

Haddington Cemetery, Haddington, Scotland

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



98 CORPORAL

R. RITCHIE

3RD BN. AUSTRALIAN MACHINE GUN CORPS.

9TH MAY, 1918 Age 28

Robert RITCHIE

Robert Ritchie was born at Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland in 1890 to parents Andrew & Euphemia Ritchie (nee Blackie).

The 1891 Scotland Census recorded Robert Ritchie as a 1 year old, living with his family at Dovecot, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland. His parents were listed as Andrew Ritchie (Gardener, aged 34, born Dirleton, East Lothian) & Euphemia Ritchie (aged 38, born Haddington, East Lothian). Robert was the youngest of seven children listed on this Census (all born Haddington) – David Ritchie (Gardener, aged 17), James Ritchie (Gardener, aged 16), Agnes Ritchie (Scholar, aged 13), Andrew Ritchie (Scholar, aged 10), Alexander Ritchie (Scholar, aged 7), William Ritchie (Scholar, aged 4) then Robert.

The 1901 Scotland Census recorded Robert Ritchie as an 11 year old, living with his family at Clerkington Doment, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland. His parents were listed as Andrew Ritchie (Market Gardener, aged 66) & Euphemia Ritchie (aged 48). Robert was the youngest of five children listed on this Census – Agnes Ritchie (aged 23), Andrew Ritchie (aged 20), Alexander Ritchie (aged 17), William Ritchie (Compositor's Apprentice, aged 14) then Robert. Also listed was Jane Mcrae, a 75 year old Aunt.

Robert Ritchie attended Public School at Haddington, Scotland.

According to information supplied for the Roll of Honour by Alex Ritchie, brother of Robert Ritchie, Robert Ritchie came to Australia when he was 19 years old. Alex B. Ritchie & Robert Ritchie, both farmers were listed as passengers on *Ophir* which departed from the port of London, England on 5th March, 1909 bound for Sydney, Australia.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Waverley, subdivision of Bondi Road, NSW recorded Robert Alexander Ritchie, Tram Conductor of Lipson Avenue, Also listed at Lipson Avenue was Elizabeth Ritchie & Stanley Ritchie, Storeman.

Robert Ritchie was a 26 year old, single, Tram Conductor from 16 King St, Bondi, NSW when he enlisted on 20th March, 1916 with the 9th Machine Gun Company of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 98 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his father – Andrew Richard Ritchie, Dovecote Gardens, Paddington, NSW (Note: the address listed would have been incorrect & should have been Dovecot, Haddington, Scotland.)

Private Robert Ritchie was posted to 9th Infantry Brigade Machine Gun Company on 20th March, 1916.

Private Robert Ritchie embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Benalla* (A24) on 1st May, 1916 & disembarked in England on 10th July, 1916.

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 Robert Ritchie was admitted to Hospital on 4th September, 1916 while posted with 9th Machine Gun Company at Larkhill, Wiltshire.

Private Robert Ritchie proceeded overseas to France on 21st November, 1916 & disembarked at Havre, France on 22nd November, 1916.

Private Robert Ritchie was appointed Lance Corporal while in the field on 1st December, 1916.

Lance Corporal Robert Ritchie was marched out on 20th May, 1917 to Machine Gun School at Camiers, France & rejoined his Unit on 9th June, 1917.

Lance Corporal Robert Ritchie was promoted to Temporary Corporal on 22nd August, 1917, vice Corporal Piper promoted.

Temporary Corporal Robert Ritchie was sent to England on 6th September, 1917 to join Machine Gun School at Grantham. He was marched in to Machine Gun Training Depot at Grantham, England on 8th September, 1917.

Temporary Corporal Robert Ritchie proceeded overseas to France from Grantham via Folkestone on 2nd February, 1918.

Temporary Corporal Robert Ritchie was marched in to M.G.C.B.D. (Machine Gun Company Base Depot) at Camiers, France on 3rd January, 1918. He was marched out to join 9th Machine Gun Company on 6th January, 1918 & rejoined 9th Machine Gun Company in the field on 8th January, 1918.

Temporary Corporal Robert Ritchie was reported to be still performing the duties of Corporal on 4th February, 1918.

Temporary Corporal Robert Ritchie was promoted to Corporal on 20th February, 1918, vice Corporal Gollan evacuated 12-10-17.

Corporal Robert Ritchie was marched out to Gas School on 17th February, 1918 & rejoined his Unit from Gas School on 23rd February, 1918.

Corporal Robert Ritchie, of 3rd Machine Gun Battalion, 9th Company, was wounded in action (Gassed) on 17th April, 1918. He was admitted to 55th Field Ambulance then transferred & admitted to 41st Casualty Clearing Station. Cpl. Ritchie was transferred & admitted to 8th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 19th April, 1918 with Gas poisoning. Cpl. Ritchie was invalided to England on Hospital Ship *Carisbrook Castle* on 22nd April, 1918.

Corporal Robert Ritchie was admitted to 2/1st Southern General Hospital, Birmingham, England on 23rd April, 1918 having been gassed (Severe). The Hospital Admissions form reads "*Shell Gas Poisoning – very severe. Burns of body. Ulceration of epiglottis & larynx. Late bronchitis developing. Broncho-pneumonia affecting all lobes.*"

Base Records had attempted to notify Mr A. Ritchie, father of Corporal Robert Ritchie, on several occasions to notify him that his son had been reported gassed (classed as wounded). The notification was sent incorrectly to Mr A. R. Ritchie, "*Duffcot Gardens, Paddington, NSW*". The correct address should have been Dovecot Gardens, Haddington, Scotland.

Corporal Robert Ritchie died at 11.35 pm on 9th May, 1918 at 2/1st Southern General Hospital, Birmingham, England from (1) Shell Gas Poisoning & (2) Broncho-pneumonia.

A death for Robert Ritchie, aged 28, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Birmingham, Warwickshire, England.

Corporal Robert Ritchie was buried at 2 pm on 14th May, 1918 in Haddington Cemetery, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland– Plot number H. 16 and has a private headstone. From the burial report of Corporal Ritchie - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral. The cortege left Haddington Station at 3 pm. Pipe band, Firing Party and Pallbearers were in attendance. The coffin was conveyed to the graveside on a one-horse trolley, no gun carriage being available. 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 present at the funeral:

BROTHERS – David Ritchie, Dovecot, Haddington; Andrew Ritchie, Dovecot, Haddington; William Ritchie.

Douglas Walker (brother-in-Law) Robert Gardiner (Sen) 30 Kirkhill Rd, Edinburgh and Robert Gardiner (Junior) 32 Queens Crescent, Edinburgh.

Robert Ritchie requested in his Will dated 24th July, 1917 that all his personal estate be bequeathed to his sister (Mrs Agnes Walker, of Meadow Park, Haddington, Scotland).

After receiving information from Mr A. Ritchie, of Cleveland Street, Sydney, brother of the late Corporal Robert Ritchie, for the Roll of Honour, Base Records contacted Mr A. Ritchie, Sydney, in March, 1920 enquiring if the father of the late soldier was deceased & if so details of his mother's address. Mr A. Ritchie had stated on the Roll of Honour form that he would like his mother to decide on the inscription she wanted for her son's headstone.

Corporal Robert Ritchie was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Cpl. Ritchie's father – Mr A. R. Ritchie, in Scotland, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Corporal R. Ritchie – service number 98, of 3rd Battalion, Australian Machine Gun Corps. No family details are listed.

Robert Ritchie is remembered in the Roll of Honour Books held in the Hall of Honour inside The Scottish National War Memorial. The north side of the Hall of Honour is divided by columns into bays, each dedicated to a different regiment and enhanced with battle honours and consecrated colours. On the broad shelf in front of each of the bays, the names of the dead are listed in leather-bound books.

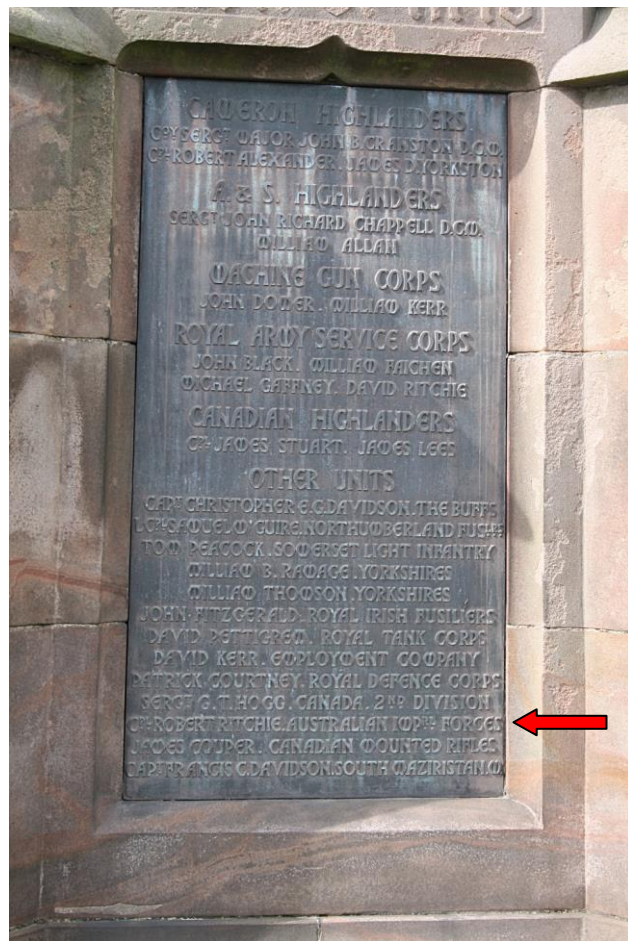


The Scottish National War Memorial & the Hall of Honour & the Roll of Honour Books.

(Photos from The Scottish National War Memorial)



Cpl. Robert Ritchie is remembered on the Haddington War Memorial located in front of St. Mary's Parish Church, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.



Haddington War Memorial

(Left Photo - War Memorials Online – Leslie Scarborough & right [Jol Martyn-Clark](#))



Corporal R. Ritchie is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 176.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(53 pages of Corporal Robert Ritchie'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

Deaths

RITCHIE – At Dudley Hospital, Birmingham, on the 11th, from the effects of gas poisoning, Corpl. RITCHIE, Australian Imperial Force, youngest son of Andrew Ritchie, Dovecot, Haddington. Funeral on Tuesday, 14th Inst., from Haddington Station at 3 pm.

(The Scotsman, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland – 13 May, 1918)

Note: No Casualty Notice was placed in the Australian Press as the contact details for Corporal Ritchie's parents had been listed incorrectly & Corporal Ritchie's name had "been withheld from press copies of Casualty List 406" as his parents were not able to be contacted of his death prior.

Haddington Cemetery, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland

Haddington Cemetery contains 12 Commonwealth War Graves – all relating to World War 1.



St. Mary's Church, Haddington *(Photo courtesy of Gourdongirl – Scottish War Graves Project)*

Photo of Corporal Robert Ritchie's name on his parents Private Headstone in Haddington Cemetery, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.



(Photos courtesy of Gourdongirl – Scottish War Graves Project)

ALSO CPL ROBERT RITCHIE A.I.F.
HIS YOUNGEST SON
WHO WAS CASSED IN FRANCE
AND DIED IN BIRMINGHAM
9TH MAY 1918, AGED 28.

In
Memory Of
ANDREW RITCHIE
Market Gardener, Dovecot
Who Died 5th April 1918
Aged 82.

Also **CPL. ROBERT RITCHIE A.I.F.**

His Youngest Son
Who Was Gassed In France
And Died in Birmingham
9th May 1918, Aged 28.

Also His Wife
EUPHEMIA BLACKIE
Who Died 21st January 1937
Aged 82