Today I would like to pause and pay our respects to:

12/1146 & 4/1146 Spr Roy Percy **Bedlington**

Roy was born on November 3, 1894, in Whangarei, to parents Percy Bedlington and Elizabeth Jane Bedlington (née Meldrum).

He received his early education at Kamo Primary School before attending Whangarei High School from 1909 to 1910.

After leaving Whangarei High School, Roy found employment with a mechanical engineering company in Whangarei. He completed his compulsory military training in Whangarei and subsequently joined the Whangarei branch of the Territorials, specifically in the mounted machine gun section.

On October 20, 1914, Roy enlisted as a private in the Auckland Infantry Regiment (AIR) and was assigned to the 2nd Reinforcements. Roy, along with 1,973 other soldiers, embarked from Wellington on December 14, 1914, on vessels Verdala HMNZT 13, Willochra HMNZT 14, and Knight of The Garter HMNZT 15. They sailed to Western Australia, where they joined the fleet of the Second Convoy, departing for the Northern Hemisphere on December 31, 1914.

The NZEF sailed with the Australian forces, arriving in Suez, Egypt, on January 28, 1915, where their units trained together. New Zealand troops saw their first combat in February 1915 during the Ottoman attack on the Suez Canal, helping to defend the canal.

Following the Ottoman attack, the 2nd Reinforcements arrived from New Zealand, and the troops spent a weekend in Cairo, engaging in festivities and a rugby match against the Auckland team. Training resumed on February 26, with long and strenuous field days. By March, it was widely known that operations were planned against Turkey in the Mediterranean.

The Auckland Battalion embarked on the Lutzow, a captured German liner, arriving at Mudros in Greece, the main base for the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF), on April 15, 1915.

At dawn on April 25, 1915, Allied troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsula. The Aucklanders, the first New Zealanders to go ashore, faced immediate danger as bullets whizzed overhead and struck their boats.

On May 23, an armistice was agreed upon to bury the dead, with Auckland providing fifty men for the grim task.

On May 30, Roy fell ill with pleurisy but remained at Anzac Cove until June 8, when he was transferred to the 1st Australian General Hospital in Heliopolis, Cairo. He was admitted to the Convalescent Hospital at Helouan on July 2 and discharged to Zeitoun Camp for training on July 6. Around this time, he was promoted to Sapper and assigned to the NZ Engineers 1st Field Company as a mechanical engineer, part of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade (NZMR).

Roy returned to duty at Gallipoli on August 16, 1915. The surviving New Zealanders and Australian Brigades were evacuated to Lemnos in mid-September to recover and rebuild their strength.

Roy celebrated his 21st birthday on Lemnos, away from the constant sound of artillery and rifle fire.

On November 8-9, the New Zealand Brigades returned to Anzac Cove. The onset of winter brought harsh conditions, with frostbite, hypothermia, and flooding in the trenches. Despite the dire conditions, the troops worked to make their quarters and trenches habitable.

Tragically, on November 30, 1915, just three weeks after returning to Anzac Cove, Roy Percy Bedlington was killed in the field at the age of 21.

Roy has been laid to rest at the 7th Field Ambulance Cemetery, Gallipoli, Turkey II. D. 15.

RIP Roy

Thank you for your service

E kore warewaretia

Will never forget

While Roy’s initial enlistment was that of Pvt with Auckland Infantry Battalion, by virtue of him been designated a Spr with 1st Field Company NZ Engineers as a mechanical engineer, he warrants remembering.