

**East Cemetery,
Gateshead, Tyne & Wear
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



1961 PRIVATE

A. O. RIX MM

23RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

21ST MARCH, 1933 Age 37

With Sweetest Remembrance

Of My Dear Husband

Albert

R. I. P.

Albert Oswald RIX

Albert Oswald Rix was born on 23rd January, 1895 at Gateshead-on-Tyne, County Durham, England to parents Henry & Bridget Rix (nee Coggins). "*Albertus Rix*" was baptised on 6th February, 1895 at St. Joseph's Gateshead, Durham, England. His parents were listed as "*Henrici Rix & Birgittae Coggins Rix.*"

The 1901 England Census recorded Albert Rix as a 6 year old, living with his family at 8 St. Bede Terrace, Gatehead, Durham, England. His parents were listed as Henry Rix (Packer of Bleaching Powder at Chemical Works, aged 47, born Trowse, Norfolk) & Bridget Rix (aged 44, born Newcastle on Tyne). Albert was one of six children listed on this Census – all born Gateshead (children listed in order as on Census) – Charles Rix (Railway Warehouseman, aged 23), John Rix (Grocer's Assistant, aged 16), Henry Rix (aged 11) then Albert, Nellie Rix (Assistant Confectionary Dept. at Co-operative Society, aged 19) & Mary (aged 8).

The 1911 England Census listed Albert Rix as a 16 year old Student, living as a Boarder at Binswood, 131 Worcester Road, Witton, Droitwich, Worcestershire in a ten roomed dwelling. The Census Address Schedule listed Revd. Father Jouandan as the Head of the house. The Census Occupants' form listed Leon Jouandou as the head of the house (Roman Catholic Priest, Teacher, aged 37, born France). Two other students were also listed as Boarders – William Waddoups (Student, aged 16, born Shropshire) & Watson William Bright (Student, aged 14, born Birmingham, Warwickshire). Two servants were also listed – Anne Foster (Widow, Housekeeper, aged 58, born Salford, Lancashire) & Maria Jukes (Widow, Housekeeper, aged 58, born Salford Lancashire).

[An "*Albert Rix*", Clerk & a William Rix, Clerk were passengers on *Otrant* which departed from London, England on 13th October, 1911 bound for Australia. An "*Albert Rix*", Farmer, aged 19, was listed as a passenger on *Ballarat* which departed from the port of London, England on 6th November, 1913 bound for Australia.]

Albert Oswald Rix stated he was a 21 year old, single, Cloth Finisher when he enlisted on 16th September, 1914 in Melbourne Victoria. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs N. Rix, of 183 Sunderland Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne, Durham, England. Private Albert Oswald Rix was posted to 14th Battalion. He was discharged on 13th October, 1914 as "*unlikely to become an efficient soldier.*"

Albert Oswald Rix was a 20 year old, single, Clerk when he re-enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia on 5th June, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 1961 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs N. Rix, of 183 Sunderland Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne, England.

Private Albert Oswald Rix embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Anchises (A68)* on 26th August, 1915 with the 6th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Battalion, 3rd Reinforcements.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was taken on strength with 23rd Battalion at Anzac on 12th October, 1915.

Private Albert Oswald Rix disembarked at Alexandria from Lemnos on *Express of Britain* on 7th January, 1916 (after the evacuation of Gallipoli).

Private Albert Oswald Rix was written up for an Offence on 17th January, 1916 at Tel-el-Kebir – Absent without Leave from 06.30 on 12th January, 1916 to 10.00 on 14th January, 1916 – a total of 39 hours. He automatically forfeited 3 days' pay & was given 4 days detention.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was sent to Hospital on 19th January, 1916 while at Tel-el-Kebir. He was admitted to No. 2 Australian General Hospital at Ghezireh with eye trouble - Myopia. He was discharged on 25th January, 1916 to O/S Base at Ghezireh. Private Rix left Base to rejoin his Unit on 5th February, 1916 & rejoined his Battalion at Moascar on 8th March, 1916.

Private Albert Oswald Rix proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) at Alexandria on 19th March, 1916 & disembarked at Marseilles, France.

Mrs Wm. Killen, of 5th Street, Bowden, Adelaide, South Australia, wrote to Base Records on 21st May, 1916, requesting her brother's (Albert Rix, born Gateshead Co. Durham, England) Regiment Number, Company & address & information. She wrote "*Last heard from him he was working Foy & Gibsons in Collingwood, Melbourne, As I am his only relative in Australia, I am very anxious to get into touch with him, so will be extremely grateful if you will*

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oblidge me with necessary information.” Base Records replied to Mrs Killen on 27th May, 1916 with an address for her to write & advised her that her brother was currently in hospital with eye trouble – 3rd Reinforcements, 23rd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, 2nd Australian General Hospital, Ghezireh, Cairo, Egypt.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was wounded in action in France on 4th August, 1916. (From the War Diary – the 23rd Battalion were at Pozieres on 4th August, 1916). He was admitted to 37th Field Ambulance on 5th August, 1916 with shrapnel wounds to scalp. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 10th August, 1916 & admitted to 1st Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, France on 11th August, 1916. Private Rix was then transferred to No. 6 Convalescent Depot at Etaples on 19th August, 1916. He was discharged to Base for Duty on 22nd August, 1916. Private Rix joined 2nd Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples on 21st August, 1916 (*date as per Casualty Form – Active Service in Service Record file*) & was marched out to join his Unit on 25th August, 1916. Private Rix rejoined his Battalion on 27th August, 1916.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was admitted to 6th Field Ambulance on 2nd October, 1916 with Pleurisy while in Belgium then transferred to 10th Casualty Clearing Station the same day. Private Rix was transferred on 3rd October, 1916 to 12th Casualty Clearing Station.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was absent without leave from 2 pm on 31st October, 1916 until 4pm on 1st November, 1916. He was awarded 10 days Field Punishment No. 2.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 3rd November, 1916 with Gonorrhoea. He was transferred to “Y” Corps Rest Station on the same day then admitted to 38th Casualty Clearing Station on 4th November, 1916. Private Rix was transferred to No. 1 Ambulance Train on 4th November, 1916 & admitted to 1st Stationary Hospital on 5th November, 1916 (cause NYD – not yet determined). Private Rix was transferred to 18th General Hospital on 7th November, 1916 with V D G. He was transferred to 51st General Hospital at Etaples, France on 8th November, 1916 & discharged to Base Details on 19th December, 1916.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was marched in to 2nd Australian Divisional Base Depot from 51st General Hospital on 19th December, 1916. He was marched out to join his Unit on 6th January, 1917 & rejoined his Battalion on 8th January, 1917.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was sent sick to Hospital on 3rd February, 1917. He was admitted to 13th Australian Field Ambulance with Gleet then transferred to 1/1 S. M. Casualty Clearing Station. Private Rix was transferred to No. 7 Ambulance Train on 4th February, 1917 & re-admitted to 51st General Hospital at Etaples on 16th February, 1917 with VDG. He was discharged to duty on 4th March, 1917 & marched in to 2nd Australian Divisional Base Depot the same day. Private Rix was marched out to join his Unit on 12th March, 1917 & rejoined his Battalion on 13th March, 1917.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was recommended for the Military Medal: *“For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty as stretcher bearers during the action near BULLECOURT on 3rd May 1917. These men [RIX, 2469 E. THOMAS, 2719 J. MOAR, 3846 C. HARRIP, 3768 F. BYRNE] worked with a most praiseworthy endurance for many hours under shell and Machine Gun fire to assist their wounded comrades, and by their fearless conduct inspired others. The last mentioned two men were wounded during this work.”*

Private Albert Oswald Rix was to be Lance Corporal from 14th May, 1917.

Lance Corporal Albert Oswald Rix was sent to Hospital sick on 25th May, 1917. He was admitted to Northern General Hospital, England. Lance Corporal Rix rejoined his Battalion in the field on 31st July, 1917.

Lance Corporal Albert Oswald Rix awarded the Military Medal on 12th June, 1917.



The Military Medal

From the *London Gazette* – 6th July, 1917 & *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* - 8th November, 1917:

Awarded The Military Medal

“HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to award the Military Medal for bravery in the Field to the undermentioned non-commissioned officer:-

No. 1961 Lance-Corporal A. O. RIX”

Albert Oswald Rix, Private in 23rd Battalion, A.I.F., aged 22, married Josephine Vicilles James, Barmaid, aged 20, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Gateshead, Durham, England on 20th July, 1917. Their marriage was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Gateshead, Durham, England. Albert Rix's address was listed as Whinney House, Low Fell, Gateshead & Josephine James' address was listed as 20 Princess Street, Gateshead.

Lance Corporal Albert Oswald Rix was sent to Hospital on 6th August, 1917. He was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance with Scabies then transferred & admitted to 4th Stationary Hospital at Arques. L/Cpl. Rix was reprimanded on 11th August, 1917 for *“irregular conduct – talking on Parade”*. He was discharged to rejoin his Battalion from Hospital on 12th August, 1917.

Lance Corporal Albert Oswald Rix was to be Temporary Corporal from 4th October, 1917 – vice Corporal Toleman wounded. He reverted to his previous rank on 2nd November, 1917 on return of Cpl. Toleman.

Lance Corporal Albert Oswald Rix was written up on 9th November, 1917 for 1. Drunkenness & 2. Being in possession of Spirits. His rank reverted to Private on 26th November, 1917.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was sent sick to Hospital on 29th December, 1917. He was admitted to 7th Australian Field Ambulance with Scabies & was discharged to his Unit on 30th December, 1917.

Private Albert Oswald Rix proceeded on English Leave from 1st March, 1918 & rejoined from Leave on 29th March, 1918. Private Albert Oswald Rix was absent without leave from 7.30 am on 16th March, 1918 till 7.30 am on 28th March, 1918. He was awarded 28 days Field Punishment No. 2 & was in custody awaiting trial on 3rd April, 1918.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was wounded in action (2nd occasion) on 10th April, 1918. He was admitted to 5th Australian Field Ambulance after being Gassed then transferred to 20th Casualty Clearing Station. Private Rix was transferred to Ambulance Train 26 & was admitted to 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen, France on 11th April, 1918. He was discharged to No. 2 Convalescent Depot on 18th April, 1918. Private Rix was discharged on 19th April, 1918 & marched in to No. 2 A.I.B.D (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 20th April, 1918. Pte Rix was marched out to join his Unit on 24th April, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion in France on 26th April, 1918.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was wounded in action (3rd occasion) in France on 24th July, 1918. He was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance after being Gassed (Shell) then transferred to 49th Casualty Clearing Station. He was transferred & admitted to 2nd Stationary Hospital at Abbeville, France on 6th August, 1918. Private Rix was transferred to 1st Australian Convalescent Depot at Havre on 9th August, 1918. Private Rix was discharged on 30th August, 1918 & marched in to No. 2 A.I.B.D (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 31st August, 1918. He was marched out to join his Unit on 3rd September, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion on 5th September, 1918.

Private Albert Oswald Rix had been Absent without Leave while at 1st Australian Convalescent Depot from *“9.30 pm till 10.50 pm on 28th August, 1918 –in Town without a Pass.”* He was awarded a forfeiture of 14 days' pay.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was taken to Hospital sick on 21st September, 1918. He was admitted to 6th Australian Field Ambulance with *“Nasal Obstruction”* then transferred to Casualty Clearing Station. Private Rix was admitted to 41st Stationary Hospital on 21st September, 1918 & discharged to his Unit on 26th September, 1918. He rejoined his Battalion on 28th September, 1918.

23rd Battalion

The 23rd Battalion was raised in Victoria in March 1915 as the third battalion of the 6th Brigade. After initial training, it left Australia in March and arrived in Egypt, where it would complete its advanced training, in June.

As part of the 2nd Australian Division, the 6th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove in early September. The 23rd Battalion was soon manning one of the most trying parts of the Anzac front line - Lone Pine. The fighting here was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions were relieved every day. The 23rd manned Lone Pine, alternating with the 24th Battalion, until they left Gallipoli in December 1915.

The battalion was next "in the line" on 10 April 1916, when it occupied forward trenches of the Armentieres sector in northern France. This relatively gentle introduction to the Western Front was followed in July by the horrific battles of Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, after which it was estimated that the Battalion lost almost 90 per cent of its original members.

After manning the front line throughout the bleak winter of 1916-17, the battalion's next trial came at the second battle of Bullecourt in May. After the failure of the first attempt to capture this town, by troops of the 4th Australian Division, this new attack was heavily rehearsed. The 23rd Battalion succeeded in capturing all of its objectives, and holding them until relieved, but, subjected to heavy counter-attacks, the first day of this battle was the battalion's single most costly of the war. Later in 1917 the battalion moved with the rest of the AIF to the Ypres sector in Belgium, and in October participated in the battle to secure Broodseinde Ridge.

In April 1918 the 23rd helped to turn back the German spring offensive, and then took part in the battles that would mark the beginning of Germany's defeat - Hamel, Amiens and Mont St Quentin. The fighting for Mont St Quentin resulted in the battalion's only Victoria Cross, awarded to Private Robert Mactier.

The battalion fought its last battle around the town of Beurevoir between 3 and 4 October. It left the front for the last time on the night of 5 October, and was resting when the armistice was declared on 11 November. The 23rd Battalion disbanded in Belgium on 30 April 1919.

(Battalion information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private Albert Oswald Rix was to be transferred to A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Force) in London Headquarters from France on 13th December, 1918. He disembarked from France at Folkestone, England on 17th December, 1918.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was taken on strength from 23rd Battalion with Australian Army Pay Corps in England on 2nd January, 1919.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was charged with being absent without leave on 11th April, 1919.

A District Court Martial was held at Warwick Square, London on 29th April, 1919 with Private Albert Oswald Rix being charged with being Absent without Leave "*in that he in London at 8.45 am on 14th March, 1919, absented himself without leave from the Finance Dept. A.I.F. H/Qrs until he surrendered himself to the Military Authorities in London at 9.30 am on 11th April, 1919.*" Private Rix was found to be guilty of the charge & was sentenced to 30 days Detention on 29th April, 1919.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was admitted to Lewes Detention Barracks on 2nd May, 1919 to serve his sentence. He was given a remission of 5 days on his sentence of 30 days. Private Rix was discharged from Detention Barracks on 23rd May, 1919.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was detached from Pay Corps & marched out to No. 2 Group, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 23rd May, 1919.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was taken off strength from Ord. Room, Sutton Veny on 1st August, 1919 for indefinite leave.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was on indefinite leave from 21st August, 1919.

Private Albert Oswald Rix left England on *Osterley* on 27th September, 1919 for return to Australia.

Mrs Killen, wrote to Base Records on 8th October, 1919 requesting information on No. 1961 Lance Corp A. O. Rix, 23rd Battalion, stating she was his only relative in Australia & the last news she heard from him was over 6 months ago.

Private Albert Oswald Rix returned to Australia on 4th November, 1919 & was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force on 8th January, 1920.

A daughter – Ellen Vicillis Rix was born to Albert & Josephine Rix in 1920 in Port Adelaide, South Australia.

A. Rix (Clerk, aged 25), J. Rix (wife, aged 23) & E. Rix (aged 1) were passengers on *Beltana* which departed from Australia & arrived at the port of London, England on 5th November, 1920.

A death for Ellen V. Rix, aged 1, was registered in the March quarter, 1922 in the district of Gateshead, County of Durham, England.

Mr A. O. Rix, Clerk, aged 31 & his wife Mrs J. Rix, aged 30, from 10 St. Edmunds Rd, Gateshead, were listed as passengers on *Ormonde* which departed from the port of London, England on 28th May, 1927 bound for Australia.

A daughter – Doreen Patricia Rix was born Albert & Josephine Rix in 1928 in Adelaide, South Australia.

Albert Rix, Clerk, aged 33 & his wife Josephine, aged 31, & their daughter Doreen Rix (infant), all of 10 St. Edmunds Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne, were listed as passengers on *Moreton Bay* which had departed from the original port of Brisbane, Australia & arrived at the port of Liverpool, England on 9th September, 1928. Albert & Josephine had embarked at the port of Adelaide, South Australia.

Ex-Private Albert Oswald Rix died on 21st March, 1933 at Gateshead, England from the “*effects of War Service*” as noted in his Service Record file. His death certificate shows his death was due to chest condition caused through gassing & Neurasthenia.

A death for Albert O. Rix, aged 37, was registered in the March quarter, 1933 in the district of Gateshead, County Durham, England.

(Ex Private) Albert Oswald Rix was buried in East Cemetery, Gateshead, England and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Private Albert Oswald Rix was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

Private A. O. Rix is not commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia as he did not die during the World War 1 eligibility dates of 4th August, 1914 & 31st March, 1921.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(63 pages of Private Albert Oswald Rix'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Two soldiers of the 23rd Battalion, 4144 Sergeant Edward Moodie and 1961 Albert Oswald Rix MM, standing at the entrance to the Catacombs, Hyde Park Corner, a system of tunnels of considerable length which were fitted to accommodate over 1,000 men. (January, 1918)



Private A. Rix M.M. (Photo courtesy of Anthea Lang)



Newspaper Notices

THE 216th CASUALTY LIST

The Victorian names are:-

WOUNDED

Private A. O. Rix, England.

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 23 September, 1916)

MILITARY AWARDS

HONORS FOR AUSTRALIANS

Military Medal

.... 1961, Pte A. O. Rix, Inf;

(*The Advertiser*, Adelaide, South Australia – 6 September, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

VICTORIAN LIST

L.Cpl. A. O. Rix, M.M., England (2nd occ.)

(Weekly Times, Melbourne, Victoria – 25 May, 1918)

VICTORIAN CASUALTIES

List No. 425

WOUNDED

L.Cpl. A. O. Rix (M.M.), England (gas)

(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – 27 August, 1918)

RETURNING TROOPS

VICTORIANS ON OSTERLEY

ACCOMPANIED BY WIVES

Lance Corp. A. O. Rix (M.M.).....

(The Age, Melbourne, Victoria – 21 October, 1919)

RETURNING TROOPS

THE OSTERLEY

The Osterley did not arrive at the Outer Harbour until 6.45 pm on Tuesday. The returning troops received a warm welcome. They numbered only 12. The Y.M.C.A. Army Department and V.A.D. provided entertainment for the eastern States men. Welcome home souvenirs were provided. Officers landed were Chaplain the Rev. C. M. Churchwood and Sister L. H. Simon. Extra men were 5435, Pte F. L. Morris, and 1961, Pte A. O. Rix.

(The Advertiser, Adelaide, South Australia – 5 November, 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)

(Ex Private) Albert Oswald Rix does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

With Sweetest Remembrance Of My Dear Husband Albert R.I.P.

East Cemetery, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, England

East Cemetery, Gateshead contains 235 identified war graves of both world wars, all of which are scattered in different parts of the cemetery.

The Cross of Sacrifice, built of Stancliffe stone, was erected after the 1914-1918 War and stands inside the cemetery entrance. It commemorates not only the servicemen buried here, but also those buried in Gateshead (Saltwell) Cemetery.



Cross of Sacrifice – East Cemetery, Gateshead *(Photo by Alexander P. Kapp)*

Photo of Private A. O. Rix's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in East Cemetery, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, England.



(Photo courtesy of Anthea Lang)



East Cemetery, Gateshead *(Photo by Alexander P. Kapp)*