

**Holy Trinity Churchyard,
Hoyle, Merseyside
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



C. R. HALE

AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER

6TH APRIL, 1918 Age 49

Christopher Ridler HALE

Christopher Ridler Hale was born at Birkenhead, Cheshire, England on 10th April, 1868 to parents George and Mary Hale (nee Hayward).

The 1871 England Census recorded Christopher R. Hale as a 2 year old, living with his family at 12 Salisbury Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire, England. His parents were listed as George Hale (Fore Man – White Smith, aged 35, born Worcester) & Mary Hale (Dress Maker, aged 31, born Worcester). Christopher was one of six children listed on this Census – Alfred G. Hale (Pupil Teacher, aged 12, born Worcester), William H. Hale (Scholar, aged 10, born Worcester), Francis J. Hale (Scholar, aged 9, born Worcester), Eliza Mary Hale (Scholar, aged 7, born Birkenhead), then Christopher & Leonard D. Hale (aged 8 months, born Birkenhead).

The 1881 England Census recorded Christopher R. Hale as a 12 year old Scholar, living with his family at 239 Grange Lane, Birkenhead, Cheshire, England. His parents were listed as George Hale (Ironmonger, aged 45, born Gt. Malvern, Worcestershire) & Mary Hale (aged 41, born Redmarley, Worcestershire). Christopher was one of ten children listed on this Census – William H. Hale (Assistant Ironmonger, aged 20, born Gt. Malvern, Worcestershire), Francis J. Hale (Ironman, aged 19, born Gt. Malvern, Worcestershire), Eliza M. Hale (Milliner, aged 17, born Birkenhead) then Christopher, Gertrude E. (Scholar, aged 8, born Birkenhead), Mehetabel M. Hale (Scholar, aged 6, born Birkenhead), Ernest C. S. Hale (Scholar, aged 4, born Birkenhead), Laura J. Hale (aged 2, born Birkenhead), Amy L. Hale (aged 1, born Birkenhead) & Stephen R. Hale (aged 3 months, born Birkenhead). Also living with the family was Mary H. Shaw (Domestic servant, aged 19).

The 1891 England Census recorded Christopher R. Hale as a 22 year old Joiner, living with his family at 239 Grange Road, Birkenhead, Cheshire, England. His parents were listed as George Hale (Ironmonger, Gas Fitter, Whitesmith & Beer Housekeeper, aged 55) & Mary Hale (aged 51). Christopher was one of seven children listed on this Census – Eliza M. Hale (Milliner, aged 27) then Christopher, Gertrude E. Hale (Music Teacher, aged 18), Mehetabel M. Hale (Mother's Help, aged 16), Ernest C. S. Hale (Ironmonger – Apprentice, aged 14), Laura J. Hale (Scholar, aged 12) & Amy L. Hale (Scholar, aged 11).

Christopher Ridler Hale married Gertrude Adelaide Livermore in 1894. Their marriage was registered in the June quarter, 1894 in the district of Cheshire, Birkenhead.

Christopher & Gertrude Hale had the following children, all born at Birkenhead, Cheshire, England – Gertrude Alice Heywood Hale born 23rd May, 1895, Doris Lilian Hale born 24th April, 1898 & Christopher Clifford Hale born December, 1899.

George Hale, father of Christopher Ridler Hale, died at 39 Woodchurch Lane, Prenton, Merseyside on the 7th April 1897.

The 1901 Census recorded Clifford Hayward (Ship Joiner, aged 32, born Birkenhead, Cheshire) & his wife Gertrude Hayward (aged 27, born Bristol, Gloucester) living at No. 22 Ivor Road, Liscard, Cheshire. Their three children were listed as Gertrude Hayward (aged 5, born Birkenhead, Cheshire), Doris Hayward (aged 2, born Birkenhead, Cheshire) & Clifford Hayward (age 1, born Birkenhead, Cheshire).

The 1911 Census recorded Christopher Hale as a 42 year old Joiner (Builder – own account), living with his wife & children in a 7 roomed dwelling at 35 Upper Rice Lane, Egremont, Liscard, Cheshire, England. His wife was listed as Gertrude Hale (aged 38). Christopher & Gertrude Hale had been married for 17 years & had three children – Gertrude Hale (Millinery Apprentice, aged 15), Doris Hale (School, aged 12) & Christopher Hale (School, aged 11).

Christopher Hale (Labourer, aged 40), his wife Gertrude (age 35) & three children – Gertrude (Milliner, aged 15), Doris (aged 11) & Christopher (aged 9) were listed as passengers on *Lake Manitoba* which had departed from the port of Liverpool, England & arrived at the port of St. John, New Brunswick, Canada on 29th March, 1912. Their destination was listed as Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. Christopher's sister Gertrude had married and emigrated to Saskatchewan in 1906.

Christopher Ridler Hale stated he was a 46 year old widower ("Married" was crossed out on the Application Form), Carpenter with 3 dependants (Housekeeper & one child) when he applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Manufacture of Munitions in Great Britain on 10th May, 1917. Christopher Hale described his experience as "Served 6 years to Carpentry & Joinery. 8 years building & property repairing. 3 years in shipbuilding. 18 months ship repairing. 7 (or 8?) years Pr__ jobbing. 3 years in Canada building. 4 years come next September building & repairing in St. Marys, Australia." Christopher Hale stated that for the past 3 years he had worked at building new houses & repairing property. He had not worked for an Employer since coming to Australia. His address was Gidley Street, St Marys, NSW.

Munitions Worker No. 3378 Christopher Ridler Hale embarked from Sydney, Australia on 8th August, 1917 on S.S. *Anchises* & disembarked at Liverpool, England on 2nd October, 1917.

Munitions Worker Christopher Ridler Hale commenced work at P. & W. Anderson's, Filton as a Carpenter on 8th October, 1917.

Munitions Worker Christopher Ridler Hale was working at the Filton Aerodrome, near Bristol, Gloucestershire, England, on 5th April, 1918 fixing Uralite on the roof of one of the Aeroplane Sheds when he slipped at around 3.15 pm and fell to the ground. He was taken to the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Munitions Worker Christopher Ridler Hale died shortly before 3.30 pm on 6th April, 1918 at Bristol Royal Infirmary, England as a result of an accident on 5th April, 1918. An inquest into the death of Christopher Ridler Hale was held at 3 pm on 10th April, 1918. Based on the Coroner's finding, Christopher Hale had an accidental fall from the roof 39ft to ground and sustained a broken collar bone, ribs & severe injury to his spine.

A death for Christopher R. Hale, aged 49, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Bristol, Gloucestershire, England. The death certificate states Christopher Ridler Hale, aged 49 years, of 17 Milk St, a Joiner, died on 6th April, 1918 at Royal Infirmary as a result of multiple injuries due to an accidental fall from a roof.

After the inquest on the 10th April, 1918, the remains of the late Munitions Worker Christopher Ridler Hale were conveyed from the Undertaker's Mortuary at 6 pm. The funeral was arranged by Christopher Hale's nephew along with Messrs Arnold & Harris, two fellow Australian workers. The Engineer General, other Foreman & the whole of the Carpenters (numbering between 40 & 50), walked in procession from the Mortuary to Temple Meads Railway Station, near Bristol, following the Hearse. All the Australian Workmen were granted leave to attend the funeral. Christopher Hale's nephew along with Messrs Arnold & Harris accompanied the remains which left the station at 7 pm & arrived at 8.45 am on Thursday morning, 11th April, 1918 for burial in Hoylake Parish Churchyard.

Munitions Worker Christopher Ridler Hale was buried at 2.30 pm on 11th April, 1918 in Holy Trinity Churchyard, Hoylake, Merseyside & has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone. A collection by the workers had raised £9. 0.6d at one point to send back to Christopher Hale's family in Australia. Details of the funeral were sent to Miss Doris Hale, of 84 Blues Point Road, McMahon's Point, North Sydney, NSW, daughter of the late Christopher Hale.

Newspaper Article from *Western Daily Press*, Bristol, England – 11 April, 1918:

FATAL FALL FROM A ROOF

The circumstances connected with the death of Christopher Rider Hale, aged 49 years, a joiner, native of Sydney, New South Wales, and recently residing at 17, Milk Street, were inquired into yesterday by Mr A. E. Baker, City Coroner. Evidence was given that deceased was employed on Friday afternoon, with two other men, in fixing asbestos sheeting on the roof of a large shed at Patchway. Instead of stepping on one of the supporting beams he walked on the sheeting, which gave way, and he fell a distance of about 30 feet to the ground. The jury found that death was caused by an accidental fall.

The personal effects of the late Christopher Ridler Hale were in possession of his mother – Mrs Mary Hale of 4 Deva Road, West Kirby, Cheshire, England who requested that they be sent to his children in Australia.

Doris Hale, daughter of the late Christopher Hale, wrote to Defence Dept., Central Administration on 14th August, 1918. The letter reads: "*With reference to the death of my Father C.R. Hale, A.M.W. 3378 I am writing to enquire about what compensation is going to be made to us, his dependants.*

Always having kept house for my Father you will understand that therefore I am not qualified for any business, consequently I cannot support myself.

It is now 5 weeks, since I received any allotment money, & I regret to say, it has caused the breaking up of the home, which we have been in for the last 5 years.

My Father was accidentally killed at the Filton Aerodrome, Bristol, England on the 6th April, 1918, & as that is 4 months ago, it is quite time I heard something about what is going to be done, as you must understand, I have absolutely nothing to live on, & if something is not done at one I must put the matter into other hands.

My usual address is "Liscard" Gidley Street, St Marys NSW but I am at present staying at 84 Blues Point Road, McMahon's Point, North Sydney, NSW. Anticipating an early & favourable reply, I will now conclude."

The Defence Department were looking into the matter in July, 1918 to ascertain if any action was being undertaken to give the dependants of the late Mr Hale compensation. The Defence Dept. was advised that Christopher Hale was a widower (according to daughter Doris – her mother had died about 4 years earlier) & his daughter Doris, aged 19, was in charge of the home and solely dependent on her father. His 2 other children - Gertrude, aged 23, was earning 15/- and his son Clifford, aged 19, was earning £1 per week. Both Gertrude & Clifford were single and living at home. On 9th August, 1918 the Treasury Solicitor was instructed to pay the sum of £300 into the County Court in satisfaction of the claims of the deceased's dependants.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Australian Munition Worker Christopher Ridler Hale – service number 3378, aged 49, Australian Munition Worker. He was the son of George and Mary Hale; husband of Gertrude Hale. Born at Birkenhead, Cheshire.

Australian Munitions Worker Christopher Ridler Hale has been accepted for inclusion on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. His name was accepted in 2020 after his name was submitted back in 2017 (at the time of researching his story). 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*)

C. Hale is remembered on the St Marys War Memorial located in Victoria Park, Great Western Highway, St Marys, NSW.



St Marys War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Stephen Woods)



Australian Munitions Workers

Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance for the duration of service, and eventual repatriation to Australia. Married men also received a separation allowance, but were required to allot a portion of all their earnings to dependants. The men were expected to work in whatever industries they were directed to by the British Board of Trade, and under the prevailing conditions and wages for the duration of hostilities.

Government newspaper adverts appeared in August, 1916, and the first party of 76 workers departed Australia in September. Groups continued to be recruited and sent at intervals, with the eventual number of workers under the scheme totalling just over 5,000. Almost 1,000 of these had already been working in Britain under private agreements with large firms such as Vickers, and were brought under the conditions of the scheme. An additional 200 former AIF soldiers were also recruited in Britain. Initially only skilled workers were sought, however at the request of the British Government later groups included large numbers of navvies for general labouring.

These men were not members of the Australian Imperial Forces and did not serve in combat units, but were recruited to meet the shortfall in skilled labour that threatened many of Britain's key wartime industries including munitions. *(Source: Australian War Memorial)*



(67 pages of Christopher Ridler Hale's First World War Munition Worker's dossier is available for viewing on-line at the National Archives of Australia)



Newspaper Notices

The newspapers at the time were encouraged not to report munition explosions or deaths through TNT poisoning as it would affect the morale of the civilian population and so reports in newspapers are virtually non-existent. When the war ended the Australians returned home and life moved on.

MUNITION WORKERS

AUSTRALIANS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Melbourne, Thursday.

The Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) announces that during the period from the inception of the schemes for the despatch of munition workers and navvies to Great Britain up to June 30 last, 2662 munition workers had been disembarked in England for employment on munition and war work. There had also been enrolled under the munition workers' scheme 124 men who had been discharged from the A.I.F. in England for that purpose, and two discharged A.I.F. men had enrolled under the navvies' agreement, making the total number of men engaged in work in Great Britain under both these schemes 4,998. Of this number 384 men had returned to Australia – the majority on account of ill-health. There had been 23 deaths. The agreement of 38 men had been cancelled for disciplinary and other reasons. Six of the men had enlisted in the A.I.F., in England, five men had enlisted in the Royal Navy, and nine men had enlisted in the British Army, leaving the total number of men still in England under the Commonwealth agreement as 4,533. In addition these men were registered on the index held in Australia House 674 Australian munition workers who proceeded to Great Britain under private contract prior to the inauguration of the Commonwealth scheme. Of the men still in England on June 30, 1918, 87 were waiting return up to that date, 152 men had proceeded to France to engage in special work, and 107 of them had returned again to England. Australian munition workers were employed at 409 different firms or centres, and navvies at 192, and the value of the output produced by the labour of these men was estimated at £6,000,000.

Provision for the payment of munition workers and navvies who proceeded to Great Britain on war work under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government is made in an amendment to the war financial regulations issued today. Munition workers and navvies are to be provided with a free passage from Australia to Great Britain and back. In the case of munition workers a dependants' allowance of 25s a week, with allowances for children, will be made for the first eight weeks after embarkation. Subsequently the allowance will be 20s. Separation allowances equal to that paid in the case of a private in the A.I.F. will be paid to dependants.

(*Examiner*, Launceston, Tasmania – 30 August, 1918)

Local and General

Christopher R Dale, a resident of St. Marys for five years, who went to England about 12 months ago for the purpose of making munitions, met with a serious accident on April 5th, when the base of his skull was fractured, and died the following day in the Royal Infirmary, Bristol. He ceased leaves a wife, two daughters and one son, living at St. Marys, to mourn their loss. He was a brother of Mr Walter Hale, of St. Marys, and was a much esteemed citizen. The deepest sympathy is felt for the widow and children.

(*Nepean Times*, Penrith, NSW – 4 May, 1918)

St. Marys

A memorial service in memory of Mr C. R. Hale (who was killed in a munition factory in England recently) and Private Athol Garner (recently killed in action) will be held in St. Mary Magdalene Church this Sunday morning, Rev. W. R. Bowers Officiating. The Mayor and Aldermen have been invited to attend.

(*Nepean Times*, Penrith, NSW – 1 June, 1918)

St. Marys

A memorial service was conducted on Sunday morning last by the Rector at St. Mary Magdalene Church in memory of Private Athol Garner and Mr C R Hale. The former was killed in action on the Western Front, and the latter died from the effects of an accident whilst munition making in England. There was a large congregation, which included relatives of the deceased men, and the Mayor (Ald K Campbell) and aldermen. The Penrith Brass Band was in attendance, and rendered excellent music. The preacher's text was taken from Exodus 3, 7-8, "I know their sorrows and I am come down to deliver them." The address was most impressive. The special form of service arranged by the Bishop of London for those fallen in this war was used.

(*Nepean Times*, Penrith, NSW – 8 June, 1918)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) honours the 1,700,000 men and women of the forces of the Commonwealth who died in the two world wars and ensures that their memory is never forgotten. The applicable periods of consideration are 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 for the First World War and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947 for the Second World War.

The Commission's principles:

- Each of the dead should be commemorated by name on the headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed

During both WW1 (& WW2) a number of Commonwealth civilian organisations were accepted by the military as qualifying for war grave status.

Members of the Recognised Civilian Organisations had to meet two additional criteria not required by military casualties.

1. Their death had to be caused by war actions or the increased threat caused by war and
2. They had to be on duty at the time of their death - being posted overseas counted as 'being on duty'.

The Australian government deemed that their War and Munitions Workers (men and women) qualified for war grave treatment as they were recruited as a body and were posted overseas for the war effort. Some of their CWGC entries show a 'service number' indicating that they were an organised body. All but one of these casualties are buried in the UK - the other being in France.

Holy Trinity Churchyard, Hoylake, Merseyside

Holy Trinity Churchyard, Hoylake contains 23 Commonwealth War Graves – 11 from World War 1 & 12 from World War 2.



Holy Trinity Churchyard, Hoylake (Photos by Peter Cox)



Photo of Munition Worker C. R. Hale's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Holy Trinity Churchyard, Hoylake, Merseyside, England.



(Photo by nettlyne- Find a Grave)