

**All Souls Cemetery,  
Kensal Green, London, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**CAPTAIN**

**ERNEST J. W. BRUCE**

**94TH BATTERY,**

**ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY**

**17TH APRIL, 1919 Age 45**

## Ernest J. W. BRUCE

Ernest John Webster Bruce was born in Melbourne, Victoria in 1874 to parents John Monro Bruce & Mary Ann Bruce (nee Henderson).

Ernest Bruce attested with the Imperial Yeomanry on 6th January, 1900 in London, England during the Boer War. He was a 25 year old, single, Student. He was given a service number of 6400. His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as Mr J. M. Bruce, of 7 Australian Avenue, London, England.

Private Ernest Bruce was posted to 35th Company, Imperial Yeomanry on 6th January, 1900. He was on Home Service until 27th February, 1900.

Private Ernest Bruce served in South Africa from 28th February, 1900 until 5th October, 1900. He had served in the South African – Senekal campaign & was wounded slightly at Senekal on 26th June, 1900 with a stiffened elbow joint.

Private Ernest Bruce was on Home Service from 6th October, 1900.

Newspaper Item – *Examiner*, Launceston, Tasmania, Australia – 8 October, 1900:

### **RETURNED**

*London, Oct. 6*

*Ernest Bruce, a Victorian who joined the yeomanry, has returned to England with a shattered arm.*

Private Ernest Bruce was medically discharged on 14th April, 1901 as unfit for further service in conjunction with the war in South Africa under authority No. 133.

John Monro Bruce, father of Ernest John Webster Bruce, died in 1901.

Mary Ann Bruce, mother of Ernest John Webster Bruce, died in 1908.

Newspaper Item – *Punch*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 27 February, 1908:

### **ENGAGEMENTS**

*An engagement is announced between Miss May Jackson, eldest daughter of Dr. Jackson, of "Offington" St. Kilda, and Mr Ernest Bruce, son of Mrs J. M. Bruce, of Melbourne and London.*

Ernest John Webster Bruce married Mary Lindsay Jackson on 2nd June, 1908 at Christ Church, South Yarra, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

The 1909 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Fawkner, subdivision of South Yarra, Victoria, listed Ernest John Webster Bruce, Merchant & his wife May Lindsay Bruce living at Homebush, Domain Rd., South Yarra.

Lindsay Mary Bruce, daughter of Ernest John Webster Bruce & Mary Lindsay Bruce, was born in 1910.

The 1911 England Census recorded Ernest J. W. Bruce as a 36 year old, living by "Private Means" & his wife May Lindsay Bruce, aged 32, living at 11 Audley House, Margaret Street, Marylebone, London, England. They had been married for 2 ¾ years & had one child. Listed under the column for Birthplace to which they both listed Melbourne, Australia was "both visitors in London child in Melbourne."

A birth was registered on Victoria in 1912 for Helen Bruce, daughter of Ernest John Webster Bruce & Mary Lindsay Bruce.

Extract of biography from *Wikipedia* of Stanley Bruce who was 8th Prime Minister of Australia from 1923 to 1929 & was a younger brother of Ernest John Webster Bruce

John Munro Bruce, was of Ulster Scottish descent and had emigrated from Ireland to Australia in 1858 at the age of 18. His mother, Mary Ann Henderson, was Irish and had married her cousin John after emigrating to Australia in 1872 at the age of 24. John Bruce became a talented businessman with "a flair for buying and selling", which would secure him a partnership in an established Melbourne importing firm that in 1868 became known as Paterson, Laing and Bruce. As his wealth grew, John Bruce became influential in colonial Victoria's social and political life. An avid golfer, he was one of the founders of the Royal Melbourne Golf Club. He was prominent in the liberal protectionist political movement within the state and an early supporter of future prime minister Alfred Deakin. John Bruce's success ensured that Stanley Bruce, his sister Mary and his brothers Ernest, William and Robert were born into affluence. Shortly after Stanley Bruce's birth the family relocated to the stately Wombalano manor, built by John Bruce, in Toorak. However, John Bruce was an aloof and remote figure in the lives of his children....

The economic depression of the 1880s and 1890s hit the Bruce family fortunes hard. John Bruce lost much of his fortune in the Victorian bank collapse of 1894 and incurred large debts to buy out his partners in the importing business in 1897. The family suffered a great deal more tragedy over the coming decades. Stanley's brother William committed suicide in 1899, shortly after seeking treatment for mental illness. Just two years later John Bruce took his own life during a business trip to Paris; he had suffered from depression as a result of the great pressures on his business and finances. His sister Mary endured a long illness before succumbing in 1908, and his mother died too in 1912.

In the aftermath of his father's death in 1901, the family fortunes were at a low ebb and Stanley Bruce went into the family business after leaving high school. The young Bruce was ambitious and determined to get an education. With loaned money, he moved to the United Kingdom with his mother and sister and enrolled in Trinity Hall, Cambridge in 1902. Ernest Bruce had remained in Australia to take charge of the family's business interests. In 1906, he lobbied the directors of the company to have his brother Stanley take over the chairmanship of Paterson, Laing and Bruce, and was ultimately successful. Despite being just 23, he proved an able chairman, and with Stanley in London managing the exporting and financial interests, and Ernest managing the importation and sales operations in Melbourne, the financial fortunes of the business and the family rapidly recovered.

Stanley Bruce returned briefly to Australia in 1914, swapping positions within the company with his brother Ernest. World War I broke out in August of that year. Bruce and his brothers sought to enlist in defence of the Empire, but all three of them would choose to serve in the British Army rather than the Australian Imperial Force. It was easier to obtain officer commissions in the British Army and the family had a close association with (and for many of them, long periods of residency in) Great Britain.

Although it had been the agreement before the war that Ernest would stay and manage Paterson, Laing and Bruce while his brothers were serving, Ernest Bruce decided to enlist in the British Army in 1915. Hence, in September 1916 Stanley Bruce sought to resign his commission and return to Australia to resume management of the family business. The War Office refused his request but granted him leave to return to Australia while recuperating from his injuries.

Ernest Bruce was given a commission in the Royal Field Artillery. He saw action in France and Belgium for 3 years.

Acting Major Ernest Bruce was awarded the Military Cross on 7th November, 1918 for his action at Morlancourt on 10th August, 1918 while serving with "D" Battery of 18th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

### **Military Cross**

The Military Cross (MC) is the third-level military decoration awarded to officers and (since 1993) other ranks of the British Armed Forces, and formerly awarded to officers of other Commonwealth countries.

The MC is granted in recognition of "an act or acts of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy on land" to all members of the British Armed Forces of any rank. (Wikipedia)



Captain Ernest J. W. Bruce died on 17th April, 1919. (Listed as Captain by CWGC & The Australian War Memorial)

Newspaper item – *Western Mail*, Cardiff, Glamorgan, Wales – 21 April, 1919:

#### **MAJOR'S SUICIDE**

*At an inquest in South Bucks on Saturday on Major Ernest John Bruce, who shot himself with a service revolver at his residence at Farnham Royal, which he had just taken, it was stated that he joined up in Australia at the beginning of the war and served in France three years, and was awaiting demobilisation. He had latterly suffered severely from stomach trouble and sleeplessness'. A verdict of "Suicide during temporary insanity" was returned.*

Newspaper item – *Uxbridge & W. Drayton Gazette*, London, England – 25 April, 1919:

#### **SUICIDE AT STOKE POGES**

##### **SAD END TO A MAJOR'S GALLANT CAREER**

*The Coroner for South Bucks (Mr A. E. W. Charsley) held an inquest on Saturday concerning the death of Major Ernest John Webster Bruce, M.C., of Tithe Farm, Stoke Poges, who shot himself in the mouth with a service revolver.*

*The deceased, who was forty-three years of age, was wounded in the South African campaign, and at the outbreak of the present war he was in Australia. He joined up, and served in France with the Royal Field Artillery for three years, and was awaiting demobilisation. He suffered from ulceration and sleeplessness.*

*Dr A. J. Wright said that a post-mortem examination showed that he had had a great pain from indigestion.*

*It was stated that Major Bruce had been taking aspirin for sleeplessness, but Dr Wright did not think that would make a man act abnormally.*

*The Coroner returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst temporarily insane."*

*The funeral took place at Kensal Green Cemetery on Tuesday.*

A death for Ernest J. W. Bruce, aged 43, was registered in the June quarter, 1919 in the district of Eton, Buckinghamshire, England.

Captain Ernest J. W. Bruce was buried in All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England – Plot number 126.3.46448.

Newspaper item – *Daily Advertiser*, Wagga Wagga, NSW – 7 May, 1919:

## OBITUARY

### MAJOR ERNEST BRUCE

*Major Ernest Bruce, managing director of Paterson, Laing, and Bruce, Ltd., died suddenly in London on Saturday, according to a private cable advice received in Melbourne. In July, 1915, Major Bruce went to England, and offered himself to the Imperial Government for active Service. His offer was accepted, and he received a commission in the Royal Artillery. He went through the principal fighting in France and Belgium during three years, and was observation officer at the Vimy Ridge battle. He was made captain, obtained the Military Cross, and later reached the rank of major. At the time of his death he was in London on leave, and from his last letter expected his discharge shortly. Major Bruce also served in the South African war with the Imperial Army, and was wounded in the left arm. He received the South African medal for gallant services. He was the eldest son of the late Mr J. M. Bruce, and had been associated with the business since he left Cambridge. His brother, Captain S. M. Bruce, is member for Flinders in the House of Representatives, and is at present in England on business. Another brother, Mr Robert Bruce, is attached to the Imperial Army. Major Bruce leaves a widow (a daughter of the late Dr. Jackson) and two children, who have been living in England for nearly four years.*

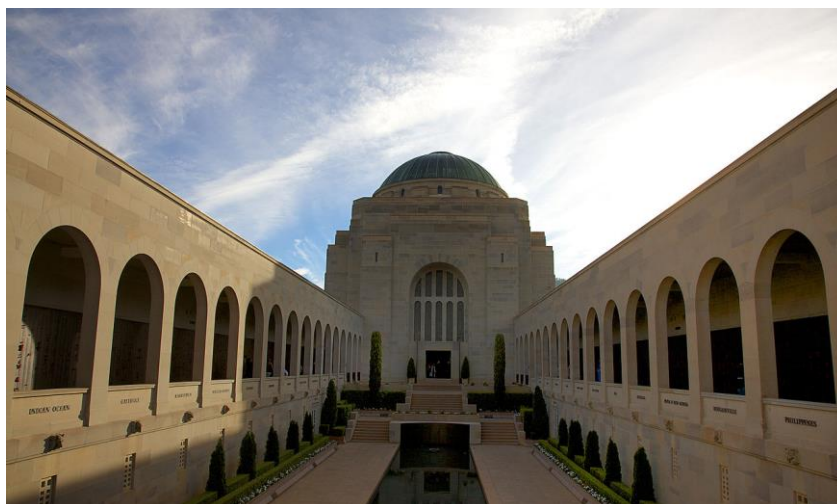
#### Probate details:

BRUCE, Ernest f 7 and 8 Australian-avenue, London and of 264 Flinders-lane, Melbourne, Australia died 17 April, 1919 at Tithe Farm, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire. Probate London 19 June to Stanley Melbourne Bruce, Merchant and May Lindsay Bruce, widow. Effects £38, 252 0s. 9d.

The UK Army Register of Soldiers' Effects for 1901-1929 records Major E. Bruce, formerly R.F.A. The National Archives, UK also records Major Ernest Bruce, Royal Field Artillery.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Captain Ernest Bruce, aged 45, of 94th Bty., Royal Field Artillery. He was awarded M.C. He was the son of J. M. Bruce of Melbourne, Australia; husband of May Lindsay Graham-Clarke (formerly Bruce, nee Jackson), of Glenrhos, Rhayader, Radnorshire. Served with the 1st Imperial Yeomanry in the South African Campaign. Three years' active service in France.

Captain Ernest J. W. Bruce is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.



**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** (*Capital Photographer*)



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **DEATH**

BRUCE – On 17th April, at London, Major Ernest Bruce, eldest son of the late J. M. Bruce, of Paterson, Laing and Bruce, Ltd. (By Cable).

(*The Week*, Brisbane, Queensland – 16 May, 1919)

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### **To Marry in London**

Mrs Ernest Bruce, widow of Major Ernest Bruce, M.C., R.F.A., an elder brother of the Prime Minister, is to marry again.

Her engagement to Mr Leonard Warre Graham-Clarke, of Glanrhos-Rhayader, Wales, is announced, and the marriage is to take place in London shortly. Mr Bruce, who is the elder daughter of the late Dr and Mrs Jackson, of Melbourne, has been living abroad for some time where her two daughters are being educated.

(*The Herald*, Melbourne, Victoria – 7 May, 1924)

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### **All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England**

All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green contains burials of both wars - 538. Half of the 482 First World War graves form a plot in the south-west section of the cemetery, the rest form small groups or are scattered throughout the cemetery. All of the 5s Second World War graves are scattered. There are also 2 non war burials here. A screen wall in the First World War plot (Sect. 213) records the names of casualties of both wars whose graves could not be individually marked. Also recorded on the wall are the names of five servicemen whose remains were cremated in Kensal Green Crematorium.

*(Information from CWGC)*



**All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green** (Photo by Rodney Burton)



**Cross of Sacrifice - All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green** (Photo by Chris Doran)



Photo of Ernest John Webster Bruce, M.C. Private Headstone in All Souls Cemetery, Kensal Green, London, England.



*(Headstone photos courtesy of British War Graves – Mick McCann)*





*To the Dear Memory of*  
*ERNEST JOHN WEBSTER BRUCE, M.C.*  
*MAJOR, R.F.A.*  
*Eldest Son Of The Late*  
*John Munro Bruce*  
*Who Died on April 17th 1919*  
*Aged 44.*  
*After Three Years Active Service*