

# SYDNEY JOHN VINE

**Born: 7 November 1886**

**Served in British Army, 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade 1907 - 1914**

**No. 15/92 Enlisted 1st New Zealand Expeditionary Force 15 August 1914**

**At time of enlistment, Chauffeur and Manservant, Government House Wellington (Lord Liverpool, Governor General) Employer given as Capt.Shawe)**

**Next of kin initially given as Harry A Vine (Father) 42 Caledonian Road, Chichester, Sussex, England (172 Chilgrove, Chichester deleted). Later entries - Mrs W.A. Vine 16 Grove Road, Chichester/ 1 Albany Villa, Reading Road,, Fleet, Hants, England/ Houghton Bay Road, Melrose, Wellington/ 46 Buckley Street, Lower Hutt.**

## **War Service:**

William John Vine born Shoreham, England 29 July 1914 (Birth certificate shows birthplace as Steyning which is close to Shoreham). It is of interest that some of his father's service records show Dad's birth date as 29 July 1916.

<sup>1</sup>Shoreham-by-Sea

A busy harbour at the mouth of the River Adur, ideal for small boat sailors. It is a working port, and its long beach extends westwards to South Lancing and Worthing."



SHOREHAM-BY-SEA The Adur Estuary offers sheltered waters for canoeists and yachtsmen. Big boats use the harbour and Shoreham is one of the largest primary ports in the country, handling 3 million tons of goods a year.

<sup>2</sup>Steyning

A medieval, quietly prosperous town of old gabled houses. According to legend the village began in the 8th century, when St Cuthman pushed his invalid mother in a wheelbarrow from Devon. The barrow broke down at Steyning, so Cuthman stayed there and built a wooden church. The present church, dating from the 12th century, is one of the noblest in West Sussex.

**15 August to 16 October 1914 - New Zealand**

**Marched into Wellington Camp 15 August, Rank Private, Unit Headquarters**

**16 October to 2 December 1914 - At sea**

**Embarked from New Zealand on His Majesty's New Zealand Troop Ship;  
Disembarked at Suez**

**3 December - 1914 - Egypt - Sth Regiment Divisional Headquarters**

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<sup>1</sup> AA Illustrated Guide to Britain - p122

<sup>2</sup> AA Illustrated Guide to Britain - p122

**15 August 1915 - "Field Return - Sick to Hospital Ship - Dardenelles" 19 August 1915 - Ships Roll - Embarked for Malta per HS Ascania -19-8-15 Dysentery"**

<sup>3</sup>Obviously it is impossible for an army in the field to carry into practice all the laws of sanitation that ordinarily govern a civilised community. The soldiers are too busy fighting for one thing; too busy at times to even bury their dead; and for a host of other reasons the sanitation of a fighting army must always be a matter of difficulty, and, especially in a warm climate, a source of anxiety. At Anzac these difficulties were intensified a hundred-fold by the circumstance that for many months the force was confined to the narrow strip of country on which it first established itself. From the outset nothing was left undone to keep the area as clean as possible, and so minimise the risks of an outbreak of disease; but inevitably much of the ground became foul, and formed breeding places for myriads of flies, which swarmed everywhere, and seriously aggravated the already prevalent dysentery. The colonials had experienced the fly plague in Egypt, which was a natural breeding ground for anything that had its origin in filth; but the flies in Egypt were a pleasant and soothing companionship compared to the voracious hosts that from dawn to dusk tormented the very souls of these unfortunate campaigners at Anzac. No efforts could keep them out of the food. They came from the unburied dead in NO Man's Land, and from the gaping latrines, and buzzed about the supply depots, and swarmed even on the very food as the soldier conveyed it to his mouth. Small wonder that the great majority of the force suffered from dysentery and diarrhoea as the season advanced".

**5 September 1915 - "C/- 'A' Section - Embarked for England per 'Plassy' - Jaundice"  
12 September 1915 - "War Office - Admitted to Military Hospital New End, Hampstead"**

28 September 1915 Married Winifred Anne Edwards (Spinster), West Dean  
n/r Chichester, Sussex, Algernon Lucy, Vicar

**1 March 1916 - "NZB Depot - Left Depot to rejoin Unit - Hornchurch"**

<sup>4</sup>There were at this time in England about 2000 convalescent New Zealand soldiers who had come in hospital ships from the Dardenelles. Originally after being discharged fit these had been quartered in an Australian depot at Weymouth, but by March they had been concentrated partly in an English camp at Epsom and principally at an exclusively New Zealand depot at Hornchurch."

**14 March 1916 "Camp Commandant - Rejoined Unit - Albury Hill**

Albury Hill was the New Zealand Division Headquarters in the Suez area

**1 April 1916 "Transferred to DAC (Divisional Ammunition Column) from DHQ - Moascar<sup>5</sup> - with Lt Col M. M. Gardner N.Z.F.A.<sup>6</sup>**

**8 April 1916 '10/C DAC - Embarked for France per EMS Haverford - Alexandria"**

**"Proceeded to Base, Etaples for transfer to 6th Reserve Btn Rifle Bde"**

**5 May 1916 " O/C NZI&G Base Depot - Marched into Base Depot - Etaples"**

<sup>7</sup>Although the Corps were thus despatched to France and a Base Depot formed at Etaples, near Boulogne, it was not proposed at first to shift the Australian or New Zealand bases from Egypt, which was for the Australian forces more favourably situated than England. The War Office definitely approved this policy on 24th March. 'ffie N.L.E.F. Headquarters therefore remained in the Kasr-el-nil barracks in Cairo under the control of Col. JA Esson, where they had been established in January."

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<sup>3</sup> The History of the New Zealand Artillery NZEF - 1914 -18 - Byrne

<sup>4</sup> The New Zealanders in France - Col H Stewart - p17

<sup>5</sup> Moascar was merely a railway siding a mile from Ismailia, on the banks of the Suez Canal where 'ffie New Zealand Division established a big camp under canvas.

<sup>6</sup> The history of the New Zealand Artillery - p 105 - "Before the Division was ordered into the line at Armentieres some further substantial alteration was made in the composition of the artillery brigades. The howitzer batteries were distributed between the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades, and the 4th Brigade was made to consist of three 18pr. Batteries - ----- Brigade Ammunition Columns were abolished, and a 4th Section was added to the Divisional Ammunition Column commanded by Lieut-Colonel M.M. Gard'ner"

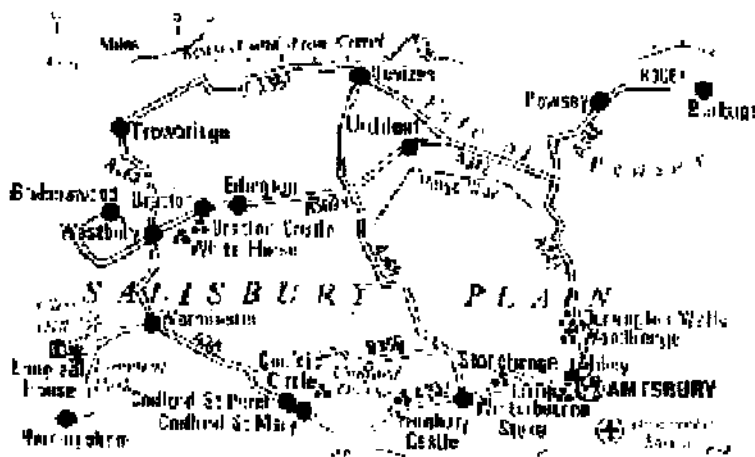
<sup>7</sup> The New Zealanders in France - p16

**20 June 1916 110/C NZ Command Depot - Att strength Comm. Depot - Hornchurch"**

**11 July 1916 "Director of Recruiting War Office - This man can remain with his present Unit - Letter to DAG 121/N/74 (A.G.2B) 3 CR File 2608471669"**

**6 July 1916 110/C NZ Command Depot - Att strgth NZ Command Depot Codford"**

<sup>8</sup>In the beginning of June a 'Command Depot' (Major J.A. McKenzie) was established on the edge of Salisbury Plain at Codford. This term had been introduced to distinguish the depots specially devoted to the reception of unfit men from the ordinary Infantry or general Base depots where reinforcements and fit men were in training and readiness to proceed to the front. As a training depot the war Office shortly afterwards assigned Sling Camp, also on the Salisbury Plain. There the training units brought from Egypt under Colonel Smyth were concentrated."



**9 August 1916 "O/C NZ Command Group - Att strgth NZ R.Group - Sling"**

**24 September 1916 "O/C Reserve Group Left Sling for France"**

**26 September 1916 "O/C Base - Marched into Base Etaples"**

**11 October 1916 "Marched out to Division Etaples"**

**13 October 1916 110.C. 1 Bde - Taken on strength 15th Battery in the Field"**

Thus SJV re-entered the hostilities towards the conclusion of the New Zealand Division's involvement in the Battle of the Somme. The New Zealand Division, after having held the line at Armentieres for three months had marched out to join the Battle of the Somme on 18 March 1916, where for over six weeks the British and French Armies had been engaged in the most desperate of battles which had yet been fought. The 1st and 2nd Brigades relieved two brigades of the 33rd Divisional Artillery, and were attached to the 14th Divisional Artillery, less the 15th Battery, which was placed under the orders of the 23rd Heavy Artillery Group, and during operations on the Somme was engaged on counter-battery work.

<sup>9</sup>On the 11th (September) the 15th Battery moved up to a new position near Longueval"

<sup>10</sup>October was a bad month for the batteries. It rained almost incessantly; the batteries were heavily shelled in their advanced and exposed positions and lost a great many of their personnel; and for the drivers and men of the Ammunition Column, the journey to the guns was a nightly struggle against the elements; while since the departure of the rest of the Division the rations had become so meagre and unvaried to warrant the making of representations on the subject, after which there was an improvement."

<sup>8</sup> The New Zealanders in France - p18

<sup>9</sup> The History of the New Zealand Artillery - p129

<sup>10</sup> The History of the New Zealand Artillery - p143

NZ gunners were relieved at Flers after 52 consecutive days in the battle on 25th and 26th October by the 1st Australian Divisional Artillery.<sup>11</sup>---- in the early morning of the 27th October batteries made their brief preparations for the road, and marched out for their billeting areas.

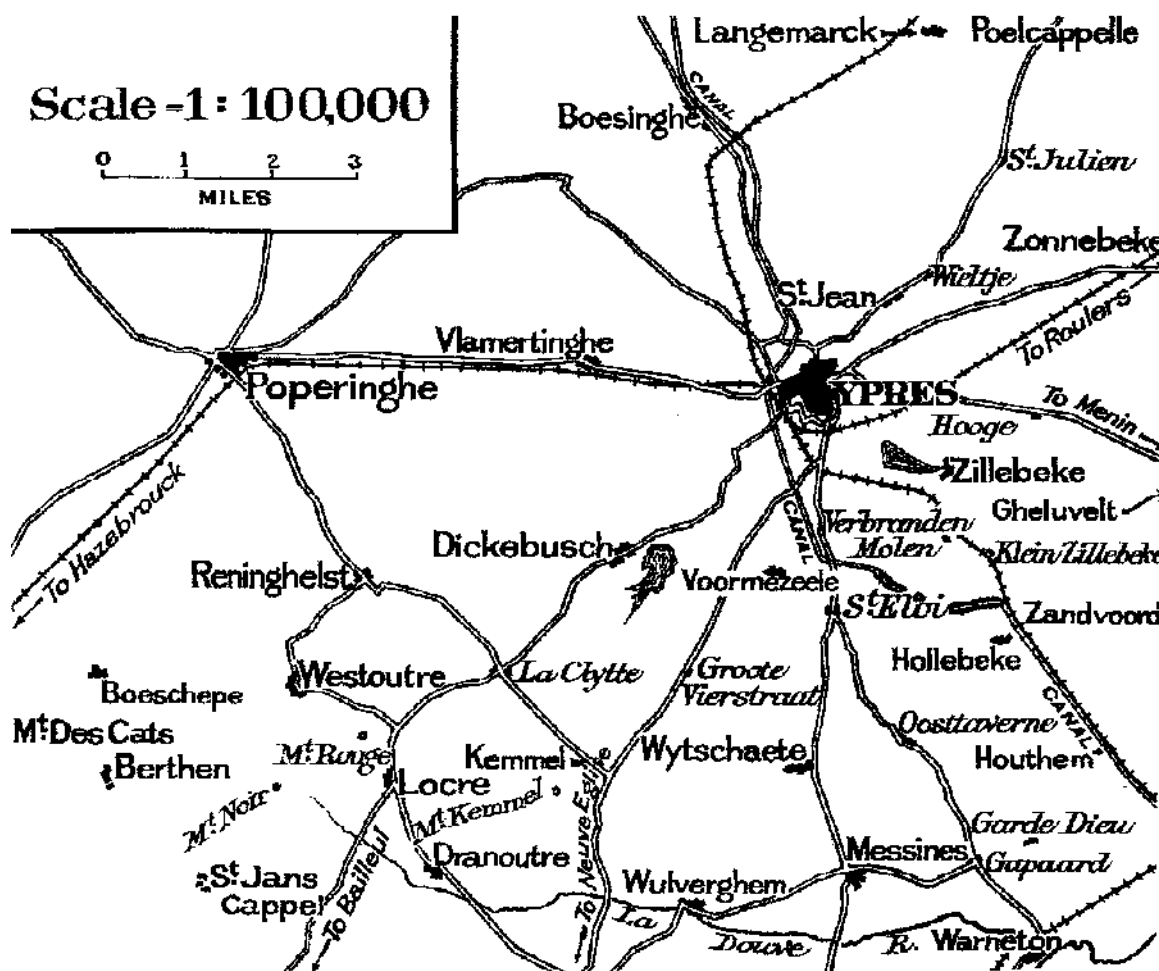
Thus ended one of the hardest periods of prolonged fighting in which the Divisional Artillery were ever engaged in the whole course of the war. For fifty two days, from September 5th to October 27th, the guns had been continuously in the firing line without rest or respite of any description whatsoever; and such had been the nature of the fighting, and the length of the casualty lists, that most of the officers and many of the gunners had spent the whole period at the gun positions".

On the nights of the 7th-8th and 8th-9th November, three brigades took over positions at Fleurbaix.

17th February 1917 saw the 15th (howitzer) Battery move back into the line near Bois Grenier.

**10 March 1917 110.C. 1 Bde - Appointed act Bombdr"**

At this time 1st Brigade was engaged in this vicinity:-



24 April 1917 Sydney Charles born Chichester

<sup>11</sup> The History of the New Zealand Artillery - p149

**28 April 1917 "15th Battery - appointed temp Cpl"**

**6 June 1917 "O.C. 1 Bde - Promoted Cpl"**

7th June 1917 was the opening of the Battle of Messines.

On 12th June 15th Battery moved to a position below Messines, near the Wulverghem-Messines Road.

<sup>12</sup>"Some idea of the violence of the shelling to which the New Zealand batteries were subjected during the period that followed the Battle of Messines may be gained from the fact that the 15th (Howitzer) Battery, which was fortunate to go through both the battle of the Somme and the Battle of Messines without losing any guns by shell fire, lost a total of eight guns in this manner during the two months following the Battle of Messines."

**19 July 1917 "O.C. 1 Bde - Apptd temp Sgt vice 2/1103 Sgt Symes K. In A."**

**12 August 1917 "O.C. 1 Bde - Proceeded on leave to UK"**

**26 August 1917 "Returned from leave"**

**17 November 1917 "O.C. 1 Bde - Promoted Sgt to complete establishment"**

**17 November 1917 "O.C. 1 Bde - Detchd to England on duty"**

**15 October 1917 "HQ NZEF - Awded the Military Medal for acts of gallantry - NZEF Ordrs List 53 (49.424)"**

**VINE, S.J.**

**15/92**

M.M. Sergeant, Field Artillery, L.G. 17 Dec 1917, p 13201 [Rec 1449, 15th Battery, 1st Brigade]

For gallant conduct. When word was received at the Battery that the F.O.O. (Lieutenant Bridgeman) was lying wounded in a shell hole forward, this N.C.O. and another immediately got out and after a long search under heavy fire, found hit and brought him safely back to a Dressing Station.

This was during the course of the Ypres offensive and the Battle of Passchendaele. On 10 October 15th Battery was in the vicinity of St Julien:

<sup>13</sup>"It took 5 hours of daylight on the 10th to bring forward a single gun of the 1st Battery and another of the 13th. In the afternoon 2 howitzers of the 15th were bogged beyond St Julien and the teams and men trying to extricate them were subjected to heavy shelling."

<sup>14</sup>"Very heavy casualties had been suffered by both Brigades of Infantry which took part in the attack; the losses in killed and wounded numbered 2730. Communications were utterly disorganised, the greatest difficulty was experienced in getting rations and water to men in the forward areas and the condition of the wounded was pitiable in the extreme. Many lay all night in the mud, exposed to the hail and rain and the bitter cold. On the night of the 12th-13th 1,200 men of the 4th Infantry Brigade and every spare man from the Artillery and the Army Service Corps were engaged in getting out the wounded, a battalion of the 147th Brigade having also been loaned to the Division for the same purpose. Six or eight men were required to carry a wounded man on a stretcher over that veritable morass and it took hours for each party to flounder down to the dressing stations."

The village of Passchendaele was finally captured on 6th November some days after the New Zealand batteries had been relieved.

<sup>15</sup>"The artillery brigades after supporting the Canadian attacks, had only on the night 2nd/3rd November been withdrawn from their positions behind Gravenstafel to the vicinity of Hazebrouck. The assistance given by the NZ Batteries to the Canadians is acknowledged in the following letter from the C.R.A. 3rd Canadian Division. "Now that the New Zealand Artillery are leaving my command, I wish to place on record my appreciation of the high standard of efficiency maintained by them while they were assisting to cover the offensive operations of the 3rd Canadian Division. In spite of the difficulties of the bad weather and almost impassable roads, they kept their guns in action and their ammunition dumps filled with a regularity which would have been impossible

<sup>12</sup> The History of the New Zealand Artillery - p181

<sup>13</sup> The New Zealanders in France - p278

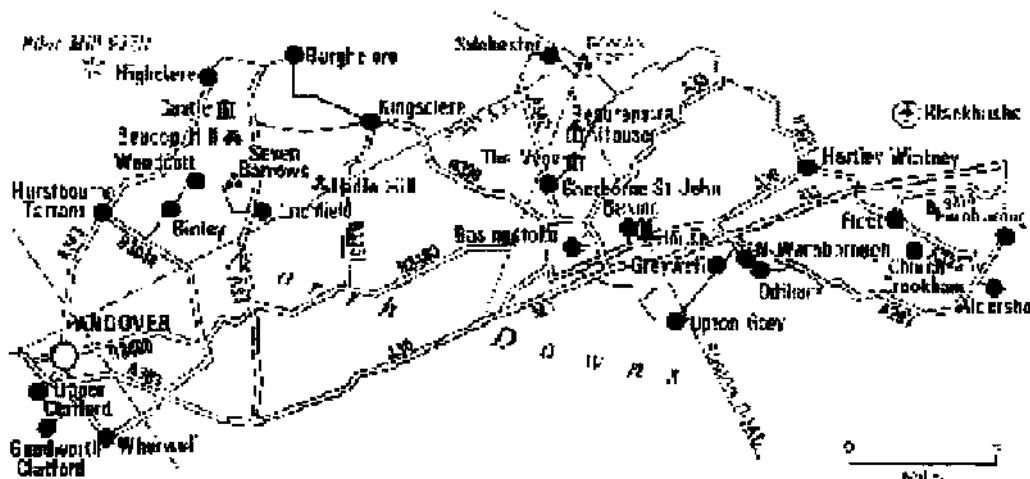
<sup>14</sup> The History of the New Zealand Artillery - p194

<sup>15</sup> The New Zealanders in France - p298

without a high standard of discipline energy and efficiency. I should be glad if you would convey my thanks to all officers, NCOs, gunners and drivers of the NZ Divisional Artillery for their gallant and faithful work in trying circumstances." On the night 31st October/1st November the 15th Battery lost 20 horses from aeroplane bombs."

**13 November 1917 "OC NZ Infantry & General Base Depot - Atch ex Divn"**

**22 November 1917 "Marched out to England - NZ Field Artillery Depot, Aldershot"**



On January 8th, 1917, the Depot had moved from Sling Camp, on Salisbury Plain, to the Talavera Barracks, Aldershot. While at Aldershot four complete sections were raised and trained and sent over to France to assist in completing the reorganisation of the Divisional Artillery on a six-gun basis. At the beginning of April 1917, the Depot transferred to Chadderton Camp, Royton and remained there until August 13th of the same year, when it was finally established at Ewshott Barracks, Fleet, in the Aldershot command where it remained until the close of the War.

**4 December 1917 "HQ in UK - Marched into NZ FA Depot - Reply to query"**

18 December 1918 - Thomas Alfred Noel born Hartly Wintney

**30 December 1918 "Marched out to NZ Disch Depot Torquay"**

**17 March 1919 "DHQMG - Embarked for NZ "Remuera" at Plymouth"**

**Disembarked New Zealand on 5 April 1919**

**Discharged on 2 June 1919**

Patricia D born 2 April 1920  
Geoffrey born 18 October 1921

**Died at Wellington Hospital 8 July 1922 - Pneumonia - Death due to War Service**

Eileen Winifred born 6 February 1923