THE ROULENT RIDDLE

THE PLAYER IN THE BACK ROW
(Ref: 2019/11)

1946 Dromana team

VINCE ROULENT - THE PLAYER IN THE BACK ROW

Despite the poor quality of the above image, it is nevertheless an important photo in the post war history of Dromana Football Club because it lists the players of season 1946. The players’ names are:

- Back row: V. Roulen  K. Keating  B. Allen  V. Humphrey  B. Friend
- Centre row: W. Gourlay  J. Brown  W. Guy  N. Osborne  W. Evans
- Front row: B. Aust  R. Clydesdale  F. Singleton  K. Clydesdale  I. Christie  D. Christie  R. Moorhead  V. Hazeldine

While the playing histories of many of the above players are known, the player ‘Roulen’ (in the back row) created interest because the name has rarely, if ever, been mentioned in discussion(s) about the club’s former personalities.

Unfortunately, there is virtually nothing in the archives of DFNC about the player ‘Roulen’. However, investigating the family name ‘Roulen’ proved to be interesting and the following research unearthed several surprising facts. It is hoped that this article will shine some new light on the life of Vincent Roulen and his family.

An extensive search of Army records and newspaper articles (as filed in the National Library) verified that the ‘V’ in the above photograph stands for Vincent.
It was also discovered that the player’s full name was **Vincent Raymond Joseph Roulent**; and he was born in 1920, in Melbourne, to Thomas Ignatius and Barbara Alice Roulent.

According to a website source (www.Geni.com), Vincent was the brother of (i) Thomas Joseph, (ii) William Francis, (iii) Kevin Patrick Michael, (iv) Veronica (Peggy) Margaret. Other details about his family were a little unclear.

Other documentation further supports the case that Vincent Roulent played for Dromana in the period immediately after World War: 2

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As shown above, Vincent served with the AIF as a member of the 15th Field Ambulance; and there is every likelihood that he saw action in New Guinea and Bougainville. Vincent was discharged from the Army on the 4th January 1946.

It was also reported, in ‘The Age’ (October 22nd 1946), that a child was born to Eileen and Vincent at the Dromana Bush Nursing Hospital in 1946. The name ‘Roulent’ is mentioned in several match reviews of that period; and Vincent seemed to be a ‘steady performer’ for DFC...


Although the news report (below) was vague, Vincent appears to have been a member of the DFC Social Committee in 1947. Local identities, of that era, Ian Christie and Bob Moorhead were also listed on that committee...


**VINCENT’S CELEBRATED BROTHER**

Using the World War: 2 Nominal Role and other trusted sources, it was substantiated that Vincent Roulent was the younger brother of Tom Roulent (1918-2005) who played 106 VFL games for North Melbourne (77 games) and South Melbourne (29 games). Tom’s VFL career extended from 1939 until 1947 (Note: Tom’s service with NMFC was interrupted by military duties in 1942-43).

Tom Roulent was recruited to North Melbourne from CYMS and he was said to have been a magnificent kick. One reference stated that Tom was a defender but he seems to have also been an effective forward. AFL archives indicate that Tom kicked 33 goals during his career (including a ‘bag of five’ against St Kilda in 1944).

High flying Tom Roulent for North Melbourne
Tom Roulent played in the 1940 Patriotic Cup Lightning Premiership
Source: VFL ‘Record’ August 3rd 1940

Tom can also be seen in the photograph below when he was a member of the A.I.F’s 2/4 Pioneers Team that won the NTFL premiership in 1942. Tom is seventh from the left in the back row. Tom was discharged from the Australian Army in May 1944; and re-commenced his football career, with North Melbourne, in Round: 2 against Richmond that year.

Tom Roulent was a key player with North Melbourne and attempts to lure him to South Melbourne were reported by Alf Brown (‘Herald’) as follows...

“ROULENT SOUGHT BY SOUTH By ALF. BROWN... South Melbourne are after Tom Roulent, solid North Melbourne full-back and back-pocket player. With Jim Cleary not available for the first eight games, South are anxious to secure an experienced fullback. SEVERAL other clubs are interested in Roulent. but South have already received permission from North Melbourne to interview him. Roulent, who joined North in 1939, has played 76 games with them, 20 last year. Although he is still on North Melbourne's list, it is likely that Roulent will be cleared.” Source: ‘Herald’ March 29th 1946.

One text (‘Encyclopaedia of AFL Footballers’ by Main & Holmesby) referred to the fact that Tom Roulent won a long distance kicking competition against USA service members during his military service. Although Corowa FC had ‘put out feelers’ for Tom to coach in 1947, he remained at the Lakeside Oval for another season.

TOM ROULENT MAY COACH COROWA TEAM


However, in 1948, Tom left the ‘big smoke’ and transferred to coach Jeparit FC in the Wimmera FL. As can be seen from the following extract from the ‘Horsham Times’, Tom Roulent was a star in that league and became an immensely popular character in Jeparit...

‘Horsham Times’ Tuesday May 30th 1950 Page: 3
A POSSIBLE DFC CONNECTION FOR VINCENT

While it was possible to discover a deal of information about Tom Roulent, facts about Vincent were less accessible.
In his younger days, Vincent Roulent lived in Brunswick but any association with a football club could not be substantiated for this article. However it is known, that following the cessation of hostilities of World War 2, Vincent moved to the Mornington Peninsula and played with Dromana FC.

There may be a possible nexus to explain how Vincent came to don the Dromana jumper. DFNC stalwart Wally Guy, who was an heroic character in the club’s history, played at North Melbourne; and perhaps Wally’s local reputation and former bonds with NMFC were the factors in attracting Vincent Roulent to play at Pier Street. Of course, the truth of the matter may never be established but it was a good day in 1946 when Vincent Roulent signed-on with Dromana FC.
It is known that Vincent Roulent died on April 2nd 2008 at the Gold Coast. He was 87 years of age when he passed away.

EVERY PLAYER HAS A GOOD STORY

The major aim, of this website, is to place on public record the club’s appreciation of players and officials for their role in building the club.
In modernity, celebrity footballers are ‘easy pickings’ to write about but Vincent Roulent is just one of many forgotten footballers in the history of Dromana Football Club.
Finally, this article again underlines the fact that every footballer has an interesting background story to tell and every football club has a history worth exploring. Richelle Mead never played football for Dromana; but her words are prophetic and worth bearing in mind as the club looks to the future...

“History is important because it teaches us about past. And by learning about the past, you come to understand the present, so that you may make educated decisions about the future.”

CAN YOU HELP WITH DFNC CLUB HISTORY?

It is understandable that during the immediate post war era that the DFC club records were ‘patchy’ simply because there was a ‘lot going on’ in the lives of men after the turbulent times of World War:II.
DFNC is trying to ‘fill the gaps’ in the club’s history and if there any friends or members of the Roulent family who can add to the above research about the Vincent please feel welcome to contact the club.
Finally, other local families are encouraged to forward any photographs, press cuttings, publications and details of memorabilia (such as medals and trophies) to the club for recording on this website. Thank you (Roger).