

**Reading Cemetery,  
Reading, Berkshire  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**7121 PRIVATE**

**J. ROWE**

**19TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**24TH AUGUST, 1918**

## John ROWE

John Rowe was born at Kinchela, Macleay River, NSW on 6th April, 1891 to parents Thomas James and Harriet Frances Rowe (nee Sanders).

John Rowe attended school at Summer Island, Macleay River, NSW & later attended Leigh College, Enfield, Sydney, NSW.

Thomas James Rowe, father of John Rowe, died on 24th May, 1906 at Kinchela, NSW.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the district of Hastings and Macleay, subdivision of Kinchela, NSW listed John Rowe, Cheesemaker, of Kinchela.

John Rowe was a 26 year old, single, Cheesemaker (According to information provided by his mother for the Roll of Honour – his calling was a Methodist Minister) from Kinchela Creek, NSW when he enlisted at Kempsey, NSW on 8th January, 1918 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Methodist & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Harriett France Rowe, of Kinchela Creek, Macleay River, NSW.

Private John Rowe was posted to Show Ground Camp, Sydney, NSW on 8th January, 1918. He was transferred to Recruit Depot at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 10th January, 1918. Private Rowe was transferred to "A" Company" 1st Infantry Battalion on 9th February, 1918 then transferred to 21st Reinforcements, 19th Battalion on 25th February, 1918.

Private John Rowe, Service number 7121, embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Nestor (A71)* on 28th February, 1918 with the 19th Infantry Battalion, 21st Reinforcements & disembarked at Liverpool, England on 20th April, 1918.

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.

Private John Rowe was marched in to 5th Training Battalion at Fovant, Wiltshire on 20th April, 1918.

Private John Rowe proceeded overseas to France from Fovant on 8th July, 1918 via Folkestone. He was marched in from England to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 12th July, 1918. Private Rowe was marched out from A.I.B.D. on 13th July, 1918 to join his Unit & was taken on strength with his Unit in the field on 14th July, 1918.

Private John Rowe was wounded in action in France on 11th August, 1918. He was admitted to 5th Australian Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds to his left buttock. Private Rowe was transferred to 55th Casualty Clearing Station then transferred by Ambulance Train on 13th August, 1918. He was admitted to 2nd Canadian General Hospital at Le Treport on 13th August, 1918. Private Rowe was listed for embarkation to England on 16th August, 1918 & embarked on Hospital Ship *Carisbrooke Castle* on 17th August, 1918.

### 19th Battalion

The spring of 1918 brought a major German offensive that the 19th Battalion helped to stop. For his actions during the fighting around Hangard Wood on 7 April, Lieutenant Percy Storkey was awarded the Victoria Cross. With this last desperate offensive defeated, the 19th participated in the battles that pushed the German Army ever closer to defeat: Amiens on 8 August, the legendary attack on Mont St Quentin on 31 August, and the forcing of the Beaufort Line around Montbrehain on 3 October. Montbrehain was the battalion's last battle. The casualties of 1918, combined with long-term leave for 1914 enlistees, and dwindling new enlistments had sapped the strength of the AIF. On 10 October 1918 the 19th Battalion was disbanded to reinforce other battalions in the brigade.

*(Information from The Australian War Memorial)*

**War Diary – 19th Battalion – 11th August, 1918**

Framerville – 11th August – 0.15- 1 am – Companies moved out of BLUE LINE system, night 10/11 and are guided to J.O. line in position before 3 am. Blue Cross gas hung over route of approach. Some men fell asleep on the tape-line, from weariness. Enemy actively shelled orchard and Chateau at intervals. Bn H.Q. moved to vault in FRAMERVILLE, X3a3.2, at 2.30 am.

Framerville – 11th August – 4 am. Zero hour. Barrage opens. Weather fine and ground firm. Troops go forward against active enemy machine-gun fire: hostile artillery fire going further back. Enemy's resistance at close quarters negligible but MG's kept very active appearing to fall back before our advance. Positions from which flares were fired also indicated that enemy was falling back. Identifications from prisoners arriving at B.H.Q at 5am established the fact that fresh German reserve troops had been put in the line, prisoners stating that they had arrived only the night before from PERONNE, where they had been resting (107 R.I.R.). These prisoners were a good stamp of men of excellent and alert intelligence. By 5 am our companies had established themselves on captured line, and work of consolidation put in hand. For detail of phases of actions, and number of prisoners, guns and other material captured, see App 14: for disposition of post established, see App 15.

Enemy severely and continuously bombarded FRAMERVILLE and surroundings during the morning, with large calibres, while enemy M.G.'s were very active from main road in R28 and R29, sweeping the gully over which the Bn. had passed in Xa, R34d. A thick fog lasted from 6 am till 10 am. When the air cleared and the weather became fine and bright. Our troops sniped at enemy seen moving about wood in R34b, and used captured M.G's against same targets.

Officers of 22nd & 24th Bns. arrived in afternoon to reconnoitre for relief. Companies of these Bns. moved up 10 pm – 12 midnt being guided to position in line and 19th Bn. moved out, relied being reported complete 0.40 am (12th). 19th Bn. thereupon moved back to BLUE LINE trench system. Nigh dark and misty.

Total strength: 34 Off: 544 O/R B.C. 2 Off. 65 O/R (2 Off wounded; 15 O/R killed and d. of w.: 47 O/R wounded: 5 O/F missing). Trench strength 20 Off: 263 O/R (H.Q. 42).

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private John Rowe was admitted to Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire on 18th August, 1918 with gunshot wounds to left buttock. The Hospital Report reads "Severe wound left buttock. Gas gangrene."

Private John Rowe died at 10 am on 24th August, 1918 at Section 2, Reading War Hospital, Reading, Berkshire, England from wounds received in action – 1. Bullet wound left buttock & 2. Gas. Gangrene. The Hospital Report stated "Patient died suddenly from cardiac seizure."

A death for John Rowe, aged 27, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Reading, Berkshire, England.

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF DEATH

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 2586801-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT		READING							
1918 DEATH in the Sub-district of St. Mary		in the County of Reading C.B.							

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
3516	Twenty fourth August 1918 Temporary No. 2 Military Hospital at Reading	John Rowe	male	27 years	No 121 Private 19th Australian Imperial Force	(1) Bullet Wound left Buttock (2) Gas Gangrene P.M. certified by John Miller M.S.	Mr. Hill Mation Temporary No. 2 Military Hospital Reading	Seventh September 1918	Adair Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Private John Rowe was buried at 2 pm on 28th August, 1918 in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire – Screen Wall. 72. 16471. Those buried in Plot 72 & buried in other parts of the cemetery that do not have headstones marking their graves are named on the Memorial Screen Wall located near the Cross of Sacrifice. Their deaths are still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

*From the burial report of Private Rowe - Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by a beautiful floral tribute. A number of patients in hospital attended the funeral. Rev. John Carter officiated at the graveside and the "Last Post" was sounded by a Bugler of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Private John Rowe requested in his Will, dated 11th February, 1918, that the whole of his property and effects be given to his mother – Harriett France Rowe, Kinchela Creek, Macleay River, NSW.

Base Records contacted Mrs H. F. Rowe, mother of the late Private J. Rowe in 1921 enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc.

Mrs H. Rowe replied to base Records in June, 1921 stating that her husband was deceased & she was the nearest blood relative.

Private John Rowe was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Rowe's mother – Mrs Harriett Rowe, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Rowe – service number 7121, of 19th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Harriet Frances Rowe, of Kinchela, Macleay River, New South Wales, and the late Thomas Rowe.

Private J. Rowe is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 89.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

J. Rowe is remembered on the Kempsey War Memorial, located in The Triangle, corner Lord Street and Pacific Highway, East Kempsey, NSW.



**Kempsey War Memorial** (Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW – David Roden & Ken Hills)



(37 pages of Private John Rowe's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives





**Private John Rowe** (*Photo from VWMA*)



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **PRIVATE JOHN ROWE DEAD**

That "ill news flies apace" was confirmed to Mrs Rowe of Kinchela, when the rather reassuring cable message, dated 23rd August, from her son in France saying "wounded in left buttock, not serious" arrived a week later than the officially imparted news of his death of wounds on the 24th August. Deceased soldier, Private John Rowe, son of the late Thomas Rowe of Kinchela, was aged 27, and beyond this river was well known in Methodist Church circles: for he had gone through the evangelistic course at the Central Methodist Mission, Sydney, was an ex-student of Leigh College, had assisted in Circuit work at Hamilton, and had relieved in a number of charges in the western district. Private Rowe, who went into camp 8th January last, sailed for Europe 28th February, and arrived in England 20th April, was brother to Mr Tom Rowe, the well known cheese manufacturer on the lower river.

(*The Macleay Chronicle*, Kempsey, NSW – 4 September, 1918)

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### **Roll of Honour**

ROWE – Died of wounds, August 24th, in France, Pte John Rowe, 19th Battalion, youngest son of Mrs Rowe and the late Thomas Rowe, of Kinchela, aged 27 years.

And how can man die better  
Than facing fearful odds,  
For the country of his father  
And the altar of his gods.

(*The Macleay Chronicle*, Kempsey, NSW – 4 September, 1918)

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## **PERSONAL**

The death from gunshot wounds of Pte J. Rowe has been reported. Pte Rowe, who was a Methodist minister prior to his enlistment, was the son of Mrs T. Rowe, Kinchela Creek, Macleay River, and a nephew of Mrs M. A. Harris, South Murwillumbah.

*(Northern Star, Lismore, NSW – 12 September, 1918)*

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## **LATEST CASUALTY LIST**

### **NORTHERN NAMES**

The 430th casualty list contains the following names:-

Died of wounds: Pte J. Rowe, Kinchela Creek.

*(Daily Examiner, Grafton, NSW – 26 September, 1918)*

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## **KINCHELA**

### **C. of E. ANNUAL FESTIVAL**

Kinchela folk are usually in earnest when they do anything, and last Friday's function at the Good Templars' Hall illustrated the fact. From the simplest item on the programme to the speech of the Chairman, and the smile of the man at the door there was an air of happy and masterful energy that did one good. It was one of the biggest successes ever achieved in Kinchela.....

Two Kinchela lads, whose future also had been bright with promise, had recently laid down their lives in the same great cause – Leyton Johnstone, who until the war took him away lived right opposite the hall; and John Rowe, who had qualified for the Methodist ministry. To all sorrowing friends the sympathy of the congregation and audience was respectfully offered. Australia will never forget, but gratefully remember, these and other like honourable names.....

*(The Macleay Chronicle, Kempsey, NSW – 23 October, 1918)*

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## **BURIED AT READING**

The military authorities have written Mrs H. F. Rowe, Kinchela, that her son No. 7121 Pte J. Rowe, 19th Battalion, who died at Reading, England, 24th August, from wounds received in action in France, was buried 28th August, 1918, in Reading Cemetery. Deceased soldier was accorded a military funeral, with polished elm coffin; and the "Last Post" was sounded by a bugler of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. Great care is accorded the graves of soldiers, and a photograph of each is to be sent to relatives of such deceased.

*(The Macleay Chronicle, Kempsey, NSW – 25 December, 1918)*

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## Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Private J. Rowe is named on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Screen Wall in Reading Cemetery as he does not have a headstone.

### **Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England**

Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire contains 248 War Graves, 17 of those being from Australian Forces – World War 1.

The War Graves Plot is situated at the back of the cemetery, in the right hand corner from the entrance. A Screen Wall Memorial commemorates those buried in Plot 72 and those buried in other parts of the cemetery whose graves are not marked by headstones. There are 207 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war and 41 of the 1939-1945 war. There is also 1 Serbian burial.

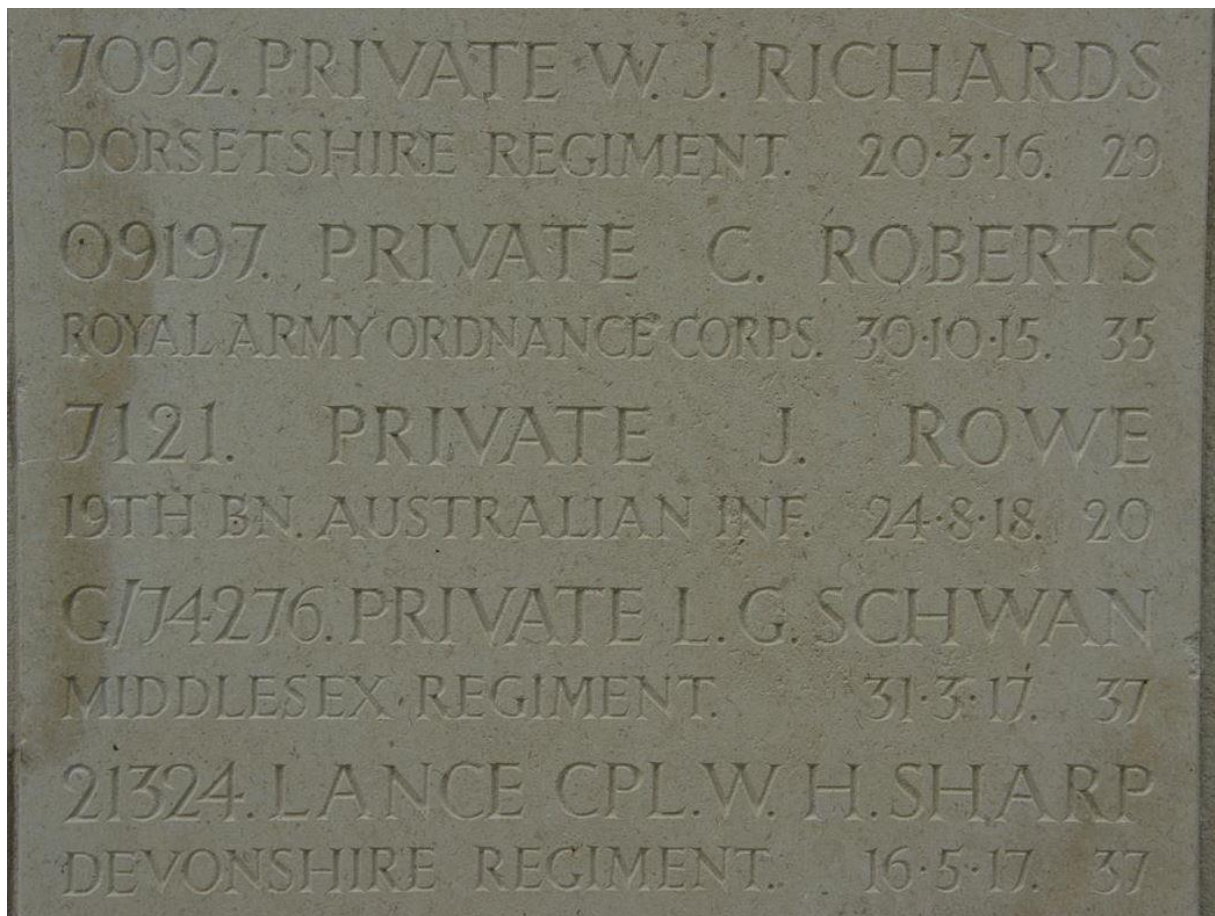
*(Information & photos from CWGC)*



**Cross of Sacrifice & Memorial Screen Wall, Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire** *(Photo from CWGC)*



Photo of Private J. Rowe's name on the CWGC Screen Wall Memorial in Reading Cemetery, Reading, Berkshire, England.



*(Photo courtesy of Phil Wood)*



*(Photo from CWGC)*