

**Gretna Cemetery,
Gretna, Scotland
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



810

J. ROYAL

AUSTRALIAN MUNITIONS WORKER

9TH AUGUST, 1917 Age 58

Joseph ROYAL

Joseph Thomas Royal was born on 6th February, 1858 in Melbourne, Victoria to parents Joseph & Sarah Harriet Royal (nee McPherson). He was baptised at St. Mary's Church, Melbourne, Victoria on 18th April, 1858.

Sarah Harriet Royal, mother of Joseph Thomas Royal, died on 18th May, 1865 in Melbourne, Victoria.

The 1903 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Northern Melbourne, subdivision of Carlton South, Victoria listed Joseph Thomas Royal, Turner, living at 109 Leicester Street, Carlton. Also listed at the same address was Joseph Royal, Blacksmith & Ann Royal, Home Duties.

Joseph Royal, father of Joseph Thomas Royal, married Ann Hughes in 1905.

Joseph Thomas Royal married Charlotte Annie (Lottie) Carter in Melbourne, Victoria in 1905.

Joseph Royal, father of Joseph Thomas Royal, died on 18th February, 1906 in Carlton, Victoria.

The 1906 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Melbourne, subdivision of Carlton South, Victoria listed Joseph Thomas Royal, Turner, living at 109 Leicester Street, Carlton. Also listed at the same address was Ann Royal, Home Duties.

Newspaper article – North Melbourne Courier & West Melbourne Advertiser – 29 September, 1911:

NORTH MELBOURNE

POLICE COURT

Monday, September 25.

MATRIMONIAL TROUBLES

Charlotte Royal proceeded against her husband, Joseph Royal, for illegal detention of certain articles, and for maintenance. The two cases were taken together.

Mr I. Hall (Daley, Hall, & Davey) appeared for the defendant.

Complainant said the case had been adjourned for settlement about four weeks ago by the bench, but no settlement had been arrived at. She lived in Blackwood-st., North Melbourne, and defendant was a bookmaker. On the 5th August he called her names, and abused her, after which he went off to the races. He asked her to meet him at a friend's after the races, but she said she would not be able to go, and defendant said "I have no time to argue." Complainant did not feel at all well that day and her sister got a bed out of complainant's house, and took her into her own house, and attended to her. Complainant suffered from bleeding in the throat, and once when she was in bed three days, the defendant never came near her. Her husband locked up the house, and when she wrote and asked him to send the key, forwarded her a drawing of one. She told him she would have to take him to court, but he took no notice of it. She got in through the windows of the house and got some clothes she wanted. Since the adjournment, witness had written to her husband, but he did not come near her. One day he said he would shoot her or anyone that went near his house, and she saw the butt of a revolver sticking out of his pocket. He had in his possession, a chest of drawers, piano, carpet, arm-chair and other property belonging to her, but she had got into the house and taken some of it.

To Mr Hall - I left him because he drank and brought people into the house at 2 a.m. to supper. He has never struck me.

The defence was that as regarded the illegal detention, the complainant could have anything that belonged to her, and in respect to the maintenance case, Mr Hall contended the evidence against defendant was not strong enough to make an order on.

Defendant in the box said he had no intention of hurting his wife with the revolver, but got it because some men had threatened him.

The bench directed defendant to give his wife' what belonged to her, and dismissed the maintenance case.

Newspaper article – North Melbourne Courier & West Melbourne Advertiser – 19 January, 1912:

NORTH MELBOURNE

POLICE COURT

Thursday, January 18.

MAINTENANCE

Charlotte Royal proceeded against her husband, Joseph Royal, for maintenance. The complainant said she was in delicate health, and had been suffering from an affection of the throat for some time. She had to leave him on 5th August, and he went to Bendigo, and had been flying about in taxi cabs and entertaining young ladies connected with the theatrical profession at supper. The case had been before the North Melbourne Court before, and been dismissed, and at the City Court it was adjourned, and just before it was to come on again, he gave her some money. There was an order made by the North Melbourne Court in respect of some property.

Mary Horan said she had seen Royal abuse his wife, and on one occasion he came to the door with a revolver in his hand, and threatened to shoot anyone who came in.

Defendant on oath, denied the allegations made against him, but the bench made an order for £1 a week, with £2/8/- costs.

Munition Worker Joseph Royal, resident of Newfoundland House, Easttriggs, Dornock, died on 9th August, 1917 at Works Hospital in H.M. Munitions Factory, Gretna, of Pneumonia.

Munition Worker Joseph Royal was buried at Rigg Cemetery (also referred to as Gretna Cemetery), Dumfriesshire, Scotland – Plot number D. 26. 1 & has a private headstone, erected by his fellow workers. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

H.M. Factory, Gretna

H.M. Factory, Gretna was the United Kingdom's largest Cordite factory in World War I. The government-owned facility was adjacent to the Solway Firth, near Gretna, Dumfries and Galloway. Built by the Ministry of Munitions in response to the Shell Crisis of 1915, it is now the site of the Devil's Porridge Museum.

H.M. Factory, Gretna stretched 12 miles (19 km) from Mossband near Longtown in the east, to Dornock / Easttriggs in the west straddling the Scottish / English border. The facility consisted of four large production sites and two purpose-built townships. The facility had its own independent transport network, power source, and water supply system.

A military, 2 ft (610 mm) narrow gauge railway was used to move materials and supplies around the sites. The network, which had 125 miles (201 km) of track, employed 34 engines. Electricity for the munitions manufacture and the townships was provided by a purpose-built coal-fired power station. The telephone exchange was handling up to 2.5 million calls in 1918. The townships had their own bakeries, laundry and a police force. The laundry could clean 6,000 items daily and the bakeries made 14,000 meals a day.

Water was taken from the River Esk, north of Longtown, through a 42 inches (110 cm) diameter pipe to a pump house. From there it was pumped through a 33 inches (84 cm) main to a reservoir. A filtration/treatment works could handle up to ten million gallons a day.

History

Construction work on HM Factory, Gretna started in November 1915 under the general supervision of S P Pearson & Sons. Two wooden townships were also built concurrently to house the workers. These were established at Gretna and Easttriggs. To prevent problems with the influx of navvies and munition workers, authorities implemented the introduction of the State Management Scheme which curtailed alcohol sales through the nationalisation of pubs and breweries in the vicinity.

Munitions production started in April 1916. By 1917 the largest proportion of the workforce were women: 11,576 women to 5,066 men.

At its peak, the factories produced 800 tons (812 tonne) of Cordite RDB per week, more than all the other munitions plants in Britain combined. Cordite was colloquially known as the "Devil's Porridge"; the name comes from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who wrote in 1917: "The nitroglycerin on the one side and the gun-cotton on the other are kneaded into a sort of a devil's porridge". In 1917, when production reached 800 tons per week, King George V and Queen Mary visited the factory.

Cordite production ceased following the end of World War I. Shortly afterwards the manufacturing plants were demolished. The entire site was retained until the 1920s when most of Site 4 and some parts of the former munition areas were auctioned for private and agricultural land in more than 700 lots. The two townships of Eastriggs and Gretna and their bakeries were also sold off.

On its closure, Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills near London became the sole government-owned cordite factory until an expansion programme started at the outbreak of World War II.

Medical issues at the facility were overseen by Dr Thomas Goodall Nasmyth FRSE.

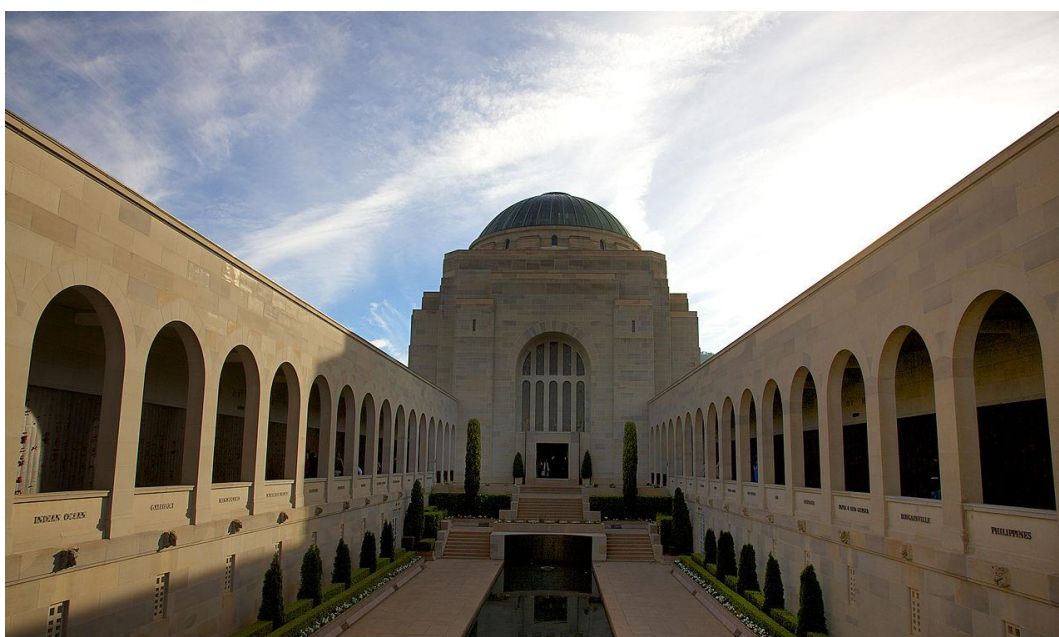
(HM Factory, Gretna information from Wikipedia)

In his last Will and Testament, Joseph Royal appointed his Wife Charlotte Annie Royal as Executrix & bequeathed all his real & personal estate to his wife.

Probate details – in the Will of Joseph Royal late of Gretna, Scotland, North Britain, Munitions Worker formerly of 423 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Blacksmith granted to Charlotte Annie Royal of 13 Station Street, Moreland on 8th January, 1918.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker J. Royal – service number 810, Australian Munition Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker Joseph Royal 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 Area of the Australian War Memorial *(Capital Photographer)*

Australian Munition 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)*



*** Note – The Service Record file for Joseph Royal, Australian Munition Worker No. 810 had not been purchased at the time of researching from National Archives, Australia. Once the file is purchased it is then open for all to view on-line.*



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.

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)

DEATHS

ROYAL – On the 9th August, 1917, at Gretna, Scotland, Joseph Thomas, the beloved husband of Charlotte Royal, and only son of the late Joseph Royal, of Carlton.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 August, 1917)

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. All but one of these casualties are buried in the UK - the other being in France.

Rigg Cemetery/Gretna Cemetery, Dumfriesshire, Scotland

Rigg Cemetery/Gretna Cemetery contains 11 Commonwealth War Graves - 4 from World War 1 & 7 from World War 2. This is on the road from Annan to Carlisle, between Gretna and Rigg. It now belongs to the County Council.



Gretna Cemetery with Muniton Worker Joseph Royal's headstone (shown by arrow) (Photo by Iain Anderson)

Photo of Munition Worker Joseph Royal's headstone at Gretna Cemetery (referred to as Rigg Cemetery by CWGC), Dumfriesshire, Scotland.



(Photo BereniceUK)

Sacred

To The Memory Of

JOSEPH ROYAL

Australian

Munition Worker

Who Died At Gretna

9 Augt. 1917 Aged 58 Years

Erected As a Token Of Respect

By His Australian Fellow

Workers On The Dornock

Section