

Roll of Honour - Roy Oswald Middleton

Rank: Captain

Unit: 3rd Battalion.

Date of death: 25 July 1916.

Cause of death: Killed in action.

Cemetery or memorial details: Pozieres British Cemetery Ovillers-La Boisselle, France

War Grave Register notes: Middleton, Capt. Roy Oswald. 3rd Bn. Australian Inf. Killed in action 25th July, 1916. Age 25. Son of Charles and Elizabeth Ellen Middleton of Vacluse, Sydney. Native of Bathurst.

A.S.C. 1903-1908.

Note School register has him as 1904. See his Application for Commission, this gives 1903-1908.

Application for a Commission in the AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

Particulars	
Surname ...	<i>Church of England</i> MIDDLETON.
Other names (in full) ...	ROY. OSWALD
Educational Qualifications ... <small>(Certificate to be attached for solution of District Head-quarters.)</small>	<i>Education at Bathurst College Bathurst 1903-1908. Passed Syd. Univ. Matric Exam 1908. Served 4 years Articles to Architect 1908-1912. 3 years tuition Syd. Tech. College in Architecture, Construction & Art. Good draughtsman</i>
Military Qualifications (previous Military Service, if any, to be stated) <small>(Attention is directed to third sub-pars. of C.M. Regulation 66. Present rank and corps to be stated.)</small>	<i>Good knowledge Topography & engineering also good service rifle shot. 6 1/2 years unbroken service in C.M. Forces (Art Rifles) Gained Commission June 1912. Promoted Lieut 2nd Bn. 2nd 4 years 86th Coy. N. (Newington) Inf. Sydney Forces. Passed Schools No 10/1911. NOS 1912. Good certif Topography 1913. No 14 Dec 1914 Good certificate Passed for Captain Aug 1915</i>
Date on which applicant qualified for a competitive examination for first appointment as 2nd Lieutenant (U.T. Regulation 132) ...	<i>Volunteer Militia officer.</i>
Present Civil Employment ...	<i>Architect (private practice)</i>
Date of Birth and Age ... <small>(Certificate of Birth or Statutory Declaration to be attached for solution of District Head-quarters.)</small>	Date of Birth: <i>1st June 1915</i> Age: <i>24 Years 3 Months</i>

National Archives of Australia World War I service records

NAA: B2455, MIDDLETON ROY OSWALD

Battle of Pozières
23 July 1916 - 07 August 1916

Pozières, a small village in the Somme valley in France, was the scene of bitter and costly fighting for the 1st, 2nd and 4th Australian Divisions in mid 1916.

The village was captured initially by the 1st Division on 23 July 1916. The division clung to its gains despite almost continuous artillery fire and repeated German counter-attacks but suffered heavily. By the time it was relieved on 27 July it had suffered 5,285 casualties.

The 2nd Division took over from the 1st and mounted two further attacks - the first, on 29 July, was a costly failure; the second, on 2 August, resulted in the seizure of further German positions beyond the village. Again, the Australians suffered heavily from retaliatory bombardments. They were relieved on 6 August, having suffered 6,848 casualties.

The 4th Division was next into the line at Pozières. It too endured a massive artillery bombardment, and defeated a German counter-attack on 7 August; this was the last attempt by the Germans to retake Pozières.

Quoting 3rd Bn. Figures from both Bean's history and unit records:

July 14 strength	27 officers, other ranks	1063
July 31	13	562
Difference	14	501

“---At this stage the 3rd Battalion, still south of the main road, was ordered to advance and connect the posts of the 8th along the northern edge of Pozières. Its commander, Colonel Owen Howell-Price, gave instructions to Captain Middleton (72) and Lieutenant Bartlett, then acting in command of the companies that were to move. On their returning to their men, both were killed,”

(72) Capt. R.O. Middleton, 3rd Bn. Architect; of Vauclose, N.S.W.; b. Bathurst, N.S.W., 1 June 1891. Killed in action, 25 July 1916.

Account of the death of Middleton; who had been in France some 4 months and a Captain for just some 15 day, (See half way down following.)

172

RANDWICK TO HARGICOURT

was sparingly doled out in the proportion of about one-eighth of a pint to a man. Advantage was taken of the lull to evacuate the wounded, but the survivors were too few and too weary to clear out the trench, which had been almost flattened by the ferocious shelling.

Throughout the night of the 24-25th the enemy again heavily shelled the Australian position, and no sleep was possible for the defenders. The battalion was still south of the main road, A and B Companies having relieved C and D in the firing line.

July 25th opened with a tornado of shells from the German "heavies," and losses continued at such a rapid rate that Lieut-Col Howell-Price, after a personal reconnaissance, ordered a forward move close up to the 8th Battalion line, hoping thus to escape the worst of the barrage. It was at this stage that Captain R. O. Middleton and Lieut J. S. F. Bartlett, both acting as company commanders, were killed. They had gone back for the purpose of guiding their companies forward but were caught in the curtain of gun-fire. Howell-Price thereupon led the survivors forward himself. By 10 a.m. this manoeuvre was completed.

Just prior to the advance, Lieut H. S. Chapman, the battalion signalling officer, was examining a map in company with Major D. T. Moore and several signallers, when a high velocity shell hit the back of the trench. Chapman was killed by the concussion and Signaller W. A. Oates was blown to pieces. The same shell killed Signallers Clarrie Page, "Snow" Pickering, and Rupert Clarke. Strange to relate, Oates predicted, while at Gallipoli, the actual date of his death.

"I decided to push forward one company," wrote Howell-Price in his report on this day. "But when I returned to my trenches I found they were quite untenable. A Company had been practically wiped out, and

"Randwick to Hargicourt."History of the 3^d Battalion A.I.F. Eric Wren.

Ronald E. McDonald. Sydney 1935.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

3rd. Battalion. A.I.F.
 Regiment or Corps ~~18th Battalion (18th Bn) (18th Bn)~~
 Captain.

Regimental No. _____ Rank ~~1st Lt.~~ Name MIDDLETON, Roy.

Enlisted (a) _____ Terms of Service (a) _____ Service reckonings

Date of promotion } Date of appointment } Numerical
 to present rank } to lance rank } roll of

Extended _____ Re-engaged _____ Qualification (b) _____

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, decorations, etc., during active service, as recorded on Army Form H (1) Army Form A. H. or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date
Date	From whom received			
19.2.16.	C.O. 3rd. Bn. B213.	Taken on Strength.	Tel-el-Kebir.	14.2.16.
	C.O. Troops. OR/MPIAN.	Embarked for, B.E.F. Disembarked	Alexandria	22.3.16.
			Marseilles.	26.3.16.
28.4.16.	C.O. 3rd. Bn. B213.	Absorbed vide A.I.F. Orders List No. 4. dated 22.4.16.	France.	22.4.16.
10.7.16.	A.I.F. /Orders List. 56.	To be Captain.	"	29.6.16.
28.7.16.	C.O. 3rd. Bn. B213.	Killed in action.	"	25.7.16.
2.8.16.	A.I.F.	Struck off Strength.	"	"

National Archives of Australia World War I service records

NAA: B2455, MIDDLETON ROY OSWALD

A.I.F. 3.A.

MIDDLETON, Captain R.O.

K. July 25th. 1916. Det:

Big chap, stout, well built, fresh complexion, clean shaven. On July 25th the Regiment were in trenches at Pozieres. Informant quite near the Captain. During the afternoon he saw a shell burst near the Captain, blowing his leg off. Informant saw him put on the stretcher, and then he had to go on a message. Cpl. Smith of Headquarters told informant after that the Captain had died at the Dressing Station near the Chalk Pit which was about three miles off.

Informant: C.R. White. Sgt. 987. H.Q.
No. 2 Australian Hosp
BOULOGNE. 30.9.1916.

3rd Battn. A.I.F.

Capt. R.O. Middleton,
Lieut. J.E.F. Bartlett.

K25.7.16

After the capture of Pozieres on 25th July, while B. Coy of the 3rd Battn. was holding the recently taken trenches, both Middleton and Bartlett were killed by shell fire. They were both buried behind the lines.

Informant was in B. Coy, of which both Middleton and Bartlett were Officers. He did not actually see either Officers killed, but was in the same trench at the time, and there can be no doubt as to what happened.

Reference: Pte. V. Pearce, 3370,
4th Aust. General Hospital,
RANDWICK.

D.W.
2:11:16.

SYDNEY BUESAU.

A.I.F. 3.

MIDDLETON Capt. R. S.

K. 25.7.16.

I knew Capt. Middleton; he had been in B.Co. and his name was Roy, and his second initial was O. not C. He was missing from the regiment on about 24.7.16, and I was told by Pte. E. Turnbull of B.Co. the day afterwards, that Capt. Middleton had been blown to bits by a shell, and they had only been able to find pieces of him. He was quite sure that it was Capt. Middleton. This was at Pozieres. There was only one Capt. Middleton in the En.

IBEO.

Reference: Pte. W. Morris. 3836. B.Co.
26 Gen.

Staples. 1.9.16. S

3rd. A. I. F.

Middleton, Capt. R. S.
A. Coy.
(K. July 25/16.)

Informant states that on the night of July 24/16 near Pozieres Capt. Middleton gave the order to go over the parapet at 1.30. a. m. He spoke to informant and then moved away and was blown to pieces by a high explosive shell a few moments after and it was impossible to bury him.

Reference:--

G. A. Hepstone,
3rd. A. I. F. A Coy.
Graylingwell Hospital,
Chichester.

Home address:--

Rubeviar, Monahan Avenue,
Banksia,
Swansea. C

3rd Australian Imperial Forces

Middleton, Capt. R.O.

(K. July 25th 1916. Details
D & B)

Informant states that on the night of July 24th 1916 at Pozieres, this officer (in reality in A. Coy, but nearly always in B. Coy) was killed by a shell, right in the village after it had been taken by our men. The reason for thinking that a shell was the cause of death is that there were no Germans in the neighbourhood who might have fired bullets. Informant is very much afraid that the Captain did not have a proper burial, as the Regiment had to go on advancing.

Reference: Serjt. Frank F.S. Ritchie, 176,
3rd Australian Infantry, B. Company,
6 Third Avenue Hospital,
Hove.

Home address:
18, The Promenade,
Victoria Park,
Nottingham.

S

3rd Battn.
A. I. F.

MIDDLETON.
Capt. R.O.

K. July 25th, Details.

He was leading his men over the parapet at Pozieres, and was blown to pieces by a shell.

He was a great man and a very nice one too.

Reference .. Smyth, 2676,
Harefield Hospital,
15.9.16.

CAPTAIN MIDDLETON.

Captain Roy O. Middleton, younger son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Middleton, of Wentworth road, Vacluse, and late of Bathurst, was killed in action in France on July 25. He was 25 years of age and was educated at All Saints' College, Bathurst. Prior to enlisting he followed the profession of architecture

The Leader, Orange. 15/8/16 p.4

In Memoriam

MIDDLETON Killed in action Pozieres, July 25, 1916 Captain Roy O Middleton, dearly loved son of Mr. and Mrs. O Middleton, Vacluse.

Just when his life was brightest. For Empire.

MIDDLETON In loving memory of Captain R. D. Middleton killed in Pozieres, France July 25.

His fight is fought, he stood the test,

We'll remember him as one of the best.

Inserted by his auntie, Mrs.A.Williams and cousin George Thackaton, Coogee.

MIDDLETON. In memory of our dear brother, Captain Middleton killed in action at Pozieres. Inserted by his brother and sister J. and L. Middleton.

MIDDLETON. In loving memory of Captain Roy Middleton, late of Vacluse, killed in action, July 25, 1916. Inserted by his loving cousins Harry Diews, Sydney Ferries Ltd, and Nurse Diews (nee Williams), and Mrs. Florence Marks, Woolwich.

Sydney Morning Herald 25/7/17



A memorial dedicated to the members of the 1st Australian Division AIF, who died during the capture of Pozieres in July 1916.

Copyright expired - public domain AWM ID number A02192



Commemorative area A.W.M

Plaque installed on the Vacluse War Memorial, 1918

"A grateful tribute to the gallant men who fought for us in the Great War" is the heartfelt message on the memorial at Vacluse on the corner of Fitzwilliam and Wentworth Roads. The memorial was the initiative of the Vacluse Progress Association formed in May 1915. The Association's first years were concerned almost wholly with supporting the war effort and the loss of two of its members, Roy Oswald Middleton, killed by shell explosion at Pozieres on 25 July 1916 and Benjamin Digby Gibson, who drowned in Egypt on 14 January 1917, was keenly felt. Middleton was an architect who had designed a number of houses in the district, and Gibson a medical practitioner who had migrated from Ireland and settled in Vacluse in 1914

Woollahra Municipal Council: Memorials To Our Local Heroes