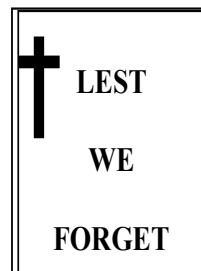


A SOLDIER'S STORY



Service No.: 3263
Name: Harold HOOLE



Medals and Decorations

British War Medal
Victory Medal

Rank: Private
Service: Army
Enlisted: 18 Mar 1916
DOD: 29 Dec 1917

Harold was born on 25 Jul 1893 at Smithfield (SA) to Thomas Hoole and Christina Hoole (nee Kinnear). There were 11 children in the family, 7 boys and 4 girls, of which he was the youngest. His family lived in Smithfield (SA).

Harold went to school at Smithfield. On completion of schooling he moved to Lipson and worked in the store and post office as a shop assistant until his enlistment in the Army at Adelaide, aged 23 years. At the time of enlistment he recorded his occupation as shop assistant.

On enlistment Harold was sent to 2nd Depot Battalion (Bn) at Mitcham for training before being allocated to 32nd Bn.

The 32nd Bn was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Mitcham on 9 August 1915. Two companies were raised in South Australia, the other two were formed in Western Australia. The Bn concentrated at Mitcham at the end of Sep 1915, before sailing from Adelaide on 18 Nov 1915 to Egypt and then to France and the Western Front, arriving in Jun 1916.

The 32nd Bn fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 Jul 1916, having only entered the front-line trenches 3 days previously. The attack was a disastrous introduction to battle for the Bn. It suffered 718 casualties, almost 75 per cent of the Bn's total strength, but closer to 90 percent of its actual fighting strength. Although it still spent periods in the front line, the Bn played no major offensive role for the rest of the year.

After completion of training Harold embarked aboard HMAT "*Matakuta*" bound for the UK, disembarking at Devonport on 22 Aug 1916. He then undertook a further period of training before embarking aboard the "*Golden Eagle*" on 11 Nov 1916, bound for France.

Harold finally arrived at his unit and was taken on strength on 25 Nov 1916. Less

than 2 weeks later he was reported as missing in action (MIA) on 9 Dec 1916. A further 2 weeks later (26 Dec 1916) it was reported that he had actually been captured on 8 Dec 1916 at Grandecourt and was being held as a prisoner of war (POW) at Krieg's Lazarette (museum) at Tournai (Belgium).

On 6 Mar 1918 it was reported that he had died of disease, Pulmonary Tuberculosis, whilst a German POW, although witness accounts state that he actually died on 29 Dec 1917. Statements by other POWs indicate that when Harold was taken to hospital at the camp he was not given appropriate treatment. One witness states that: "I saw Pte Hoole die in this hospital (Tournai) on 29 Dec 1917. He was there only a short time and died from starvation. They gave him an injection and 10 minutes later he died." Another witness states: "I saw Pte Hoole ... he died because he was neglected." Both these witness statements could well have been as a result of the emaciation caused by the disease from which the soldier purportedly died.

He was originally buried at Tournai Communal Cemetery, German Extension North. On 25 Jun 1925 his remains were exhumed and reinterred at Tournai Communal Cemetery, Allied Extension West. In a letter to his next of kin the Imperial War Graves Commission explained that this was undertaken so that his remains would not be isolated in a foreign communal burial ground.

Once again we see the delays and confusion in the passage of information at this time. The soldier's parents were deceased and it was not known who was his next of kin or where they were located. On 6 Jan 1923 it was confirmed that the official next of kin was his brother and the memorial scroll and medals were sent to this person, 5 years after the death of the soldier!



British War Medal Victory Medal

**Private
HOOLE, HAROLD**

Service Number 3263

Died 29/12/1917

32nd Bn.
Australian Infantry, A.I.F.

Son of Thomas and Christina Hoole. Native of
Smithfield, South Australia.



Right:
Lipson
Shop



Right:
Tournai
Community
Cemetery,
Hainaut,
Belgium

