

SMITHFIELD HONOUR ROLL

HOOLE, Harold

Harold was born on 26th March 1890 at Smithfield. The son of Thomas a wheelwright of Smithfield, and Christina Kinnear. Thomas was also a storekeeper and postmaster at Smithfield. Thomas arrived in Adelaide in 1864, on the ship Ocean Chief. He married Christina, three years later at Hindmarsh.

Harold was the youngest of 10 children, and was known as "Allie" by his family and friends.



Richard William	b. 6 Sept 1868 at Smithfield
Margaret	b. 11 January 1870 at Smithfield
Thomas	b. 9 February 1872 at Smithfield
Alice	b. 11 April 1874 at Smithfield
Alfred James	b. 12 March 1878 at Smithfield
Christina	b. 18 May 1880 at Smithfield
Edward	b. 7 October 1882 at Smithfield
Herbert Charles	b. 7 July 1884 at Smithfield
Robert	b. 13 March 1886 at Smithfield

He attended Smithfield Primary School.

Thomas passed away in 1902 at Smithfield and Christina in 1909, also at Smithfield. It appears that five of their children died as young adults. Alfred, was 21 in 1899 when he died, Christina named after her mother was just 24 in 1909, when she passed away. Herbert was 24 in 1908 and died at Smithfield, Thomas, was only 19 in 1891 when he passed away at Smithfield also.

Harold was the only one from his family to enlist in the war effort. When Harold joined the AIF on 13 March 1916 his parents were both deceased. He listed his brother Edward of Bridge St. Gawler West as his next of kin. Harold was at that time a shop assistant at Farrell's Flat, 20 km east of Clare. He had previously been rejected for the AIF at Burra because of his teeth.

He was a private and joined the 32nd Battalion, 7th Reinforcement. He embarked on the HMAT "Malakuta" on 27 June 1916 to the U.K. He arrived on 22 August 1916. He then was transferred to the SS "Golden Eagle" from Folkstone to Etaples in France. The 32nd Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Mitcham, on the outskirts of Adelaide, on 9 August 1915. Only two companies were raised from South Australian enlistees - another two were formed in Western Australia and joined the battalion at the end of September.

The 8th Brigade joined the newly raised 5th Australian Division in Egypt, and proceeded to France, destined for the Western Front, in June 1916. The 32nd Battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916, having only entered the front-line trenches 3 days previously. The attack was a disastrous introduction to battle for the 32nd - it suffered 718 casualties, almost 75 per cent of the battalion's total strength, but closer to 90 per cent of its actual fighting strength. Although it still spent periods in the front line, the 32nd played no major offensive role for the rest of the year. Fortunately for Harold, he only arrived after the major battle.

In early 1917, the German Army withdrew to the Hindenburg Line allowing the British front to be advanced and the 32nd Battalion participated in the follow-up operations. The battalion subsequently missed the heavy fighting to breach the Hindenburg Line during the second battle of Bullecourt as the 8th Brigade was deployed

to protect the division's flank. The only large battle in 1917 in which the 32nd Battalion played a major role was Polygon Wood, fought in the Ypres sector in Belgium on 26 September.

Unlike some AIF battalions, the 32nd had a relatively quiet time during the German Spring Offensive of 1918 as the 5th Division was largely kept in reserve. The 32nd was resting and retraining out of the line when the war ended on 11 November 1918. On 8 March 1919, after the gradual repatriation of men to Australia, the remnants of the 32nd Battalion were merged with the 30th Battalion.

Harold was captured on 8 December 1916 at Grandcourt and was interned in Prisoner of War camp. It appears he was first interned at Wahn lager on 27 December 1916. Located 20 miles south-east of Cologne at the Wahner Heide Artillery practice camp. The camp has 35,000 men on its register and was formerly a parent camp for work camps in the district. Several months later on the 19 April 1917, he was transferred to Limburg, Germany, a camp holding 12,000 men. On 2 August 1917 he was reported as a prisoner of war. In September he was transferred to Friedrichsfel, a camp of 35,000 men.

On 29 December 1917 he was reported to have died whilst a prisoner at Kriegs Lazarette, (Military hospital) Tournai, 85km, south west of Brussels, Belgium. The translation of the German death certificate gives pulmonary tuberculosis as cause of death. He was admitted to a convalescent home on 16 November 1917.

Statements regarding Harold's death were gathered from other Australian soldiers. Private Mitchell gave a statement saying "I saw Pte. Hoole die at this hospital (Tournai) on 29.12.17. He was there only a short time and died of starvation. If he had been given something to eat he would have been saved. They gave him an injection and 10 minutes later he died." Private R. Russel also stated "I was in hospital for 10 weeks at Tournai in Belgium. While in hospital I saw Pte.Hoole – this man died because he was neglected."

His remains were later moved and re-buried in the war cemetery – Tournai Communakl Cemetery Extension West, Belgium.

Harold's medals were sent to Edward as well as his effects – coins, religious medallion, note book, letters and cards. He was also sent a photo of the headstone.

Later this memorial appeared in the local newspaper under "Heroes of the Great War"

HOOLE – In loving memory of my dear pal Pte. Harold Hoole, died a prisoner of war, Dec. 29.12.1917. One of the best Gone west
Inserted by is pal Reg. Grosse, Farrell's Flat.

Harold has been included on several war memorials. It appears after his parents passed away, the family moved to other areas. Harold's sister married Harry Lyons of Port Pirie and Christina passed away there, Harold would have had to live there for a time. His name appears on the memorial of the Farrell Flat Institute building. On the war memorial at the Esplanade at Tumby Bay. On the Burra Honour Board, located in the Burra RSL. The Gawler Honour board, located in the Gawler Council foyer, and on the Memorial gates to the Port Pirie oval.

References

SA Birth Death & Marriage indexes

National Archives of Australia

Tributes of Honour website

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Trove Research by Pam and Dave Gallery

2012