Hollybrook Memorial,

Southampton, Hampshire, England

War Graves

Lest We Forget

World War 1

2879   PRIVATE

J. H. STEEPE

36TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

13TH DECEMBER, 1916

John Henry STEEPE

John Henry Steepe was born at "Rockwell", Walcha, near Port Macquarie, New South Wales on 19th September, 1884 to parents Edmund & Ellen "Alice" Steep (nee Hogno). His birth was registered in 1884 in the district of Walcha, New South Wales (NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages website has surname as "Steep").

Edmund Steep/e, father of John Henry Steepe, died on 24th July, 1899 at Inverell Hospital, New South Wales.

John Henry Steepe stated he was a 29 year old, single, share Farmer from (care of) S. Haylock, Toomberah (as listed on Embarkation Roll, however it should be Loomberah, near Tamworth), via Tamworth, NSW when he enlisted on 7th November, 1916 (date as per Embarkation Roll, however his Attestation Papers have date as 4th October, 1916) at Armidale, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Presbyterian & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Alice Steep, (care of) S. Haylock, Toomberah, via Tamworth, NSW. John Henry Steep's Medical History Sheet listed the following slight defect – *"Hammer toe left foot, the result of an accident."*

Private John Henry Steepe was posted to Armidale Depot Battalion on 7th November, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 6th Reinforcements of 36th Battalion from 12th November, 1916.

Private John Henry Steepe, Service number 2879, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Beltana (A72)* on 25th November, 1916 with the 9th Infantry Brigade, 36th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements.
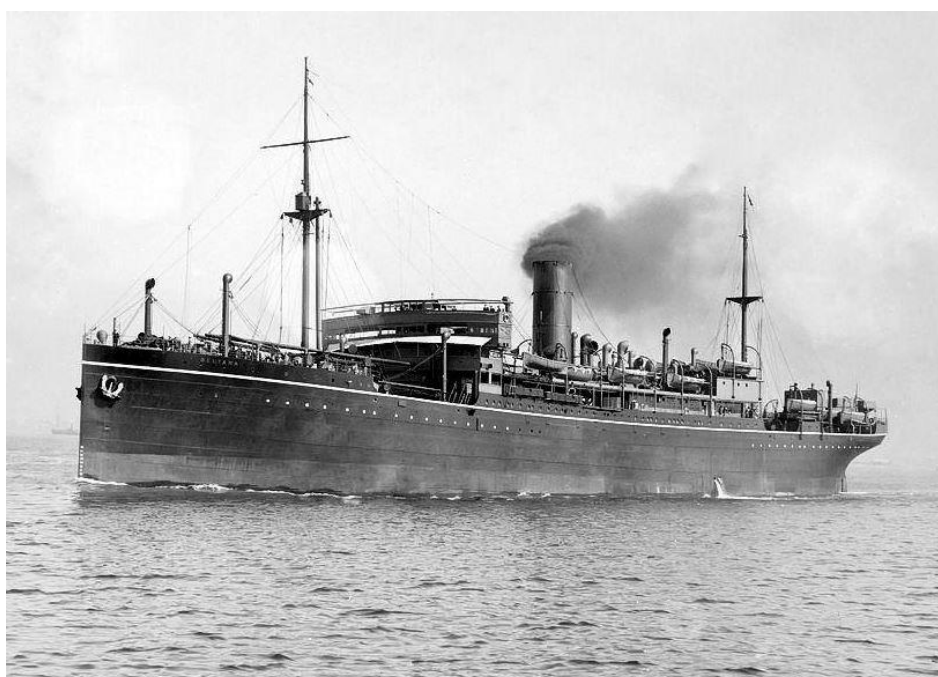
36th Battalion

The 36th Battalion was raised at Broadmeadow Camp, in Newcastle, New South Wales in February 1916. The bulk of the battalion's recruits had been enlisted as a result of a recruiting drive conducted amongst the rifle clubs of New South Wales by the Minister for Public Information in the New South Wales government, Ambrose Carmichael. Thus, the battalion became known as "Carmichael's Thousand". Carmichael led by example and enlisted as well, serving in the battalion as a captain.

The 36th Battalion became part of the 9th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division….

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private John Henry Steepe was admitted to Ship's Hospital on 1st December, 1916 with Pneumonia.
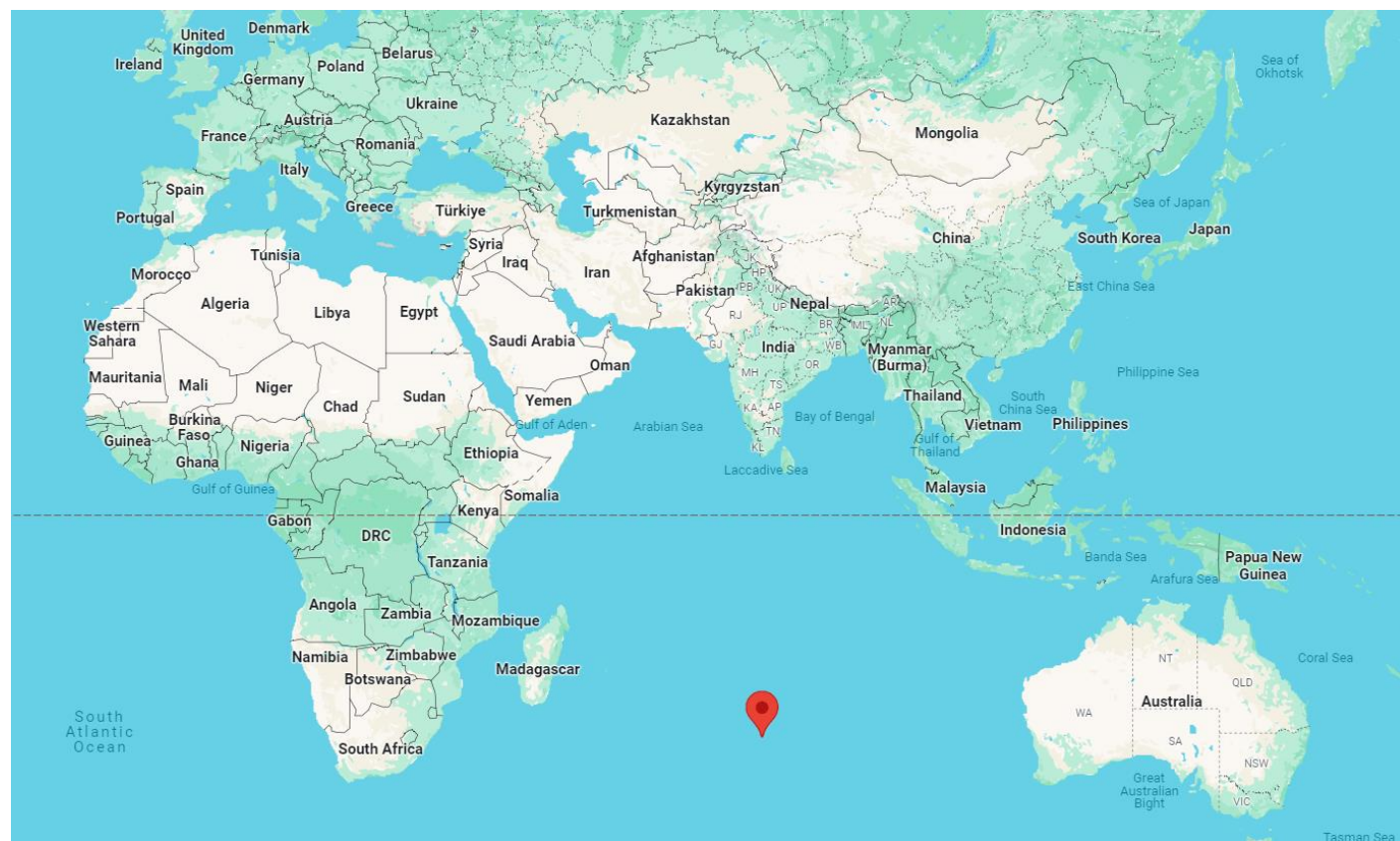

HMAT *Beltana (A72)*

Private John Henry Steepe died on 13th December, 1916 at Sea on board HMAT *Beltana* from Pneumonia.

According to Register of Deceased Passengers – John Henry Steepe died at 1.30 pm on 13th December, 1916 at Latitude 29.19S, Longitude 77.34E.

(Note: Seven deaths were recorded on Register of Deceased Passengers for Runic from 26th November, 1916 until 14th January, 1917. Three had died from Pneumonia; 3 from Broncho Pneumonia following Measles & one from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis)

Place of death of Private John Henry Steepe on board HMAT *Beltana*

Private John Henry Steepe was buried at Sea from HMAT *Beltana* on 13th December, 1916. He is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England as he has no grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Private John Henry Steepe was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Steepe's mother – Mrs W. J. Baker (of Crows Nest, Queensland), as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent March, 1923 & signed for by Alice Baker. Plaque sent July, 1922 & signed for by Alice Baker).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Henry Steepe – service number 2879, of 36th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

J. H. <u>Steep</u> is remembered on the ANZAC Park Memorial Gates, located at ANZAC Park, Brisbane Street, Tamworth, NSW.

ANZAC Park Memorial Gates, Tamworth *(Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)*

Private J. H. Steepe is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 127.

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(36 pages of Private John Henry Steepe'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

NEWS OF THE DAY

WALCHA NEWS – At the Police Court, on Thursday, Edmund Steep, charged with wilfully leaving his children without necessary food, clothing or lodging, was remanded for eight days.

(*The Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, NSW – 16 April, 1895)

Walcha Police Court

On the 12th, one drunk, and on the 13th, three drunks, first offenders, were cautioned by Mr. Erratt and discharged.

(Wednesday, 14th Before Messrs. G. H. Erratt and M. J. Walsh, J'sP.)

Edmund Steep, charged with child desertion, pleaded not guilty.

The following depositions were taken:

Henry Sharp, on oath, stated : I am Senior-Sergeant of police and reside at Inverell. At about half-past 11 on the 5th inst., I saw accused near the Court House, Inverell. I had a conversation with him and arrested him on a charge of child desertion at Walcha. Defendant said my name is Edmund Steep. I left one of my children with Henry Steep, my

© Cathy Sedgwick 2024

brother, at Walcha, and the other with Frank Foster, of Walcha, and arranged with them for the children's support. I confined accused in Inverell lockup.

Alex. Edwards, on oath, stated : I am Sergeant of the police stationed at Walcha. Yesterday I received the defendant from Constable Hood. Previously I have had complaints from the Inspector of Charities respecting the child Norman Steep, now at Walcha hospital. I have also had complaints from Charles Smith, respecting the same child. He stated that the defendant left the child with him with the understanding that he was to remain there for a week. This would be about 9 months ago, he said. He states that he hasn't heard from the father since he left the child there, and didn't know, where the father was. While at Smith's the child had an accident and was brought, to the Walcha hospital. He is convalescent for some time past but Smith refuses to take custody of him. This is the second occasion on which I have had to find fault with defendant for neglect of his children.

To defendant : Charley Smith himself said you left the child there for a week.

Edmund Steep, on oath, said : I am a labourer, and reside at Inverell. About last February I received information from the Barraba police that Sergt. Edwards, of Walcha, wanted me to come and see what I was to do with the children. I came to Walcha and saw Sergt. Edwards. I told him I wasn't prepared to pay anyone to look after them, and I thought it would be better to give them out to people that would look after them. He told me I would have to consult my wife. I then went to Tia. Before that I had not made any arrangements to give the children away at all. There was a message left with my mother from my sister, Mrs. Smith that she wanted Norman, the youngest child, I wrote a note straight to tell her to tell her she could have him, and I sent the child to her. I wrote her a note to ask her what recompense she would want to keep him for 12 months as I didn't care about parting with him altogether. The reply she sent me was that she was only willing to keep the child for my sake for nothing.

To Sergt. Edwards : I have been previously arrested for neglecting my children, and I have been cautioned by you previously to this action.

Charge withdrawn on promise of defendant to support the child and take him by 17th inst.

(*The Walcha Witness and Vernon County Record*, NSW – 17 December, 1898)

Australian Casualties

List No. 261

New South Wales

Killed in Action

Pte J. H. STEEPE (Loomberah), 13/12/16

(*Australian Town and Country Journal*, Sydney, NSW – 10 January, 1917)

CASUALTIES

261st LIST

Died of Wounds

Pte J. H. Steepe, Loomberah

(*The Land*, Sydney, NSW – 12 January, 1917)

Australian Casualties

List No. 261

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF ILLNESS

Private J. H. Steep (Loomberah)

(*The Maitland Weekly Mercury*, NSW – 13 January, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

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.

Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England

The Hollybrook Memorial is situated in Southampton (Hollybrook) Cemetery behind the plot of First World War graves near the main entrance.

The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces* whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters (*Officers and men of the Commonwealth's navies who have no grave but the sea are commemorated on memorials elsewhere). The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial. Almost one third of the names on the memorial are those of officers and men of the South African Native Labour Corps, who died when the troop transport Mendi sank in the Channel following a collision on 21 February 1917. Other vessels sunk with significant loss of life were: HS Anglia, a hospital ship sunk by mine off Dover on 17 November 1915. SS Citta Di Palermo, an Italian transport carrying Commonwealth troops, sunk by mine off Brindisi on 8 January 1916. In rescuing survivors, two Royal Naval Otranto drifters were themselves mined and blown up. HMTs Donegal and Warilda, ambulance transports torpedoed and sunk between Le Havre and Southampton on 17 April 1917 and 3 August 1918. HS Glenart Castle, a hospital ship torpedoed and sunk off Lundy on 26 February 1918. SS Galway Castle, torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918. RMS Leinster, the Irish mail boat, torpedoed and sunk in the Irish Sea on 10 October 1918. Among those commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial is Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, who died when the battle cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sunk off Scapa Flow on 5 June 1916.

The memorial was designed by T. Newham and unveiled by Sir William Robertson on 10 December 1930.

There are approximately 162 Australian World War 1 Service Personnel commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

(Information & photos from CWGC)
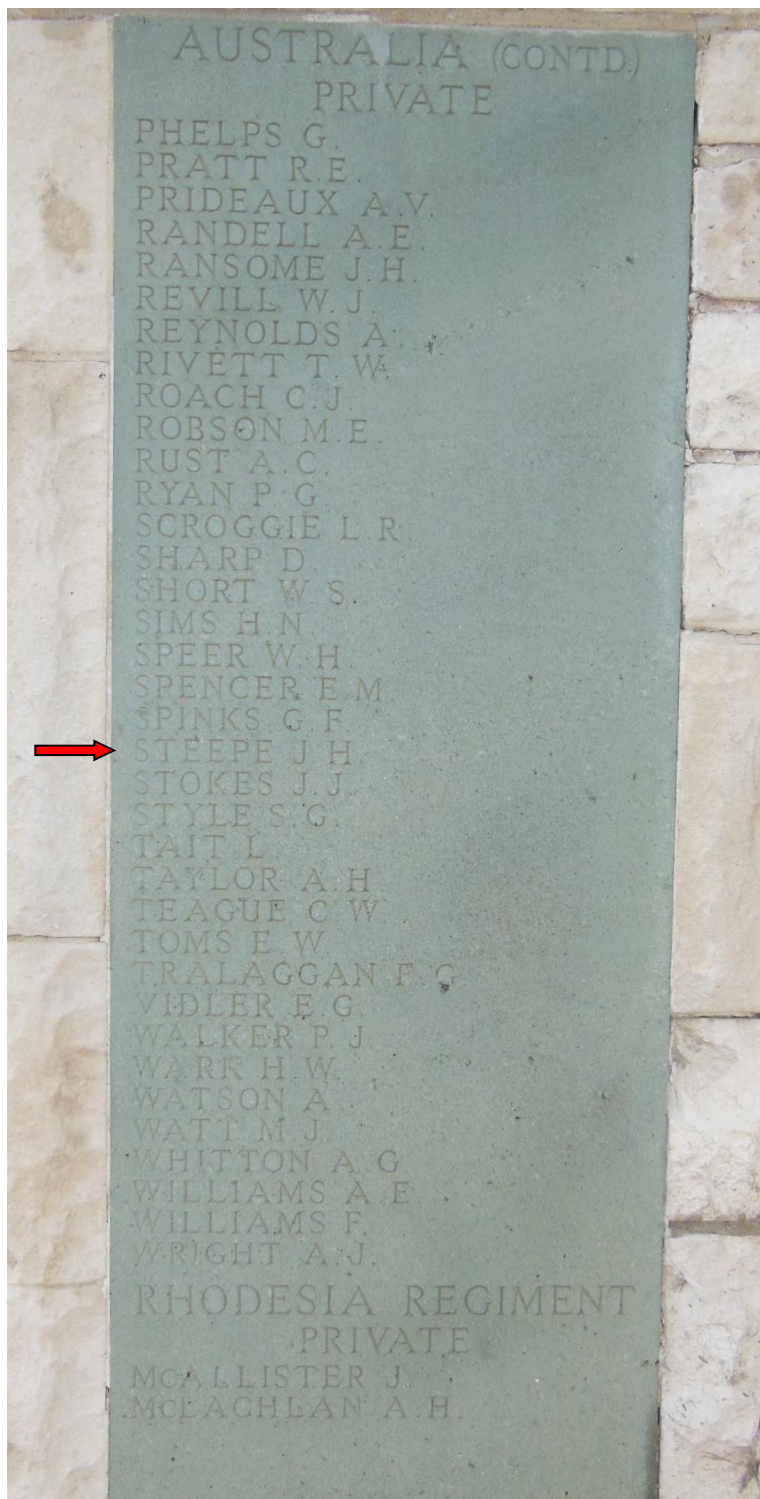

Cross of Sacrifice

Name Panels behind Cross of Sacrifice *(Photo from CWGC)*

CWGC Graves in Hollybrook Cemetery with Cross of Sacrifice & Hollybrook Memorial

(Photo from CWGC)

Photo of Private J. H. Steepe's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, Hampshire, England.

(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)