

**Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery,
Bristol, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5099 PRIVATE

G. RICHARDS

29TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

21ST DECEMBER, 1918 Age 20

*The Dear Son & Brother
Of G. & E. Richards & Family*

R.I.P.

George RICHARDS

George Richards was born at Merino, Victoria in 1898 to parents George James and Elizabeth Richards (nee Elliott), of Merino Downs, Henty, Victoria.

George Richards attended school at Merino, Victoria.

George Richards was an 18 year old, Groom (as stated on Embarkation Roll & Application to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force, however his Attestation Papers recorded that he was a Grocer) from Henty, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 4th October, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5099 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr G. J. Richards, Merino Downs, Henty, Victoria. As George Richards was under the age of 21 years, his parents were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Geo. J. Richards & Elizabeth Richards both signed their consent.

Private George Richards was posted to 22nd Depot Battalion at Royal Park on 5th October, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 23rd Reinforcements of 8th Battalion on 3rd November, 1916 then transferred & admitted to Ascot Isolation Camp on 13th October, 1916 & transferred to Glenroy on 13th November, 1916. Private Richards was posted to 1st Depot Battalion at Royal Park on 2nd December, 1916 then transferred to 8th Reinforcements of 58th or 68th (?) Battalion on 8th December, 1916. He was transferred to 14th Reinforcements of 29th Battalion (Fourth Sports Unit) on 14th December, 1917.

Private George Richards embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Ulysses* (A38) on 22nd December, 1917 with the 29th Infantry Battalion, 14th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 16th January, 1918.

Private George Richards entrained from Suez to Alexandria on 22nd January, 1918 then detrained at Camp "A" Gabbon at Alexandria on 23rd January, 1918. He then embarked on H.M.T. *Abbassieh* from Alexandria on 29th January, 1918 & disembarked at No. 9 Rest Camp at Taranto, Italy on 4th February, 1918. Private Richards then entrained from Taranto on 7th February, 1918 & entrained at Cherbourg, France on 14th February, 1918 then embarked the same day from Cherbourg on H.M.T. *Prince George*. He disembarked at Southampton, England on 15th February, 1918.

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.

Private George Richards was marched in to 15th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 15th February, 1918.

Private George Richards was on Command at School of Instruction at Jellalabad Barracks, Wiltshire from 23rd February, 1918.

Private George Richards was transferred from 15th Training Battalion to 14th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 11th April, 1918.

Private George Richards was written up for an Offence at Codford on 11th April, 1918 – AWL (absent without leave) from 24.00 hrs 10th April, 1918 until 06.00 hrs on 11th April, 1918. He forfeited of 1 days' pay.

Private George Richards was sent sick to Group Hospital at Codford on 15th April, 1918 with enlarged tonsils. He was admitted to 3rd New Zealand Hospital at Codford on 16th April, 1918 with Quinsey. Private Richards was discharged to Training Depot on 27th May, 1918. He was marched in to 14th Training Battalion at Codford the same day.

Private George Richards proceeded overseas to France from 14th Training Battalion on 8th July, 1918 via Folkestone. He was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Le Havre, France on 10th July, 1918. He was marched out to his Unit on 13th July, 1918 & was taken on strength of 29th Battalion from 14th Reinforcements in the Field on 17th July, 1918.

Private George Richards was wounded in action on 29th September, 1918. He was admitted to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station on 29th September, 1918 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to back. He was then transferred to No.

12 Ambulance Train then admitted to 2nd General Hospital at Havre, France on 30th September, 1918 & was reported to be dangerously ill. Private Richards was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Guilford Castle* on 1st October, 1918.

29th Battalion

The 29th Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria on 10 August 1915.....

Unlike some AIF battalions, the 29th had a relatively quiet time during the German Spring Offensive of 1918 as the 5th Division was in reserve for a lot of the time. When the Allies took to the offensive again, the 29th fought in a minor attack at Morlancourt on 29 July, and then in August and September took part in the great advance that followed the battle of Amiens. The 29th fought its last major action in September when the 5th and 3rd Australian Divisions, and two American divisions attacked the Hindenburg Line across the top of the 6-kilometre-long St Quentin Canal tunnel; the canal was a major obstacle in the German defensive scheme. The offensive of 1918, however, had strained the AIF almost to breaking point. On 12 October the 29th Battalion was disbanded to provide reinforcements for other 8th Brigade units.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

From the War Diary – 29th Battalion

The 29th Battalion were based at Hesbecourt then moved on the Villeret at 8.30 am. They arrived at Bellicourt at 10.15 am then were west of Nauroy at 11.10 am.

The following casualties were listed in the operations around 29th & 30th September, 1918:

Killed 14, Wounded 63, Missing 3

(Information from War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private George Richards was admitted to Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, England on 2nd October, 1918 with GSW to spine & paralysis – severe.

Private George Richards died at 10.40 am on 21st December, 1918 at Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, England from wounds received in action – GSW to spine, absorption & exhaustion.

A death for George Richards, aged 20, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Bristol, Gloucestershire, England.

Private George Richards was buried on 27th December, 1918 in Holy Souls Cemetery, now Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery, Bristol, England – Plot number D.1. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private George Richards - *Coffin was good with brass mounts. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths sent from the Matron and Nursing Staff of the Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the burial service conducted by the Rev. Father Murphy, of the A.I.F. London officiated. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of Relatives or Friends present at the Funeral – Australian Soldiers from Hospital, Imperial Soldiers & Nursing Sisters from Hospital.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private George Richards contains letter from the Red Cross Visitor which reads: *"Wounded Aug:Sept – Is seriously wounded in the spine, but is getting much better and is very cheerful. I cannot find out whether a permanent cure is possible, but they speak very hopefully of him. We are doing everything possible for him...."*

Another letter from the Red Cross Visitor reads: *“Regret to say died last week, and was buried on Monday. Was unconscious the last time I saw him – the day before his death. A few days before that, when I was with him his only trouble seemed to be that he feared his death would kill his Mother as she was so ill. Everything possible was done for him and the Nurses speak of him most sweetly and regretfully. He told us they looked after him with the utmost care and kindness.”*

Private George Richards was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Richards’ father – Mr G. Richards, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

Base Records forwarded on to Mr G. Richards, Merino Downs, Henty, Victoria, father of the late Private George Richards, on 17th June, 1931, a copy of the “Western Daily Press” containing an article referring to the Anzac Day Pilgrimage and Memorial Service held at Arnos Vale Cemetery, where the remains of the late Private G. Richards was interred. The Newspaper item had been sent from Mr Robert Bush, Bishop’s Knoll, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, England.

Base Records forwarded on to Mr G. Richards, Merino Downs, Henty, Victoria, father of the late Private George Richards, on 17th June, 1932 & on 15th June, 1933 a copy of the “Western Daily Press” and “Evening World” which featured the Anzac Day Pilgrimage and Memorial Service held at Arnos Vale Cemetery, where the remains of the late Private G. Richards was interred. The Newspaper item had been sent from Mr Robert Bush, Bishop’s Knoll, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, England.

Copies of the “Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror” sent by Mr Robert E. Bush, Bishop’s Knoll, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, England, featuring the Anzac Day Pilgrimage and Memorial Service held at Arnos Vale Cemetery were sent to Mr G. Richards, “Washburn”, Merino, Victoria, father of the late Private George Richards, on 28th June, 1935, 22nd June, 1936 & 12th August, 1937.

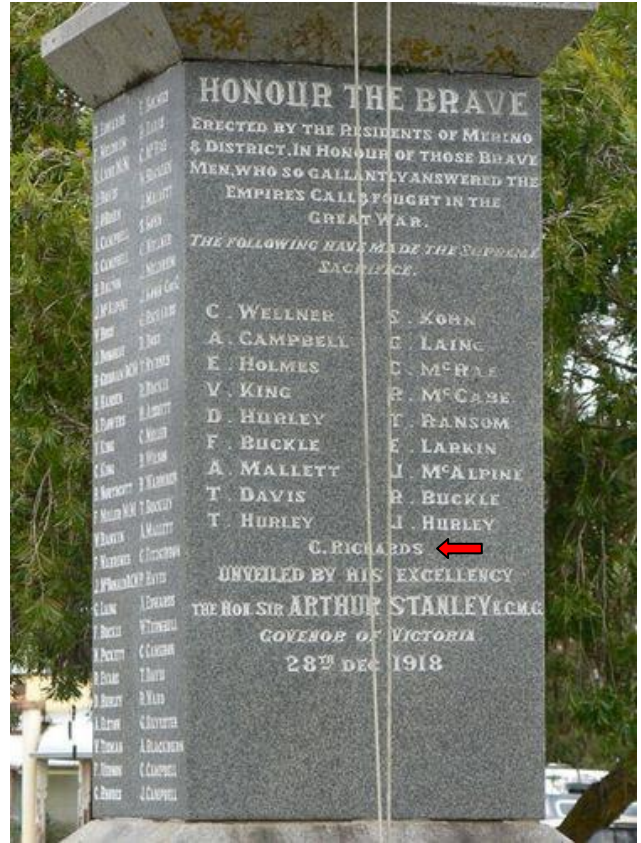
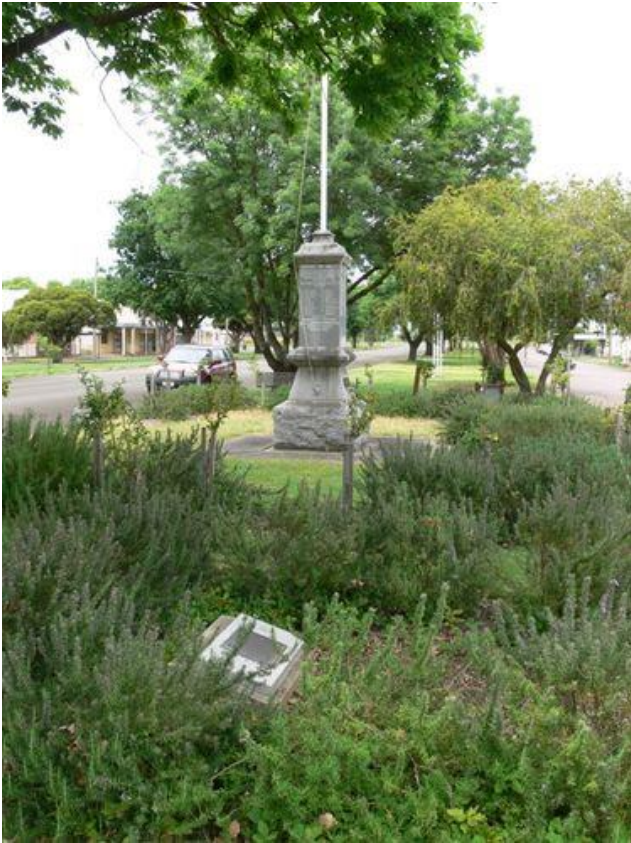
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Richards – service number 5099, aged 20, of 29th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of George and Elizabeth Richards, of Merino Downs, Henty, Victoria.

Private G. Richards is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 116.



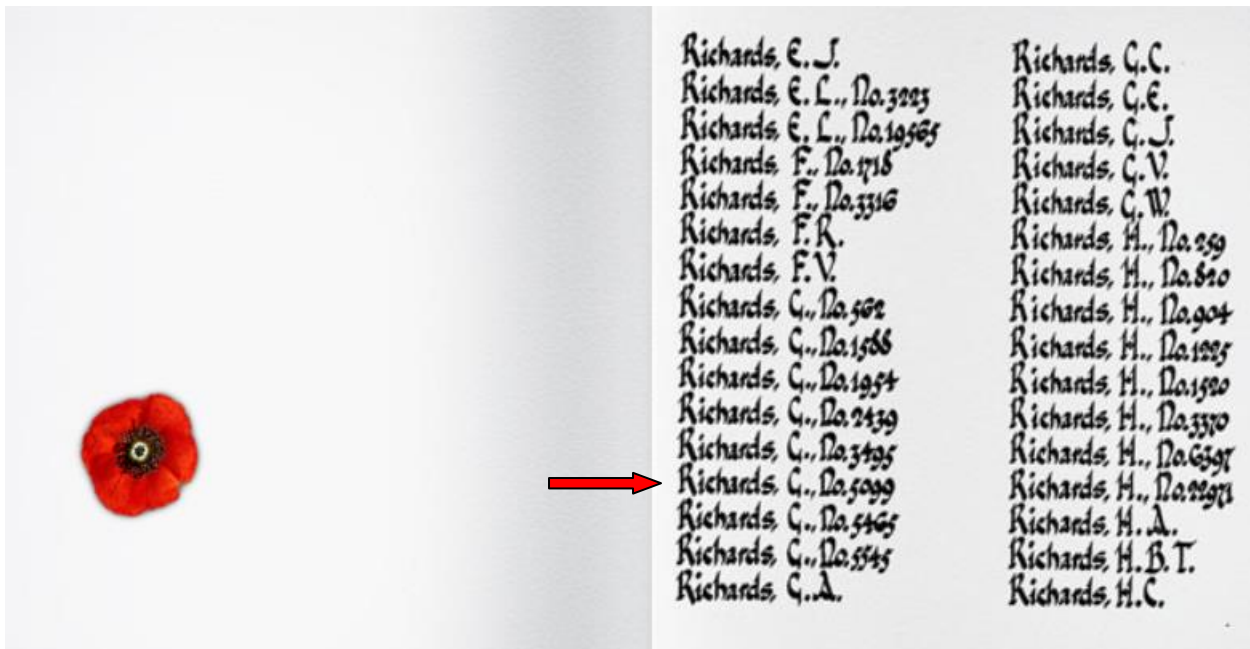
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

G. Richards is remembered on the Merino War Memorial, located at Maud & High Streets, Merino, Victoria.



Merino War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)

G. Richards is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.





(59 pages of Private George Richards' 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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

VICTORIAN CASUALTIES

List No. 443

WOUNDED

G. Richards, Henty

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 November, 1918)

VICTORIA'S ROLL OF HONOR

CASUALTY LIST NO. 456

DIED OF WOUNDS

G. Richards, Henty

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 January, 1919)

DIED ON SERVICE

RICHARDS – On the 21st December, 1918, at Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, of wounds received in France 29th September, 1918, Private George Richards, beloved second son of George and Elizabeth Richards, “Merino Downs”, Henty, and loving brother of Tom, Cecily, Maisie and Bess, aged 20 years.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 13 February, 1919)

DIED ON SERVICE

RICHARDS – On the 21st December, 1918, at Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol, of wounds received somewhere in France, Pte G. Richards, dearly loved nephew of Mr and Mrs Deering, and loved cousin of Bella, Jessie, Ruby, Pearl, Jack and Roddy.

Loved by all who knew him.

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 February, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

RIVHARDS – In loving remembrance of our dear nephew, George, No. 5099, Private, 29th Battalion, died 21st December, 1918, in Beaufort War Hospital, of wounds received at Bellicourt on 26th September, 1918. Loved by all who knew him.

-Inserted by his loving aunt, uncle and cousins, 19 Camberwell-road, Camberwell.

RICHARDS – In memory of my dear cousin, Private S. Richards, 5099, 29th Battalion, who died of wounds received at Bellicourt on the 21st December, 1918, aged 20 years. One of the brightest.

-Inserted by A. E. Oakland Junction.

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 December, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

RICHARDS – In proud and loving memory of our dear son and brother, George, who died in England 21st December, 1918 (late 29th Batt., A.I.F.).

“One of Australia’s bravest and best.”

-(Inserted by his sorrowing parents, brother and sisters, “Merino Downs,” Henty).

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 22 December, 1920)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

RICHARDS – In proud and loving memory of our dear son and brother, George, who died in England, 21st December, 1918, from wounds received in France on September 26, 1918.

“We do not forget him, we loved him too dearly.”

-(Inserted by his sorrowing parents, brother and sisters).

RICHARDS – In loving memory of our dear nephew and cousin, Private George Richards, No. 5099, 29th Btn., who made the great sacrifice on 21st December, 1918. (Inserted by his aunt and cousin, K.R. and M.R.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 21 December, 1921)

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 G. Richards does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The Dear Son & Brother Of G. & E. Richards & Family R.I.P.

Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery, Bristol, England (also known as Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery)

The cemetery was begun in 1856. During both wars, there were a number of military hospitals at Bristol and the city was the depot of the Gloucestershire Regiment. During the Second World War there were also a number of Royal Air Force stations and prisoner of war camps in the area. Bristol (Arnos Vale) Roman Catholic Cemetery contains 52 First World War burials, mostly of men who died at the local hospitals, particularly the 2nd Southern General and the Beaufort, many of whom were landed at Avonmouth from hospital ships from the Mediterranean. Forty of the graves form a war plot, marked by a screen wall bearing the names of the dead. The cemetery also contains 11 Second World War burials and ten Belgian and Portuguese war graves. (*Information from CWGC*)





Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery (Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)



Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery (Photo by JohnM – Find a Grave)

Photo of Private G. Richards' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Arnos Vale Roman Catholic Cemetery, Bristol, England.



(Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)



Australian World War 1 CWGC Headstones in Holy Souls Roman Catholic Cemetery

Private G. Richards – middle row; right

(Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave)