

**Brandwood End Cemetery,  
Birmingham, Warwickshire, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**W. R. TODD**

**AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER**

**13TH DECEMBER, 1917 Age 39**

## Walter Roland TODD

Walter Roland Todd was born at Birmingham, England in 1876 to parents George W. and Margaret Ann Todd (nee Naylor). His birth was registered in the district of Solihull, Warwickshire, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Walter R. Todd as a 14 year old, living with his family at Avon Street, Yardley, Worcestershire, England. His parents were listed as George W. Todd (Tool maker, aged 52, born Leeds, Yorkshire) & Margaret A. Todd (aged 55, born Leeds, Yorkshire). Walter was one of three children listed on this Census – George W. Todd (aged 18), Edwin Todd (aged 16) & Walter.

Walter Roland Todd married Mary Ann Webb in the district of Solihull, Warwickshire, England. Their marriage was registered in the December quarter, 1898.

A "Walter R. Todd", aged 24 & "Mary A. Todd", aged 27 were passengers on Duke of Norfolk, which departed from the port of London England on 14th December, 1900 & were to disembark at the port of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Walter Roland Todd was a witness in a Central Police Court case in Sydney, NSW on 10th June, 1914. The following is an extract of the newspaper report from *Truth* (Melbourne edition), Victoria – 20 June, 1914:

### **A MOTOR RIDE – AND AFTER**

#### **ALLEGED ADVENTURES OF TRIO OF SYDNEY TARTS**

##### ***Motorman Charged with Rape***

##### ***Non-appearance of Girls Causes Five Remands***

.....

*The serious side of what presented many of the features of an ordinary motor joy-ride, said to have been participated in by three motor-men and three tartlets, was presented in the Central Police Court, Sydney.*

.....

*Walter Roland Todd, plasterer, residing at Kogarah-road, Blakehurst, said he was coming from the punt in a motor car, a gentleman having given him and his wife a lift. When nearing his home witness saw another car, and called out, "Is there anything the matter?" A man ran out of the bush and said, "No, drive on." They did so. This would be about 10.30. While having some supper he heard a female crying out,*

*"MURDER! HELP! POLICE!"*

*At this witness aroused his neighbour, and together they went along the road, and saw a man and woman lying in the gutter, struggling. The remainder of this witness's evidence was corroborative of Vormeister's.*

Walter Roland Todd enrolled as a Volunteer Australian Munitions Worker in Great Britain. He was given a Muniton Worker number of 417.

*(Note: the file for Australian Muniton Worker Walter Roland Todd has not been purchased & is therefore not open so there is little information about his role).*

Australian Muniton Worker Walter Roland Todd died on 13th December, 1917 at Messrs Vickers' Works, Sheffield, England from a fall.

A death for Walter R. Todd, aged 40, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Sheffield, Yorkshire, England.

Newspaper report – *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Yorkshire, England – 14 December, 1917:

*Whilst working on a scaffolding in Messrs Vickers' Works, Sheffield, yesterday, Walter Todd, aged about 40, a native of Australia, fell from a ladder and was killed. The body lies at the City Mortuary awaiting an inquest.*

Newspaper report – *Sheffield Independent*, Yorkshire, England – 14 December, 1917:

### **TRAGIC DEATH**

#### **WELL-TO-DO AUSTRALIAN WHO WAS DOING HIS BIT.**

*Walter Todd, an Australian, met his death tragically at Vickers' River Don Works, Sheffield, yesterday morning. He was one of 50 or 60 Australians at Vickers' works, who came to this country to do something in the war, being debarred from fighting. Although in a good position in Australia, he accepted a position as a labourer at Vickers' and while engaged in repairs to the power house fell from the roof and was mortally injured. He died before he could be conveyed to the firm's ambulance station. His injuries were complicated by the fact that his fall was broken three times on projecting parts of the building.*

Newspaper report – *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Yorkshire, England – 15 December, 1917:

*At an inquest yesterday on the body of Walter Roland Todd (40), 41, Idsworth Road, Sheffield, who was caught by a plank whilst working on some scaffolding at Messrs Vickers' works, fell and was killed, a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.*

Australian Mmunition Worker Walter Roland Todd was buried at Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England – Plot number C. 1 "C." 1197 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

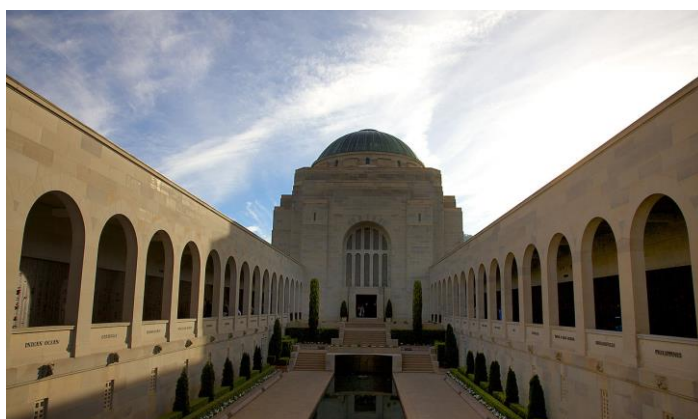
Newspaper Notice – *The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, NSW, Australia – 6 July, 1918:

### **Legal Notices**

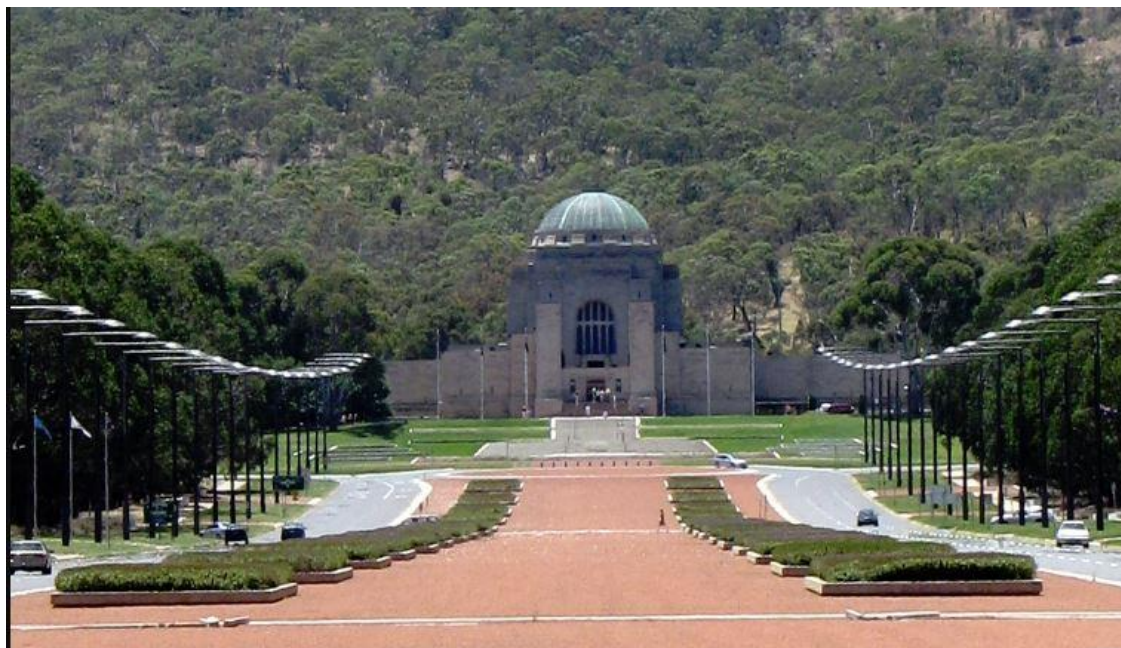
*In the Supreme Court of New South Wales, - Probate Jurisdiction. In the Estate of WALETR ROLAND TODD, late of Kogarah Road, Blakehurst in the State of New South Wales, and of the Australian Imperial Forces on Active Service deceased. Application will be after fourteen days from the publication hereof that Administration of the Estate with the Will annexed of the abovenamed deceased may be granted to the Public Trustee. And all persons having claims against the said Estate must render same in detail to the Public Trustee on or before the 6th day of August, 1918. T.W. Garrett Public Trustee Culwulla Chambers Castlereagh Street Sydney.*

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker Walter Roland Todd – service number 417, aged 39, Australian Mmunition Worker. He was the son of George William and Margaret Ann Todd.

Australian Munitions Worker Walter Roland Todd 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 War Memorial**

### **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)*



**\*\* Note – The Service Record file for Walter Roland Todd, Australian Munition Worker No. 417 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.*

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### **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)*

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### **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.

### **Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England**

The First World War saw four important hospitals - besides many smaller - posted at Birmingham: the 1st Southern General (3,500 beds) was in the university and other buildings, with a section at Stourbridge; the 2nd/1st Southern General (1,800 beds) in the Dudley Road Infirmary and in billets; the 1st Birmingham War Hospital (1,000 beds) at Rubery Hill Asylum and the 2nd Birmingham War Hospital (900 beds) at Hollymoor Asylum. Military hospitals were at Birmingham again during the Second World War, including No 7 Canadian Hospital at Marston Green. Birmingham and Coventry were among the chief manufacturing areas producing materials for the war effort and were subjected to many devastating air raids during the Blitz of 1940-41. Birmingham (Brandwood End) Cemetery contains 110 scattered burials of the First World War, with screen walls to commemorate 35 servicemen whose graves could not be individually marked. Second World War burials number 98. The cemetery also contains two Polish war graves.

*(Information from CWGC)*



**Cross of Sacrifice at Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham** *(Photo from CWGC)*





**War Graves at Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham**

Photo of Australian Mmunition Worker W. R. Todd's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brandwood End Cemetery, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England.







AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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