him & everyone was his friends. When I last saw him he passed close to me & called out "What Ho Knuck" and was smiling just as usual. I have his diary, belt, watch & wallet & will_send them to you as soon as I can for it was his wish.

His diary cannot be sent throug the post from here so I will endeavour to sne it some manner. Money was sent to him to the Union Bank in England. I have written to the manager and given your address .I also wrote to Capt N. Davis who took Chas up for a fly. The money sent to Chas was from Western Australia but I cannot find any address .Bob Mitchell, Charlie and I had our photo taken before we went into this advance & if they are successful I will send them along as soon as possible.

Bob Mithcell will I hope write to you & tell you more than is in my crude effort .We miss Chas very much & there always seems to be something missing and I can assure you we are with you in the pride & sorrow of his remembrance.

I don't think I need say any more except to express on behalf of Bob & myself our deep sympathy with you all in your great sorrow and to join you in the pride of his glorious and noble death.

Beleive me to be for all time

Yours in sorrow

S. K. Knuckey

Charles Herbert Stewart

Charles Herbert Stewart was born at Byaduk, Victoria in 1889, to parents William & Julia Stewart (nee Lyall). He was a 27 year old, single, Farmer from Hamilton, Victoria when he enlisted on 23rd June, 1917 with the 6th Infantry Battalion, 25th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 7572 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs J. Stewart of Hamilton, Victoria (Father deceased).

Pte Charles Herbert Stewart embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Themistocles* (A32) on 4th August, 1917 & disembarked at Glasgow, Scotland on 2nd October, 1917. Pte Charles Herbert Stewart had been admitted to the Ship's Hospital with Parotitis from 16th September, 1917 until they arrived in Glasgow.

Pte Charles Herbert Stewart was admitted to Civil Isolation Hospital, Belvidere, Glasgow on 3rd October, 1917 with Mumps & discharged on 18th October, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte Charles Herbert Stewart was Marched In from Glasgow Hospital to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 28th October, 1917.

On 12th February, 1917 Pte Charles Herbert Stewart proceeded overseas to France from Sutton Veny. He was Marched In from England to Havre on 13th February, 1918 & Taken on Strength in the Field with 6th Battalion on 23rd February, 1918.

Pte Charles Herbert Stewart was killed in action on 9th August, 1918 in France, aged 29 years from a sniper. He is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial in France as he has no known grave.

From the Will dated 1st June, 1917 of Pte Charles Herbert Stewart – “prescribed as Legatees – (Brother) Gordon Alexander Stewart of Port Hedland, W.A. All my real and personal interests in our property known as “Peenebup” also my share in remaining portion of late Father’s estate which is now held in trust for Mother during her lifetime.”

Pte Charles Herbert Stewart was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

Pte C. H. Stewart is remembered on Panel 48 in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia.

Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

Villers-Bretonneux became famous in 1918, when the German advance on Amiens ended in the capture of the village by their tanks and infantry on 23 April. On the following day, the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions, with units of the 8th and 18th Divisions, recaptured the whole of the village and on 8 August 1918, the 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions advanced from its eastern outskirts in the Battle of Amiens.

The memorial is the Australian National Memorial erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War, to their dead, and especially to name those of the dead whose graves are not known.

The Australian servicemen named in this register died in the battlefields of the Somme, Arras, the German advance of 1918 and the Advance to Victory. The memorial stands within Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, which was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from other burial grounds in the area and from the battlefields.

Both the cemetery and memorial were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. The memorial was unveiled by King George VI on 22 July 1938.

There are now 10,739 Australian servicemen officially commemorated by this memorial and named within the register.



Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

D	HOOD H.S.	SANDBERG J.H.	B
	HOPE V.S.	SCHONFELDER A.W.	B
	HOWARTH F.C.	SCOWN C.	B
W	HOWETT H.	SECKOLD P.	C
	JEFFERS W.J.	SHAW J.W.	C
	JEFFS G.E.	SHEEHAN T.J.	C
	JENNINGS A.V.	SIMMONS P.	C
	JINKS C.A.	SMITH J.W.	C
	JOHNSON H.W.	SPALDING E.W.	C
N	JOHNSTON L.	STEED S.J.T.	
AL	JOHNSTON R.	STEWART C.H.	
	JORGENSEN H.H.	STONE S.M.	
	JOSEPH D.H.	TALAVA A.	
	KEAN C.M.G.	THOMPSON J.S.	
	LOUGHRIDGE W.	VEALE F.	
	McFARLANE D.	WALES C.S.	
	McGRATH J.A.	WALKER H.I.	
	MACKIE J.	WALL H.C.	
	McLACHLAN P.	WATERS A.M.	
	MAES W.A.	WHITE F.W.	
	MARSHALL T.A.	WHITE G.W.	
	MATTHEWS R.T.	WHITE T.H.	
	MEMBREY C.	WILKINSON H.G.	
	MURTON L.R.	WILLIAMS A.	
	MYNOTT E.	WILSON T.W.F.	
	O'CALLAGHAN I.J.	WRIGHT G.E.	
	OLDFIELD A.W.		

(Photo by Misty & Company)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P06958.001

Pte Charles Herbert Stewart

Information from Australian War Memorial:

Studio portrait of 7572 Private (Pte) Charles Herbert Stewart, 6th Battalion, of Broomhill, WA. A farmer before enlisting in June 1917, Pte Stewart left Australia for England with the 25th Reinforcements in August 1917. Arriving in France in February 1918, he was killed by a sniper during the 6th Battalion's attack on Lihons on 9 August 1918, aged 29.

Newspaper Notices:

STEWART – Killed in action in France, August 9, 1918, Charles Herbert Stewart, beloved youngest son of Julia Stewart, Burnsville, Hamilton and late William Stewart, of View Bank, Byaduk, aged 28 years.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne – Wednesday 28 August, 1918)

STEWART – Killed in action in France, August 9, Charles Herbert Stewart, youngest son of Mrs W. Stewart, Hamilton, Victoria and brother of J. and G. Stewart, De Grey and nephew of D. Stewart, Pallinup, Broomehill.

(*The West Australian*, Perth – Saturday 31 August, 1918 & *Western Mail*, Perth – Friday 6 September, 1918)

THE LATE PRIVATE C. H. STEWART

In a letter from France to Mrs W. Stewart, of Burns-street, Hamilton, details are supplied of the manner in which her son, Private Charles H. Stewart met his death on the battlefield. The writer (S. K. Knuckey), who does not give his own military rank, states:- "The 9th August was the second day of the advance, and we had been moving forward from 8 a.m. till late in the afternoon. Charley's company got in touch with the enemy, and then dug themselves in. There was no shelter, and Fritz was keeping things very warm. One of our officers was hit in two places, and Charley got out his field-dressings, and was in the act of binding his wound, in full view of the enemy, and with no thought of his own danger, when a sniper picked him out with a rifle bullet. He fell without a moan. He never knew what fear was, and every man in the company says the same. He fell near the small village of Rossiers, and lies in a soldier's grave about half a mile east of that village and near the railway line.

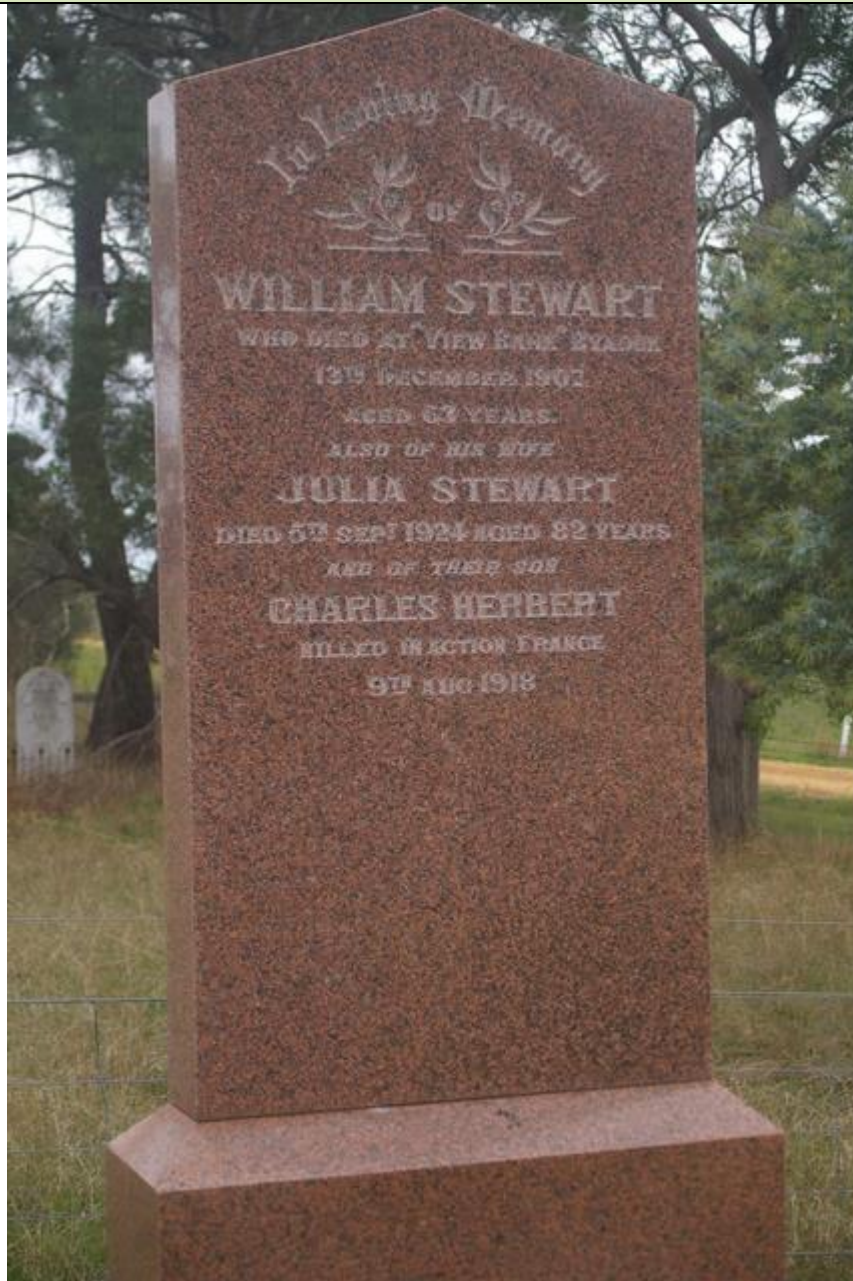
(*Hamilton Spectator*, Victoria – Tuesday 26 November, 1918)

STEWART – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Charles Herbert Stewart, 6th Battalion, killed in action at Rossiers, in France, on the 9th August, 1918

To Memory ever dear.

(Inserted by his loving mother and sisters)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne – Monday 9 August, 1920)



Charles Herbert Stewart is also remembered on his parents' headstone in Byaduk Cemetery, Victoria

(Photo from Carol's Headstone [Photographs](#))