

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4455 PRIVATE

R. J. DRISCOLL

3RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

17TH MARCH, 1918 Age 29

Roy John DRISCOLL

Roy John Driscoll was born on 5th July, 1888 at Port Adelaide, South Australia to parents William Sydney & Jessie Driscoll (nee Alexander). He was baptised in St Paul's Church, Port Adelaide, South Australia on 12th September, 1888.

[Note: According to information provided by his mother for the Roll of Honour Roy John Driscoll was born at Alberton.]

Roy John Driscoll attended Port Adelaide State School, South Australia.

Roy John Driscoll was a 27 year old, single, Wood Turner from Exchange Hotel, Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW when he enlisted on 26th August, 1915 at Newcastle, New South Wales with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr W. Driscoll, Port Adelaide, South Australia.

Private Roy John Driscoll was posted to 14th Reinforcements of 3rd Battalion.

Private Roy John Driscoll, Service number 4455, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on RMS *Osterley* on 15th January, 1916 with the 3rd Infantry Battalion, 14th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 13th February, 1916.

3rd Battalion

The 3rd Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 1st, 2nd and 4th Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these battalions, formed the 1st Brigade.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

W. S. Driscoll, Port Adelaide, C/o Mrs Carson, Fussell Place, Alberton, S.A., wrote to Base Records on 27th March, 1916 with the following letter: *"I am sorry to trouble you again but having heard from a friend of mine in Sydney that my son had enlisted about 3 months ago he met him in his regimentals would you kindly let is know how to communicate with him as his mother and I anxious to know his name is Roy John Driscoll age 27 if you can give me the above information you will greatly oblige yours."*

Base Records replied to Mrs W. S. Driscoll on 30th March, 1916 advising the postal address was *"No. 4455 Private Roy John Driscoll, 14th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Australian Division, Egypt."*

Private Roy John Driscoll embarked from Alexandria on 29th March, 1916 on Troopship *Transylvania* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 4th April, 1916.

W. S. Driscoll, c/o Mrs Carson, Fussell Place, Alberton, Pt Adelaide, wrote to Base Records on 1st October, 1916 regarding *No. 4455 Private Roy John Driscoll, 14th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Australian Division, Egypt. We have had our letter returned marked not in 3rd Battalion could you give us any information whether he has been transferred to any other Battalion. Would you kindly let me know who he mentioned as his next of kin as far as I know I his father would be has I would like to know in the event of anything happening to him would I be notified and oblige."*

Base Records replied to Mr W. S. Driscoll on 10th October, 1916 advising *"....there is no official advice that your son, No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Battalion, has been transferred to nay other unit. However, if you will forward to this office, the envelope endorsed "Not in 3rd Battalion", upon receipt of same, and if such action is warranted inquiries will be instituted and the result communicate to you when to hand. Next-of-kin to this soldier is shown on the records as William Driscoll (Father), Port Adelaide, S.A., with whom you are apparently identical, and will be notified of any reports respecting him."*

W. S. Driscoll, c/o Mrs Carson, Fussell Place, Alberton, Pt Adelaide, replied to Base Records on 17th October, 1916 *"Enclosed please find the envelope returned to us hoping that you will be able to trace my sons address thanking you for post favor..."*

Base Records replied to Mr W. S. Driscoll on 23rd October, 1916 advising *"...the envelope you enclosed has been forwarded to the Commandant, A.I.F. Headquarters, London, together with a request that investigations be made with a view to ascertaining the present whereabouts of your son, No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 14th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion, and the result, when to hand, will be promptly communicated to you. Your change of address has been noted."*

Base Records forwarded the envelope to The Commandant, A.I.F. Headquarters, 130 Horseferry Road, Westminster, London on 23rd October, 1916 along with the following explanation: *"... For favour of investigation and reply as to the present whereabouts of the soldier. Your attention is invited to the fact that although same is addressed in accordance with the records here. It has been endorsed "Unable to trace &c.," and "Not in 3rd Battalion", and returned to sender."*

Private Roy John Driscoll was attached to 1st D. H. Q. in France from 2nd November, 1916 & was classed P.B. (Permanent Base). (The Statement of Service form recorded *"attached to 1st Anzac Hd Qrs. for permanent Base duties in Corps Area."*)

The Officer i/c Records, A.I.F. Headquarters, Westminster, London, replied to Base Records on 31st January, 1917 regarding No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll *".....that it has been ascertained that this soldier has never been taken on the strength of the 3rd Battalion, but he was attached to 1st Anzac Headquarters for permanent Base Duty in Corps area in 2nd November, 1916. The envelope forwarded by you is returned herewith."*

Base Records replied to Officer i/c Records, A.I.F. Headquarters, Westminster, London on 26th March, 1917: *"....concerning the return of a letter addressed to No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, who embarked from Australia with the 14th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion, and who you now state is attached to the 1st Anzac Headquarters, as his correspondence was addressed to the only Unit know to his relatives, i.e., that with which he embarked, is it not reasonable to assume that same should have been re-addressed to his correct unit? It is hard to convince relatives of soldiers in these cases that any other course should have been taken."*

Base Records wrote to Mr W. S. Driscoll on 26th March, 1917 *"...concerning the present whereabouts of your son, No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Battalion, I am now in receipt of a report from Australian Imperial Force Headquarters, London to the effect that he is attached to the 1st Anzac Headquarters, and his correspondence should, therefore, be addressed No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 1st Anzac Headquarters, Australian Imperial Force, ABROAD."*

Private Roy John Driscoll returned to 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) in France on 31st October, 1917 for return to Australia.

Private Roy John Driscoll was transferred to England from Havre on 21st November, 1917.

Private Roy John Driscoll was re-classified "B" by 1st Australian Divisional Medical Board (no date recorded).

Private Roy John Driscoll was *"Marked "C" (employed) D.A.D.O.S."* (no date recorded).

Private Roy John Driscoll was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot, Weymouth, Dorset, England on 22nd November, 1917.

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 & also Dorset.

A Medical Report was completed on Private Roy John Driscoll, 4455, 3rd Battalion, on 22nd November, 1917 at No. 2 Command Depot, Westham, Weymouth. His disability was listed as V.D.H. which was pre-existing from Australia. *"Has always been short of breath. Was turned down twice before being accepted for A.I.F. No rheumatic history."* His present condition was recorded as *"Dyspnoea. Well marked aortic & mitral bruits. Pulse 132 low pressure."* The Officer in charge of the medical case recommended that Private Driscoll be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board Finding was Private Roy John Driscoll was permanently unfit for General Service & permanently unfit for Home Service.

Private Roy John Driscoll was admitted to Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset on 28th December, 1917 – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined).

W. S. Driscoll, c/o Mrs Carson, Fussell Place, Alberton, Pt Adelaide, wrote to Base Records on 25th February, 1918: *"Having received news from the Matron of the Military Hospital Weymouth saying that our son #4455 Private Roy John Driscoll is very ill the letter is dated 29-12-17. Coul you please give us any information about him whether he is any better of if he is coming home. Any news you can give us about him we will be very thankful for...."*

W. S. Driscoll, wrote to Base Records on 18th April (crossed out & written in red "March"), 1918: *"Please find enclosed letter that I received from the Matron of the Military Hospital Weymouth referring to my son #4455 Private R. J. Driscoll hoping that you may think it worth while enquiring as we are very anxious to know and oblige."*

Base Records replied to Mr W. S. Driscoll on 2nd March, 1918: *"...there is no official advice to hand that your son, No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 1st Anzac Headquarters, is in hospital, but if the letter you have received indicates that his case is serious, you might forward same to this office for perusal, and if warranted inquiries will be instituted. I might point out, however, that ordinary cases of sickness are not reported upon by cable, the official notification appearing in hospital lists, which come to hand later by mail. There is no advice to hand that he is returning to Australia."*

Private Roy John Driscoll died at 5 pm on 17th March, 1918 at Burdon Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from V.D.H. (Valvular Disease of the Heart) Mitral.

A death for Roy J. Driscoll, aged 29, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Roy John Driscoll was buried on 20th March, 1918 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Grave No. 3096 Section C.

From the burial report of Private Roy John Driscoll- *Elm coffin trimmings good. Military Funeral officiated by Chaplain the Rev. W. E. Moorhouse, Monte Video Camp. The grave is in a corner of the cemetery kept for the Australians so his body rests with his comrades. There were some flowers on the coffin.*

This is now recorded by CWGC as Plot number II. C. 3096 and now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The D.A.A.G., 4th Military District, Adelaide, South Australia replied on 22nd March, 1918 to Base Record's memo advising *"the next-of-kin of the late No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Battalion, A.I.F., has been duly notified re the casualty. The next-of-kin now resides at Torrens Road. Alberton, S.A."*

The Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Co. Ltd, Sydney, NSW, wrote to Base Records on 12th April, 1918 requesting a certificate of Death for Roy John Driscoll, No. 4465, 3rd Battalion, South Australia.

Base Records replied to The Mutual Life and Citizens' Assurance Co. Ltd, on 16th July, 1918 enclosing a Certificate of Death of No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll.

The personal effects of the late Private Roy John Driscoll were returned to his father – Mr William Driscoll, c/o Mrs Carson, Fussell Place, Alberton, Port Adelaide, South Australia on 21st June, 1918 on *Barunga*.

Mr W. S. Driscoll, c/o Mrs Coleman, Torrens Road, Alberton, South Australia wrote to Base Records on 6th March, 1919: *"Would you kindly let me know if any belongings to my son Private Roy John Driscoll #4455 3rd Battalion 14th Reinforcements who died at Burdon Hospital Weymouth on March 17, 1918 by so doing you will greatly oblige yours."*


Base Records replied to Mr W. S. Driscoll, c/o Mrs Coleman, Torrens Road, Alberton, South Australia on 12th March, 1919 advising: *"... regret to inform you that a package of personal effects of your son, the late No. 4455 Pte R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Batn, was included in a consignment of 5500 packages comprising the personal effects of over*

5000 soldiers, shipped per H.M.A.T. "Barunga" which was lost by enemy action at sea. This is all the more regrettable as the loss by the "Barunga" was the only instance in which any personal effects of deceased members of the A.I.F. were lost in transit to Australia. No advice has been received as to the contents of the packages consigned per this vessel, but a communication despatched to A.I.F. Headquarters, London requesting that inventories be furnished and when to hand all concerned will be advised."

Base Records wrote to Mr W. S. Driscoll, c/o Mrs Coleman, Torrens Road, Alberton, South Australia on 22nd September, 1919 with the following: "With reference to my communication of the 12th March; I am forwarding herewith inventory of effects of your son, the late No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Battalion, included in a consignment shipped from England per S. S. "BARUNGA", which vessel was lost at sea. It is regretted no hope can be entertained for the recovery of these effects."

E.R.M.

Australian Imperial Force.



A.I.F. KIT STORE,
110, GREYHOUND ROAD,
HAMMERSMITH,
LONDON, W. 6.

Inventory of Effects of - No. 4455. Driscoll R.J. 3rd. Btn. Lte. 1st M.G.C.
A.I.F.

Forwarded to - FATHER.
Mr William Driscoll,
C/o Mrs Carson,
Fussell Place,
Alberton, Pt. Adelaide,
Sth. Australia.

EFFECTS.

Ex. No. 2 Command Depot, Westham. Book No. 7a.

1 Camera, 1 Whistle, 1 Pr Scissors, 1 Aluminium Ring,
1 Pipe, 1 Purse, 1 Tin (containing:- Badges, 1 French
Bullet, Buttons, Coins), 3 Hair Brushes, 1 Disc, Letters,
Photos, 1 Devotional Book, 1 Purse, 3 Mirrors.
Paybook handed to Estates Branch, A.I.F.Hqrs, London.
Ex. Kit Bag held in Store. Book No. 7a. 44.

1 Testament, 1 Wallet (containing:- Photos, 1 Bank Receipt
on Com. Bank of Australia No. B19424 1/-)
2 Swimming Costumes.

Per "Barunga" 21.6.18.
In Case No. 1135.

D/S. 32788.

The Commonwealth Bank – Savings Bank Department, Sydney, NSW, wrote to The Secretary of Defence on 18th October, 1918 requesting a Certificate of Death of No. 4455 Private Roy John Driscoll, Deceased, A.I.F.

Base Records replied to The Superintendent, Savings Bank Department, Commonwealth Bank, Sydney, NSW on 25th October, 1918, enclosing as requested a Certificate of report of death of the late No. 4455 Private R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Battalion.

Private Roy John Driscoll was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Driscoll's father - Mr W. Driscoll, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent October, 1922).

On 24th November, 1921, Commandant, 4th District Base, Keswick Barracks, Adelaide, South Australia wrote to Base Records advising that "Mr W. Driscoll (father) Next-of-kin of the late No. 4455, Private R. J. Driscoll, 3rd Battalion is now deceased. The present address of the late soldier's mother Mrs J. Driscoll, is:- c/o Mr L. G. Hawke, Denning Street, Hawthorn, Adelaide."

On 16th December, 1921 Base Records had recorded across the Attestation Papers of the late Private Roy John Driscoll that "War Medals etc to Mother" - Mrs J, Driscoll, c/o Mr L. G. Hawke, Denning St, Hawthorn, Adelaide.

Jessie Driscoll signed as receipt for the British War Medal on 28th November, 1921. J. Driscoll signed as receipt of the Victory Medal on 16th February, 1923.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Roy John Driscoll – service number 4455, aged 29, of 3rd Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Jessie Driscoll, of Denning St., Hawthorn, South Australia, and the late William Sydney Driscoll.

Private R. J. Driscoll is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 36.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(97 pages of Private Roy John Driscoll'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

DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE

DRISCOLL – On the 17th March, at Burdon Military Hospital, England (of heart trouble), Private 4455 Roy John Driscoll, at Anzac headquarters, only beloved son of Mr and Mrs W. S. Driscoll, Torrens-road, Alberton, brother of Mrs L. G. Hawke, aged 29 years and 8 months.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 23 March, 1918) & (*Chronicle*, Adelaide, Sth Aust – 30 March, 1918)

THE AUSTRALIANS

CASUALTY LIST No. 387

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

DIED OF ILLNESS

4455 – Pte R. J. DRISCOLL, Alberton (March 17)

(*The Journal*, Adelaide, South Australia – 30 March, 1918)

PERSONAL

At last night's meeting of the Port Adelaide City Council it was decided to send letters of condolence to the relatives of the following soldiers from the district who had died on active service:- Private L. R. Wright and F. E. Deeley (killed in action) and R. J. Driscoll (died of illness)

(*Port Adelaide News*, South Australia – 5 April, 1918)

RETURN THANKS

MR and MRS W. S. DRISCOLL, of Torrens-road, Alberton, and Mrs L. G. Hawke, desire to THANK all Friends and Relatives for expressions of sympathy in the loss of their only son and brother, Private Roy John Driscoll.

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 18 May, 1918)

HEROES OF THE GREAT WAR

DRISCOLL – In loving memory of our dear and only son, Private Roy John, late 3rd Battalion, A.I.F., died at Weymouth Military Hospital, March 17, 1918.

Beloved in life,
Honored in death,
Cherished in memory,

-Inserted by his loving father and mother.

DRISCOLL – A tribute of love and honor to the memory of Private Roy John Driscoll, only beloved brother of Mrs L. G. Hawke, Alberton, died in Weymouth Hospital, March 17, 1918.

(The Advertiser, Adelaide, South Australia – 17 May, 1919) & (Chronicle, Adelaide, Sth Aust – 22 March, 1919)

****Notices were also placed in the newspapers in 1920, 1921, 1925, 1926**

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 R. J. Driscoll does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



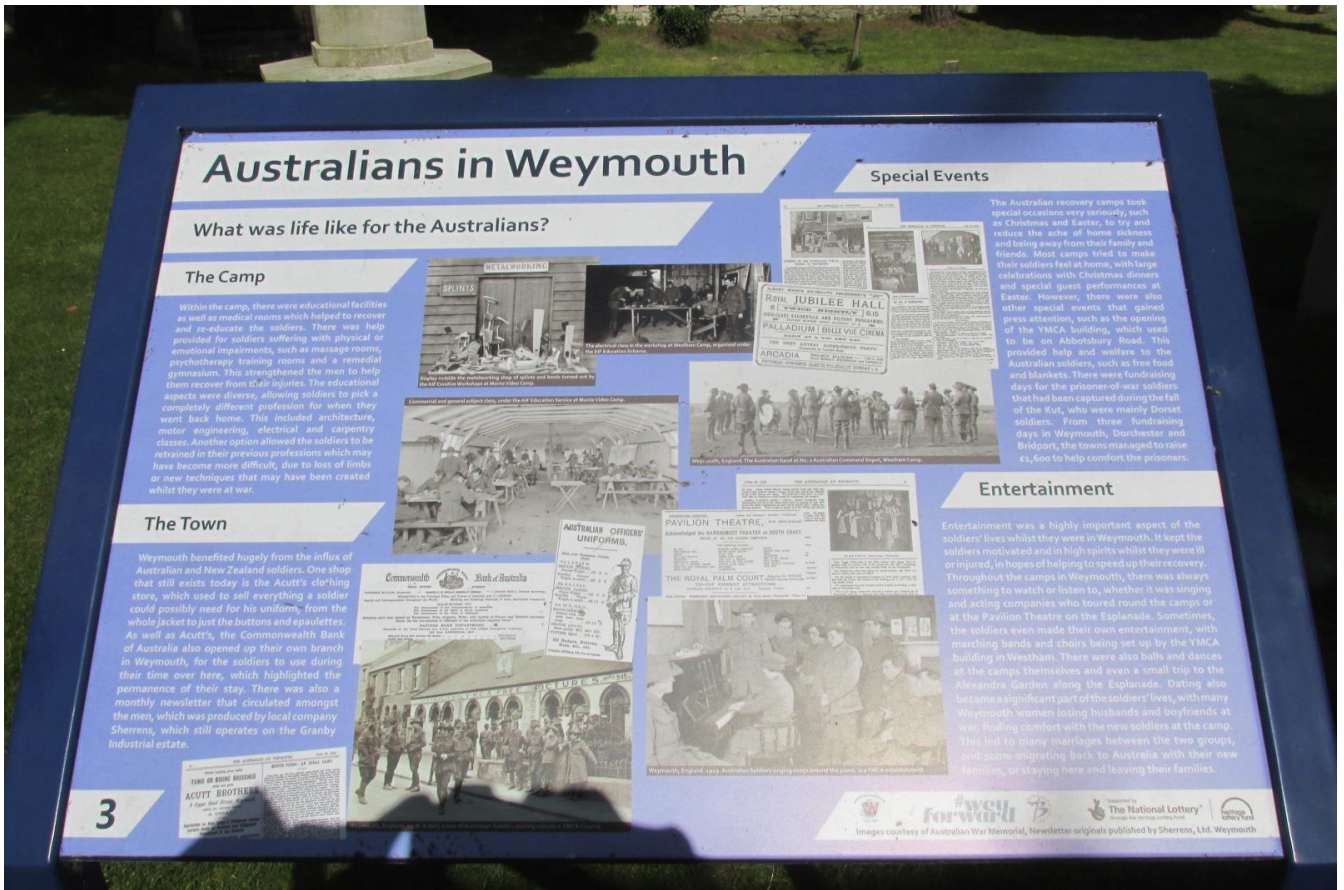
(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)

Photo of Private R. J. Driscoll's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Janice Dennis)