Private Gervase L. Somers (XC 1914-17)

AWM ~ Roll of Honour
Gervase Louis Edgeworth Somers
Service Number: 3487
Rank: Private
Unit: 59th Australian Infantry Battalion
Date of death: 1 October 1918
Place of death: France
Cause of death: Killed in action
Age at death: 19
Place of association: Mornington, Australia
Cemetery or memorial details: Prospect Hill Cemetery, Gouy, France

Perhaps, however, the best and, though saddest, yet sweetest memento of poor Gervase is the poem composed by his mother on the death of her two sons (Noel, the eldest son, was killed at Gallipoli), which by her kind permission, we reproduce just as it appeared in the “Argus” for Saturday, November 16th—

“Though I rejoice and watch with proud
Dimmed eyes
The flag my sons have died for float
Against the skies.

You will forgive and understand, who have
No dead to mourn,
That though I share your pride and joy
I feel forlorn
When other mothers’ brown-faced sons march by
With soldier tread
(Dear gallant boys, I love them all, yet then
I mourn my dead).

One near Aegean sleeps well;
The wild thyme scents his grave.
One sleeps in France; in dreams
I see red poppies o’er him wave.

Rejoicing, I watch with you to-day
The flag they died for float against the skies.
Victory is ours, and if my tears fall fast,
You will forgive—no brown-faced sons of mine
March past.”

Rest to them both, and comfort and consolation to the sorrow-stricken home that mourns the loss of two so dear to all.

From “The Xaverian” 1918 p. 61

Gervase Edgeworth-Somers.—Poor Gervase was killed in action in France on 1st October, at the early age on nineteen years. He had always been anxious to enlist, and having obtained, on his eighteenth birthday, his parents’ consent to follow his wish, went straight to the Maribyrnong Camp, listing with the Artillery. Shortly after, there was a call for volunteers to the Infantry. Gervase at once transferred, and was still serving with that body when he met his death.

He had, indeed, spent some months in the Brigade School in England for officers, and was in hopes of obtaining his commission after early October engagements. But it was not to be. Higher hands than those of earth were to bestow a higher honour, and now he lies buried not far from St. Quentin, between the villages of Nauroy and Estrees.

Two short extracts taken from letters written, one before his death, the other after, illustrate his spirit and courage. In the former his General, writing to Doctor Somers, says—“Your boy is making a very fine soldier, but you must face the fact that for one of his type there are only two things—rapid promotion or death.” Unfortunately, it was death that came.

In the latter, a fellow-comrade writes—“Your son was a brave soldier. He was killed beside me, but I could not save him. He died facing the enemy and fearless in the presence of dangers.”