

**Sheerness Cemetery,
Isle of Sheppey, Kent
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



78958 GUNNER

W. H. ANTONIE

ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY

8TH JULY, 1916 Age 22

R.I.P.

William Henry ANTONIE

William Henry Antonie was born in 1892 at Richmond, Victoria, Australia to parents Manuel & Admelia Antonie (nee Toy).

Admelia Antonie died on 3rd May, 1911 at the Cue Hospital, Western Australia.

The following information may or may not relate to this "William Henry Antonie":

[W. Antonie, aged 20, born Victoria was listed as a Trimmer (Crew) on Orana which departed from the port of London, England to Sydney, New South Wales on 15th August, 1912.]

[W. H. Antonie, aged 20, Trimmer, born Melbourne,, Victoria was listed as a deserter from Orana on 31st December, 1912.]

William Henry Antonie married Maud Elizabeth Emmerton in 1914. Their marriage was registered in the district of Camberwell, London, England in the September quarter, 1914.

A birth was registered in the September quarter 1915 in the district of Southwark, London, England for Florence M. A. Antonie (mother's maiden name Emmerton).

William Henry Antonie enlisted with the Royal Garrison Artillery in London, England as Gunner. His service number was 78958.

Royal Garrison Artillery

The Royal Garrison Artillery (R.G.A.) was formed in 1899 as a distinct arm of the British Army's Royal Regiment of Artillery serving alongside the other two arms of the Regiment, the Royal Field Artillery (R.F.A.) and the Royal Horse Artillery (R.H.A.). The R.G.A. were the 'technical' branch of the Royal Artillery who were responsible for much of the professionalisation of technical gunnery that was to occur during the First World War.

From 1914 when the army possessed very little heavy artillery, the R.G.A. grew into a very large component of the British forces on the battlefield, being armed with heavy, large-calibre guns and howitzers that were positioned some way behind the front line and had immense destructive power.

With the new long-range small arms available to the infantry in the era before World War I, artillery fighting in the infantry line was increasingly brought under fire. The solution to this was the principle of standing off and engaging the enemy with indirect fire. Henceforth the artillery would be positioned well behind the infantry battle line, firing at unseen targets, at co-ordinates on a map calculated with geometry and mathematics. As the war developed, the heavy artillery and the techniques of long-range artillery were massively developed. The R.G.A. was often supported by the Royal Flying Corps (R.F.C.) who had devised a system where pilots could use wireless telegraphy to help the artillery hit specific targets. The R.F.C. aircraft carried a wireless set and a map and after identifying the position of an enemy target the pilot was able to transmit messages such as A5, B3, etc. in morse code to a R.F.C. land station attached to a heavy artillery units, such as Royal Garrison Artillery Siege Batteries.

The R.G.A. significantly increased in size, especially the Heavy Batteries, which increased from 32 Regular and Territorial Force batteries in 1914 to 117 by the end of the war. Similarly the Siege Batteries increased from just three Regular batteries in 1914 to 401 by the end of the war.

Siege batteries (such as 9th Siege Battery at the Battle of the Somme) had the largest guns and howitzers; mounted on railways or on fixed concrete emplacements. *(Information from Wikipedia)*

Based on research of the Service Number & time of enlistment, it is believed that the range of service numbers 78702-79403 enlisted at Dover – No. 1 Depot between 26th April & 11th May, 1916.

The UK Army Registers of Soldiers Effects for Dover records the War Gratuity payments available to the next-of kin. The War Gratuity was authorised to Gunner William Henry Antonie's widow – listed as Maud E. (self & child). Listed in red in the Register for Gunner William Henry Antonie is the following: "*Not admissible under 6 months service.*"

Gunner William Henry Antonie died on 8th July, 1916 at Broadway Hospital, Sheerness, Kent, England from Empyema while on Home Service.

A death for William H. Antonie, aged 23, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Sheppey, Kent, England.

Gunner William Henry Antonie was buried on 11th July, 1916 in Sheerness Cemetery, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, England – Plot number FF. 131. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Maud Elizabeth Antonie, widow of the late Gunner William Henry Antonie, remarried in the district of Camberwell, Surrey/London, England in the March quarter, 1917 to Henry R. (Harry) Palmer.

Gunner William Henry Antonie was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner William Henry Antonie – service number 78958, aged 22, of Royal Garrison Artillery. He was the son of Mr and Mrs I. Antonie, of Australia; husband of Maud Elizabeth Palmer (formerly Antonie) of 15 South Avenue Gardens, Southall, Middx.



Sheerness Cemetery, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, England

Sheerness (Isle of Sheppey) Cemetery is situated on the road from Sheerness to Queenborough, and the main entrance to the Cemetery is in Halfway Road.

Historical Information

During the First World War the Central Air Office R.N.A.S. and H.M.S. 'Hermes' (H.Q. Naval Wing) were at Sheerness. The Second World War saw Sheerness one of the ports controlling the initial despatch of volunteer vessels to Dunkirk for the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force in 1940. After Dunkirk, when invasion seemed imminent, the port was one of four bases at which were stationed a striking force to deal with an approaching enemy fleet. There was also a Royal Air Force station at Sheerness.

Sheerness (Isle of Sheppey) Cemetery contains 128 scattered First World War graves. Of the 38 Second World War burials, 18, all of them Merchant Seamen, are unidentified.

(Information from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice at Sheppey Cemetery (Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)



Sheppey Cemetery (Photo by David Anstiss)

Photo of Gunner W. H. Antonie's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Sheerness Cemetery, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, England.



(Photo by julia&keld)