

Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield, South Yorkshire

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



H. V. RYAN

AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER

6TH NOVEMBER, 1918

Henry Valentine RYAN

Henry Valentine Ryan was born at Forbes, NSW around 1878.

Henry Valentine Ryan was an apprentice for A. Gaggins, Forbes for 9 months.

Henry Valentine Ryan was a 37 year old, single, Engine Driver when he enlisted on 3rd August, 1915 at Holsworthy, Sydney, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Ettie Ryan, Forest Gardens, Forbes, NSW. Henry Ryan stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served in the Boer War.

Henry Valentine Ryan was posted to 9th Reinforcements of 18th Battalion on 3rd August, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to Infantry Depot at Liverpool, Sydney, NSW on 26th August, 1915.

A report was made on 30th December, 1915 by Provost Marshall's Office "*re Pte Ryan, H. V. of 18th Casula. I beg to report that the above named was arrested by G.M.P. piquet and charged with drunk and absence.*"

Henry Valentine Ryan was reported as a Deserter from 11th January, 1916. A Warrant was issued for Private Ryan, Henry Valentine "*engaged to serve in the Australian Imperial Forces under the Army Act Sect (12(1A.)), having deserted from the said Corps on the 11th Jan. 1916 I hereby direct that the be apprehended and conveyed to the Infy Depot Lpool to be dealt with according to law.*"

From NSW Police Gazette – 1 March, 1916:

Deserted from the Military Forces of the Commonwealth

From the Military Camp, Liverpool

.....

Ryan, Henry Valentine, private, 37 years of age, 5 feet 7 inches high, dark complexion, dark-brown hair, brown eyes; enlisted Sydney; born Forbes; an engine-driver. Deserted 11th January, 1916.

[The warrant was withdrawn on 30th January, 1919.]

Henry Valentine Ryan, Compressor Engine Driver, single & aged 38, applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Work as Navy or Labourer in Great Britain on 26th February, 1917. His religion was listed as Roman Catholic & his address was listed as c/o J. Ryan, Glenreigh via Grafton, NSW. Henry Valentine Ryan stated he was currently working on Railway Tunnel - Glenreigh to Dorrigo line for six months. He also stated he "*came from South Africa just as this war started. Served through Boer war in Imperial Military Railways. Both Transvaal & Natal been there ever since always followed up Engine & Railway work.*"

Henry Valentine Ryan was given an Australian War Worker number of 397 & embarked from Australia on 24th April, 1917 on *Suffolk* & arrived in England on 27th July, 1917. (Australian War Workers Death form records H. V. Ryan arrived at Plymouth, England on 15th August, 1917. Another Record file for Henry Ryan states for 6th September, 1917 "*Landed at Plymouth 10.8.17. Could not start work for 9 days owing to legs giving trouble.*")

Henry Valentine Ryan reported to Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, Plymouth on 12th August, 1917.

Henry Valentine Ryan commenced work with Messrs Vickers Ltd, Sheffield on 24th August, 1917 as a Labourer.



H.V. Ryan had a Doctor's Certificate stating he was suffering from an accident to elbow & was not able to follow his ordinary occupation from 20th to 23rd October, 1917. (Henry Ryan's Record file with Australian Munitions Workers recorded on 25th October, 1917 that he had a Doctor's certificate & was suffering from a slight accident to his arm which happened to him whilst working & necessitated his absence from work.)

H.V. Ryan had a Doctor's Certificate stating he was suffering from "Rheumatism shoulder" & was not able to follow his ordinary occupation on 21st November, 1917. Another Doctor's Certificate dated 27th November, 1917 did not record a reason. A further Doctor's Certificate dated 21st January, 1918 stated H. V. Ryan was unable to work from 4th January to 19th January, 1918 suffering from Bronchial Catarrh. (From the Australian Munitions Workers file on Henry Ryan: "*he contracted a bad chill during the holidays and has been sick ever since 2nd Jan. he could not see his own Doctor before 4th Jan. as he was delayed in Dublin 2 days by embarkation Office owing to Submarines. Hopes he can receive sick pay to include those 2 days.*")

The Australian Munitions Workers file on Henry Ryan recorded for the 13th June 1918 that Henry Ryan was "*asking for transfer on account of his health. Finds winter very severe in that district and wishes to be moved before next winter. Climate gives him rheumatism. Would prefer Bristol or South of England. Has just completed about 6 months work at 100 hours a week.... Advised to take a Medical Certificate with him to strengthen his application.*"

Australian Munitions Worker Henry Valentine Ryan died on 6th November, 1918 at Fir Vale Hospital (Sheffield Union Hospital), Sheffield, England from Bronchial Pneumonia following influenza.

A death for Henry V. Ryan, aged 40, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Sheffield, Yorkshire West Riding, England.

The Death Certificate records the following details: Died: 6th November, 1918 Sheffield Union Hospital, Sheffield, Henry Valentine Ryan, Male, aged 40 years; Rank or Profession - of 243 Petrie Street Sheffield; Gas Stoker at Steel Works; Cause of death - 1. Influenza 2. Broncho pneumonia. No PM. Registered 12th November, 1918.

The Australian Munitions Workers' file on Henry Ryan recorded for the 7th November, 1918 that a Telegram had been received from Messrs Vickers stating that Henry Ryan had died. A Telephone message (undated) from Messrs Vickers stated that Ryan "*was moved from his lodgings on 5th instant to Firvale Hospital, Sheffield. He died there of Pneumonia on the 7th instant. Firm states they will arrange funeral and will send their own men to dig the grave. R. was engaged to Miss Agnes Smith who was in the service of the doctor who attended the men at Hostel.*" A follow up letter was received from Messrs Vickers on 7th November, 1918 "*confirming their telegram and telephone message. R. was taken seriously ill yesterday and died this morning. At time of illness he was in his lodgings at Sheffield Hostel. No further particulars at present...*"

A letter was received by Officer-in-charge Australian Munitions Workers (undated) from Miss A. Smith of Sheffield stating that she "*had been engaged to R. and they were shortly going to be married. Asks for advice with ref: to Funeral arrangements etc., as she does not wish R. to be put in a pauper's grave. She has written to his people in Australia as he had no relatives in England.*"

Newspaper notice –*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, England – 14 November, 1918:

All Australian workmen are respectfully requested to attend the funeral of the late Henry Valentine Ryan, which leaves John Heath and Sons, Earsham Street, at 10.30, tom-morrow (Friday) morning, the 15th inst., for Burngreave Cemetery. – J. P. Bell, Hon. Sec., Australia Munition Workers' Association.

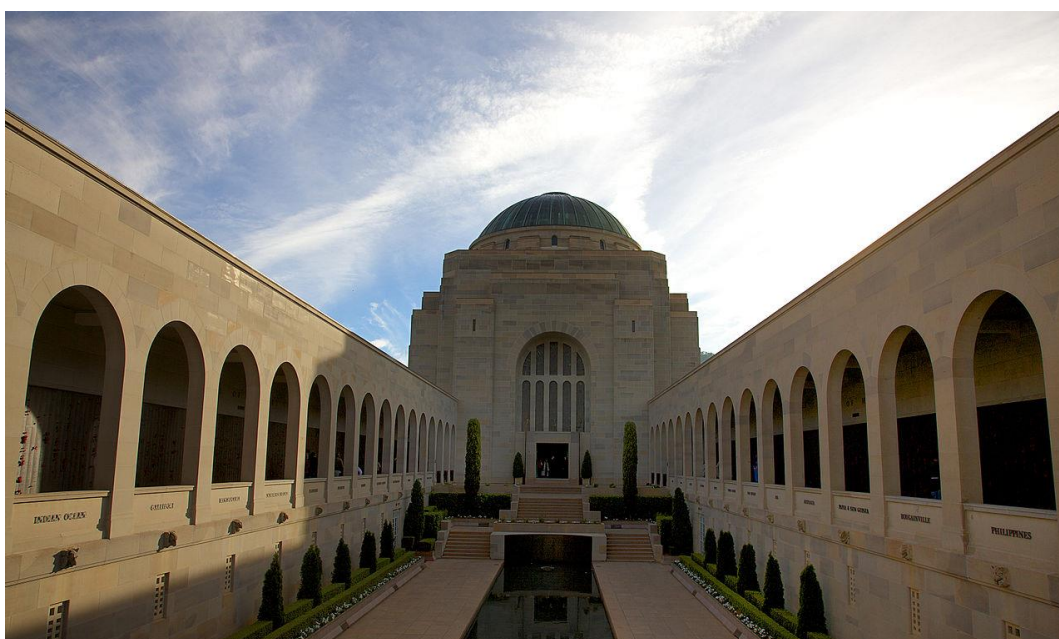
Australian Munitions Worker Henry Valentine Ryan was buried on 15th November, 1918 in Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England - Plot number JJ. "C" 3348 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Australian Munitions Workers file on Henry Ryan recorded for the 17th December, 1918 a letter from Messrs Vickers "*giving all particulars of R's funeral etc. which took place on Nov. 15th in Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield. No. of grave is 3348 Section J.J. Firm states they made all arrangements. Fifty Australian workmen R's colleagues attended the funeral. Enclose 2 certificates of death.....Agreement and Badge of deceased and bill from Messrs*

John Heath & Sons, amounting to £8.15.0 for funeral expenses and other items of expenditure connected with deceased, amounting in all to £10.12.11. No charge will be made for grave as it has been bought by the firm. No wages were due to R. as he had drawn out all that was owing to him. Messrs Vickers state they are sending box containing R's effects which had been handed over to them by R's landlady."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker H. V. Ryan, Australian Munition Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker Henry Valentine Ryan 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 Munitions 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.

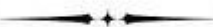
These men were not members of the Australian Imperial Forces and did not serve in combat units, but were recruited to meet the shortfall in skilled labour that threatened many of Britain's key wartime industries including munitions.

(Source: Australian War Memorial)



(13 pages of Henry Valentine Ryan's Australian Army records & 32 pages of Henry Valentine Ryan's Munition Worker records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial & National Archives



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)

WHISKY FOR MALARIA

MUNITIONS VOLUNTEER IN TROUBLE AT SHEFFIELD

"I have a hard job, and I find it difficult to do it on the 'tucker' I get," said Henry Valentine Ryan, "B" Colony, Tyler street, at the Sheffield Court, yesterday. "I got a bit thick," he added. "I have had malaria."

He was charged with having done damage to a door to the amount of 7s. 6d., and also with having used obscene language. It was said that he went in late, and under the influence of drink. He created a disturbance, and although given a cold meal and a hot meal later, he demanded another.

Defendant said he was an Australian munition volunteer. He had been in the South African war and the Zulu rebellion, and had been on military service in the present war. He had a touch of malaria, and got some hot spirit for it. This upset him. He went back hungry and could not get a hot meal to which he was entitled. "As for using bad language," he added, "I don't know anything about it. I didn't smash the door; I might have pushed it and it blew over."

After the South African war, he said, he was driving for the Government and was allowed three bottles of whisky a week free of charge to combat malaria.

The Chairman suggested he should try quinine.

Defendant was fined £1 in regard to the damage, and the other case was dismissed.

(*Sheffield Independent*, England – 14 March, 1918)

An Australian worker, named Henry Valentine Ryan, who has for about 18 months been working for Messrs Vickers, has died. He came all the way from Australia to volunteer for munition work; to help his fellow-citizens of the Empire to beat the Germans, and his services have been greatly appreciated. He was held in esteem by his fellow-workman, and may of his Australian comrades will follow his remains to the grave to-morrow; the funeral taking place at Burngreave Cemetery at 11 o'clock in the morning.

(*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, England – 14 November, 1918)

****The following 2 news items have a different name to that of Henry Valentine Ryan but the events & details match.*

Word is to hand this morning of the death in Sheffield, England, of Mr L. Ryan, son of Mr Larry Ryan, of Forest Gardens, Forbes. Deceased enlisted from Melbourne as a munition worker. He contracted influenza, and pneumonia supervening, death followed. He served in the South African war.

(*Forbes Times*, NSW, Australia – 15 November, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

PRIVATE LARRY RYAN

The sad news reached the Rev. Father O'Brien last night that Private Lawrence Ryan, son of Mr and Mrs Lawrence Ryan, of Fitzgerald's Bridge road had died of illness in Sheffield hospital, England. The tidings were immediately conveyed to the parents of deceased, and much sympathy will be expressed for them in their hour of sorrow.

The late Private Ryan, who was a single man, had seen and taken part in active service in the South African war, going to the front with one of the Australian contingents, and fighting right through the campaign. He could tell a good yarn, and on his return from South Africa, the way he told of his experiences keenly interested Forbes residents.

About three years ago the late Private Ryan once more donned khaki, and went to England as a munition maker. The saddest part of it all is that the same week news arrived that peace had been declared, the aged parents of Private Ryan also received word that their son had given his life in the cause of liberty. We extend our sincere sympathy to the bereaved parents.

(The Forbes Advocate, NSW, Australia – 15 November, 1918)

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.

Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England

During the First World War there were two substantial war hospitals in Sheffield, the Wharnccliffe, in the Wadsley Asylum, and the 3rd Northern General, housed in 15 separate buildings. The city, a centre for war industry during the Second World War, suffered heavy enemy air-raids during the Blitz with 600 people killed in a single raid in December 1940. Sheffield (Burngreave) Cemetery contains scattered war graves of both wars. Behind the Cross of Sacrifice in plot JJ is a Screen Wall commemorating those First World War casualties whose graves could not be marked by headstones, most of them buried in the plot of ground immediately in front of it. In front of the Screen Wall are a number of Special Memorial headstones for Second World War casualties buried elsewhere in the cemetery whose graves could not be marked. In all, the cemetery contains 235 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 57 from the Second. *(Information from CWGC)*



(Photo by Paula Lloyd – Find a Grave)



Cross of Sacrifice & Screen Wall *(Photo by Joaquin O’Ryan)*

Photo of Australian Munition Worker H. V. Ryan's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Burngreave Cemetery, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England.

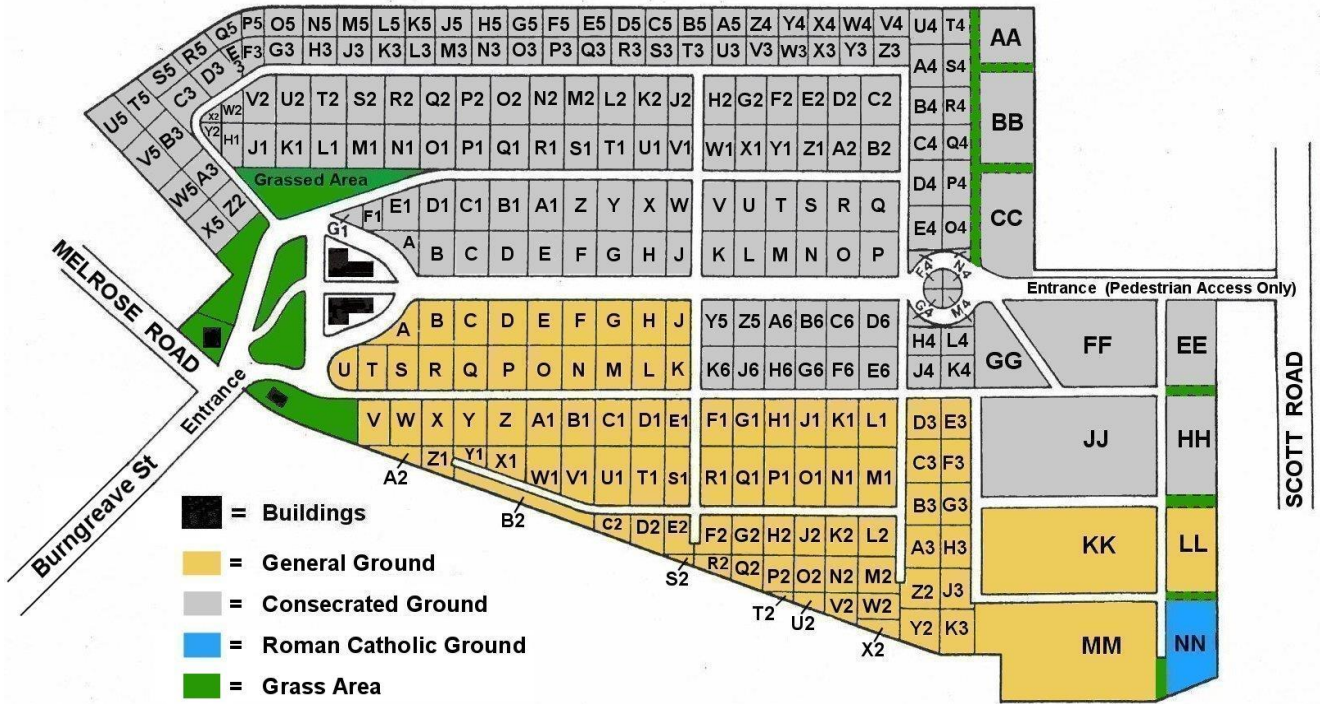


(Photo by Stephen Farnell – Find a Grave)



(Photo by Dave Yate)

Burngreave Cemetery



(Photo from Meersbrook – Find a Grave)