

**Brotton Church Cemetery,  
Brotton, Yorkshire, England**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**J. REID**

**AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER**

**4TH AUGUST, 1917**

## James REID

James Reid was born around 1869.

*[Note: There is very little information that can be verified regarding James Reid. His place of birth was not recorded on his application to be a Munition/War Worker in England. Due to the number of "James Reid's" it is too hard to pinpoint the correct one without any other evidence to prove that the correct person was recorded.]*

James Reid, widower, aged 48, of 706 Square & Compass Hotel, George St, Sydney, applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Manufacture of Munitions in Great Britain on 30th April, 1917. He stated he had worked at Boree Shire Council for 4 years on road work & then for 9 months at Cudal at a Marble Quarry.

James Reid was selected as a Labourer to be sent to England for non-Military work & was given a Munition Worker number of 825.

Worker James Reid embarked from Fremantle, Western Australia on 8th May, 1917 on *Clan McGillivray* & arrived at Plymouth, England on 27th July, 1917.

Australian Munitions Worker James Reid reported to Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Works, Plymouth of 27th July, 1917. He commenced work on 1st August, 1917 as a Labourer at T. H. Ridley & Sons, Skinningrove Iron Works, Middlesborough.

Australian Munitions Worker James Reid died on 4th August, 1917 at his lodgings at 26 Lax Street, Carlin How, Skinningrove, Yorkshire, England from a Cerebral Haemorrhage following a fit.

A death for James Reid, aged 50, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Guisborough, Yorkshire North Riding, England.

Australian Munitions Worker James Reid was buried on 6th August, 1917 in Brotton Church Cemetery, Brotton, Yorkshire, England – Plot number A. I. 6. & has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Australian War Worker No. 888 E. Stanley (Foreman) advised Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, that all papers belonging to the late James Reid had been forwarded to Australian House on the 7th August. A letter was sent from Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Workers to Mr Stanley stating that a £10 maximum was guaranteed for Funeral expenses & asked that he make enquiries into the extra amount on undertaker's account. Mr A. Garnett, Undertaker, wrote to Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, explaining that the extra amount was because "*at the time no specific instructions had been received & he did what he thought best under the circumstances.*" Mr Garnett, Undertaker, offered to reduce the account but would be £2.10.0 out of pocket. A Memo was sent to Accountant on 1st October, 1917 requesting payment of £12.10.0 for Undertaker's account as it had been given special approval by the Official Secretary to pay the full amount.

The Acting Secretary of Defence wrote to Miss Kate Reid, Cottage Hospital, Manly, NSW on 7th September, 1917 offering deepest regret on the death of her father, an Australian War Worker & who was buried at Brotton on 6th August. The letter advised that Senator Pearce had expressed his personal sympathy as well as The Minister of Munitions, London who had abled his sincere regret and sympathy. A reply was sent from Alice Reid thanking them for their sympathy on behalf of herself and brother and sister who were both on active service.

*[Note: Katie Reid, aged 27, of Double Bay, NSW embarked from Sydney on RMS Mooltan on 9th June, 1917 as a Staff Nurse. Her next of kin was listed as her brother – J. Reid, "Netherby", Kiara Road, Double Bay, NSW]*

From the Record file of Australian Munitions Worker James Reid – his next-of-kin was stated to be Miss Kate Reid, 14th General Hospital, Port Said, on active service as Staff Nurse. Kate Reid, of Euston Road, Hurlstone Park, Sydney, wrote to Base Records on 12th January, 1920 in regards to finding the Will of the late James Reid. She stated the dependents of her father consisted of one son - James Reid, aged 20, & daughter - Winifred Reid, aged 16.

The late Australian Munitions Worker James Reid's landlady – Mrs Shaw submitted a claim for expenses in connection with the illness & death of James Reid. *“Prior to his decease he lay unconscious for 3 to 4 days – in consequence his landlady had to destroy the bedding. The man also owed her one week's board and lodging.”* Items consisted of feather bed and pair straw mattresses, 1 pair sheets and pillows & one week's board and lodging totalling £5.8.0d. The Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, wrote to Base Records on 17th February, 1919 stating that he had forwarded the address of the late Australian War Worker No. 825 J. Reid's sister and next-of-kin – Miss Kate Reid to Mrs Shaw so that Mrs Shaw could communicate directly with Miss Reid regarding the settlement of her claim for expenses incurred during Mr Reid's illness. Miss Reid forwarded £2 to Mrs Shaw & stated the remainder would be forwarded after hearing that the amount had reached Mrs Shaw safely.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker James Reid – service number 825, Australian Muniton Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker J. Reid 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 Roll** (Photo from AWM)



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

## 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)*



(73 pages of Australian Munition Worker James Reid's Munition records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial & National Archives*



## **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.*

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### **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)*

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## 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.

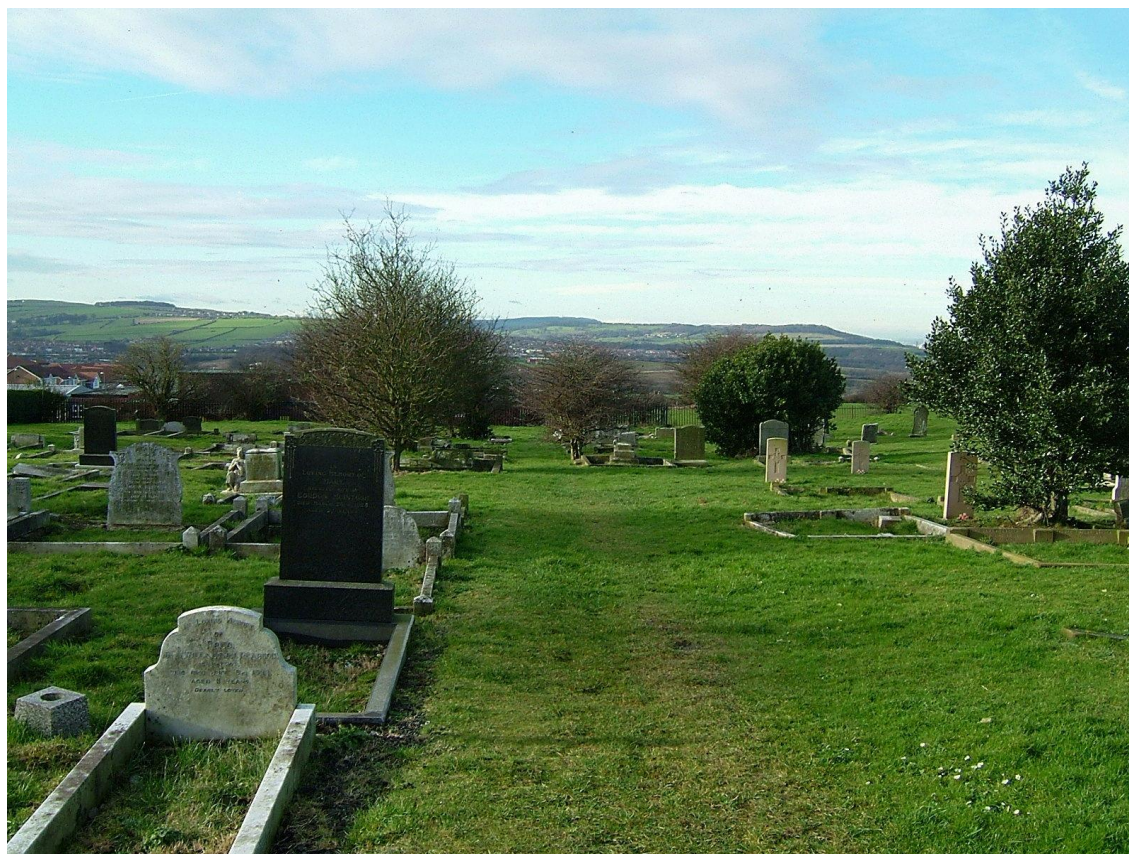
Members of the Recognised Civilian Organisations had to meet two additional criteria not required by military casualties.

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.

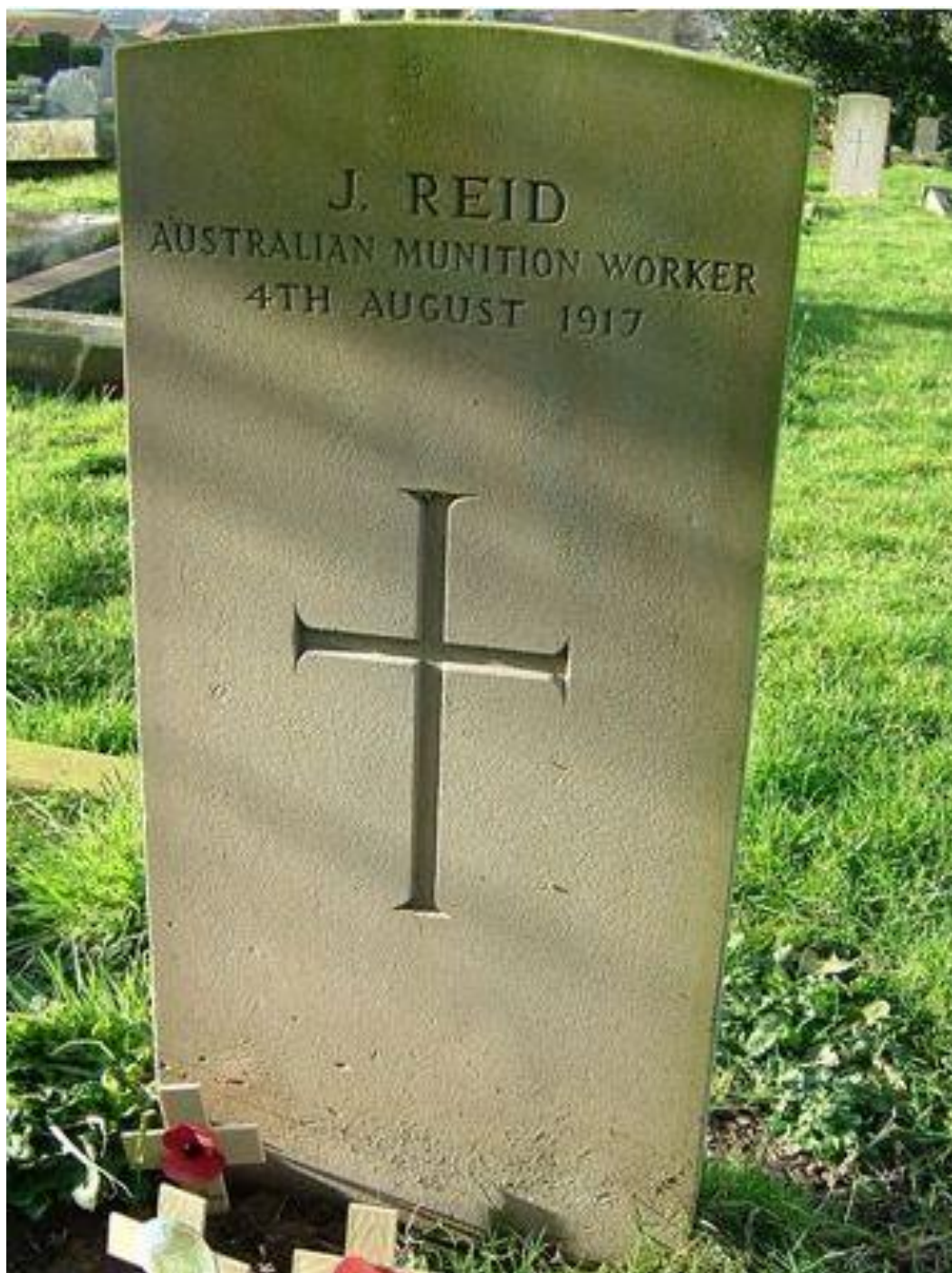
### **Brotton Church Cemetery, Brotton, Yorkshire, England**

Brotton Church Cemetery has 11 Commonwealth Commission War Graves – 10 from World War 1 & 1 from World War 2.



**Brotton Church Cemetery** (Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)

Photo of Australian Munition Worker J. Reid's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brotton Church Cemetery, Brotton, Yorkshire, England.



*(Photo courtesy Peter Bennett)*