Sapper Vacso Loureiro  (XC 1893-’08)

Caricature of Vasco Loureiro, 1916 by himself.
Image from the State Library of NSW

From “The Xaverian” 1918 p. 50/51

Vasco Loureiro — Poor Vasco joined the 11th Field Engineers, Queensland, A.I.F., and served with them as a Sapper until injury to his spine put him on the casualty list. He was well on his way to recovery in a hospital in England, when meningitis supervened and closed his young life at some 33 years. He was famous as a “lightening sketcher,” and boasted that he had been “all round the world with a lead pencil.” Rest his soul. May his be the “vision splendid,” his, and of every Old Xaverian who “has passed the darksome bourne, whence none can e’er return.”

From the State Library of NSW

Louis Vasco enlisted as a Sapper, or engineer, but his calling was art.
At 33, he married and then six months later boarded a troopship bound for the Western Front.
He found time to sketch. First it was the men and boys on board who were sharing this mission, and later in the summertime of France. Vasco was so inspired he took out his watercolours and filled letters to his wife Gwendolyn with charming French farmyard scenes.
Born Vasco Loureiro in Brixton, London, he grew up in Melbourne and studied art at the National Gallery of Victoria from 1902-1905.
As part of the 11th Field Company Engineers, his responsibility included constructing the lines of defence, temporary bridges, tunnels and trenches, observation posts, roads, railways, communication lines. They

AWM ~ Roll of Honour
Vasco Loureiro

Known on the Roll as: Louis Vasco
Service Number: 16136
Rank: Sapper
Unit: 11th Field Company, Australian Engineers
Date of death: 3 August 1918
Place of death: United Kingdom
Cause of death: Illness (meningitis)
Age at death: 36
Place of association: Brisbane, Australia
Cemetery or memorial details: Soldier’s Corner, St Albans (Hatfield Road) Cemetery, Hertfordshire, England, United Kingdom
Grave Reference: Row E, Grave No. 5

During the First World War, the County of Middlesex War Hospital was established in the Middlesex Mental Hospital at Napsbury, near St. Albans.
There are 147 First World War burials in Hatfield Road Cemetery, 93 of them forming a war graves plot.
From the “Palm Beach Daily News”

Vasco Loureiro did travel the world with his lead pencil. On 5 March 1908 the “Palm Beach Daily News” (Florida, USA) reported that Vasco was a passenger in a car that raced a train and “Visitors to Palm Beach already know Vasco Loureiro, the artist, who has made himself famous by touring the world making pencil sketches and drawings from life. He is renting the beach and may be seen daily on the ocean front … engaged in his art at which he is wonderfully clever.”