



In Memory of
Sergeant
HENRY HAMILTON STEPHEN ROWAN
QX5147, 2nd/15th Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.
who died age 36
on 06 July 1941

Son of James Stephen Rowan and Lily Louise Rowan;
husband of Gertrude Louise Rowan,
of Grange, Queensland, Australia

Remembered with honour
TOBRUK WAR CEMETERY, LIBYA



SERGEANT
HENRY HAMILTON STEPHEN ROWAN
2ND/15TH INFANTRY BATTALION
REGIMENTAL NUMBER: QX5147



Australian War Memorial photograph PO9623.001 of Henry Hamilton Stephen Rowan.

Sergeant Henry Hamilton Stephen Rowan, the son of James Stephen Rowan and Lily Louise Rowan (nee O'Hara), was born at Melbourne in Victoria on 23rd February 1905. He was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. At the age of 35 years and 3 months he voluntarily enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Kelvin Grove in Brisbane on 24th May 1940 after swearing the statutory oath of allegiance. At the time of his enlistment he was married and employed as a Station Manager. He had previously served as a Lieutenant in the Citizen Military Forces as a Lieutenant. His physical description was that he had black hair and grey eyes. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion. He gave his next of kin as his wife, Mrs Gertrude Louise

Rowan, c/- Miss Standish, Abuklea Street, Newmarket, Brisbane.

Sergeant Henry Rowan joined the Northern Command Recruit Training Depot at Enoggera from the 49th Area on 27th May 1940. He joined the 2nd/7th Field Provost Company on 29th May 1940. He joined the 2nd/15th Infantry Battalion at Redbank Camp on 23rd June 1940. His battalion left the Redbank Camp on 30th June 1940 and proceeded to the Pinkenba Wharf where it boarded the troopship "Zealandia" for movement to Darwin in the Northern Territory. The ship left Brisbane on 1st July 1940 and arrived at Darwin on 11th July 1940. The battalion continued its military training in the Northern Territory. He was promoted to the rank of Acting Corporal on 27th July 1940. His battalion returned from Darwin and joined the Grovely Camp on 30th September 1940.

Sergeant Henry Rowan attended a Northern Command Training School course at Redbank during the period 11th October until 25th October 1940. He was granted pre-embarkation leave to farewell his family and finalize his personal affairs during the period 29th October until 6th November 1940 prior to leaving for overseas service in the Australian Imperial Force. He left Redbank in Queensland on 18th December 1940 for Eastern Command in New South Wales. His battalion embarked for overseas service from Sydney on the troopship "Queen Mary" on 26th December 1940. The ship travelled via Fremantle to Trincomalie in Ceylon. At Ceylon the battalion was

transferred to the former Dutch East Indies vessel "Indrapoera" for the remainder of the trip. The battalion disembarked at Kantara in Egypt on 3rd February 1941 and was settled into Kilo 89 Camp near Gaza. The battalion continued training in Palestine. He was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 3rd March 1941. The 2nd/15th Battalion had taken up positions along the front line in the Western Desert before being pushed back to Tobruk in April 1941.

Sergeant Henry Rowan was killed in action whilst serving with his battalion at Tobruk on 6th July 1941. He was buried in the Tobruk War Cemetery in Libya. At the time of his death he was 36 years of age. For his service during World War 2 he had entitlement for the 1939/1945 Star, the Africa Star, the War Medal and the Australian Service Medal 1939/1945. His name is commemorated on Panel No. at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and locally on the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.

The following is part of a poem written by Sergeant Rowan in Libya shortly before he died that was published in the Maryborough Chronicle on 16th September 1941:

*Oh Libya, thou land of pests
With Nature's woes one never rests.
And Jerry shows his nasty ways
By shelling us for days and days;
The C.Q. sends the rations shore
And drinks the rum
We've always thought,
Of our C.O. I cannot speak
We have a new one every week
The moon it shines
So awfully bright
That Jerry snipes with all his might
And makes us jump
And swear with fright
And cry "You square-head come and fight"*

Note:

His wife applied for and received a Female Relative Badge on 28th May 1941 and the Mothers' & Widows' Badge on 12th January 1943.

A detailed history of the 2nd/31st Infantry Battalion in World War 2 is contained in Ron Austin's publication, "Let Enemies Beware – The History of the 2nd/15th Battalion 1940-1945", Slouch Hat Publications, McCrae. Australia, 2008. ISBN 0 646 215949.

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a boarder on 12th March 1921 and he left the School on 22nd June 1922. His parent was shown as Mr James Stephen Rowan of Wollongong, New South Wales.

External Links:

[CWGC](#)

[Australian War Memorial Honour Roll](#)

[Military Record](#)