

**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard,
Harefield, Middlesex, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2187 PRIVATE

JOHN GILBERT BICE

37TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

25TH MAY, 1917 Aged 20

Erected By His Comrades

John Gilbert BICE

John Gilbert Bice was born at Inglewood, Victoria in 1895 to parents Luke Edward & Lillian Bice (nee Jones).

Lillian Bice, mother of John Gilbert Bice, died on 5th October, 1898 at Inglewood, Victoria, aged 27.

Luke Edward Bice, father of John Gilbert Bice, died 6th November, 1906 at Wycheproof, Victoria, aged 36.

Luke Edward Bice jnr, brother of John Gilbert Bice, died 21st October, 1914, at Inglewood, Victoria, aged 22.

John Gilbert Bice was a 19 year old, single, Labourer from Inglewood, Victoria when he enlisted at Bendigo, Victoria on 10th April, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2187 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his grandmother – Mrs Mary Ann Jones, Maxwell Road, Inglewood, Victoria.

Private John Gilbert Bice was posted to “B” Company of 3rd Reinforcements of 38th Battalion on 19th April, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 23rd Light Horse Reinforcements at Seymour on 25th July, 1916 then transferred to “C” Company of 37th Battalion Reinforcements on 15th August, 1916. Private Bice was transferred to 3rd Reinforcements of 37th Battalion on 20th September, 1916.

Private John Gilbert Bice embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Shropshire (A9)* on 25th September, 1916 with the 10th Infantry Brigade, 37th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 11th November, 1916.

37th Battalion

The 37th Battalion was formed, as part of the 10th Brigade of the 3rd Australian Division, in February 1916 at Seymour in Victoria. Its recruits were drawn from Melbourne, north-east Victoria and Gippsland.

After training in both Australia and Britain, the battalion moved to France on 23 November 1916. Within a week it had begun to occupy trenches on the Western Front, just in time for the onset of the terrible winter of 1916-17....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire & some in the county of Dorset.

Private John Gilbert Bice was marched in to 3rd D.A.T.B. (Divisional Amalgamated Training Battalion) at Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England on 17th November, 1916. He was marched out to 10th Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire, England on 17th November, 1916.

Private John Gilbert Bice was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital, Wiltshire, England on 6th December, 1916 with Bronchitis.

Private John Gilbert Bice was marched out to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire for return to Australia from 10th Training Battalion, Durrington, on 24th January, 1917.

Private John Gilbert Bice was admitted to 1st Auxiliary Hospital, England on 5th March, 1917 & was seriously ill.

A Medical Report was completed on Private John Gilbert Bice on 5th March, 1917 at No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, England. His disability was recorded as Pulmonary Tuberculosis which had originated in October, 1916 at Durrington Camp, Salisbury, Wiltshire (10th Training Battalion). He had “*very extensive signs of Pulmonary Tuberculosis at upper part of both lungs with copious expectorant in which the Tubercle Bacillus is found microscopically to abound.*” It was stated that the infection was due to climate change or possible had been dormant before enlistment. The Officer in charge of the Medical case recommended that Private B ice be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board found on 20th March, 1917 that Private John Gilbert Bice was permanently unfit for all Military Service.

Base Records advised Mrs M. A. Jones, Maxwell Road, Inglewood, Victoria, next of kin of Private John Gilbert Bice, on 13th March, 1917 that Private Bice had been admitted to 1st Auxiliary Hospital on 5th March, 1917 *“suffering from severe illness (nature not known).”* Mrs Jones was advised on 21st March, 1917 that Private Bice’s condition was stationary.

Base Records advised Mrs M. A. Jones, Maxwell Road, Inglewood, Victoria, next of kin of Private John Gilbert Bice, on 31st March, 1917 that he was dangerously ill. She was advised on 4th April, 1917 that his condition was stationary.

Base Records advised Mrs M. A. Jones, Maxwell Road, Inglewood, Victoria, next of kin of Private John Gilbert Bice, on 24th April, 1917 that he was still dangerously ill. She was advised on 25th April, 1917 that he was pronounced out of danger.

Mrs M. A. Jones, Maxwell Road, Inglewood, Victoria, next of kin of Private John Gilbert Bice, was advised by Base Records on 1st May, 1917 that his condition was stationary & on 2nd May, 1917 that his condition was improving.

Mrs M. A. Jones, Maxwell Road, Inglewood, Victoria, next of kin of Private John Gilbert Bice, was advised by Base Records on 7th May, 1917 that his condition was stationary. She was advised on 10th May, 1917 that his condition was improving & she was advised again on 15th May, 1917 that his condition was stationary.

Private John Gilbert Bice died at 1.30 pm on 25th May, 1917 at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, Middlesex, England from Tuberculosis of Lungs.

A death for John G. Bice, aged 21, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

Private John Gilbert Bice was buried at 3 pm on 28th May, 1917 in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England – Plot number Aust. 21 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private John Gilbert Bice – *Coffin was polished Elm with Brass Fittings. Band in attendance. Coffin borne on Gun Carriage. Firing Party at grave, “Last Post” sounded by Bugler. Coffin covered with Australian Flag and surmounted by wreath. Steps are being taken to erect a permanent memorial to each patient dying in above hospital – from a fund raised for this purpose within the hospital.*

A War Pension was granted to Mary Ann Jones, Kew, grandmother of the late Private John Gilbert Bice, in the sum of 20/ per fortnight from 28th July, 1917.

Mary Ann Jones, next of kin of the late Private John Gilbert Bice, advised Base Records on 14th October, 1917 of a change of address from Maxwell Road, Inglewood to 232 High Street, Kew.

One package of the personal effects of the late Private John Gilbert Bice were received by Mary Ann Jones, 232 High Street, Kew, Victoria, on 4th February, 1918.

Base Records wrote to Mrs M. A. Jones, 232 High Street, Kew, Victoria on 6th April, 1921 stating she was registered on the records of the late No. 2187 Private J. G. Bice as the next of kin but were enquiring if his father or mother, or brothers and sisters were alive due to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc.

Mrs M. Bastow, of Inglewood, Victoria. wrote to Base Records on 22nd February, 1922 stating she had seen in the daily paper that *“you have been advertising for the next of kin to John Gilbert Bice. I am his aunt, his father’s sister Luke Edward Bice. My name married (Mary Bastow) maiden name (Mary Bice) would you let me know what [you] wanted for. Mrs M. A. Jones was his grandmother she died since he went to the war & died. His brother Herbert Oswald Bice was wounded & died. Also I never heard any more of them after.”*

Base Records replied to Mrs M. Bastow, of Inglewood, Victoria with a similar letter they had sent to Mrs Jones in 1921 – asking for details of the late soldier's family & if they were alive. Mrs Bastow replied no to all the questions (as in the named relative was deceased) except she stated that 2 Uncles were alive on his father's side "*J. J. Bice and O/H. Bice they are older then me I don't know there address as they don't live in Inglewood that have gone from here some time.*"

Base Records wrote to Mrs M. Bastow, of Inglewood, Victoria, on 12th May, 1922 stating that they were "*prepared to recommend that deceased's war medals be handed to you, but only on the distinct understanding that they will be preserved with due care as mementos of his services and produced to this Department at any time upon receipt of its demand in writing. If you are agreeable to accept the mementoes under these conditions, kindly complete the attached agreement before a J. P. and return it to me at your earliest convenience....*"

Base Records wrote to Mrs M. Bastow, of Inglewood, Victoria, again on 2nd August, 1922 stating that they had no reply to their letter regarding the War Medals on account of the late Private J. G. Bice. Base Records advised that they were attaching another Declaration to be completed but if no reply was to hand within 21 days they will be placed upon the untraceables list.

Mrs M. Bastow, of Inglewood, Victoria, signed a Statutory Declaration on 16th August, 1922 stating she would "*preserve with due care any war medals or other items given into my custody on account of the services rendered by the late No. 2187 Private J. G. Bice, 37th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, and will produce them to the Department of Defence at any time upon receipt of its demand in writing.*"

Private John Gilbert Bice was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Bice's Aunt – Mrs M. Bastow, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in September, 1922 & received by M. Bastow in October, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Gilbert Bice – service number 2187, aged 20, of 37th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Luke Edward & Lillian Bice. Born at Inglewood, Victoria, Australia. His brother Alexander Bice also fell.

Private J. G. Bice is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 127.

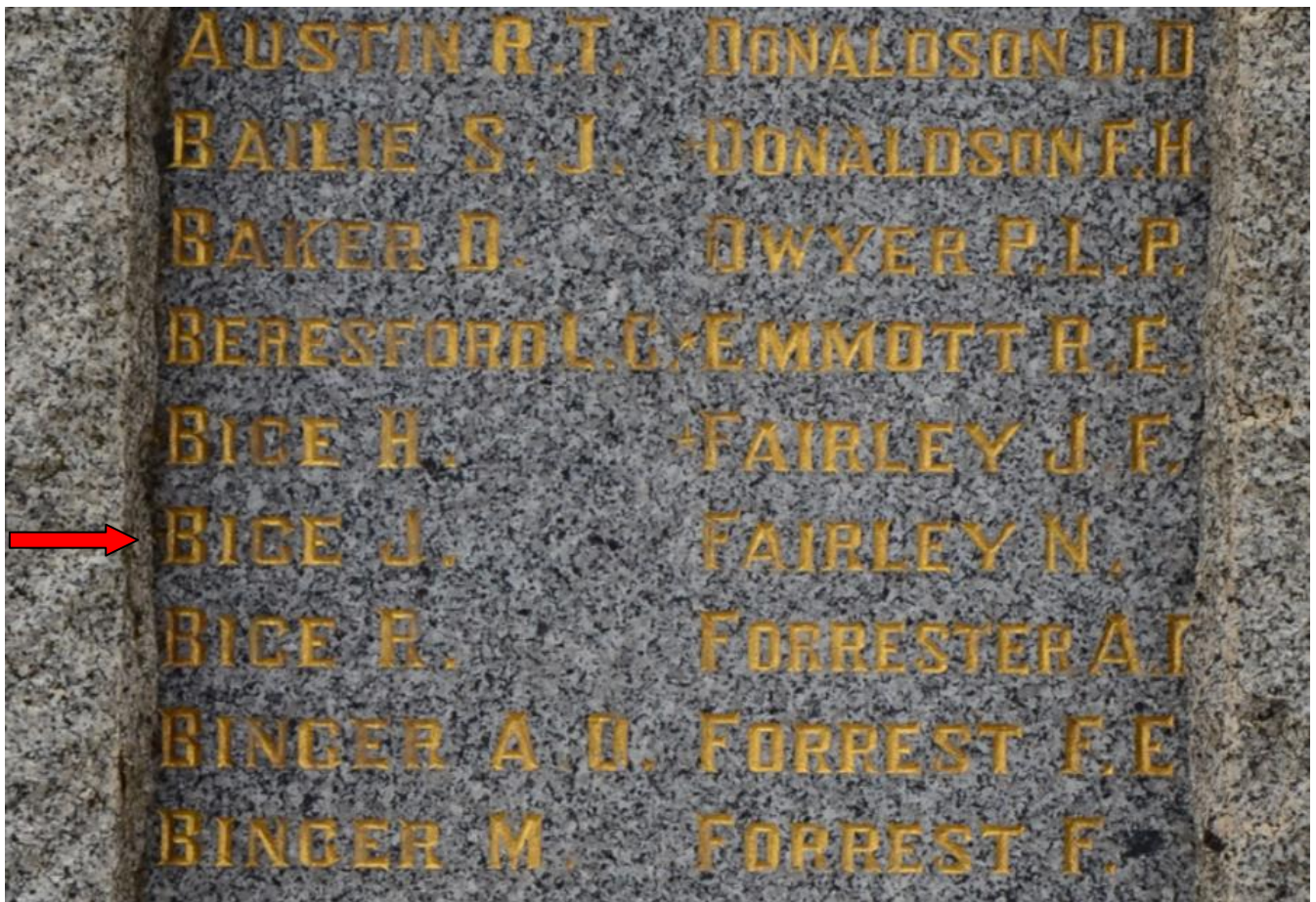


Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. Bice is remembered on the Inglewood War Memorial, located at Grant & Verdon Streets, Inglewood, Victoria.



Inglewood War Memorial (Photos from AWM Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)



John Bice is remembered on the Serpentine & District Roll of Honour, located at Serpentine Memorial Complex, Chapel Street, Serpentine, Victoria.



Serpentine Roll of Honour (Photos from AWM –Places of Pride – Henry Moulds)



J. G. Bice is remembered on the Serpentine East Loddon Shire Honour Roll for World War, located at Serpentine Memorial Complex, Chapel Street, Serpentine, Victoria.



John G. Bice is remembered on the East Loddon WW1 Memorial Pillars, located at East Loddon P12 College, Dingee Road, Dingee, Victoria – Pillar 4B.



East Loddon WW1 Memorial Pillars (Photo from AWM – Places of Pride)



East Loddon WW1 Memorial Pillars (Photo courtesy of [East Loddon Anzacs](#))

East Loddon WW1 Memorial Pillars

This website contains stories and images that have been compiled by East Loddon P-12 College students in partnership with the East Loddon Historical Society. The aim of this project is to make local history accessible to all. Moreover, we want students to empathise with the service men and women who came before us.

The East Loddon Shire consisted of 9 major towns (Mitiamo, Calivil, Jarklin, Prairie, Dingee, Tandara, Yallock, Serpentine & Pompapiel) and is now known as the Loddon Shire. Around 320 men and women either born, living or working within the East Loddon district enlisted in WWI. Sadly over 65 never returned to Australia.

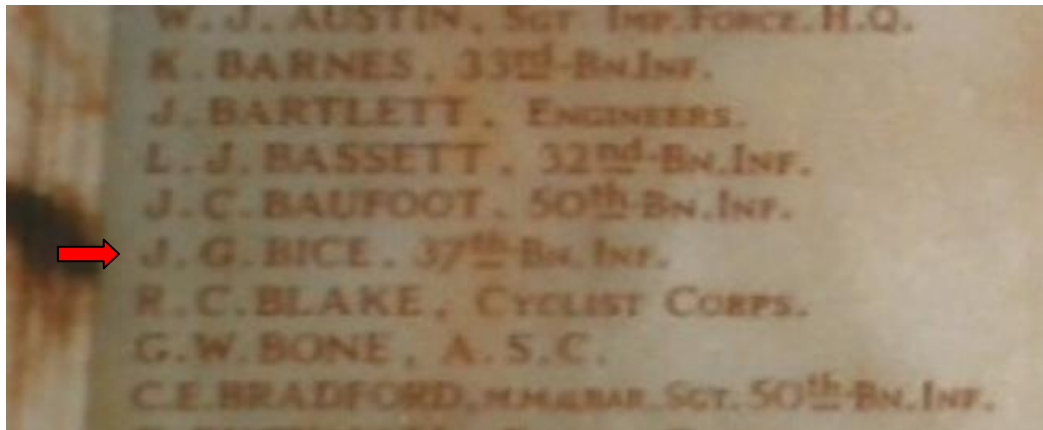
There are 8 pillars in the memorial. Three include a timeline of the local home front during the war. The other five include the honour roll and feature stories about local nurses and soldiers.

(Information from [East Loddon Anzacs](#))

J. G. Bice is remembered on the Australian Soldiers' Memorial in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Church Hill, Harefield, Middlesex, England.



Australian Soldiers' Memorial, Harefield (Photo from War Memorials Online – B. Wood)



(86 pages of Private John Gilbert Bice's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives

Newspaper Notices

RECRUITING CAMPAIGN

BENDIGO DEPOT

Ten Accepted Yesterday

At the Bendigo Town Hall recruiting room yesterday 13 presented themselves for examination, and 10 passed. Two were rejected and one was deferred. The following is a list of the names of those who passed yesterday:-.....John Gilbert Bice, labourer, Inglewood.....

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 11 April, 1916)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

281ST CASUALTY LIST

SERIOUSLY ILL

J. G. Bice, Inglewood

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 23 March, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCES

286th CASUALTY LIST

ILL

Pte J. G. Bice, Inglewood (dang.)

(Bendigo Advertiser, Victoria – 10 April, 1917)

In Honor's Cause

PRIVATE J. BICE, INGLEWOOD,

DIED OF ILLNESS

Word was received from the Defence Department on Tuesday of the death in England, from tuberculosis, of Private John Bice, of Inglewood. The soldier, who was only about 21 years of age, was the son of the late Mr and Mrs Luke Bice, both parents dying when he was very young. He was brought up by his grandmother, Mrs Jones, senr., and proved an affectionate and considerate grandson. He had served with the forces for a considerable time. He had many friends locally, who sincerely regret his sad ending. As a mark of respect flags were flown at half-mast.

(Inglewood Advertiser, Victoria – 1 June, 1917)

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

309TH LIST

Died of Illness

Pte J. G. BICE, Inglewood

(*The Bendigo Independent*, Victoria – 12 June, 1917)

John Gilbert Bice is remembered on the Bice Family headstone in Inglewood Cemetery, Victoria with his parents & 2 brothers.



Inglewood Cemetery, Victoria (Photo from Carol's Headstone Photos)



Bice Family Headstone in Inglewood Cemetery (Photo from Carol's Headstone Photos)

Sacred
To
The Memory Of
LUKE EDWARD BICE
Died 6TH Novr. 1906 Aged 36

Also
LILLIAN
Wife Of Above
Died 5TH Oct 1898 Aged 27

Also Their Sons
LUKE EDWARD
Died 21ST Oct 1914 Aged 22

JOHN GILBERT
Died On Active Service
25TH May 1917 Aged 21

HERBERT ALEXANDER
Killed In Action
4TH June 1917 Aged 23
REST IN PEACE



Newspaper Item – *Bendigo Advertiser*, Victoria –7 October, 1898:

★ INGLEWOOD, Wednesday

OBITUARY – A resident of the borough named Mrs _ . Bice died in the hospital at an early hour this morning from suppurating hydatids tumor. The deceased lady, who was only 27 years of age, leaves a widower and three young children to mourn their loss.

★ Newspaper Item – *Inglewood Advertiser*, Victoria – 23 October, 1914:

The death occurred at the hospital on Wednesday, of Luke Bice, a young man 22 years of age, and a son of Mr L. Bice, formerly of Inglewood. The deceased was afflicted with pulmonary tuberculosis, from which complaint he had been a suffered for a considerable period. He entered the hospital in April last, but proved beyond recovery, and his condition gradually became worse. Sincere sympathy is extended to the relatives in their loss.

The interment will take place at 3 pm to-day.

★ Newspaper Item – *Inglewood Advertiser*, Victoria – 17 July, 1917:

Tidings of Soldiers

THE LATE CAPTAIN H. A. BICE

The above soldier, whose death in action in France was recently recorded in these columns, was a brother to the late Private John G. Bice, whose death from illness was reported a short time ago. The late Captain Bice enlisted in South Australia on the outbreak of war. He saw service on Gallipoli, where he was wounded, and afterwards in France, being wounded for the second time here. He gained his stripes, and was promoted to the rank of Captain, and after spending some time in England had returned to France only a short time when he met his untimely death. The deceased soldier was a grandson to Mrs M. A. Jones, formerly a resident of Inglewood, but who now resided at 232 High-street, Kew.

★ From The Australian War Memorial :

Private Herbert Alexander Bice, Service Number 480, 50th Battalion, was killed in action in Belgium on 9th June, 1917. He is remembered in the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium as he has no known grave.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Private John Gilbert Bice does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Erected By His Comrades

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield contains 126 Commonwealth War Graves.

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

Harefield (St. Mary) Churchyard contains war graves from both world wars. There are 120 First World War graves, mostly those of Australians who died in No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield Park. Uniquely, their graves are marked by scroll shaped headstones, chosen by the staff and patients at the hospital. In the centre of the Australian plot stands a memorial obelisk which was erected by Sir Francis Newdegate, late Governor of Tasmania and of Western Australia, and Mr. C.A.M. Billyard-Leake, of Harefield Park. The churchyard also contains six graves of the Second World War.

(Information & photos from CWGC)





St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield



Photo of Private John Gilbert Bice's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield, Middlesex, England.

(Note: CWGC were advised at the time of researching – April, 2021 that Private Bice's headstone had been engraved incorrectly with 7th Battalion – should be 37th Battalion)



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)

UPDATE: The following photo was sent to me (June, 2021) from CWGC showing that Private John Gilbert Bice's headstone had been amended.



(Photo courtesy CWGC – June 2021)



St Mary the Virgin Church, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)



St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Harefield (Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett)





THE ANZAC CEMETERY, HAREFIELD, LAWRENCE, PHOTO