

Deux soldats dans la guerre

Un Calédonien, un Néo-Zélandais

À partir de 1914, les troupes coloniales du Pacifique allaient contribuer à l'effort de guerre des nations européennes engagées dans un conflit qui deviendrait mondial.

*Deux hommes, **Octave Vautrin** soldat calédonien, **Henri James Nicholas** soldat néo-zélandais, devaient, à la fin de la guerre, partager le même sort.*

C'est le récit de leurs engagements que trois élèves de la classe de 1^{ère} L3 du lycée La Pérouse ont choisi de retracer dans ce diaporama sonorisé, rédigé en anglais.

*Ce travail a été présenté, dans le cadre d'un échange scolaire du 24 septembre au 03 octobre 2015, aux élèves du Rangiora High School, dans la région de Christchurch (Île du sud). Il permet de **mettre en miroir les mémoires** de ce conflit et de rappeler l'importance des lieux de mémoire partagés entre nos deux pays.*

Two soldiers in the First World War :

A Caledonian & a New Zealander.

How was lived the war by two men from two different countries ?

1918 : The end of the war

- The 11th of November 1918 :
Germany signs the Armistice in the marshal Foch's wagon. The ceasefire agreement finally allows the end the first world-war.
- We will remember for many years the important number of deads, the sacrifice of these men, from all the nationalities...

Octave Vautrin, 1914



Birth: perhaps in 1896 in Bourail

Situation before the war: Student in the La Pérouse
(recalled Baudoux today)



Henri James Nicholas, 1914



- Born the 11th of June 1891 in Lincoln
- Job before the war : Carpenter



1916 : Departure

- **Octave Vautrin** leaves Noumea on the third of December 1916 ; on "Le Gange", to Marseille. He will do some stopovers at Sydney, Melbourne, Fremantle, Colombo, Djibouti, Port-Saïd, Malte and Bizerte.
- **Henri James Nicholas** leaves Christchurch the 27th of May 1916 ; to Portsmouth. He will do a stopovert in Mozambique. His trip taked around two months.



en de Sydney, le Studium, où nous
d'Australie poids lourds. Cela ne
ney mardi. Nous toucherons ensuite

part de son départ de Nouvelle-
à 15 h 30, avec un
iens, est arrivé à
ns probablement
Mais nous avons
ts précédents.
er et aussi
Australie,
arrivée à
rtir au
oindre
depuis
il ne



destinataire n'a pu être
Je ne sais vraiment ce qu'
arrivé. Est-il prisonnier
possible ! Ou, est-il mort
ne désespérons pas et
Je suis, en ce moment,
dans un hôpital. Nous
une équipe de vingt
Nous faisons des terra
montons de grandes
bois. Nous sommes tr
bien nourris. Nous ne
probablement pas au
le mois d'avril, ceci
au froid. Je ne sais
s'ils reformeront
créole, nous restero
printemps, pour fa
et prendre des ga

3 décembre 1916 : départ de

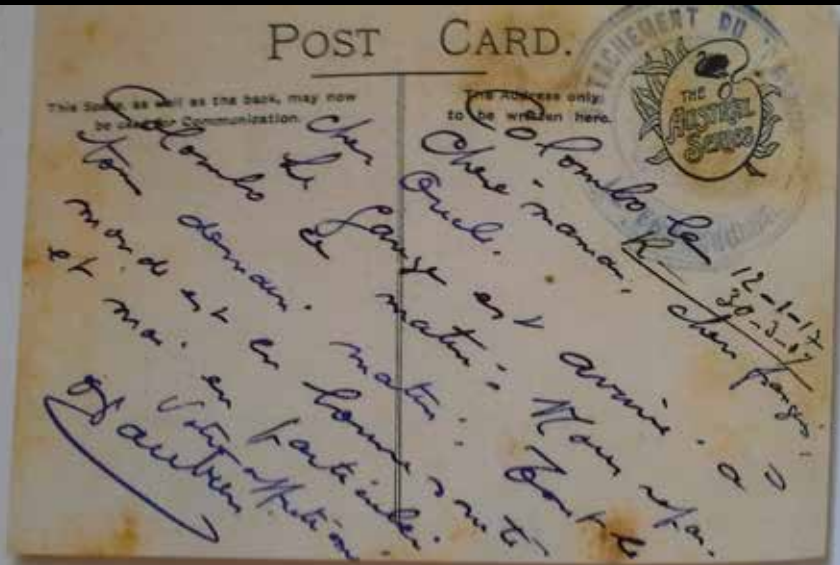
The 3rd of December 1916

Departure of the New Caledonian's third contingent aboard « The Gange »

Octave Vautrin's Post Card

From Colombo the 12th of January 1917

J'avais espéré qu'il
aurait pas. Puisse-
er sain et sauf à
Ma convalescence



Carte d'Octave Vautrin

1917 : Octave Vautrin

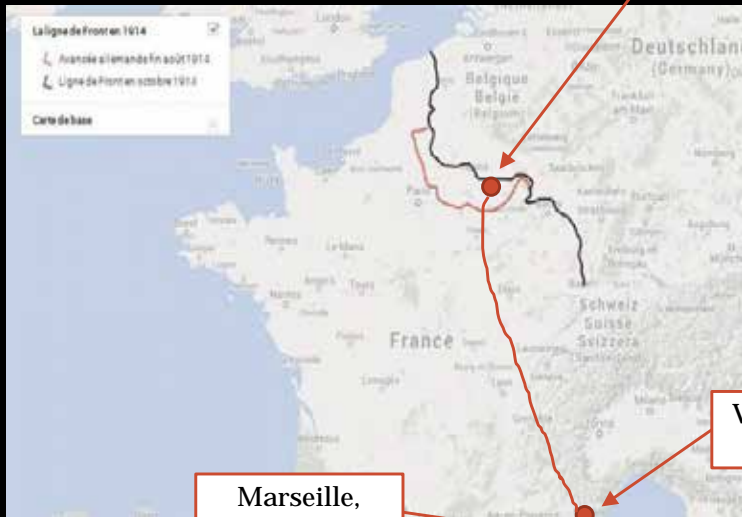
- Arrived in France the third of February 1917, Octave Vautrin will go to the front solely in November. Octave was promoted a midshipman at the beginning of October.
- Then he is affected the twentieth of November 1917, at the colonial regiment of Morocco and he is, with his unit, at only forty kilometers of the front.
- He writes a letter sent from Crézency to his mother, about his ascent to the front.

« I'm on the armies for one week already, at the colonial regiment of Morocco. It's the famous corp whose its prowesses have valued the fourragère in the colors of the Legion of Honour. »

- He asks to become second lieutenant of this regiment. He climbs to the first lines at the end of the year.

1917

Octave Vautrin's position from February to December 1917



Crézancy, the company leaves the front, november-december

Valreas' camp, August

Marseille, February

1917 : Henry James Nicholas

- Henry, after a short training in the Salisbury Plain's camp, is sent to the front on September 1916, with the first battalion of Canterbury. He is promoted sergeant the twenty-first of June, 1917.
- He crosses « La Manche » the twenty-first of September 1916, to go to the Etaples' camp.
- He takes part, the third of december 1917, of the assault of the germanic strategic point of the Polderhoed Castle, where he distinguishes himself by an act of bravery. He would have succeeded to be close to a blockhaus which blocked the way of his unity, and killed the officer who commanded it as well as the sixteen soldiers. Then he would have made four prisoners as well as taking submachine guns, and collecting some munitions under the fire of the foes.

1916-1917

Henry James Nicholas' position from July 1916 to December 1917

Plymouth,
July 1916

Salisbury
Plain, July
1916

The Manche's Corssing, arrival
at the Etaples'Camp.
September 1916

Poderheak's Castle,
december, 1917



January-August 1918 : Octave Vautrin

- During the week of the fourteenth of April, Octaves takes part of some assaults between Roye-sur-Matz and Lassigny « *where we succeeded to stop the Jerry that the stupid english men had left to come.* » as he said in his letter, the fourteenth of April.
- It is during this assault that he won the War Cross, for his act of bravery. Indeed, he would « train his unity in an exemplary way » and, with five hundred men, would succeeded to make eight thousand prisonners and killed seven hundred men as well as taken fifty submachine guns. His regiment wins the fourragère of the colors of the Honour's Legion and ranks itself at the first regiment of France.
- The Fith of May, he goes to the « Chemin des Dames » (litteraly the « ladies'path ». He will stay there until August. He learns, the thirty-first of July, the death of his brother Maurice, killed in the first line near Soissons.
- He becomes second lieutenant of the colonial regiment of Morroco the fifteenth of August, after a wait of nine month and a half.

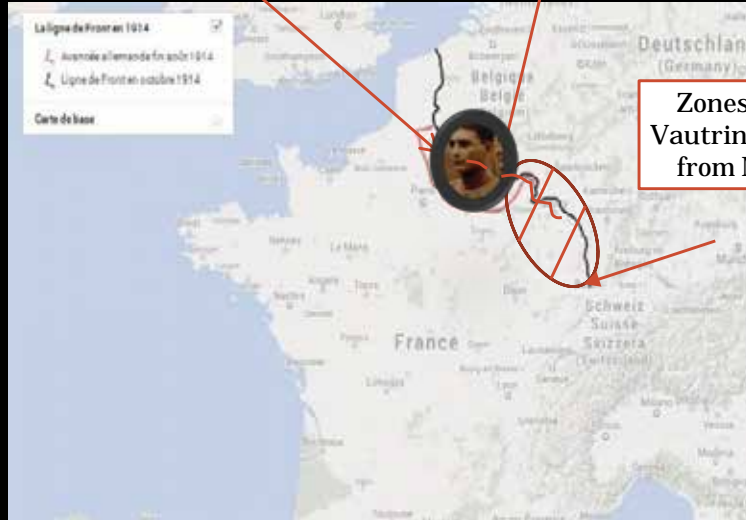
1918

*Octave Vautrin's Position from
January to August 1918*

Assault between Roy-sur-Matz and Lassigny, April

« Chemin des Dames », May

Zones where Octave Vautrin could have been from May to August



January-October 1918 : Henry James Nicholas.

- He returns to London to receive the Victoria Cross at Buckingham palace. He gets it thanks to his bravery act the third of december 1917.
- The first battalion of Canterbury (whose he belongs to), receives, in October 1918, the mission of moving out the german machine gunners and the isolated skirmishers in the Baudiginies' region. This battalion wins the Millitary Cross.

1918

*Henry James Nicholas' Position from
January to October 1918*

London, delivery of
the Victoria Cross at
Buckingham palace, at
the beginning of the year

Place where Henry
James Nicholas could
have been from
January to October



Beaudignes,
October



Victoria Cross

The Victoria Cross is the biggest military decoration of the british army. In Great Britain, it is given by the Queen of England, and the investiture takes place at Buckingham palace.

August 1918: Octave Vautrin's Death

- Octave Vautrin is killed on Friday the twenty-third of August 1918, in front of Bourguignon-sous Coucy... His tragic death brings him the Order of the Army.
- He will receive, for him posthumously, the decoration of Chevalier of The Legion of Honour.
- **He dies at only four months of the armistice's declaration.**
- He is buried in Oignes, then his body will repatriate in 1922 and buried in the cemetery of the fourth kilometer in Noumea.



Octave Vautrin's Mentioned in Despatches

One of the three Mentioned in Despatches that Octave Vautrin received.

PARTIE À REMPLIR PAR LE CORPS.

1984
Nom VAUTRIN

Prénoms Octave Pierre Ambroise

Grade 2^e Lieut. SoutenuantCorps Régiment d'Inf^{te} Coloniale du MarocN^o _____ au Corps. — Cl. 1916

Matricule. 1431 au Recrutement de Nouméa

Mort pour la France le 23 août 1918

à Bourguignon (S^{te}) La Capelle

Genre de mort Tué à l'ennemi

Né le 4 avril 1896

à Bourvail Département Nouvelle Calédonie

Arr^o municipal (p^r Paris et Lyon),
à dénoter rue et N^o.

Jugement rendu le _____

par le Tribunal de _____

acte ou jugement transcrit le 11 décembre 1919

à Paris (1^{re}) sous le N^o _____ (Nouvelle Calédonie)N^o du registre d'état civil _____

Obituary

Name: Vautrin**First names:** Octave, Pierre, Ambroise**Grade:** Second Lieutenant**Corps:** Colonial Infantry Regiment of Morocco.**Cl:** 1916**Matricule:** 1431 to Noumea Recruitment**Dead for France:** At Bourguignon La Capelle.**Kind of Death:** Killed by the enemy,**Birth on/in:** the 4th of April, 1896, in Bourvail**Departement:** New-Caledonia

Act transcribed December 11, 1919

In Paris (1st)

Home: Noumea (New Caledonia)

October 1918: Henry James Nicholas' Death

- Henry James Nicholas is killed the twenty-third of October 1918, on the bridge of Beaudignies, because of a German patrol. He was 27 years.
- He is died nineteen days before the declaration of the armistice.
- He is buried at the Beaudignies' cemetery, then buried with the the Military Honours at the Vertigneul's cemetery, situated in the North of France.

Awards & Others:

New-Caledonian Soldier:

- During his soldier life, **Octave Vautrin** won three Mentioned in Despatches and the Legion of Honour for his posthumously. A street in Noumea was renamed for him, as a memory.

New-Zealander Soldier:

- During his soldier life, **Henry James Nicholas** won a Military Medal as well as a Victoria Cross (the best distinction in the British Army). A bronze statue was erected in Christchurch, near to the Avon River, not far from the Bridge of Memories, and also a memorial to the Embassy of New-Zealand and in Brussels.

Biography Points ...

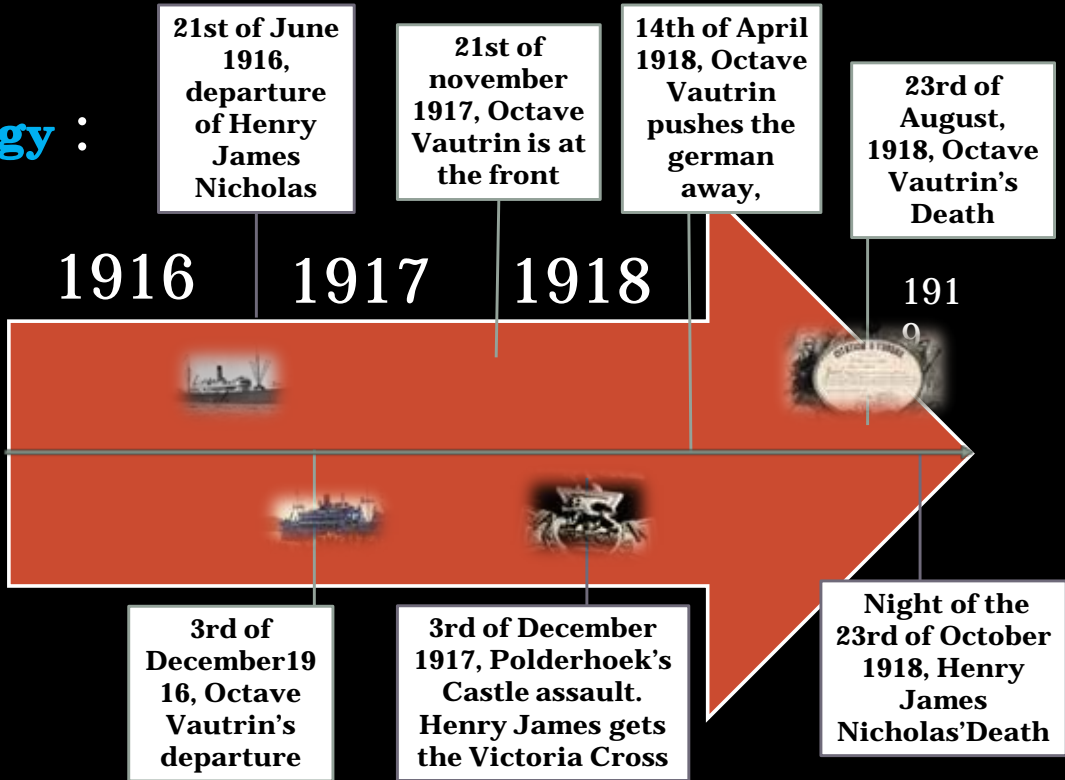
Octave Vautrin

- *The third of December 1916, Octaves leaves Noumea on the ship « Le Gange » and informes his mother of his departure the fifth of December, while he is on board for two days. His brother Maurice receives from Octave a letter telling him that he is on the front the twenty-first of November 1917 and was appointed midshipman in the beginning of October 1917.*
- *The fourteenth of April 1918, Octave, who just participated in heavy fights, takes a few time to write to his family and says « I have stopped the Jerry that the English men had left go » and that he received the « Cross War ». His regiment wins the fourragère of the colors of the legion and ranks itself to the first of France.*
- *The fifth of May 1918, Octaves goes to the « Chemin des Dames ». He will not have benefited of his colonial permission so hoped that he dies the twenty-third of August 1918, during hard fighting near Bourguignon. He recieves three Mentioned in Despatches and the decoration of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and the Knight Cross.*

Henri James Nicholas

- *The twenty-seventh of may 1916, he goes to England. After a long trip, he arrives in Plymouth and is sent to the Salisbury's Camp. After a hard training, he goes to the front of France. He is just a simple soldier of the second rank.*
- *He gets, during the assault of the Polderheak's Castle (the 3rd of December 1917), the Victoria Cross, for his act of bravey for his capture of a blockhaus which blocked the way for his unity to go forward.*
- *During the night of the 23rd of October 1918, he has to capture a brigde in Beaudignies'zone. He and his unity find a german patrol and he is killed at close by a german officer. He will get the Military Cross and will have the right to be buried with the Military Honours*

Chronology :



Bibliographie :

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- Site internet du Auckland War Memorial Museum, <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C11458>
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Arteme POINTEL, Elisa LEMEY, Clara MATTEO

**Classe de 1^{ère} L3, lycée La Pérouse sous l'encadrement des enseignants
Marie Sybille REGENT, Ludovic POUX**