

**Fort Pitt Military Cemetery,  
Rochester, Kent  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**3395 PRIVATE**

**T. P. ROONEY**

**59TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**16TH NOVEMBER, 1916**

*In Memory*

*Of The Beloved Son*

*Of Francis & Annie Rooney*

*R.I.P.*

## Thomas Patrick ROONEY

Thomas Patrick Rooney was born at Clifton Hill, Victoria in 1895 to parents Francis & Annie Rooney (nee Millman).

Thomas Patrick Rooney attended Christian Brothers School, Abbotsford, Victoria.

Thomas Patrick Rooney was a 20 year old, single, Mail Driver from Northcote, Victoria when he enlisted on 21st July, 1915 with the 5th Infantry Battalion, 11th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 3395 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr F. Rooney, of 54 Barry Street, Northcote, Victoria. As Thomas Rooney was under the age of 21 years, both parents needed to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Francis & Annie Rooney signed their consent in a letter to the Defence Department, dated 14th July, 1915.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was posted to Depot Camp on 26th July, 1915. He was transferred to 11th Reinforcements of 5th Battalion on 11th September, 1915.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Nestor* (A71) on 11th October, 1915.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was admitted to 3rd Auxiliary Hospital, Heliopolis with Gastritis. (Different forms have different dates – The Statement of Service form records that he was admitted 23rd December, 1915. The Casualty Form – Active Service records that he was admitted on 7th January, 1916 & discharged to duty on 11th February, 1916.)

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was allotted & proceeded to join 59th Battalion on 26th March, 1916 from 2nd Training Battalion at Zeitoun. He was taken on strength with 59th Battalion at Ferry Post on 3rd April, 1916.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was admitted to Hospital at Duntroon Plateau on 1st May, 1916 with a fever after inoculation. He was discharged to his Unit on 3rd May, 1916.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney embarked from Alexandria on 18th June, 1916 on *Kinfauns Castle* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 29th June, 1916.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was wounded in action on 19th July, 1916. He was admitted to No. 2 Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 20th July, 1916 with gunshot wounds to leg & shoulder. Pte Rooney was transferred by Ambulance Train & admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital at Wimereux, France on 20th July, 1916 with severe wounds. He embarked for England on Hospital Ship *Cambria* on 22nd July, 1916.

### **59th Battalion**

The 59th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 21 February, 1916 as part of the expansion of the A.I.F. Approximately half of its recruits came from the veteran 7th Battalion, and the other half were fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 7th, the 59th was predominantly composed of men from rural Victoria. The battalion became part of the 15th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

On 19 July, 1916, the 59th became embroiled in its first major battle on the Western Front, less than a month after it arrived in France. The battle of Fromelles was a disaster for the 59th. Attacking in the first wave, the 59th suffered heavy casualties at the hands of German machine-gunners, and its advance faltered far short of its objective. Despite grievous losses, the units of the 5th Division manned the front line around Fromelles for a further two months.

*(Information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### **War Diary – 59th Battalion – 19th July, 1916**

#### **SAILLY**

12 noon – Heavy bombardment of enemy lines. 60th Battn. relieved half our front from PINNY AVENUE inclusive.

*7 pm - 59th Battn. attacked enemy position in four waves. First wave going over parapet at 6.45 pm. Other three waves following at five minute intervals. Attack did not penetrate enemy trenches being held up by intense rifle and machine gun fire approximately 110 yards from enemy front line.*

*(Information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was admitted to Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham, Kent, England on 23rd July, 1916 with gunshot wounds to left leg & shoulder. The Hospital Reports states that Pte Rooney developed Pharyngitis & pneumonia & part of his leg was amputated owing to Septicaemia.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney died at 6 am on 16th November, 1916 at Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham, Kent, England from wounds received in action in France– gunshot wound to left leg & Septicaemia.

A death for Thomas P. Rooney, aged 21, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Medway, Kent, England.

Private Thomas Patrick Rooney was buried on 20th November, 1916 in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England – Plot number 1419 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Pte Thomas Patrick Rooney was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Rooney's father – Mr F. Rooney, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Thomas Patrick Rooney – service number 3395, of 59th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Francis and Annie Rooney, of 54 Barry St., Northcote, Victoria, Australia. Native of Clifton Hill, Melbourne.

Private T. P. Rooney is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 168.



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

T. P. Rooney is remembered on the General Post Office Honour Roll which is located in the old G.P.O. Building, Bourke & Elizabeth Streets, Melbourne, Victoria.



**General Post Office Honour Roll, Melbourne** (Photo from Monument Australia – Kent Watson)

The Northcote Cenotaph does not record individual names.



**The Northcote Cenotaph** (Photo from Monument Australia – Graeme Saunders/ Peter F. Williams)

(41 pages of Pte Thomas Patrick Rooney'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*



**The Rooney Family**

*(Back l to r: (Standing) Frank, Mary, Thomas Patrick, John Michael)*

*(Front l to r: Philomena, Francis, Laurence & Ann)*

### **Newspaper Notices**

THIS WEEK'S CASUALTIES

DIED OF ILLNESS

Private T. P. Rooney, Northcote.

*(Northcote Leader, Victoria – 2 December, 1916)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P07648.001

**Private Thomas Patrick Rooney**



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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)*

Pte T. P. Rooney does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*In Memory Of The Beloved Son Of Francis & Annie Rooney R.I.P.*

## Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent contains 289 identified Commonwealth War Graves.

During both wars there were naval and military establishments in the neighbourhood of Rochester, and some fishing and shipping at the port.

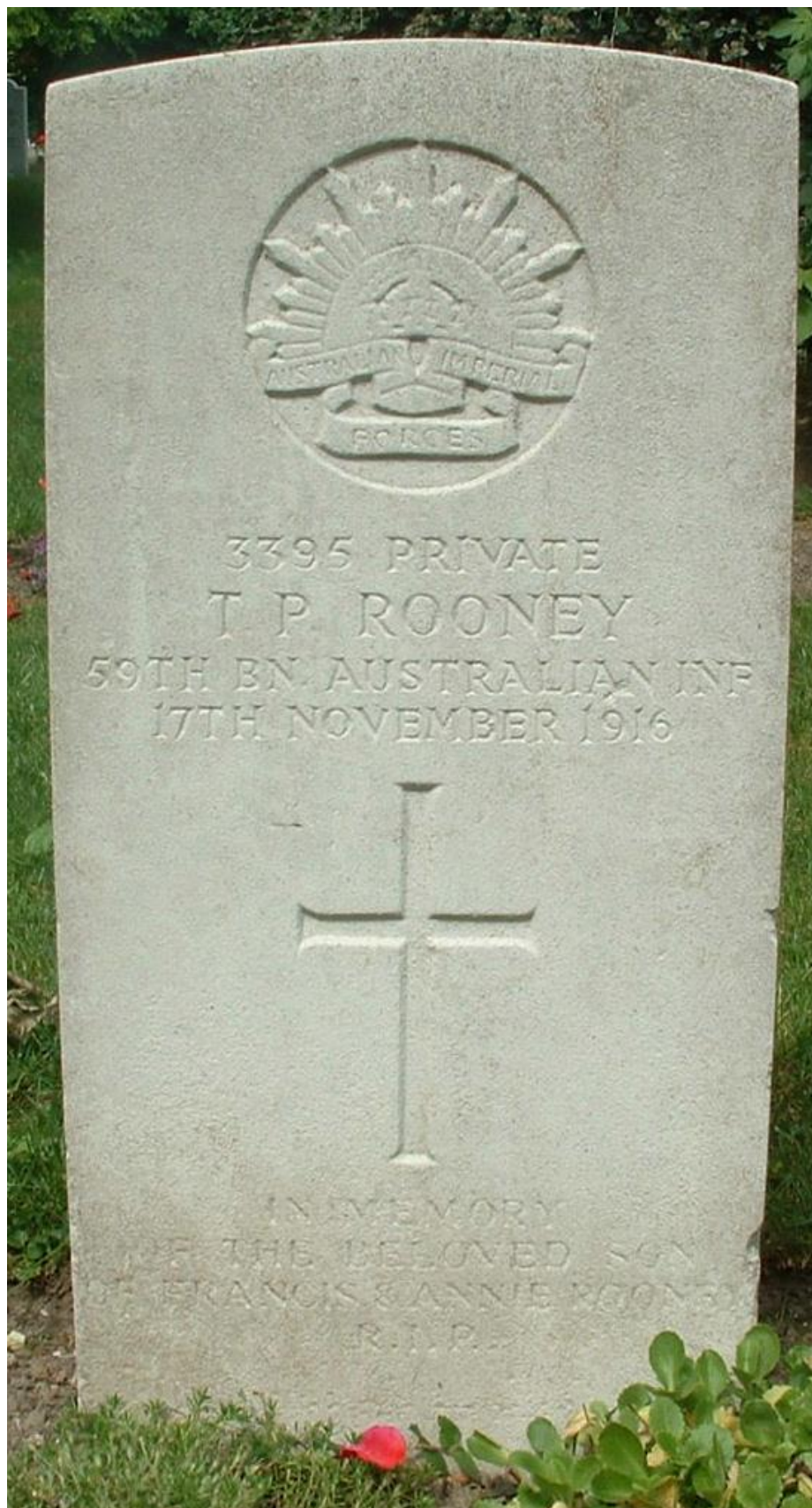
Fort Pitt Military Cemetery contains a plot of 266 First World War graves. The 25 Second World War graves (two of them unidentified) are north of the plot. All save two of them are together in a group.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*



Photo of Pte T. P. Rooney's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England.

*NOTE: The date of death on the headstone is incorrect. Private Thomas Patrick Rooney died on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1916.*



*(Photo courtesy of Kyle Tallett)*