



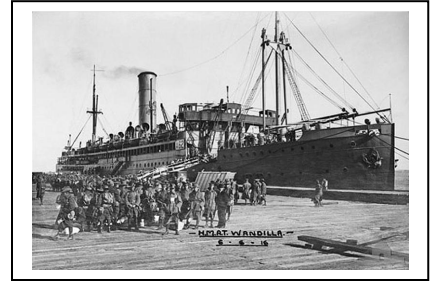
Private Thomas Roude (elsewhere, including his family, mostly *Roud*), Number 3895A of the 49th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, lies interred in Longuenesse (St-Omer) Souvenir Cemetery: Grave reference IV D 59.

His occupation prior to military service is recorded as that of a seaman; however, the documents available do not note whether he was a crew member of a ship stopping in an Australian port or whether he was an immigrant to that country. Whatever the case, he presented himself for enlistment and attestation on September 11, 1915, at the port-city of Brisbane in the State of Queensland. There, after a period of training, he was attached to the 25th Re-enforcement Battalion, having been declared as *fit for overseas service*.



It was His Majesty's Australian Transport *Wandilla* onto which Private Rouse and the 25th Re-enforcement Battalion embarked in Brisbane on January 31 of 1916.

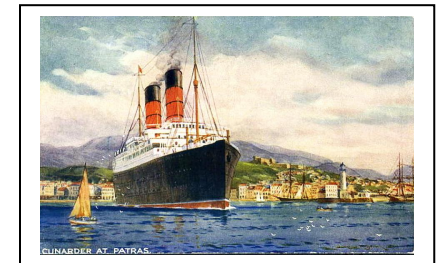
(Right: A later reserve force, the 3rd Pioneer Battalion, prepares to board *Wandilla* in Melbourne on June 6, 1916. – from the *Old Ship Picture Galleries* website)



Wandilla took some six weeks to make the passage from Brisbane to Egypt and Port Suez at the southern end of the canal which bears the same name. On the way the vessel had stopped at the British Crown Colony of Ceylon where Private Rouse was to find the time to write and send a post-card to his brother Charles back in St. John's.

Upon disembarkation in Egypt, on April 2, Private Rouse was attached to the 49th (Australian) Infantry Battalion which at the time was stationed in the area of Heliopolis, a newly-built town some ten kilometres removed from the capital city, Cairo. Six weeks later again, on May 14, he was ordered to the 13th Training Battalion at Serapeum, to remain there for a mere three weeks.

On June 6, His Majesty's Transport *Franconia** (right), a requisitioned ocean-liner of the *Cunard Line*, took on board the 13th Battalion at the British base at Alexandria for passage to the United Kingdom where the vessel docked in the naval port of Plymouth-Devonport on the 16th.



*On October 4, four months afterwards, she was torpedoed and sunk by a U-boat in the Mediterranean to the east of the island of Malta.

The Australians were to spend the next several months in England training at the Army facilities on and in the vicinity of the Salisbury Plain. The 13th Battalion itself was billeted in the nearby parish of Codford.

For at least some of that period, Private Rouse was to be absent from Codford, being admitted into the 3rd London General Hospital in the London Borough of Wandsworth. There he stayed for an apparently unrecorded time, to be treated for what had been diagnosed as *debility*. While there, he was likely to have met a number of his compatriots: Wandsworth was the hospital of choice for wounded and sick Newfoundland soldiers in the United Kingdom.

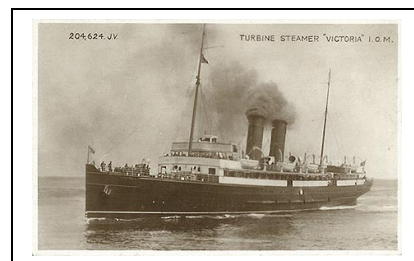
(Right: The main building of what became 3rd London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1st, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010)



(Previous page far right: *Newfoundland patients, unfortunately unidentified, convalescing at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth* – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

A charge sheet provides the evidence that Private Roude was back with his unit by the early days of the New Year, 1917; January 5 was apparently the day that he re-appeared after having spent the previous night *absent without leave*. Apprehended and charged on that date, he spent three days in jail awaiting trial at which time he was awarded forty-eight hours detention and the loss of eight days' pay.

The 13th Battalion took passage on board the *Princess Victoria* to *active service* on the Continent on February 8. The Australians embarked in the English Channel port of Folkestone and almost certainly – although this is not confirmed – landed in the French coastal town of Boulogne, only hours' sailing-time away.



(Right above: *The image of the ship Princess Victoria is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

(Right below: *A view of the coastal town of Folkestone almost a century later as seen from the top of the white cliffs of nearby Dover – photograph from 2009*)

On the following day the Australians reported to the 4th Australian Division Base Depot at Étaples, just down the coast from Boulogne. Only days later again – on or about the 15th – the newcomers were to report *to duty* with the 49th Battalion, likely at Bécourt, just east of the larger centre of Albert, at a time when the unit was still in the area of *the Somme*, although withdrawn from the front lines.



(Right below: *the French port-city of Boulogne at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

During March and April the 49th Battalion, still stationed in *the Somme* – and by now an element of the 13th (Australian) Infantry Brigade – spent most of its time in training, the only respite from this appearing to be a local attack carried out in early April. The first half of May was a continuation of the same, until the middle of the month when the Battalion was transferred north.



On the 31st it was in vicinity of Neuve-Église, just on the French side of the border with Belgium where things were about to become active. The 4th Australian Division was to be a reserve division during the upcoming battle for the Messines Ridge. Even as a reserve force it was to incur more than twenty-six hundred casualties.



(Preceding page: Vestiges of the Great War – a German block-house - still stand adjacent to the Messines Ridge. – photograph from 2014)

The offensive lasted a week – short by comparison with preceding, and future, battles – from June 7 to 14, the main action being the destruction of German positions on the Ridge by a number of large mines placed underneath on the first day. The primary objective of the attackers, the British and Empire (*Commonwealth*) troops, was to capture the Ridge from which the German artillery dominated the region south of Ypres, this latter area occupied at the time by the British.

Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief, also had plans for a *summer* offensive there in Flanders – an offensive for which he planned to use the captured Messines Ridge* as a launching pad.

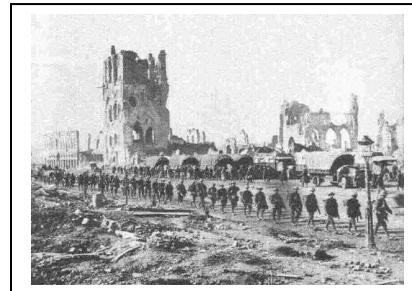
**Ironically, the successful British bombardments and mines at Messines damaged the terrain to such an extent that it was to take more than six weeks before the transport system was able to furnish supplies for the Third Battle of Ypres, thus allowing the Germans to re-group.*

(Right: one of the many craters left by the mines detonated at Messines just before the attack, now transformed into a lake named Lone Tree Crater and also the Pool of Peace – photograph from 1914)



(Right: Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration)

The Salient at Ypres had been selected by the High Command to be the theatre of that British summer offensive of 1917. Officially named the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign came to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, taking that name from a small village on a ridge that was one of the British Army's objectives.



Like its predecessor of the previous year – *1st Somme* – the battle was another lengthy expenditure of human life that gained very little, and even *that* gain was to be only a temporary acquisition.

(Right: an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield during the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration)



3rd Ypres began on the last day of July, was paused during much of September, and continued from the third week of that month until November. Apparently the rains began on the eve of the first attacks, abated while the British Army was reorganizing in September, and took up again right on cue at the end of that same month.

According to its War Diary, the 49th Battalion was not heavily involved in the August fighting, and by early September had withdrawn to the village of St-Sylvestre Cappel. On the second day of that month Private Roude, however, was reported as having been... *Accidentally injured in field...*

He was evacuated from St-Sylvestre Cappel to the 58th (*Scottish*) General Hospital in the French town St-Omer and was admitted there on the following day, September 3. The commanding officer of the hospital then reported him as having *died of (accidental) injuries* on that same date*.

**His death was apparently originally recorded as having occurred on August 3 and still appears under that date in certain official papers – including the Newfoundland Book of Remembrance in Ottawa.*

On September 10, a Court of Inquiry was held, its findings being:

1) That No. 3895 Pte Roude T. of 'B' 49th B'tn A.I.F. met his death as a result of being run over by a car of the 45th Squadron R.F.C.* at about 10 p.m. on 2.9.17. near ST SYLVESTRE CAPPEL

2) That no individual responsibility is attachable to anyone by the reason of his death as the court is of the opinion that he was lying in the road probably under the influence of liquor, and that the car was not travelling at excessive speed, and that the driver was exercising due care.

**Royal Flying Corps*

The son of William Roud (sic) – originally from the Channel Islands - deceased September 28, 1906, and Elizabeth Roud (deceased February 29, 1904) of 93 Hamilton Street in St. John's – his own address at the time of enlistment cited as 196, LeMarchant Road in the city - he was also brother to Bridget (*Bride*), to Mary-Louise, Agatha, James, Charles M. and to William*.

Private Roude was buried by the Reverend Walsh, Roman Catholic Chaplain to the Forces, on September 4, 1917.

Thomas Roude had enlisted at the declared age of thirty-two years and seven months.

**This, from a single source, needs confirmation.*

Private Thomas Roude was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



(continued)

July 6th, 1916

93, Hamilton Street
St. John's
Newfoundland

Minister of War

Dear Sir I received on the 22nd of February a Post Card from my brother Thomas Roud it came from Ceylon he told me he had joined the Australian army and asked me to write but gave no number regiment or destination just saying he was on a transport bound for Egypt I have written to the AEF but got no answer from him I would be very thankful if you could find out what regiment and number he is in. he was at Ceylon on the 22nd of Feb. 1916

I remain yours sincerely

Charles Roud

93 Hamilton

St. Johns

Nfld

The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – February 18, 2023.

