

**East Finchley Cemetery &
Marylebone Crematorium,
East Finchley, London, England
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2158 PRIVATE

J. A. G. RENNIE

26TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

9TH DECEMBER, 1920 Age 23

From Darkness To Light

John Andrew Gibson (Jack) RENNIE

John Andrew Gibson Rennie was born at Bundaberg, Queensland on 9th March, 1897 to parents William & Agnes Douglas Rennie (nee Gibson).

Agnes Douglas Rennie, mother of John Andrew Gibson Rennie, died on 2nd March, 1903, aged 35.

John Andrew Gibson Rennie attended North Bucca School, Queensland.

John Andrew Gibson Rennie was an 18 year old, single, Farmer from Mt. Larcombe (Spelling as per Embarkation Roll), Gladstone, Queensland when he enlisted in Brisbane, Queensland on 22nd June, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2158 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr William Rennie, Mt. Larcombe, Gladstone, Queensland.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was posted to 4th Reinforcements of 26th Battalion on 2nd June, 1915 for recruit training.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie embarked from Brisbane, Queensland on HMAT *Armada* (A26) on 20th September, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Brigade, 26th Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie joined his Unit at Tel-el-Kebir on 11th January, 1916.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie proceeded from Alexandria on 15th March, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 21st March, 1916.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was wounded in action in France on 5th August, 1916. He was admitted to No. 3 Casualty Clearing Station on 6th August, 1916 then transferred to Ambulance Train. Private Rennie was admitted to 13th Stationary Hospital at Boulogne, France on 8th August, 1916 with Shrapnel wounds to head & eyes. He was invalided to England on 19th August, 1916 on Hospital Ship *West Australia*.

26th Battalion

The 26th Battalion was raised at Enoggera, Queensland, in April 1915 from recruits enlisted in Queensland and Tasmania, and formed part of the 7th Brigade. It left Australia in July, and, after training in Egypt, landed at Gallipoli on 12 September. At Gallipoli, the 26th played a purely defensive role and at various times was responsible for the defence of Courtney's and Steele's Posts, and Russell's Top. It withdrew from the peninsula on 12 December.

After another stint in Egypt, the 7th Brigade proceeded to France as part of the 2nd Australian Division in March 1916. In concert with the 28th Battalion, the 26th mounted the first trench raid undertaken by Australian troops on the Western Front on 6 June. The Battalion fought in its first major battle around Pozieres between 28 July and 7 August.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 26th Battalion

POZIERS HEIGHTS

4th August, 1916:

Battalion took part in the attack on heights of Poziers at 9.15 pm (see typewritten report attached)

5/6 August, 1916:

___ O.G. 1 and 2. The area from jumping off X 4 b 67 to X 4 b 19 line and forward to R34 d 59 thence eastward to R35 c 48 was held by the Bn. The 14th Bn A.I.F. took over at 11pm 6/8/16.

Lewis M/guns were relieved at 2am but did not leave C.T. until daylight 7/8/16 and then took part in repelling enemy attack, taking 91 prisoners & killing many others. Bn reassembled at Tara Hill and marched to Brickfields.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mr W. Rennie, Mount Larcom, Queensland, was advised by Base Records on 18th August, 1916 that his son, Private John A. G. Rennie, was seriously ill with gunshot wound to head and eyes.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, England on 20th August, 1916 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to head.

Mr W. Rennie, Mount Larcom, Queensland, was advised by Base Records on 28th August, 1916 that his son, Private John A. G. Rennie, had been removed from seriously ill list. He was advised again on 31st August, 1916 that his son's condition was improving.

A Medical Report was completed on Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie on 31st August, 1916 at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth, England with his disability listed as "G.S.W of both eyes causing blindness". The disability had occurred on 4th August, 1916 near Albert, France. "He was in a charge when struck by a fragment of shrapnel. He was taken to Boulogne Hospital, No. 13 Stationary, where he remained a fortnight and was then transferred to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth. S.W." Private Rennie's present condition was listed as: "Right Eye. Enucleated. Left Eye. No perception of light. The optic nerve is ruptured." An operation had been performed. The officer in charge of the medical case recommended that Private Rennie be discharged as permanently unfit & this was agreed by Medical Board on 1st September, 1916.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was unfit for duty & was transferred to St. Dunstan's Hostel, Regent's Park, London, England on 7th September, 1916 to await final instructions.

St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blind Soldiers and Sailors

In 1914 St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blind Soldiers and Sailors was founded by Sir Arthur Pearson, author of Victory Over Blindness. A year later it moved to a property in Regent's Park. The idea was to provide a hostel where ex-servicemen would go after they had received hospital treatment to 'learn to be blind'. The legacy of the war meant that in 1921 men were still waiting to be accommodated, with 57 men awaiting admission. By 1929 there were still two thousand men in their care. The intake included 103 colonial ex-servicemen who were trained during their time at St Dunstan's.

The emphasis of the organisation was training, which often involved varying forms of technology that enabled the men to utilise their skills. This included adapted typewriters and telephones, with standardised assessments to encourage employment. St Dunstan's often found itself in the papers and, as a more understood form of 'disability', attracted public sympathy.

(National Archives UK)



St. Dunstan's Hostel

Miss L. A. Caplin, Mt. Larcom, Queensland wrote to Base Records on 2nd September, 1916 asking for Private J. A. G. Rennie's present address. *"His father received word that he was seriously ill, gun shot wounds head & eyes. A week later his father received word that he was out of danger. Private Rennie received all my letters address to A. Company, 26th Batt, 7th Brigade, A. I. Force. On Active Service up till 25th June when he wrote telling me that he may not be able to write for a while to me as he was at the "firing line" but would write as early as he could. Could you kindly let me know if you know what Hospital he is in & if he is in England or in France. I wish to try & let him know as early as I can that we have received word that he is ill..."*

Base Records replied to Miss L. A. Caplin, Mt. Larcom, North Coast Line, Queensland on 8th September, 1916 to state that the name of the hospital at which No. 2158 Private J. A. G. Rennie, was located was unknown but gave her details on how to address letters which would reach Private Rennie. The letter continued with *"The above soldier, who was reported as seriously ill and suffering from a gunshot wound in the head and eyes, is now reported as improving. Next-of-kin shown as father will be promptly communicated with should any later information come to hand."*

Mr William Rennie, Mount Larcom, Queensland, was advised by Base Records on 23rd September, 1916 that his son had been admitted to 3rd London General Hospital on 20th August.

Base Records sent the following letter to Mr W. Rennie, Mount Larcom, Queensland, on 11th April, 1917 *"The following is a report received from A.I.F. Headquarters, London, dated 23.1.17, concerning your son, No. 2158 Private J.A.G. Rennie, 26th Battalion:-*

"As a matter of interest I enclose herein a list giving particulars of those of our boys now at St. Dunstan's Home for the Blind and the occupations they have taken up. (In the instance of your son – shorthand and typewriting.). It should be a great comfort to the relatives to know that in spite of the darkness in which their friends live, they are all happy and contented in their various occupations, and the relatives in Australia might be informed to this effect. They are well cared for and receive every consideration and assistance from their sympathetic instructors. Their training is made interesting and cheery and at frequent intervals officers visit the Home to see that the men have everything they need to ensure their comfort. St. Dunstan's is an ideal home for men so afflicted – said to be the finest of its kind anywhere, affording every facility for the acquirement of useful trades, and the feeling of being necessary and useful reacts most gratifyingly on the patients mentality and disposition."

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was sent on furlo from 21st July, 1917 to 21st August, 1917 & was to report back to St. Dunstan's Hospital, Regents Park.

John Andrew Gibson Rennie, Soldier, aged 20, married Harriet Gertrude Jane May, aged 17, on 3rd March, 1918 at St Marylebone Parish Church, London, England. The marriage was registered in March quarter, 1918 in the district of Marylebone, Middlesex, England.

The records for the next-of-kin for Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie were changed on 21st March, 1918 to show that his next-of-kin would now be his wife – Mrs H. G. J. Rennie, 23 Circus St, Marylebone, London, England instead of his father.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was granted Leave from 4th May, 1918 until 31st May, 1918 on which date he was to report back to St. Dunstan's Hospital, Regents Park.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie reported back to St. Dunstan's Hospital, Regents Park on 31st May, 1918 from Leave. His injury – shrapnel wounds to head had healed but he was totally blind. He had been admitted to St. Dunstan's Hostel on 7th September, 1916 Blind & was discharged on 27th June, 1918 fully trained in shorthand & typing. Private Rennie was transferred to 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital on 27th June, 1916.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was discharged from 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital to Ship on 30th June, 1918 for return to Australia.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie embarked from England on *D 14* on 30th June, 1918. He embarked from Suez on 21st July, 1918 on *H.M.A.H.S. Kanowna*. Private Rennie was returned to Australia to be medically discharged due to G.S.W to both eyes causing blindness.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was transferred to 6th Australian General Hospital, Brisbane on 4th September, 1918. He was discharged on 5th October, 1918.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was discharged from Australian Imperial Force on 5th October, 1918.

A daughter – Joyce Agnes Louisa Rennie was born in 1918 to parents John & Harriet Gertrude Rennie.

The 1919 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Wide Bay, subdivision of Bundaberg, Queensland, listed John Andrew Gibson Rennie, of Crofton St. West. His mother – Agnes Isabella Rennie, Home Duties was also listed at Crofton St.

Mrs Harriet Gertrude Rennie & her daughter travelled to Australia in July, 1919.

John Rennie, Clerk, aged 23, & his wife Gertrude Rennie, aged 19, along with their daughter Joyce Rennie, aged 2, were passengers on *Tahiti* which has departed from Sydney, Australia & arrived at port of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada on 17th August, 1920 & was en-route to England.

The family of 3 were passengers on *Canada* which had departed from Montreal, Quebec, Canada & arrived at the port of Liverpool, England on 2nd September, 1920.

A daughter – Vera Jean Rennie was born on 21st October, 1920 in London, England to parents John & Harriet Gertrude Rennie.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie died on 9th December, 1920.

A death for John A. G. Rennie, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1920 in the district of Marylebone, London, England.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was buried on 13th December, 1920 in East Finchley Cemetery, Middlesex, England - Plot number D. 14.126 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie – service number 2158, aged 23, of 26th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William and Agnes Rennie; husband of H. G. Rennie, of 23 Circus St., Marylebone, London, England.

Private J. A. G. Rennie is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 108.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

J. A. G. Rennie is remembered on the North & South Bucca District Roll of Honour, located at the Bucca Hall & Recreation Club, 28 Longs Road, Bucca, Queensland.



North & South Bucca District Roll of Honour (Photos from Queensland War Memorials)



The Bucca War Memorial, located at the Bucca Hall & Recreation Club, 28 Longs Road, Bucca, Queensland, does not list individual names.



Bucca War Memorial (Photo from Queensland War Memorials)

J. A. G. Rennie is remembered on the Mount Larcom and District Honour Roll, located in Mount Larcom and District Sub-Branch of RSL Memorial Garden, Mount Larcom Showgrounds, The Narrows Road, Mount Larcom, Queensland.

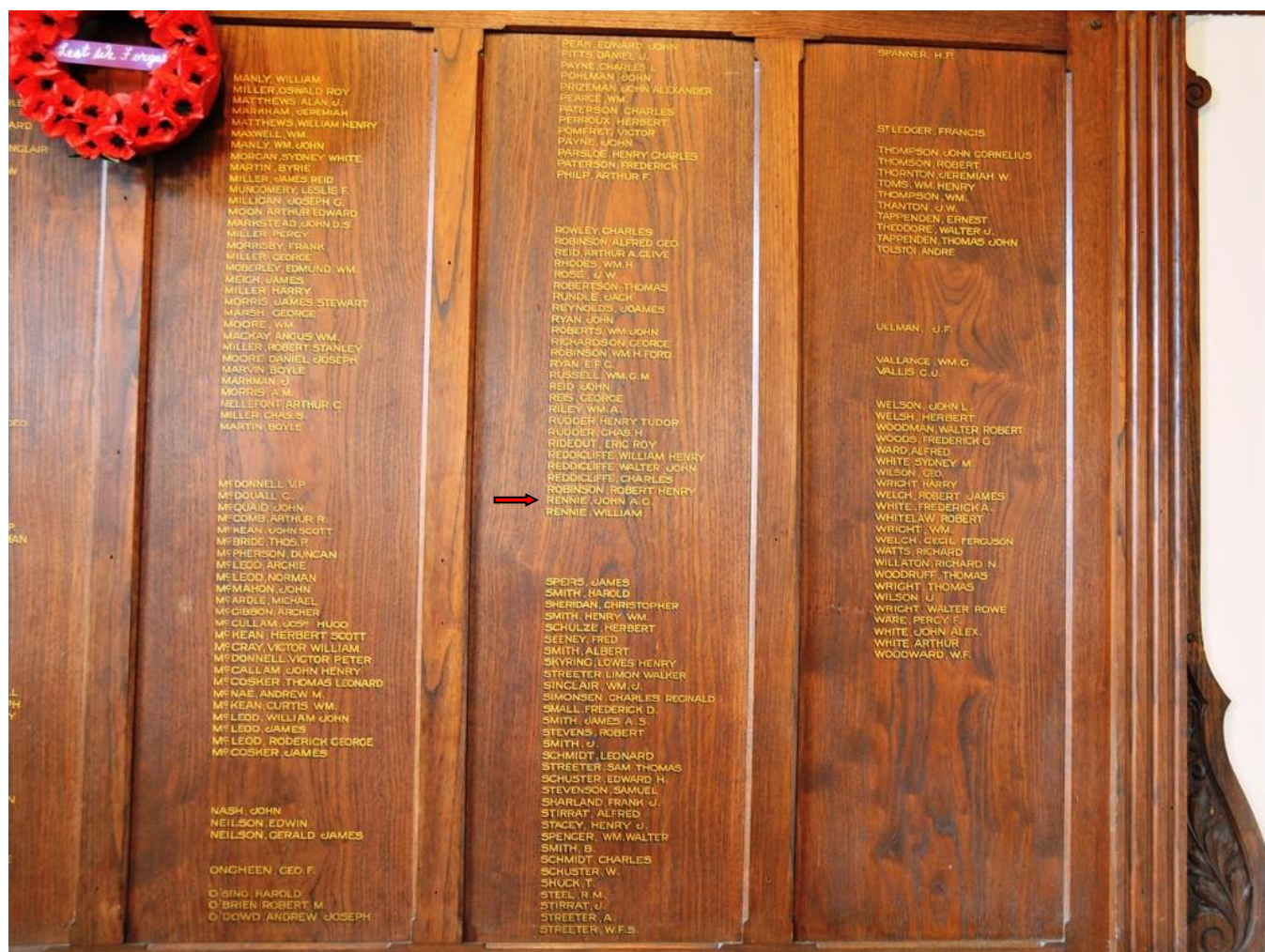


Mount Larcom and District Honour Roll (Photo from Queensland War Memorial Register)

John A. G. Rennie is remembered on the Gladstone and Shire of Calliope Roll of Honour, located in Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum, corner Goondoon and Bramston Streets, Gladstone, Queensland.



Gladstone and Shire of Calliope Roll of Honour (Photos from Queensland War Memorial Register)



The Gladstone ANZAC Park Cenotaph, located at Tank & Goondoon streets, Gladstone, Queensland does not list individual names.

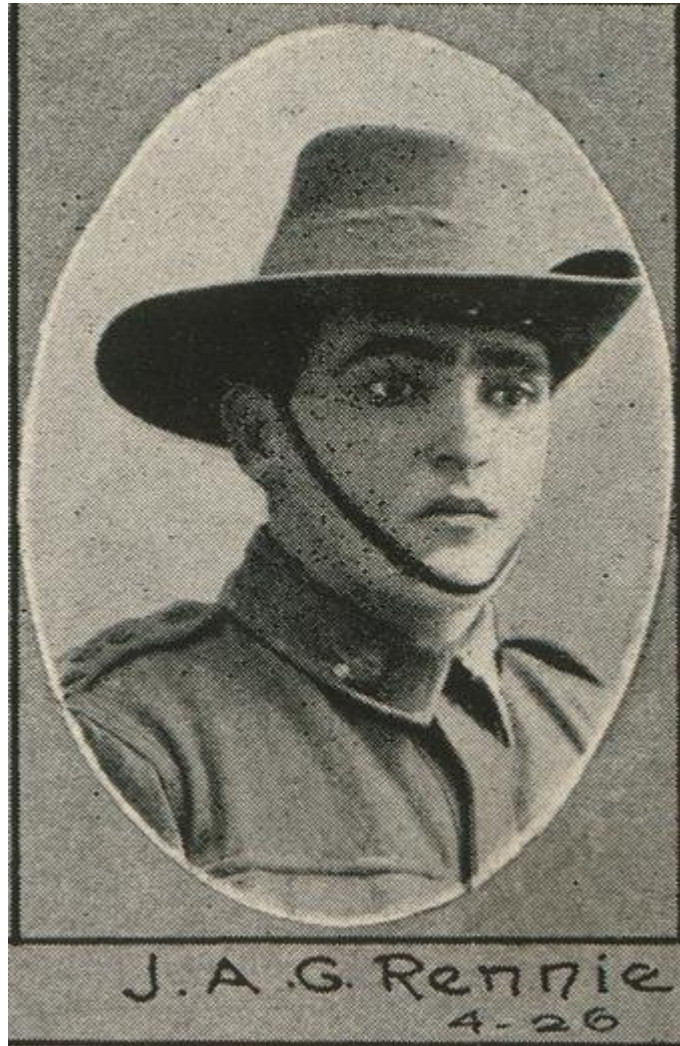


Gladstone War Memorial/Cenotaph (Photo from Queensland War Memorial Register)

(52 pages of Private John Andrew Gibson Rennie'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





(*The Queenslander Pictorial*, Queensland – 8 April, 1916)



Newspaper Notices

MOUNT LARCOM

(From Our Own Correspondent)

.....

Another recruit has just left here for the training camp to join the forces at the front. Mr Jack Rennie, who left here last week, carrying the best wishes of all.

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 2 July, 1915)

MOUNT LARCOM

(From Our Own Correspondent)

....

A further batch of volunteers for the front presented themselves for examination and passed the necessary tests and will duly report at Enoggera training camp. They were Messrs E. Croisica, James Tappenden, and W. Woodward. Mr Jack Rennie, who had been in training at camp came home for a day to say goodbye to his friends and relations, all wishing him a safe return.

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 21 September, 1915) & (*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Q'land – 25 September, 1915)

The Roll of Honour

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

202nd LIST

QUEENSLAND

WOUNDED

(Casualty Previously Reported)

Pte J. A. G. Rennie, Mt Larcom (ser. ill)

(*The Queenslander*, Brisbane, Queensland – 9 September, 1916)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

212th AND 213TH LISTS OF AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

QUEENSLAND

PROGRESS REPORTS

Pte J. A. G. Rennie, Mt. Larcom (improv., prev. rep. w'nd. and ser. III)

(*The Brisbane Courier*, Brisbane, Queensland – 16 September, 1916)

The Roll of Honour

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

222nd & 223rd LISTS

QUEENSLAND

PROGRESS REPORTS

(Casualty Previously Reported)

Pte J. A. G. Rennie, Mt Larcom (convalescent)

(*The Queenslander*, Brisbane, Queensland – 7 October, 1916)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H.G. Wheeler, writing from London on the 9th of September to Miss M.S. Trotman, says: –

.....

“On Wednesday, the 30th of August, when at Wandsworth Hospital, I found Private J.R. Rennie, of Mount Larcom. This poor laddie has been grievously wounded, having lost his right eye and at present has no sight in the left. A pellet of shrapnel, the size of a large green pea, passed through his right eye and under his left. He seemed so delighted to hear that I came from so near his home. He is just the bravest lad I have seen. He had not one word of complaint. All that worried him was the trouble he was giving to other people. Of course I assured him that it was the greatest pleasure to everyone to be able to help him in any way. The other boys in the ward were so kind and gentle to him. He had his first lesson in Braille that morning and was making a string bag on a frame. Yesterday, when I went, the bag was finished, and I am sending it to his sister. Rennie was just leaving Wandsworth when I got there. He is going to St Dunstan’s Hospital for the Blind. He is very keen to get home; but I am going to try to persuade him to stay over here until he masters the Braille and learns some trade. At St Dunstan’s everything possible is taught to the blind, and I feel sure that he will be contented to stay when he realises what it means to him to be able to read and write and work. I wish you could have seen the hearty send-off he had from the ward yesterday. The other lads, English and Australian, all eye cases, shook hands with him and wished him good luck. I spoke to Sir Thomas Robinson about him, and I hope to be able to visit him constantly at St Dunstan’s and take him out for walks and drives if I am allowed. The subscribers to the Sock and Soldiers’ Comforts Fund will be pleased to know that, through their generosity, I was able to send him a pipe and tobacco and a shaving kit.

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 19 October, 1916)

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H. G. Wheeler, writing to Miss M. S. Trotman from London on the 4th of October, says:-

....

“Jack Rennie has gone to the Convalescent Hospital for the Blind at Torquay. He will be there a month and will try and arrange for his fortnight’s furlough at Eastbourne after.

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 24 November, 1916) & (The Capricornian, Rockhampton, Queensland – 2 December, 1916)

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H. G. Wheeler, writing to Miss M. S. Trotman from London under date the 1st of November, says:-

.....

“I rang up St. Dunstan’s Hospital during the week to ask for Jack Rennie and was told he was still at Torquay.”

.....

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 19 December, 1916)

QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H. G. Wheeler, writing from London on the 16th of November to Miss M. S. Trotman, says:-

.....

“Jack Rennie is still at Torquay, and I have sent on letters and parcels which came from home for him, and a Miss Giles, at Torquay, very kindly wrote to me for Rennie, saying he had received them. She says he is looking ever so much better since he went to Torquay and is very happy and cheerful, and is asked out very often. The afternoon she wrote he was going with Miss Giles and a friend to the pavilion to tea.”

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 9 January, 1917)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H. G. Wheeler, whose address is “care of the Agent-General, Queensland Office, Strand, London,” writing to Miss M. S. Trotman on the 14th of December, says:-

.....

“Jack Rennie is at Torquay again. I had a very nicely typed letter from him three days ago, and I have forwarded a great many letters to him from home.”

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 3 February, 1917)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

....

“Jack Rennie, my blind boy, is still at Torquay. A Miss Giles wrote last week saying that he was spending Christmas with them. She says he is wonderfully brave and patient and quick to learn. He is knitting mittens just now. I have received five letters for him and will forward them at once.”

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 24 February, 1917)

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS IN ENGLAND

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H.G. Wheeler, writing on the 11th of January....

“Jack Rennie has returned to St. Dunstan's from Torquay. I had a typed letter from him this morning and hope to see him on Sunday morning.”

(Morning Bulletin, Rockhampton, Queensland – 1 March, 1917) & (The Capricornian, Rockhampton, Queensland – 3 March, 1917)

AUSTRALIANS AT HOME

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

Mrs H. G. Wheeler, whose address is "care of the Agent-General, Queensland Office, Strand, London," writing to Miss M. S. Trotman on the 8th of April, says:-

"Jack Rennie has not been very well lately. I saw him yesterday. He has lost a good deal of condition, by says he is quite well again. I sent Private Baram, from Mount Larcombe, to see him. He was delighted to have a chat with someone from home."

(*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 19 May, 1917)

AUSTRALIANS ABROAD

LETTER FROM MRS H. G. WHEELER

.....

"I saw Jack Rennie on Thursday. He is quite well again."

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 21 May, 1917)

ST DUNSTAN'S HOSTEL

Miss M.S. Trotman writes: "Apropos of the good work done at St Dunstan's Hostel for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors, England, to which reference is made in your issue of to-day, I enclose you a typewritten letter which Mrs H.G. Wheeler received from the blind soldier Jack Rennie, of Mount Larcom. Perhaps you would care to publish it. But please return to me as 'Mother' Wheeler likes to keep all letters from her boys."

The enclosure is as follows: –

St Dunstan's,
Regents Park,
London, N.W.1

11th April, 1917

My Dear "Mother,"

I now take the pleasure of writing a few lines to you to let you know how things are progressing. I am still in the best of health and am having a real good time of it here among the boys. Well, mother, I hope you had a good time at Easter. I went down to Ascot and had a real good time. Well, dear mother, I am still holding on to the pound that you gave me, so it seems as if it will last me a good while at this rate. Well, mother, I will close now for this time. Hoping this finds you and your daughter in the best of health, as it leaves me in the pink.

I remain,

Your loving boy,

Jack Rennie, xxxxxx

Excuse all mistakes, as I am in a hurry. I have so many to write. Love from Jack, xxxxxxxxx

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 6 July, 1917) & (*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 14 July, 1917)

LETTER FROM MRS H.G. WHEELER

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS ABROAD

Mrs H.G. Wheeler, writing to Miss M.S. Trotman from London on the 5th of June, says:

.....

"I had another very nicely-typed letter from Jack Rennie. He says he is getting on well with shorthand, which, as times goes on, seems to get easier."

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 9 August, 1917) & (*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 11 August, 1917)

LETTER FROM MRS H.G. WHEELER

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS ABROAD

....

Jack Rennie has returned to St. Dunstan's after his holiday. He seems to be making great progress with his typing, as his letter is beautifully written. He expects his father here any day now. He was very pleased to get Frank Gregg's address from me and has written to ask him to get leave as he would very much like to have a talk with him about home.

.....

Private C. Barram wants some socks and wishes to be remembered to Frank Hansen and Jack Rennie. I have sent Barram a nice parcel.

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 3 November, 1917) & (*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Q'land – 10 Novr, 1917)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS ABROAD

LETTER FROM MRS H.G. WHEELER

Miss M.S. Trotman is in receipt of the following letters from Mrs H.G. Wheeler: –
London, November 5

.....

"I have had a letter from Jack Rennie, telling me that his father has arrived."

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 1 January, 1918)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS ABROAD

LETTER FROM MRS H.G. WHEELER

Mrs H.G. Wheeler, writing from London on the 12th of April to Miss M.S. Trotman, says: –

....

"Jack Rennie wrote a few days ago to tell me that he is married. He is very cheerful. He says that he expects to be happy for the rest of his life."

(*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 13 July, 1918)

THE WAR

CENTRAL QUEENSLANDERS ABROAD

LETTER FROM MRS H.G. WHEELER

Miss M.S. Trotman is in receipt of the following letter, dated London, 19th April,

.....

"I have had a long typewritten letter from Jack Rennie, who seems to be very happy. He is getting on with his work well, and can now take down shorthand at ninety words per minute."

(*The Capricornian*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 20 July, 1918)

SOLDIERS COMING HOME

70 MEN DUE TO-MORROW

Seventy returned invalid soldiers are expected to arrive by special train from Sydney at 9.5 p.m., to-morrow at No. 5 platform, Central station. Two passes only will be issued by the military authorities to enable the next of kin (as stated by the soldier) to gain access to the railway platform on the arrival of the train. Only those motor cars authorised by the Defence Department will be allowed within the enclosure. Relatives and friends of members of the Australian Imperial Force will not be allowed in these cars.

The names of the men are as follows:—

....

Pte J. A. G. Rennie, 26th Btn, Brisbane

(*The Daily Mail*, Brisbane, Queensland – 4 September, 1918)

DUTY WELL DONE

SOLDIERS RETURN HOME

SIX COT CASES

....

The following is a list of men and nurses who returned last evening:-

.....

J.A.G. Rennie, 26th Btn.....

(*The Brisbane Courier*, Queensland – 6 September, 1918)

The Blind Soldier

The whole hearted sympathy of the Patriotic citizens of Bundaberg is extended to Private Rennie, the blind soldier, whose fine appearance as a stalwart Australian has been so freely commented upon since his return home. Private Rennie, whose home was at Bucca Crossing, was greatly esteemed in the Invicta district where his father resided. He did excellent work in the battle fronts before the sad event that totally bereft him of his eyesight. In anticipation of his return to Queensland his aged father had secured for him a fine agricultural selection in the Mt Larcom district. This, of course, is now useless to him and must be abandoned. Private Rennie is at present being well cared for by kind friends in West Bundaberg, and with a view to providing him with a home, in preparation for the arrival of his wife, Mrs Flint and other ladies have organised a social evening to take place in the Austral Assembly rooms next Thursday evening, and for which townfolk generally may be relied upon to take a ticket.

(*The Bundaberg Mail*, Queensland – 26 October, 1918)

Home For the Blind Soldier

A very strong desire is manifest in Bundaberg and district to build a house for Private Rennie, the Bucca Crossing returned soldier who has come home bereft of his eyesight. The Girls' Patriotic Club are contemplating taking the matter up in a practical manner, and if they do they will find a large and ungrudging support behind them. The matter will be discussed at their next meeting.

(The Bundaberg Mail, Queensland – 31 October, 1918)

Cottage for Blind Soldier

The movement initiated by the Girls' Patriotic Club with the object of providing a home for the blind soldier, Private Rennie, is meeting with a spirited response at the hands of the public. The Girls' Patriotic Club has voted £50 towards the fund, and donations to-day and during next week may be sent to Miss Alison at the Q.N. Bank. There is every reason for anticipating a ready and liberal assistance, so that no delay will take place in providing the home. In response to the appeal by the Girls' Patriotic Club for an area of land suitable for poultry raising purposes on which to establish a home for the blind soldier, Private Rennie, the Mayor (Ald. W. Dunn) was yesterday approached by Mr E.R. Cole who offered to donate an area of five acres, situated beyond the cricket reserve, West Bundaberg. We understand that the land in question will suit the purposes required of it, and Mr Cole is to be commended upon his generous donation.

(The Bundaberg Mail, Queensland – 11 January, 1919)

OUR BLIND SOLDIER

PRIVATE RENNIE'S NEW HOME

Blind Soldier Jack Rennie was yesterday given possession of his fine house, on the Maryborough road, about two miles distant from town. The property contains ten acres of good agricultural land and in addition to a good residence, outbuildings, windmill, well, etc., and was purchased for the blind hero by the Repatriation Committee at a cost of £650. For the purpose of furnishing the home, the public came forward with suitable gifts, and Mrs Flint with the assistance of several ladies raised a sum of £51 which was utilised for the purchase of the balance of the furniture, which was entrusted to Mesdames Flint and Bergin. The place was thoroughly renovated by Mr Rennie, father of the blind soldier, and who has also prepared and planted the land with cane, maize, etc. Yesterday the home was handed over to Private Rennie, in the presence of a number of interested friends by Mr W. Dunn, Chairman of the Repatriation Committee. There were also present: Lieut. G.H. Mather, Warrant Officer Sullivan, Mesdames W.G. Marsh, W. Dunn, W. Flint, Bergin, and others. In handing over the property, Mr Dunn thanked Mrs Flint for the interest she took in Private Rennie. He referred to Mrs Flint as one of the few who have done so much for the soldiers. He also thanked the other ladies who assisted Mrs Flint, and concluding wished Private Rennie, and his wife, who was on her way out from England, every prosperity in their new home. Lieut. Mather also added a few words of congratulation, and Private Rennie returned thanks. Apologies for unavoidable absence were received from the Mayor (Ald. M. Dunn) and Messrs. C.W. Buss and F. Haly. Refreshments were provided by Mesdames Flint, Bergin and Hansen, and a most enjoyable afternoon was spent.

Private Rennie, who is a well-known Bundaberg boy, was wounded in the glorious battle of Pozieres on the 4th August, 1916. He was shot in the head the bullet passing through his head behind both eyes, severing the optic nerves and rendering him permanently blind. He was married in England and his wife is expected to reach Australia towards the end of next month.

(The Bundaberg Mail, Queensland – 24 May, 1919)

WIDE BAY DISTRICT

MARYBOROUGH. May 26.

An interesting ceremony took place in Bundaberg at the week-end. This was the handing over to Private Jack Rennie, a blind soldier, of a fine house on the Maryborough road, two miles from town, with 10 acres of good agricultural land, well, windmill, and other appurtenances, This was purchased for the blind hero by the Repatriation Committee for £650, whilst the public defrayed the cost of the furnishings. The house-heating ceremony, was performed by Ald. W. Dunn, chairman of the Repatriation Committee. Private Rennie, who is a well known Bundaberg soldier, was wounded at Pozieres on 4th August. 1916, the bullet passing through the head between both eyes, severing the optic nerves, and tendering him permanently sightless. He was married when in England, and his wife is expected to reach Australia next month.

(The Telegraph, Brisbane, Queensland – 26 & 27 May, 1919) & (The Week, Brisbane, Queensland – 30 May, 1919)

PERSONAL

Mrs Rennie, wife of our blind hero, Private Jack Rennie, who has just come out from England with her child, to join her husband in Bundaberg, arrived on Saturday morning accompanied by her husband who went down to Brisbane to meet her. They were welcomed at the station by Mesdames W.G. Marsh, W. Flint and W. Dunn, and Mrs Rennie was made the recipient of a bunch of sweet peas tied with Private Rennie's battalion colours, after which they were taken home in Mr Dunn's car.

(The Bundaberg Mail, Queensland – 14 July, 1919)

CERTIFICATES PRESENTED

TO HEROES OF BUCCA AND KOLAN RIVER SOUTH

Like other centres of the Bundaberg district, the residents of Kolan Rover South and Bucca. Played their part in the great war. The young men responded well to the call of their country. Unfortunately several of them paid the supreme sacrifice, other returned home wounded, while others were spared to come through unscathed. On Saturday afternoon the Gooburrum Shire Council present to each returned man, as well as the relatives of the fallen, an illuminated certificate, in the presence of a very large gathering of residents of the district at the Bucca Hall.....The Chairman, in his opening remarks, regretted that five of their boys were called upon to give their lives, while of those who came back wounded one of them, Private Rennie, lost the sight of both eyes.....The recipients of the certificates were.....Private J. A. G. Rennie (26th Battalion).....

(The Bundaberg Mail, Queensland – 23 September, 1919)

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 J. A. G. Rennie has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone with the following inscription:

From Darkness To Light

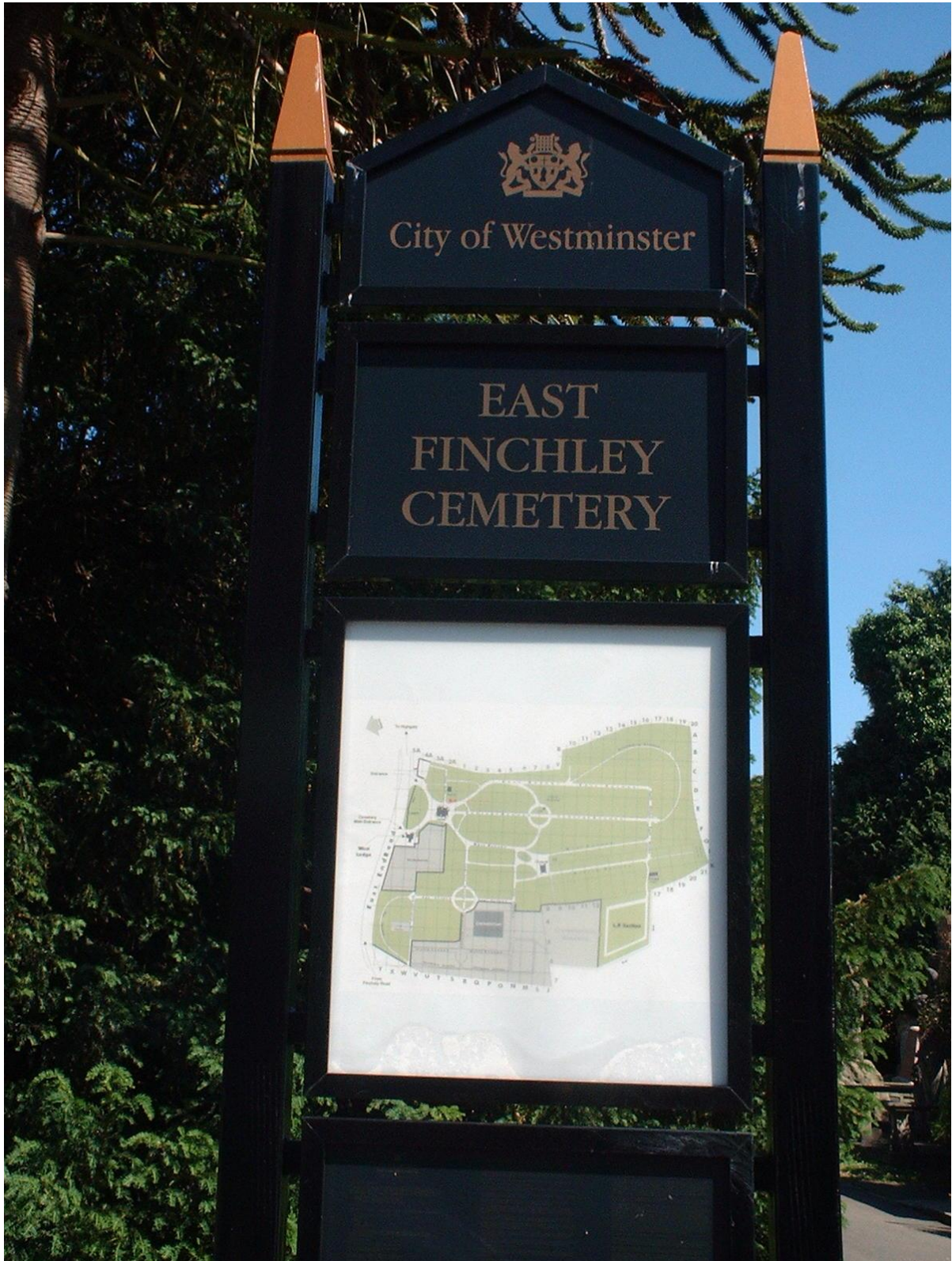
East Finchley Cemetery, Middlesex, England (originally called St. Marylebone Cemetery)

The Cemetery is located off the East End Road in East Finchley near to where the A504 flyover crosses the North Circular Road (A406). In the North-West part of the Cemetery is a War Graves Plot, set aside in December, 1916 for the burial of ex-Officers and men of His Majesty's Forces from the Borough whose deaths resulted from wounds received or disease contracted in the Great War. The plot is located in Remembrance Avenue on the north-western side of the cemetery, near the Western Gate. St. Marylebone Crematorium is situated within the grounds of the cemetery, near the War Graves Plot. The main carriage drive leading to the crematorium and chapel is in Holly Avenue. The screen wall can be found behind the Cross of Sacrifice in the War Graves Plot.

There are 79 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war in the cemetery and a further 100 burials of the 1939-45 war, 2 of which are unidentified British soldiers. There are also 11 non-war service burials here. There is a Screen Wall memorial, behind the Cross of Sacrifice, recording the names of the 1939-1945 casualties who were cremated and also names those burials not marked by headstones.

There is also a small memorial on the left hand side of the plot recording names of 8 1914-18 casualties, who lie buried elsewhere in the cemetery and whose graves could not be individually marked.

(Information from CWGC)



(Photo courtesy of Private Collection of Peter Bennett)



(Photos courtesy of Private Collection of Peter Bennett)



Photo of Private J. A. G. Rennie's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in East Finchley Cemetery, Middlesex, England.



(Photo courtesy of Private Collection of Peter Bennett)