

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



6568 PRIVATE

G. A. WARD

56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

27TH DECEMBER, 1916 Age 52

George Arthur WARD

George Arthur Ward was born at Lucknow, India in 1864 to parents Colonel John Ward & Elizabeth (Bessie) Ward (nee Collison).

Elizabeth (Bessie) Ward, mother of George Arthur Ward, died on 3rd January, 1866 in India.

According to information provided by his sister for the Roll of Honour – George Arthur Ward attended Alderham (?) Grammar School & also attended St. John's College, Luton, Bedfordshire.

The 1871 England Census recorded George A. Ward as a 9 year old Scholar, living with his father – John Ward (Widower, retired Colonel in the Army, aged 50, born Castle Acre, Norfolk) living at 33 High Street – The Limes, Watford, Hertfordshire, England. George's siblings – Frances J. Ward (sister) (Scholar, aged 7, born _____, East Moris?) & Harry C. Ward (Scholar, aged 5, born Rourki, East Moris ?). Also listed in the household – Margaret Ward (grandmother, Annuitant, aged 75, born Middleton, Norfolk), Emily War (sister, Housekeeper, aged 52, born Castle Acre, Norfolk) & 2 servants – Cook & Nurse Maid.

Colonel John Ward, father of George Arthur Ward, died in 1897 at Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

According to information provided by his sister for the Roll of Honour – George Arthur Ward came to Australia when he was between 18 & 19 years of age.

The 1912, 1913, 1915 & 1916 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Wide Bay, subdivision of Nanango, Queensland recorded George Arthur Ward, Farmer from Wooroolin.

George Arthur Ward stated he was a 44 year old, single, Farmer when he enlisted in Brisbane, Queensland on 14th December, 1914 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Church of England & his next of kin was listed as Miss Frances J. Ward (sister), care of Mr Laverick, Hatch End, Middlesex, England. George Ward stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served in 2nd Contingent South African War.

Driver George Arthur Ward was posted to "Unallotted" at A.A.S.C. (Australian Army Service Corps) on 5th December, 1914. He was transferred to 17th Company, A.A.S.C. from 1st March, 1915.

Driver George Arthur Ward, Service number 6568, embarked from Brisbane, Queensland on HMAT *Ascanius (A 11)* on 24th May, 1915 with the 7th Infantry Brigade Train, Army Service Corps, 17th Company.

Driver George Arthur Ward embarked on "*Themistocles*" for Overseas on 15th November, 1915.

Driver George Arthur Ward was transferred from 17th A.S.C. & was taken on strength of 56th Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir from 15th March, 1916.

Driver George Arthur Ward reported sick at Ferry Post on 1st June, 1916. He rejoined his Battalion on 2nd June, 1916.

Driver George Arthur Ward reverted to rank of Private from 4th June, 1916.

Private George Arthur Ward embarked from Alexandria on H.T. *Georgian* on 18th June, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 27th June, 1916.

Private George Arthur Ward was admitted to No. 2 Australian General Hospital at Mousot (?) on 29th June, 1916 with "Ulcer Leg". He was transferred to England on Hospital Ship *Maheno* on 9th August, 1916 with Nephritis.

56th Battalion

The 56th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 14 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 4th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 4th, the 56th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Arriving in France on 30 June 1916, the battalion entered the frontline trenches for the first time on 12 July and fought its first major battle at Fromelles a week later.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private George Arthur Ward was admitted to Beaufort War Hospital at Fishponds, Bristol, England on 10th August, 1916. He was transferred to 1st Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, on 14th October, 1916 with Nephritis.

A Medical Report was completed on Private George Arthur Ward on 16th October, 1916 while at Harefield Park. His disability was listed as Nephritis which had originated on 28th June, 1916 at Marseilles. He was also listed as "very deaf & aged 46." The Officer in charge of the case recommended that Private Ward be discharged as permanently unfit. The Medical Board agreed on 17th October, 1916 that Private George Arthur Ward was permanently unfit for both General & Home Service.

Private George Arthur Ward was transferred from 1st Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset, England on 19th October, 1916.

Private George Arthur Ward reported sick to Sidney Hall Military Hospital on 26th December, 1916. The Officer Commanding, No. 2 Command Depot sent a Telegram to Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. on 26th December, 1916 "...to report 6568 Driver G. A. Ward 56th Battalion lying seriously ill at Sidney Hall Military Hospital Weymouth. Please advise next of kin Francis J. Ward c/o Mrs Levricks (?), Hatched, Middlesex.."

Private George Arthur Ward died at 1.50 am on 27th December, 1916 at Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Bronchitis & Cardiac failure.



A death for George A. Ward, aged 52, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private George Arthur Ward was buried on 29th December, 1916 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Section C 2674.

Private George Arthur Ward's burial place is now recorded by Commonwealth War Graves Commission as III. C. 2674. He has a Private Headstone, however his death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Foxton, Hobbs & Macnish, Solicitors, Brisbane, as Solicitors for the Executor of the Wil of the late G. A. Ward, wrote to Base Records on 1st May, 1917 requesting 2 copies of the Certificates of Death. "*His full name was George Abel Ward – No. 6568 – Driver – 17 Army Service Corps and died on or about the 27th day of December last.*"

Base Records replied to Messrs Foxton, Hobbs & Macnish, Solicitors, enclosing the certificate of report of death of the late No. 6568, Private G. A. Ward, 56th Battalion.

Foxton, Hobbs & Macnish, Solicitors, Brisbane replied to Base Records on 15th May, 1917 with the following: "*... On perusing the Certificate we find that deceased's second Christian name appears therein as 'Arthur' whereas his name is 'Abel' and enquiries from the Military Authorities here elicit the fact that Abel was the name on their roll, copy of which you have, and the name deceased gave when enlisting, so we presume under the circumstances, a clerical error has been made in the name in the Certificate, and we now return same for correction.*"

Base Records replied to Messrs Foxton, Hobbs & Macnish, Solicitors, advising "*...I have to state that in every instance, the records here show this soldier's Christian names as "George Arthur". It is regretted, therefore, that no alteration can be made in the certificate of report of death, which is returned herewith.*"

Private George Arthur Ward was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Ward's sister - Miss F. Ward, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Arthur Ward – service number 6865, aged 52, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private G. A. Ward is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 163.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

G. A. Ward is remembered on the Wooroolin 1914 - 1918 Roll of Honour, located in Wooroolin Memorial Hall, Bunya Highway, Wooroolin, Queensland.

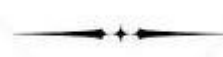


Wooroolin 1914 - 1918 Roll of Honour

(Photo from Queensland War Memorials – Dennis Stocks & Doug Tanner)

(65 pages of Private George Arthur Ward'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





1913 Wooroolin Town Band
Back Row from left: Jack Jessen, Jim Cavanagh, Arthur Morris, George Ward, Vic Newbury, George Kemp
Front Row from left: Henry Hubert, Fred Zillman, Herb Clulow, Tim Ryan, Billy Long, Charlie Rodman



Private George Arthur Ward

Newspaper Notices

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES

LIST NO. 262

Died from Cause Not Stated

Private G. A. Ward

(*Morning Bulletin*, Rockhampton, Queensland – 12 January, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Private George Arthur Ward has a Private Headstone.

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial. *(Information from CWGC)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)





(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

What was life like for the Australians?

The Camp

Within the camp, there were educational facilities as well as medical rooms which helped to recover and re-educate the soldiers. There was help provided for soldiers suffering with physical or emotional impairments, such as massage rooms, psychotherapy training rooms and a remedial gymnasium. This strengthened the men to help them recover from their injuries. The educational aspects were diverse, allowing soldiers to pick a completely different profession for when they went back home. This included architecture, motor engineering, electrical and carpentry classes. Another option allowed the soldiers to be retrained in their previous professions which may have become more difficult, due to loss of limbs or new techniques that may have been created whilst they were at war.

The Town

Weymouth benefited hugely from the influx of Australian and New Zealand soldiers. One shop that still exists today is the Acutt's clothing store, which used to sell everything a soldier could possibly need for his uniform, from the whole jacket to just the buttons and epaulettes. As well as Acutt's, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also opened up their own branch in Weymouth, for the soldiers to use during their time over here, which highlighted the permanence of their stay. There was also a monthly newsletter that circulated amongst the men, which was produced by local company Sherrens, which still operates on the Granby Industrial estate.

Special Events

The Australian recovery camps took special occasions very seriously, such as Christmas and Easter, to try and reduce the ache of home sickness and being away from their family and friends. Most camps tried to make their soldiers feel at home, with large celebrations with Christmas dinners and special guest performances at Easter. However, there were also other special events that gained press attention, such as the opening of the YMCA building, which used to be on Abbotshay Road. This provided help and welfare to the Australian soldiers, such as free food and blankets. There were fundraising days for the prisoner-of-war soldiers that had been captured during the fall of the Kut, who were mainly Dorset soldiers. From these fundraising days in Weymouth, Dorchester and Biddport, the towns managed to raise £3,600 to help comfort the prisoners.

Entertainment

Entertainment was a highly important aspect of the soldiers' lives whilst they were in Weymouth. It kept the soldiers motivated and in high spirits whilst they were ill or injured, in hopes of helping to speed up their recovery. Throughout the camps in Weymouth, there was always something to watch or listen to, whether it was singing and acting companies who toured round the camps or at the Pavilion Theatre on the Esplanade. Sometimes, the soldiers even made their own entertainment, with marching bands and choirs being set up by the YMCA building in Westham. There were also balls and dances at the camps themselves and even a small trip to the Alexandra Garden along the Esplanade. Dating also became a significant part of the soldiers' lives, with many Weymouth women losing husbands and boyfriends at war. Finding comfort with the new soldiers at the camp, this led to many marriages between the two groups, and some migrating back to Australia with their new families, or staying here and leaving their families.

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THESE BOYS BEARING ACUTT BROTHERS

#weyforward

The National Lottery

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial, Newsletter originals published by Sherrens, Ltd. Weymouth



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



During the First World War between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mostly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Repatriation and Rehabilitation camps in Westham, Littleton, Chickerell and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness. Weymouth was picked as the place to set up camp, as it was seen as a relaxing seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



Although thousands of ANZACS passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Melcombe Regis cemetery. This is only 100 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 142 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 59 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.



Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.



Modern Day Street Names	Westham Camp - December 1916
Cheset Close	Soldiers Huts
Sussex Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shark Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Wessex Road	Home Shelter
Parth Street	Cool Yard
Melcombe Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecroft Road	





www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk

Photo of Private George Arthur Ward's private headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photos courtesy of Allan Wood)



In Loving Memory

Of

GEORGE ARTHUR WARD, A.A.S.C.

Son of the late

Colonel John Ward, of Watford

Died Dec 26th 1916. Aged 52 Years

