

**Weston Mill Cemetery,
Plymouth, Devon
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



59 GUNNER

A. E. I. BICKERS

AUST. SIEGE ARTILLERY

26TH AUGUST, 1915* Age 19

*(*Note: There is a discrepancy with the date of death – some forms in the Service Record file of Gunner A. E. I. Bickers have 26th August, others have 27th August, 1915 as the date of death)*

Archibald Eric Ivan BICKERS

Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers was born at Rupanyup, Victoria in 1896 to parents Alfred & Isabella Bickers (nee Bryant). (Listed on Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages as "Archie Eric Ivan Bickers").

Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers attended Rupanyup State School, Victoria.

Isabella Bickers, mother of Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers, died on 17th August, 1908 at Rupanyup, Victoria.

Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers was a 19 year old, single, Soldier from Artillery Barracks, Queenscliff, Victoria when he enlisted at Queenscliff, Victoria on 2nd June, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 59 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr A. Bickers, of Rupanyup, Victoria.

Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers was posted with Siege Brigade on 2nd June, 1915 for training.

Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Orsova* (A67) on 17th July, 1915 with the Siege Artillery Brigade. Sergeant Alexander Bickers, older brother of Archibald, also embarked on the same ship.

Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers died on 26th August, 1915* at Military Hospital, Plymouth, Devon, England from Acute Pleurisy, Pneumonia & Cellulitis of face.

**(Note: there is a discrepancy with the date of death of the late Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers – The "Report of Death of a Soldier" – Army Form B. 2090 & "Field Service" Army Form B. 2090A both have the date of death as 27th August, 1915 however a letter from Base Records dated 19th December, 1915 to Mr Alfred Bickers reports that his son died on 26th August, 1915. Also a cable message from the High Commissioner, London dated 27th August, 1915 stated that Gunner Bickers had died on 26th August, 1915. The final summary sheet in the Service Record file has the date of death as 26th August, 1915. A Summary card in the Service record file has the date of death as 22nd August, 1916.)*

A death for Archibald E. Bickers, aged 19, was registered in the September quarter, 1915 in the district of Devonport, Devonshire, England.

Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers was buried on 30th August, 1915 in Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England – Plot number Mil. Con. 3515 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Communications to Base Records from Mr William Bickers, eldest brother of the late Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers, advised that their father - Alfred Bickers, died on 1st June, 1917 & their mother was also dead.

Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers 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 the late Gunner Bickers' eldest brother - Mr William Bickers, as the closest next-of-kin as their father had died. (Scroll sent September, 1921 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers – service number 59, aged 19, of Australian Siege Artillery. He was the son of Isabella and the late Alfred Bickers. Native of Rupanyup, Victoria, Australia.

Gunner A. E. I. Bickers is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 19.



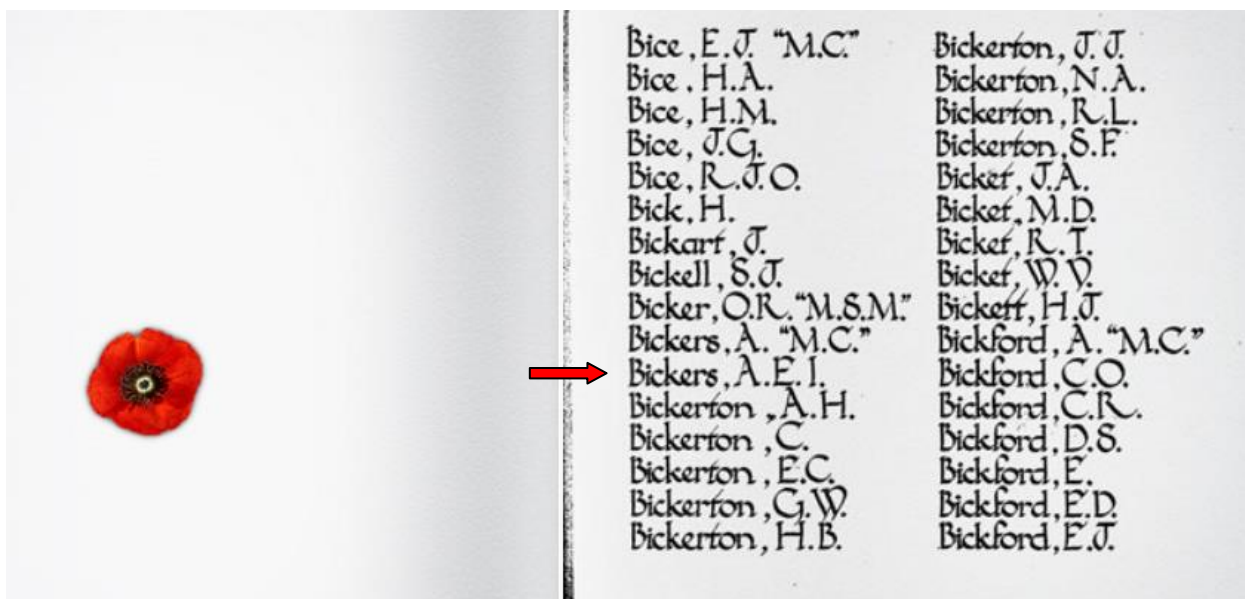
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

The Rupanyup War Memorial, located on median strip in front of RSL Clubrooms, Cromie Street, Rupanyup does not have individual names.



Rupanyup War Memorial (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

A. E. I. Bickers is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.



(37 pages of Gunner Archibald Eric Ivan Bickers' 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

DEATH OF GUNNER ARCHIE BICKERS

On Tuesday morning a telegram was received from the Defence Department by the Rev. W. M. Robertson, to the effect that Gunner Archibald Bickers had died in the Devonport Hospital, England from pneumonia, and to inform his father who lives at Warranooke. Gunner Bickers was a native of Rupanyup and general sympathy is felt for his family in their bereavement.

(Rupanyup Spectator and Lubeck, Banyena, Rich Avon and Lallat Advertiser, Victoria – 2 September, 1915)

VOLUNTEER'S DEATH

The sad news was received by Mrs E. Eagle, of Scott-street, on Friday, that her brother Mr Archie Bickers, who joined the Victorian Permanent Artillery, and who left with the siege train for England some weeks ago for service at the front, had died in the Devonport Hospital from cellulitis. Deceased, who was 19 years of age, was well known in Warracknabeal, having been employed by Mr G. W. Lawson. He was a very popular young man, and his death under such distressing circumstances, is deeply regretted. As a tribute of respect to the deceased, the flags in the town were flying at half-mast on Friday.

(Warracknabeal Herald, Victoria – 7 September, 1915)

In the 75th Casualty list, issued on Wednesday and which contained 560 names, Gunner Bickers, of Rupanyup, is reported to have died of illness.

(Dimboola Banner and Wimmera and Mallee Advertiser, Victoria – 10 September, 1915)

ROLL OF HONOUR

DIED OF ILLNESS

VICTORIA

Gnr BICKERS, A. E. I., Siege Arty Bde., Rupanyup

(Weekly Times, Melbourne, Victoria – 11 September, 1915)

Rupanyup State School

ANNUAL REPORT

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The War – The school has a record of no less than 27 former pupils doing their duty at the front, and we regret to say that one, Archie Bickers, died of illness in Egypt. It is intended to have a “roll of honour” placed in the schoolroom, as soon as the Education Department has decided on the design.

(Rupanyup Spectator and Lubeck, Banyena, Rich Avon and Lallat Advertiser, Victoria – 23 December, 1915)

IN MEMORIAM

BICKERS – A tribute of love to the memory of Gunner Arch. E. Bickers, of the Siege Brigade, died Military Hospital, Davenport, England. 26.8.15.

“Lead kindly light.”

- H. A. B. Evans

(The Colac Herald, Victoria – 30 August, 1916)

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)

Gunner A. E. I. Bickers does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England

During the First World War, Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse contained between them the Royal Dockyard, Royal Naval Barracks (known as H.M.S. Vivid), the Royal Marine Barracks of the Plymouth Division, and naval and military hospitals. For the duration of the war, Devonport was made headquarters of the Auxiliary Patrol Area.

Plymouth was a naval station second only to Portsmouth during the Second World War. Devonport was also an important military station and there was a R.A.F station at Mount Batten, opposite Plymouth.

Plymouth (Weston Mill) Cemetery contains 401 burials of the First World War, 1 being unidentified. Approximately half are in the naval and military war graves plots north-east of the chapel, the rest are scattered.

Second World War burials in the cemetery number 556, 11 of which are unidentified. Of these, 111 of the earlier graves filled the existing naval and military plots. A further plot was then set aside for service graves and 317 of the burials were made there. The rest of the war graves are scattered. The cemetery also contains 14 non-war service burials and 36 war graves of other nationalities, 25 of them Polish.

There are six Australians buried in this cemetery – five from World War 1 & one from World War 2.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



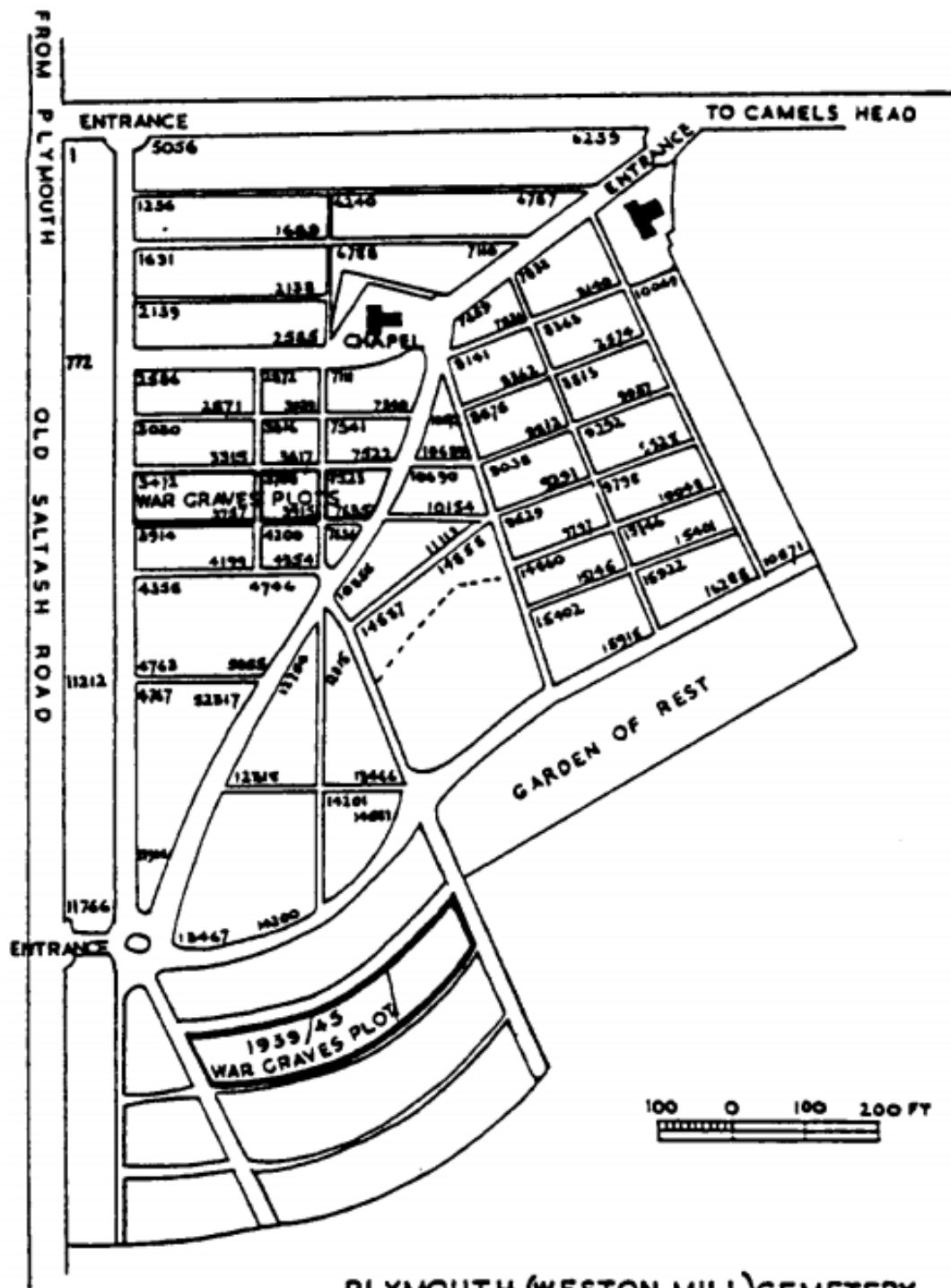
Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon



Photo of Gunner A. E. I. Bickers' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Weston Mill Cemetery, Plymouth, Devon, England.



(Photo courtesy of Julia & keld)



PLYMOUTH (WESTON MILL) CEMETERY