

**All Souls Cemetery,
Kensal Green, London, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4602 PRIVATE

A. L. ROMEO

1ST AUSTRALIAN PIONEERS

4TH AUGUST, 1916

Our Tears

Are The Flowers

On Your Grave

Albert Lentiligent ROMEO

Albert Lentiligent Romeo was born in Sydney, NSW in 1890 to parents Albert & Elizabeth M. Romeo (nee Emmerson).

Albert Lentiligent Romeo attended Crown St Public School, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW.

Albert Lentiligent Romeo married Ethel May Tasker in 1910 in Sydney, NSW. A son – Cecil H. Romeo was born in 1911. A daughter – Phyllis Daphne Tessie Romeo was born in 1912.

Albert Lentiligent Romeo was a 25 year old, married, Labourer from 407 Riley Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted at Casula, NSW on 25th November, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4602 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs E. M. Romeo, 407 Riley Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW. Albert Romeo stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served with Royal Irish Rifles & was discharged due to completing his service.

Private Albert Lentiligent Romeo was posted to 4th Reinforcements, 4th Battalion for recruit training.

Private Albert Lentiligent Romeo embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Wandilla* (A62) on 3rd February, 1916 with the 4th Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements & disembarked at Alexandria on 7th March, 1916.

Private Albert Romeo embarked from Alexandria on 29th March 1916 on Troopship Transylvania to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 4th April, 1916.

Private Albert Romeo proceeded to reinforce 1st Pioneer Battalion from Etaples, France on 8th June, 1916 & was taken on strength of 1st Pioneers on 11th June, 1916.

Private Albert Lentiligent Romeo was wounded in action. His "Casualty Form – Active Service" states he was wounded between 22 to 27 July, 1916. Pte Romeo was admitted to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station on 24th July, 1916 with gunshot wounds then transferred to No. 21 Ambulance Train on 25th July, 1916. He was admitted to 13th Stationary Hospital at Boulogne, France on 26th July, 1916 with shrapnel wounds to eye & head. Pte Romeo was transferred to Convalescent Camp at Boulogne on 30th July, 1916 then transferred to Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel* the same day with gunshot wounds to right eye.

1st Australian Pioneer Battalion

The 1st Pioneer Battalion was an Australian infantry and light engineer unit raised for service during the First World War as part of the all-volunteer Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). The 1st Pioneers were raised in Egypt, on 10 March 1916, from volunteers drawn from New South Wales who were subsequently assigned to the 1st Division. Trained as infantrymen, the pioneers were tasked with light combat engineer functions in the field, with a large number of personnel possessing trades from civilian life. The concept had existed within the British Indian Army before the war, but was adopted by the Australian Army in early 1916 to meet a need for troops with construction and engineering skills to assist with digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points and undertaking battlefield clearance. At the same time, they could be pressed into the line to fight alongside regular infantry where required.

After the battalion's introduction to trench warfare around Fleurbaix it was committed to the Battle of Pozieres in July 1916 where, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edmund Nicholson – an artillery officer who had served at Gallipoli – they laid the form-up trench for the attack, before being committed to the capture of the village itself. The battalion's losses in its first battle amounted to 180 killed or wounded.

(Information from Wikipedia)

War Diary – 1st Australian Pioneer Battalion

23rd July – Contal-Maison Pozieres:

Early morning, after intense bombardment, infantry attack launched against enemy positions. This battalion followed up attack and consolidated certain positions won. In cases where infantry had not gained objectives, Pioneer parties supporting in these sectors were not able to carry out the consolidating work allotted to them and engaged in developing and improving communication trenches and other work. Capt H. F. HUBBE (Adjutant) was killed after doing excellent work

24th July – Contal-Maison & Pozieres:

In morning party proceeded to CEMETERY (POZIERES) to form strong point. Other parties engaged in POZIERES VILLAGE constructing strong points and improving communications and others further back in BLACK WATCH ALLEY and on POZIERES TRENCH. At night, further infantry actions against enemy positions and Pioneer parties supported attacks.

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27th July – Contalmaison Albert

Battalion withdrawn and work taken over by 2nd Pioneer Battalion. Returned to Billets in ALBERT

Casualties for period from 23rd inst. were as follows:-

KILLED 2 Officers & 20 Other Ranks

WOUNDED 5 Officers & 130 Other Ranks

MISSING 19 Other Ranks

(Extract of War Diary information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo was admitted to 2nd London General Hospital, Chelsea, England with shrapnel wounds to right eye (severe). (Statement of Service form records incorrectly he was admitted on 25th July, 1916).

Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo died on 4th August, 1916 at 2nd London General Hospital, Chelsea, England from wounds received in action in France - gunshot wounds to right eye & Tetanus. Cause of death also listed as 1. Wound of orbit & 2. Ancumsesceal Meningitis. Another form in the Service Record file of Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo records that he died on Pneumonial Meningitis.

A death for Albert Romeo, aged 26, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Chelsea, London, England.

Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo was buried on 9th August, 1916 in All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England – Plot number 10, Soldiers Plot, Square No. 213 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte

A letter was written from Base Records to Mrs E. M. Romeo, widow of the late Private A. L. Romeo, advising that the remains of her husband had been exhumed from the former site & re-interred in Grave No. 14, Section 173, Kensal Green Cemetery, London. The letter stated that "This work is carried out with every measure of care and reverence in the presence of a Chaplain."

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo contains the following letter: "*In answer to your letter of inquiry as to No. 4602. Pte A. L. Romeo, 1st Pioneer Battn (late 4th Battn.) who died at St. Marks Chelsea on August 4th last – I am sorry I cannot give very many details as he was in the Hospital such a short time.*"

However these are the facts as far as I have been able to ascertain them from the doctors and the sister who attended him.

He was admitted on July 30th with a gun shot wound in the head and was then a waking case, but suddenly became very ill, and lost consciousness, passing away on August 4th without regaining consciousness.

I saw the sister who looked after him, the day after he died, and she said she would like his people to know that everything possible had been done for him, so I wrote to Mrs Romeo, and I also went up to put some flowers on his grave, as I thought she would like it. I seem to have told you so little, but in such a short time – between his admittance to the hospital and his death – there really were as far as I can ascertain no further details, owing to his losing consciousness.

A Pension was granted to Ethel May Romeo, of 173 Albion Street, Surry Hills, widow of the late Private Albert L. Romeo, in the sum of £2 per fortnight, from 14th October, 1918. Pensions were also granted to Private Albert Romeo's children – Cecil Romeo - £1 per fortnight & Phyllis Romeo – 15/- per fortnight, also from 14th October, 1918.

Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Romeo's widow – Mrs Ethel Romeo, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo – service number 4602, of 1st Australian Pioneers. He was the husband of Ethel Romeo, of 262 Grafton St., Woollahra, Sydney, Australia.

Private A. L. Romeo is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 172.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. L. Romeo is remembered on the Crown Street Public School War Memorial, located in the front grounds of the school at 356 Crown Street, Surry Hills, Sydney, NSW.



Crown Street Public School War Memorial



Crown Street Public School War Memorial (Photo by J. Bar)

A. L. Romeo is remembered on the Leichhardt War Memorial, located in Pioneers Memorial Park, Norton Street, Leichhardt, NSW.



Leichhardt War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)



(54 pages of Private Albert Lentilgent Romeo'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

WAR CASUALTIES

DIED OF WOUNDS

PRIVATE A. L. ROMEO

Private A. L. Romeo, husband of Mrs Romeo, of Surry Hills, has died of wounds,. He was employed in the Public Works Department.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 1 September, 1916)

ERROR IN NAME

Mrs A. L. Romeo, of 173 Albion-street, Surry Hills, states that there was an error in the official casualty list which was published on Thursday, and that the record "Private A. L. Romeo, of Brighton (Vic.), died of wounds" was intended for Private A. L. Romeo, her husband, who had died of wounds.

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 1 September, 1916)



PTE A. L. ROMEO

Surry Hills – Died of wounds

(Sydney Mail, NSW – 22 November, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

ROMEO – In sad but loving memory of my darling husband, Pte A. L. Romeo, who died of wounds, August 4, 1916, aged 24 years.

When alone in my sorrow the bitter tears flow,
There stealeth a dream of the dear long ago;
And unknown to the world he stand by my side,
And whispers these words: Death cannot divide.
Oh Lord grant us the victory,
That his life was not given in vain.

Inserted by his sorrowing wife, Ethel.

ROMEO – In sad but loving memory of our darling daddy, Pte A. L. Romeo, who died of wounds received in France, August 4, 1916, aged 24 years.

Your death has made us sad, dear daddy,
We are sorrowed by your fall;
But you died an Australian soldier, daddy,
'Tis the grandest death of all.
Heaven had gained what we have lost.

Inserted by his sorrowing children, Phyllis and Cecil.

ROMEO – In sad and loving memory of my dear son-in-law, Pte A. L. Romeo (Hal), who died of wounds received in France, August 4, 1916, aged 24 years.

We cannot, Lord, The purpose see,
But all's done well that's done by Thee.

Inserted by his sorrowing mother-in-law and relations in Melbourne.

ROMEO – In loving memory of my dear brother, Albert, died August 4, 1916, of wounds received in France.

Let the memory of his loving ways
Restrain us so no evil e'er be thought or done,

Kathleen.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 4 August, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

ROMEO – In sad but loving memory of our darling husband and our daddy, Pte A. L. Romeo (hal), died of wounds received at Pozieres, August 4, 1916, aged 24 years.

When the flowers strew the roadway,
And the boys come marching home,
When a father's hand shall grasp them,
And a mother's hand shall clasp them,
Oh, God, have pity for the watching ones,
Whose loved ones can never come home.

Oh, darling, how I pray that when life's cares are o'er,
That your loving smile may greet the
Broken hearts you have left behind.

Inserted by his sorrowing wife, Ethel, and children (doves), Phyllis and Cecil.

ROMEO – In loving memory of my dear brother, Hal, died August 4, 1916, of wounds received in France.

Out in a lonely graveyard,
Beneath a strange sod,
There lies my darling brother,
Resting in peace with God.

Inserted by his loving sister, Kathleen Tasker.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 3 August, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

ROMEO – In loving memory of my dear brother, Hal, (Pte A. L. Romeo), died August 4, 1916, from wounds received in France.

There is a link death cannot sever.
Loving remembrance lasts for ever.

Inserted by his loving sister, Katie.

ROMEO – In memory of dear Hal, who died of wounds received in France, August 4, 1916.

He sleeps among the honoured dead,
Duty nobly done, his crown well won.

Inserted by mother-in-law.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 4 August, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

ROMEO – In sad but loving memory of Pte A. L. Romeo, died of wounds, August 4, 1916, aged 23 years.

Darling, I pray that when life's cares are o'er
Your loving smile may greet the broken hearts you have left behind.

Inserted by his sorrowing wife, Ethel, and children (doves), Phyllis and Cecil.

ROMEO – In loving memory of my dear brother, A. L., died August 4, 1916.

Great though the odds, they stood up to the test,
Peace to the souls of our comrades gone West.

Inserted by Sister Kathleen, and nephew, Ken.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 4 August, 1920)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Private A. L. Romeo does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Our Tears Are The Flowers On Your Grave

All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England

All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green contains burials of both wars - 538. Half of the 482 First World War graves form a plot in the south-west section of the cemetery, the rest form small groups or are scattered throughout the cemetery. All of the 5s Second World War graves are scattered. There are also 2 non war burials here. A screen wall in the First World War plot (Sect. 213) records the names of casualties of both wars whose graves could not be individually marked. Also recorded on the wall are the names of five servicemen whose remains were cremated in Kensal Green Crematorium.

(Information from CWGC)



All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green *(Photo by Rodney Burton)*

Photo of Private A. L. Romeo's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England.



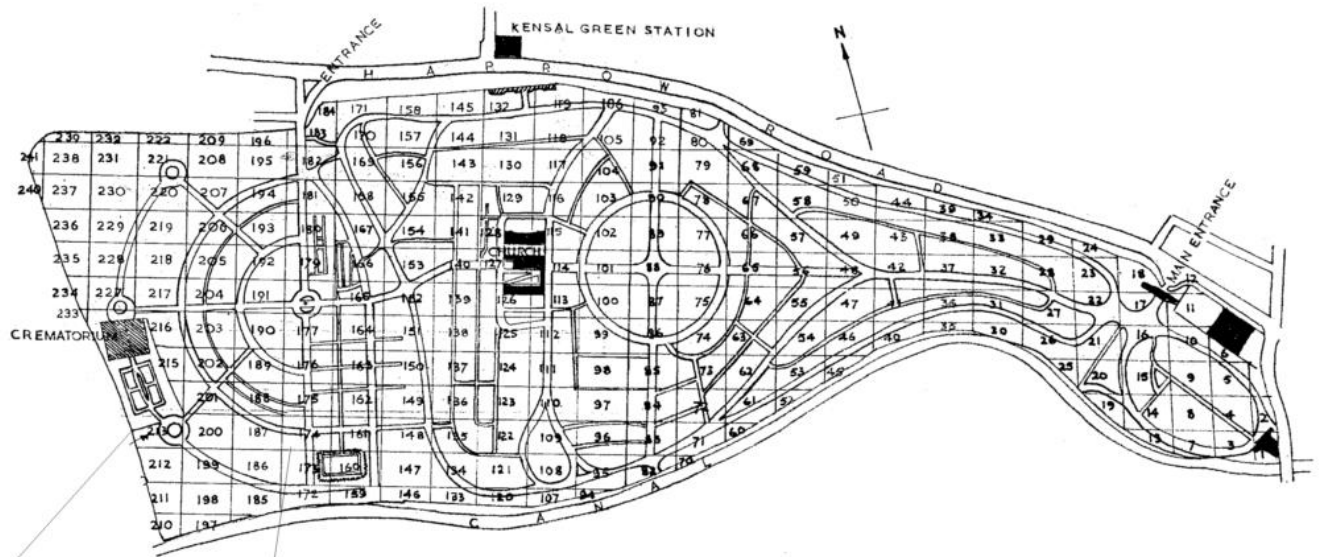
(Photo by Francois Greeff)



All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green (Photo courtesy of Francios Greeff)



Cross of Sacrifice - All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green (Photo by Chris Doran)



Sect. 213 : Main U.K. and N.Z. Plot.
 Sect. 173 and 174 : Main Dominion Plot