#### **Corporation Honour Rolls Source Sheet No. 50**

Records held by the City Archives show there have been several wartime Honour Rolls hanging in the Adelaide Town Hall at one time or another, although one proposed for the 1939-45 War seems to have been aborted.

**1914 - 1918 Roll**

The 1914 -1918 Great War Honour Roll is located at the Southern Passageway Entrance to the Town Hall and is viewable from the Foyer. This ornate Roll was restored to its former glory by the Archives’ Conservator during 1992 - 93, after having been stored for a number of years at the Council’s former Halifax Street Depot. The Roll contains the names of Corporation employees who served in the AIF and indicates those who were killed in action. It was originally placed in the foyer of the Town Hall in 1919. In addition to the Corporation Roll, the Archives holds a list of names of soldiers killed during the 1914 -18 War who were residents of the City.

**1939 -1945 Rolls**

The whereabouts of a Corporation Roll for the 1939-45 War has not yet been determined, if indeed one ever existed. Several long serving officers of the Corporation staff were unable to recall having seen one displayed anywhere in the Town Hall buildings when asked about this subject a few years ago. Nor is there any evidence in the Council’s archives to show that such a Roll was ever created or commissioned by the Corporation during the immediate post-war years, although one was certainly contemplated. It seems that there has been some confusion about this matter, both at the time and since then, owing to the fact that there were at least two other large Honour Rolls erected at the Town Hall during the war years.

**Corporation Roll**

On 18 January 1946, the Acting City Engineer (J.D. Chapman) was requested by the Town Clerk (A.J. Morison) to consider erecting an Honour Roll in the Town Hall for Corporation officers who had enlisted in the war. He was also asked to look into the possibility of creating a second Roll for the employees (outdoors workers) who had enlisted. A list of 117 names was supplied on 9 April 1946, and detailed designs for the two Rolls submitted.

On 18 June 1946, the Council resolved that ‘a Roll of Honour containing the names of members of the Corporation staff who enlisted for service in the fighting forces be erected on the south side of the entrance to the main passage in the Town Hall vestibule’ (Council Digest of Proceedings, 1945-46, p.471). The City Engineer was accordingly instructed to have a Roll erected, but it seems this never happened because Council revised its decision. On 3 February 1947, a new resolution was passed by the Council that ‘an Honour Roll be erected to those members of the staff who died on war service, the form of the honour roll to be the subject of a further report by the Town Clerk’ (Digest of Proceedings, 1946-47, p.363). Just why the Council changed its mind about the type of Honour Roll it wanted is not made clear in the records.

It was subsequently reported by the Town Clerk, however, that only three Corporation staff had actually died during war service, whereupon the Council contemplated adding their names to the 1914-1918 Roll, but this was later rejected as inappropriate. It would appear, therefore, that a 1939-1945 Corporation Honour Roll was never created (although the list of names of those Corporation staff who served in the war is held by the Archives). This is supported by a memorandum of the City Engineer dated 31 October 1949, in which he suggested modifying the existing 1914-18 Roll to include the names of those who had enlisted in the 1939-45 War by lengthening the wooden panel containing the names and changing the inscription from *Roll of Honour The Great War 1914 - 1918* to *Roll of Honour World Wars 1914 - 1918 and 1939 - 1945*. This proposal was not taken up by the Council, and in December 1949 the matter was deferred indefinitely.

**Volunteers Roll**

On 18 August 1941, to help stimulate military recruiting within the City, the Council decided to erect a temporary Honour Roll outside the Town Hall building on which the names of those City residentswho had voluntarily enlisted in the armed forces were recorded. The Acting City Engineer submitted a design for the proposed roll which was approved by the Council on 10 November 1941. It consisted of a 9 x 7 feet wooden board, which was fixed to the front of the Town Hall between the two windows on the southern side of the main entrance. Names of the City volunteers, both men and women, were obtained from the military authorities, and these were placed in one-inch letters on the Roll in alphabetical order, with spaces left to enable additional names to be added. At the top of the Roll was the Corporation’s Coat of Arms and the words *Progressive Roll of Honour* in gold letters.

In February 1942, a second Roll of similar design was erected to accommodate more names, this time on the northern side of the main entrance to the Town Hall. These two temporaryRolls were apparently still in place in 1947, when the Council, having determined that there was insufficient room for them inside the Town Hall vestibule, resolved instead that ‘an honour roll be compiled of citizens of Adelaide who lost their lives in war service’ (Digest of Proceedings, 1945-46, p. 363). It was also decided that the type of Roll should not be finalised until the number of names involved could be obtained. Incredibly, however, accurate information could not be supplied by the Commonwealth defence authorities, so publicity had to be given to the matter through the press and a radio station but, equally incredibly, only a handful of names were received. In view of this lack of interest, the Council decided in August 1949, that no further action be taken.

At the same time, the Council had the two Rolls fixed to the front of the Town Hall removed and placed in the Corporation Depot. What happened to them after that is not known, although it may be possible to trace their fate by further researching the City Engineer’s records. They were evidently still being stored at the Corporation’s Sturt Street Depot in 1958, but no further information has yet come to light. It is unlikely they were ever publicly displayed again by the Corporation, and most probably were destroyed, although there is a chance they may have been given to the RSL or Commonwealth military authorities. However, this is pure speculation. Mr Brian Le Leu, Registrar of War Memorials in South Australia, has not been able to discover their whereabouts. Fortunately, a list of the names of the City volunteers which were on the Rolls has survived and is preserved in the Archives.

**Nurses Roll**

In May 1942, the Council received a letter from the South Australian Army Nurses Fund asking for permission for a Roll of Honour of South Australian nurses serving in the AIF to be hung in the Town Hall. Apparently, the Council had earlier allowed a 1914 - 1918 Nurses Roll to be hung in the Town Hall vestibule, and the Fund was hoping to have the new Roll positioned next to this. On 26 July 1943, the Council informed the Nurses Fund that a space on the eastern side of the Town Hall, at the head of the main staircase, above the first landing could be made available for their Roll at the conclusion of the War. Through the intervention of the Lord Mayor (Reginald Walker) arrangements were later made for the 300 name Roll to be unveiled in the Town Hall by Lady Gowrie (wife of the Governor General) on 24 November 1943.

In June 1945, the Council granted the Fund permission to erect an additional Roll, consisting of four panels, next to the existing one, to include the names of Naval and Air Force nurses. Another Roll to include the names of South Australian nurses who enlisted abroad was unveiled in the Town Hall on 26 February 1947.

The Nurses Rolls remained in the Town Hall until 1953, when an extensive remodelling of the entrance area and staircase was undertaken. According to information given to the Archives in 1994 by Mrs Dorothy Chesterfield, a former wartime RAAF nurse, the various Nurses Honour Rolls were moved from the Town Hall to the RSL hall at Glenelg. The Glenelg branch of the RSL later amalgamated with the Seacliff branch, which had no room for the Rolls. They were then evidently stored in a roof somewhere in Thebarton for many years. In the early 1990s a group of ex- wartime nurses successfully campaigned to save the Rolls which were restored and now hang in the main recreation hall at the Keswick Army Barracks.

**SOURCES 1914-18 War** Town Clerk’s Docket 111 of 1917 ‘Roll of Honour’

Town Clerk’s Docket 368 of 1919 ‘Memorial to Fallen Soldiers’

City Engineer’s Docket 96 of 1917 ‘Honour Rolls’

**1939-45 War** Town Clerk’s Docket 2286 of 1941 ‘Recruiting in Metropolitan Area’

Town Clerk’s Docket 192 of 1946 ‘Honour Roll - Corp Officers and Employees’

Town Clerk’s Docket 1420 of 1942 ‘Army Nurses Roll of Honour’

Town Clerk’s Docket 415 of 1942 ‘Unveiling Ceremony - Roll of Honour Board’

**Further Information**

**City Archives:** Topham Mall, off Currie and Waymouth Streets, Adelaide 5000

**Counter / telephone enquiries:** 9**.**00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

**Search Room open for public research:**10.00 am to 4.00 pm Tuesday to Thursday

**Telephone:** +618 8203 7439

**Email:** [cityarchives@cityofadelaide.com.au](mailto:cityarchives@cityofadelaide.com.au)

**Web:** <https://cityofadelaide.com.au/cityarchives>