

## **Roy Hawkins: From the Silver Plated Sawyer by Dayle Shafer**

Roy was the tenth and youngest child of Caroline and Alfred Hawkins. He was born in November 1891 in Uralla, NSW. After growing up at St Helena, near Wollun, he would have been about eighteen when the family moved to Ben Venue at Armidale. He was employed by the Railways at Armidale.

A year after World War I started Roy, like his two elder brothers, Ernest and Arthur, enlisted in the Army. Although Roy was the youngest of the three brothers who enlisted, he was the first of them to join up.

On 23 August 1915 Roy enlisted in Armidale. He was attached to the Third Battalion. After receiving basic training in Australia, he left Sydney on 15 January 1916 aboard HMS Ceterley, bound for Alexandria in Egypt. After further training in Egypt, he left Alexandria on 29 March 1916 for Marseilles, arriving there on 4 April 1916. Roy arrived in Marseilles only one day before his two brothers did. After leaving Marseilles, his next stop was the battlefields of the Western Front in France and Belgium. Roy's battalion took part in operations in the Somme Valley in France and around Ypres in Belgium, their first major battle being Pozieres in the Somme Valley in July 1916. Roy was wounded in action on 29 January 1917. He had been shot in the left foot and right thigh. He was taken to Second General Hospital in Havre in Northern France.

On 4 February he embarked for England for further treatment and was then transferred to the Third Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 27 March 1917 for further convalescence. By the end of April 1917 Roy was well enough to be sent to the command depot at the Windmill Hill Camp in England. On 7 October, Roy proceeded overseas to France from Southampton to re-join his battalion, who were fighting in Belgium. He finally joined them on 15 October. After three months of fighting in Belgium, Roy was given ten days leave in Paris on 24 January 1918.

When his leave was over, Roy returned to his battalion in Belgium. It was soon after his return that the Third Battalion returned to the Somme Valley in France where they assisted in stopping the German Spring offensive in March and April. Roy's battalion subsequently participated in the Battle of Amiens between 8 August and 11 August 1918. While this battle was a crucial allied breakthrough, it would not have been without casualties. Sadly, Roy was one of these. He was killed in action on 9 August 1918. His war service records do not state where he was buried. Like thousands of men who died in World War I, his final resting place is probably unknown. He is, however, remembered with Honour on the Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux.