

**Camberwell Old Cemetery,
London, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3907 PRIVATE

C. ROFFEY

45TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

1ST MARCH, 1919 Age 27

Charles ROFFEY

Charles Roffey was born at East Dulwich, London, England in 1892 to parents George & Eliza Roffey (nee Arthur).

The 1901 England Census recorded Charles Roffey, aged 9, living with his family at 12 Roydene Rd, Plumstead East, London, England. His parents were listed as George Roffey (Inspector Metropolitan Police, aged 41, born Westcott, Surrey) & Eliza Roffey (aged 48, born Dorking, Surrey). Charles was the youngest of five children listed on this Census – Ethel Roffey (General Servant, aged 18, born Lewisham, London), Albert H. Roffey (General Labourer: R Arsenal, aged 15, born Lewisham, London), Alice Roffey (aged 13, born Greenwich, London) Grace Roffey (aged 12, born East Dulwich, London) then Charles.

The 1911 England Census recorded Charles Roffey, Cricket Bat Maker, aged 19, living with his family at 27 Henslowe Road, East Dulwich, Camberwell South, London, England which was a five roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as George Roffey (Met. Police Pensioner, aged 51) & Eliza Roffey (aged 58). George & Eliza Roffey had been married for 32 years & had a total of seven children, one having since died. Also listed in the household was Charles' sister – Ethel Mendez (widow, aged 28) & her 2 children – Ethel Mendez (aged 6, born Plumstead, London) & Nellie Mendez (aged 5, born Plumstead, London).

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour – Charles Roffey came to Australia when he was aged 19. Charles Roffey, Cricket Bat Maker, was a passenger on *Commonwealth* which departed from the port of London, England on 7th December, 1911 bound for Sydney, Australia.

Charles Roffey was a 24 year old, single, Labourer (as listed on Embarkation Roll, however his trade was listed as Sports Manufacturing on his Attestation Papers) from "Gleniffen", Bellingen, New South Wales when he enlisted on 23rd August, 1915 at Holsworthy, Sydney, New South Wales with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. Roffey, 20 Ulverscroft Road, East Dulwich, London, England. He was issued a Service number of 2796.

Private Charles Roffey, Service number 2796, 20th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements requested through Military District Pay Office, Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 14th October, 1915 that *"on and after Embarkation 1915 and during my service in the Expeditionary Force, you will be good enough to pay on my behalf the sum of 4/- (four shillings) per day to George Richard Johnston (Friend) Glennifer, Bellinger R."*

Another set of Attestation Papers were dated 29th November, 1915 at Liverpool, Sydney, New South Wales. These Attestation Papers have a Service number of 3907.

Private Charles Roffey was posted to 12th Reinforcements of 13th Battalion.

Private Charles Roffey, Service number 3907, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Suevic (A29)* on 20th December, 1915 (date as per Embarkation Roll, however the Service and Casualty Form Part 1 & Casualty Form – Active Service both have recorded he embarked on 23rd December, 1915) with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 13th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements.

13th Battalion

The 13th Battalion AIF was raised from late September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. The battalion was recruited in New South Wales, and with the 14th, 15th and 16th Battalions formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash.....

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. While in Egypt the AIF was expanded and was reorganised. The 13th Battalion was split and provided experienced soldiers for the 45th Battalion. The 4th Brigade was combined with the 12th and 13th Brigades to form the 4th Australian Division.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Charles Roffey was transferred to 45th Battalion from 6th March, 1916 from 13th Battalion. He was allotted to & proceeded to join 45th Battalion from Zeitoun on 6th March, 1916 from 4th Training Battalion.

Private Charles Roffey proceeded from Alexandria on 2nd June, 1916 on *Kinfauns Castle* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 8th June, 1916.

Private Charles Roffey was reported to be "*Still with Bn*" in France on 22nd May, 1917. (This was usually reported when there had been no entries (eg. Illness, wounding or transfers) on Casualty Form – Active Service for a period of time)

Private Charles Roffey was wounded in action on 12th October, 1917. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 12th October, 1917 with shrapnel wound/s to Face then transferred the same day to 2nd Casualty Clearing Station. Private Roffey was admitted to 56th General Hospital at Etaples, France on 12th October, 1917. He embarked for England on 18th October, 1917 on Hospital Ship *Newhaven*.

45th Battalion

The 45th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 2 March 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its new recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 13th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 13th, the new battalion was composed mostly of men from New South Wales.

As part of the 12th Brigade of the 4th Australian Division, the 45th Battalion arrived in France on 8 June 1916, destined for the Western Front. It fought in its first major battle at Pozieres in August, defending ground previously captured by the 2nd Australian Division. After Pozieres the battalion spent the period until March 1917 alternating between duty in the trenches and training and rest behind the lines, first around Ypres in Belgium, and then in the Somme Valley in France.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 45th Battalion

9.10.17 to 13.10.17 – Ypres Westhoek Ridge Zonnebeke

9.10.17 – Bn (less 6 Off & 114 OR which remained at Reinforcement Camp CAESTRE) left STEENVOORDE area at 8 am & embussed for YPRES arriving there at 12.30 pm. After dinner the Bn proceeded to the front line & relieved 5th A.I. Bde, relief being completed by 12.30 am on 10.9.17. Bn H.Q. situated at D16 d 8 1 sheet 28 N.E. see operation ref attached.

11.10.17 - Major H. E. Ford wounded and Capt O. B. Dibbs assumed command until the arrival of Major A.I. Allan, D.S.O. at 12 midnight.

13.10.17 – Bn relieved by 14th Bn moved to WESTHOEK RIDGE & late to Esplanade Tap, YPRES arriving at 3 am on 14th inst.

Majo I. L. Perry M.C. re-transferred from 46th B & took charge of Bn

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Charles Roffey was admitted to Cambridge Hospital, Aldershot, England on 19th October, 1917 with shell wound/s to Face. He was transferred to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford, Kent on 26th November, 1917 with G.S.W Face. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "*On Oct 10th 1917 received SW face, upper lip cut & upper central lapuac incisors broken also 1 lower central incisor. Wound healed to have dental treatment.*" He was discharged to Depot at Hurdcott on 28th November, 1917.

Private Charles Roffey was marched in to No. 3 Command Depot at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 28th November, 1917 & was medically classified as B1 A2 (fit for Overseas Training Camp in 3 – 4 weeks). The Hospital Admissions form recorded that Private Roffey was being treated for Scabies from 22nd December, 1917 till 4th January, 1918. He was medically classified as B1 A4 on 3rd January, 1918 (fit for Overseas Training Camp when passed dentally fit).

[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. Later Training & Convalescing Units were combined under the one Command Depot.]

Private Charles Roffey was marched in to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 12th January, 1918.

Private Charles Roffey was A.W.L. (Absent without Leave) while posted at Larkhill, Wiltshire from midnight on 29th January, 1918 until 11 pm on 30th January, 1918. He was admonished by Major R. A. Geddes on 31st January, 1918 & forfeited days pay.

Private Charles Roffey proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 7th February, 1918 & was posted to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 8th February, 1918. Private Roffey was marched out to his Unit on 10th February, 1918 from A.I.B.D. He rejoined 45th Battalion in the Field on 16th February, 1918 from being wounded.

Private Charles Roffey reported sick on 21st May, 1918 & was admitted to 11th Australian Field Ambulance on the same day with Influenza. He was transferred & admitted to 5th Casualty Clearing Station on 21st May, 1918 & was discharged to duty on 24th May, 1918. Private Roffey rejoined 45th Battalion in the Field on 24th May, 1918.

Private Charles Roffey was sent to 4th Army Cookery School from 1st June, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion on 24th June, 1918.

Private Charles Roffey was granted Leave to UK on 17th November, 1918. He was on Leave to UK from 18th November, 1918 & rejoined 45th Battalion from Leave on 6th December, 1918.

Private Charles Roffey reported sick on 21st January, 1919. He was admitted to 12th Australian Field Ambulance then transferred to 48th Casualty Clearing Station on 21st January, 1919 with Dysphagia. Private Roffey was transferred & admitted to 32nd Stationary Hospital at Wimereux, France on 27th January, 1919 with Dyspepsia. He was transferred to England on 2nd February, 1919 on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel*.

45th Battalion

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Like most AIF battalions, the 45th rotated in and out of the front line throughout the winter of 1917-18. In the spring of 1918 it played a crucial role in turning the last great German offensive of the war when it defeated attacks aimed at breaking through the British front around Dernancourt. The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August with the battle of Amiens. On the first day of this battle the 45th Battalion captured 400 German prisoners, 30 artillery pieces and 18 machine guns. 8 August became known as the "black day of the German Army" and initiated a retreat back to the formidable defensive barrier known as the Hindenburg Line. The 45th Battalion fought its last major action of the war on 18 September 1918 around Le Verguier to seize the "outpost line" that guarded the approaches to the main defences. The battalion was out of the line when the war ended on 11 November, and was disbanded on 2 May 1919.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Charles Roffey was admitted to Mile End Military Hospital, Bancroft Road, London, England on 2nd February, 1919 with Dysphagia. (The Hospital Admissions form recorded "Swallowed ___ Dec 26 1918..."). He was transferred to Lewisham Military Hospital, High Road on 6th February, 1919 with Oesophageal Stricture. (The Hospital Admissions form recorded "... about c__ed cartilage due to swallowing caustic solution on Boxing Day. Capacity for swallowing varies. Transferred to Millbank.") Private Roffey was reported to be dangerously ill with a Throat Obstruction on 7th February, 1919. He was transferred to The Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, Extension Census on 11th February, 1919. The Hospital Admissions form recorded "*Stricture of Oesophagus. Admitted 11/2/19 with history of having swallowed caustic soda on December 26th 1918 by mistake. Condition on admission very emaciated, unable to swallow even fluids and aphonia.....Gastrostomy performed 16/2/19 Patient stood operation well.....Condition steadily deteriorated, pulse and respirations both increasing in rate but temp. remaining sub-normal, except for a short rise on 20/2/19 (t. 102) and on 22/2/19 (t. 99.8)....*"

Private Charles Roffey died at 12.35 pm on 1st March, 1919 at Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, Extension Census, Millbank, London, England from Stricture Oesophagus. (Cause of death was listed on some forms as Dysphagia)

A death for Charles Roffey, aged 27, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of St George Hanover Square, London, England.

Private Charles Roffey was buried on 11th March, 1919 in Camberwell Old Cemetery, Forest Hill, London, England – Grave No. 25874 Section S 85.

Private Charles Roffey's place of burial is now recorded by Commonwealth War Graves Commission as Screen Wall Reference: 85. 25874. He does not have a headstone but is instead remembered on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Screen Wall.

From the burial report of Private Charles Roffey - Coffin was Oak. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag, and conveyed to the graveside, surmounted by several beautiful wreaths, sent from:- Mother, Brothers, Sisters, Ethel, & All at home. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and Chaplain Lt Col Makeham, C. of E. of the A.I.F. Headquarters, London. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. A.I.F. Headquarters London were represented at the funeral.

Names of family & Friends present at the Funeral – Mrs Roffey, Misses N. & E. Roffey, Brother, George & Albert, Mr & Mrs G. Roffey, Mr & Mrs Edwards.

Private Charles Roffey was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Roffey's mother – Mrs E. Roffey, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Charles Roffey – service number 3907, aged 27, of 45th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of George & Eliza Roffey, of 20 Ulverscroft Rd., East Dulwich, London.

Private C. Roffey is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 140.

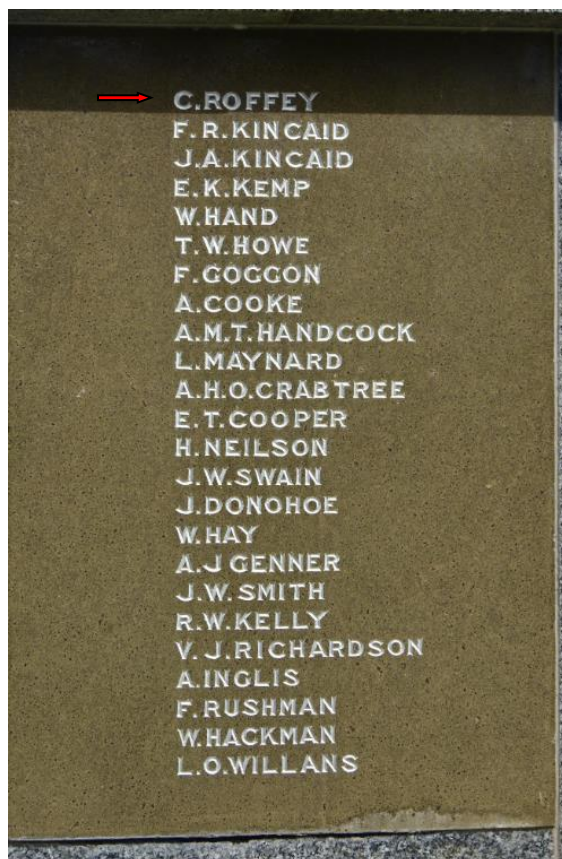


Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

C. Roffey is remembered on the Bellingen War Memorial, located on Oak & Hyde Streets, Bellingen, New South Wales.

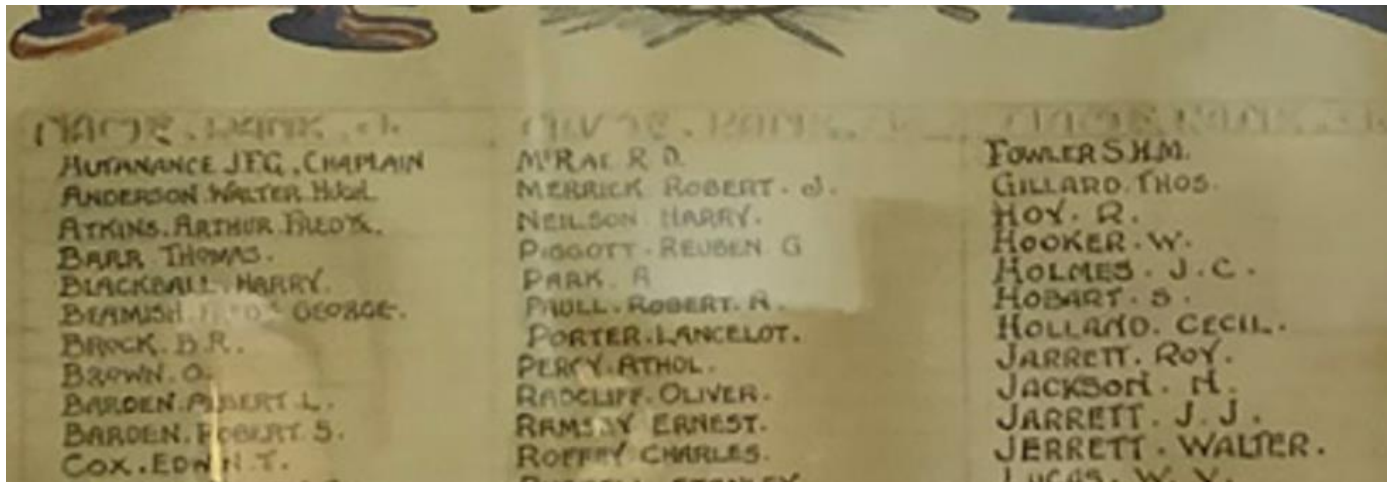


Bellingen War Memorial (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Penny Smith)



Charles Roffey is remembered on St. Margaret's Anglican Church Roll of Honour, 100 Hyde Street, Bellingen, NSW.





(55 pages of Private Charles Roffey'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) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

Australian Casualties

Lists Nos. 363 to 366

Wounded

Pte C. Roffey (England)

(*Australian Town and Country Journal*, Sydney, NSW – 12 December, 1917)

As the outcome of "jollification" in Belgium, Pte Chales Roffey, Australian Imperial Force, drank caustic soda in mistake for spirits, which had fatal consequences.

(*Bristol Times and Mirror*, England – 8 March, 1919)

SICK SOLDIERS

CASUALTY LIST NO. 461

ILL

C. ROFFEY, England (p.r.w)

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 18 March, 1919)

463rd CASUALTY LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED, OF OTHER CAUSES

Pte CHARLES ROFFEY, England (illness)

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 17 April, 1919)

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 C. Roffey does not have a headstone but is instead named on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Screen Wall.

Camberwell Old Cemetery, London, England

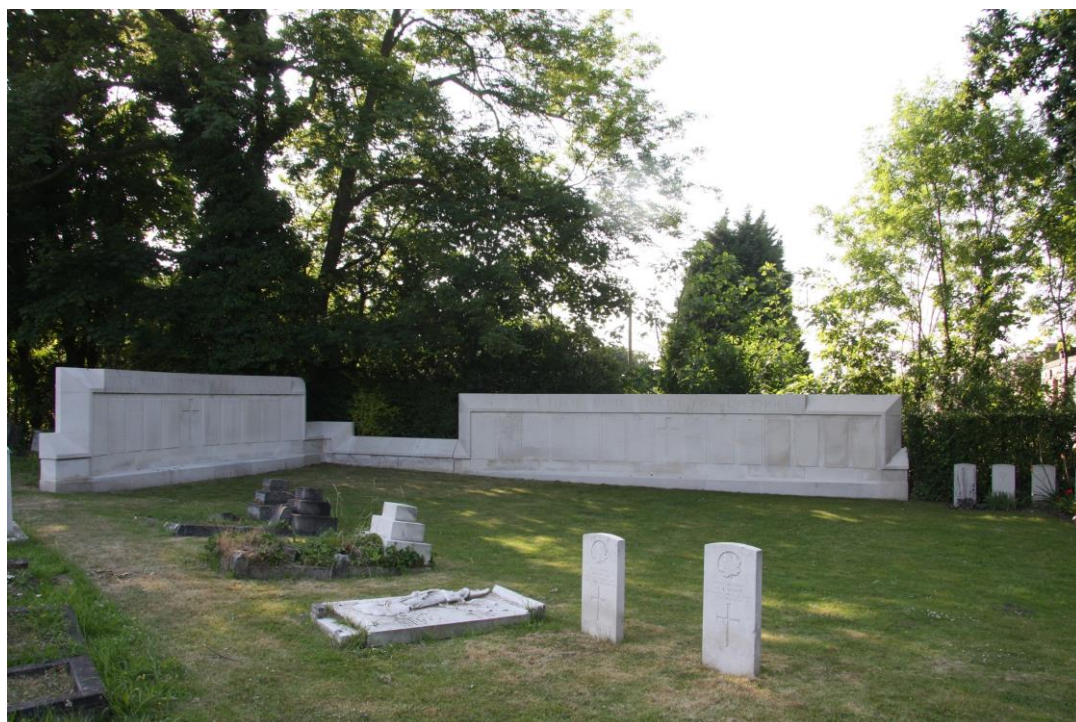
This cemetery contains 291 First World War burials. The war graves plot is in the north-east corner of the cemetery and contains two screen walls. One commemorates almost 160 casualties buried in the plot, the other bears the names of those buried in the remaining war graves scattered throughout the cemetery that could not be individually marked.

The war graves plot also contains a group of special memorials to the 14 casualties of the Second World War buried in the cemetery.

(Information from CWGC)



Entrance to Camberwell Old Cemetery *(Photos from Find a Grave – Julia&keld)*

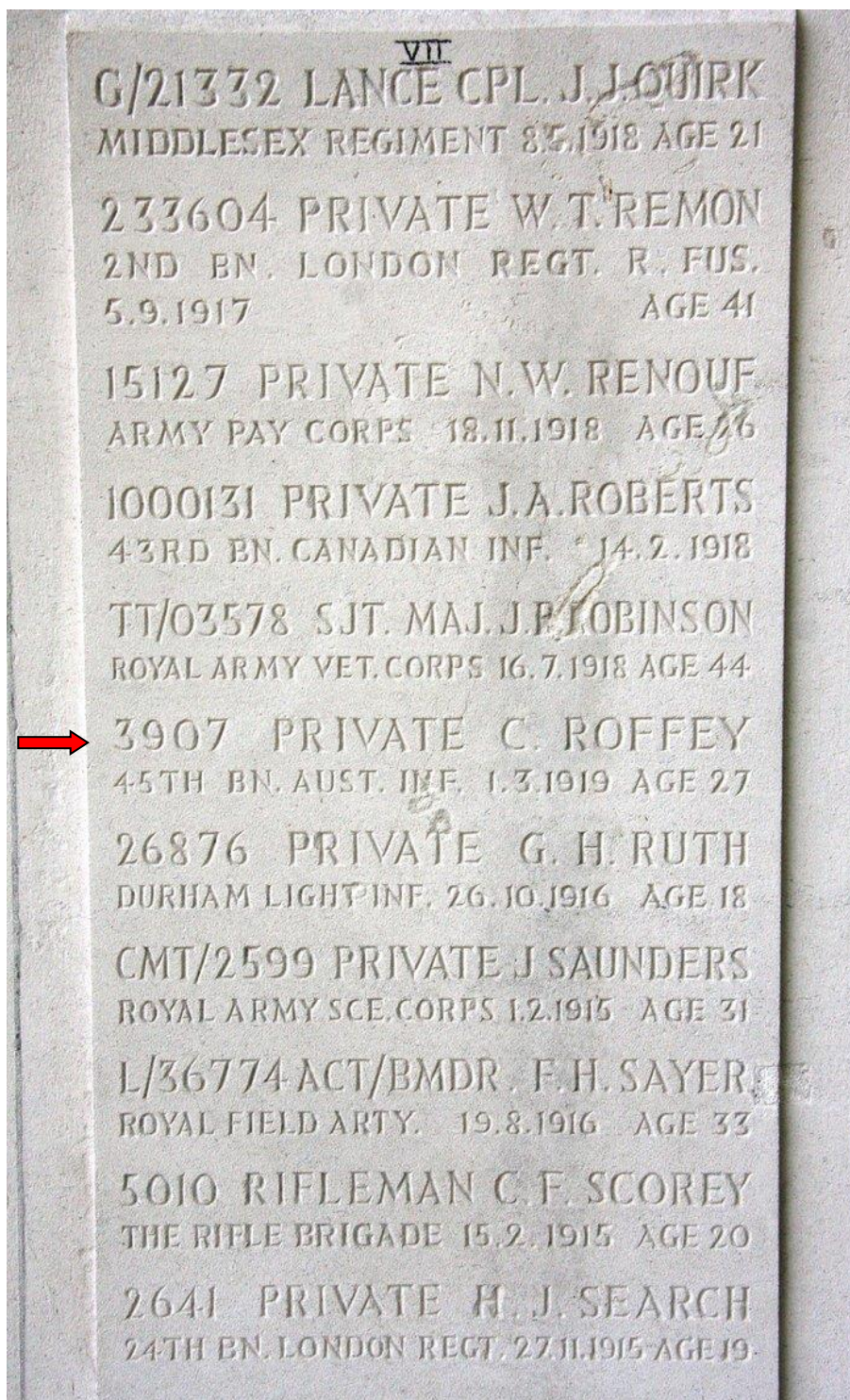




CWGC SCREEN WALL (*Photos from CWGC*)



Photo of Private C. Roffey's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Screen Wall in Camberwell Old Cemetery, London, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Julia&keld)

