

**Watling Street Cemetery,
Dartford, Kent
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



ENGINE FITTER 1014

A. S. WEST

AUSTRALIAN MUNITIONS WORKER

8TH NOVEMBER, 1917 Age 27

Arthur Sidney (Jock) WEST

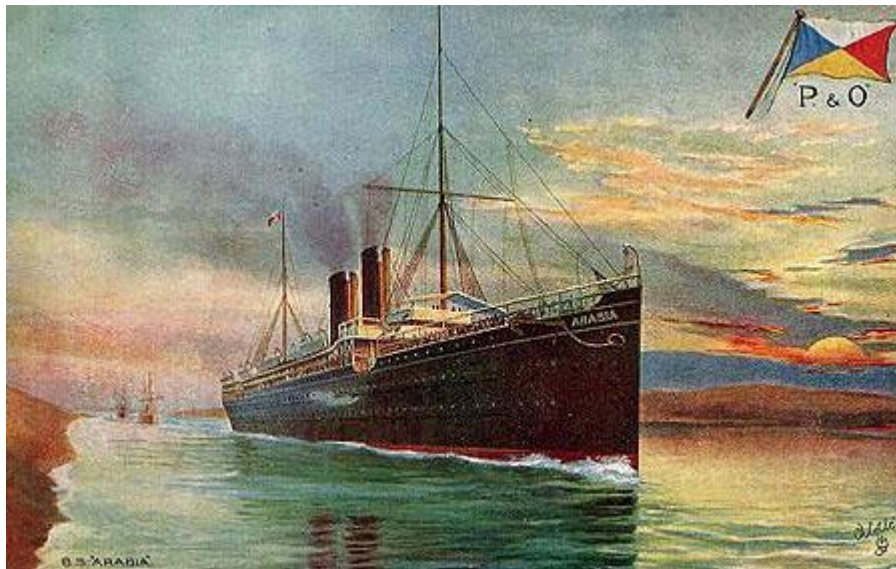
Arthur Sidney West was born on 26th June, 1889 at Enfield, Sydney, NSW to parents William Luke West and Mary West. His birth was registered in the district of Burwood, Sydney, NSW.

Arthur Sidney West applied for active service in the Australian Imperial Force but was classed as unfit for war service (possibly due to his eyesight).

Arthur Sidney West embarked from Sydney on S.S. *Arabia* on 30th September, 1916 & disembarked at Southampton, England on 21st November, 1916.

S.S. *Arabia*

In 1915 and 1916 *Arabia* made three voyages between Britain and Australia. On 6th November, 1916 she was en route from Sydney via Fremantle, Western Australia to England when the German submarine UB-43 torpedoed her without warning 97 nautical miles (180 km) south by west of Cape Matapan, Greece, killing 11 of her engine room crew. *Arabia* launched her boats within 15 minutes. Four armed trawlers and the passenger liner *City of Marseilles* rescued survivors. 187 Australians were aboard *Arabia*. Her sinking helped surge volunteer enlistment in the Australian armed forces. (Wikipedia)



RMS Arabia in a pre-war postcard

Arthur Sidney West enrolled with the Australian Munitions Workers scheme on 17th May, 1917. He was a 27 year old, single, Fitter and Turner. Arthur West stated on his "Application to be enrolled as an Australian Munitions Worker" form that he had been apprenticed for 5 years with R. C. Swan and Co., Pitt Street, Sydney as a Fitter and Turner from 1909 to 1915. Arthur West then worked for Thomas Danks and Sons, Sydney as a Fitter and Turner from 1915 to 1916. Arthur Sidney West stated he was employed as a Toolmaker (under Contract) at Vickers Ltd., Crayford, Kent from 24th November, 1916 & was still presently employed there. Arthur Sidney West was approved on 19th May, 1917 & assigned Badge No. 1014. His address was listed as 37 West Hill, Dartford, Kent.

Engine Fitter (Australian Munition Worker) Arthur Sidney West died on 8th November, 1917 at Vickers Ltd factory, Crayford, Kent from an accident. Arthur West was a toolmaker in the Rifle Stock department and the cause of death recorded on the death certificate was "*Shock and internal haemorrhage following injuries to ribs and lungs through falling on to a band cutting machine whilst at work by misadventure Dartford.*" His address was recorded on the death certificate as The Elms, Crayford.

A death for Arthur S. West, aged 27, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Dartford, Kent, England.

Engine Fitter (Australian Munition Worker) Arthur Sidney West was buried on 13th November, 1917 in Watling Street Cemetery, Dartford, Kent, England, – Plot number 1983.

The Vickers factory at Crayford had their own magazine which published the following epitaph about Arthur West:
“As a mechanic he was keen, energetic and thorough. As a man and a comrade he was appraised by all who knew him. In the midst of any worry he was always well met and his smile so nearly approached permanency that he appealed to all as the personification of content.

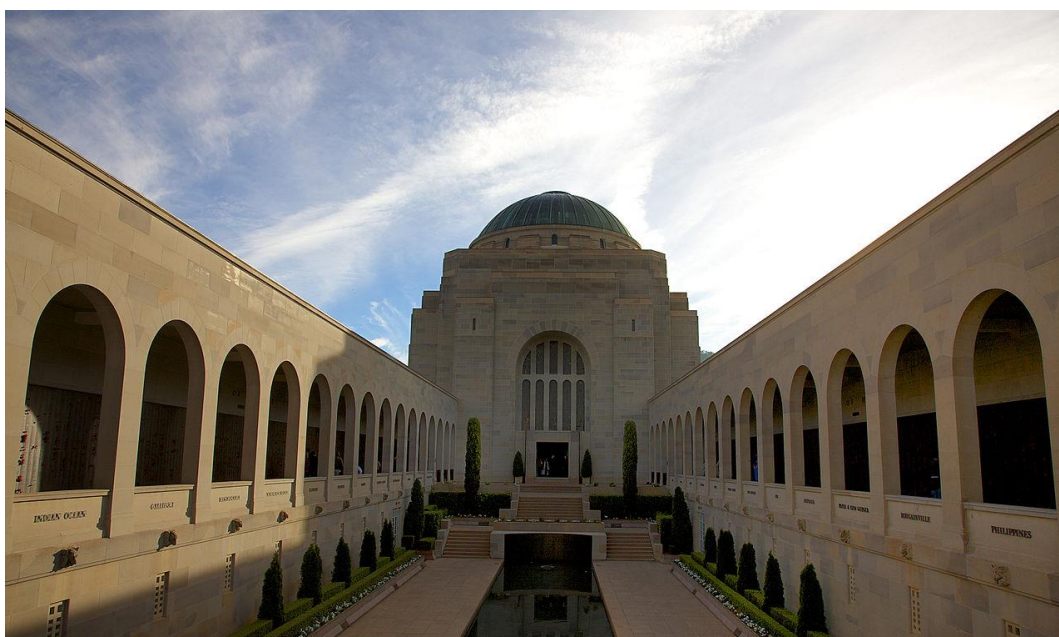
Only 28 years of age, in the bloom of manhood and under extremely ghastly unfortunate circumstances, he met his death as a true born soldier, in the course and execution of his duty. He was buried at East Hill Cemetery, Dartford on November 13th, 1917.

His friends and fellow Australians accompanied his remains to their last resting place. Many beautiful floral tokens bore tribute to the esteem and affection in which he was held by all. He will ever be remembered and his name will be held sacred by his fellow Australians who will sadly mourn his demise.”

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Engine Fitter Arthur Sidney West – service number 1014, aged 27, Australian Munitions Worker. He was the son of William Luke West and Mary West, of Plymouth, Punchbowl Road, Enfield, Sydney, New South Wales. Arthur Sidney West was only recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 2008.

At the time of researching (December, 2016) Australian Munitions Worker Arthur Sidney West was not 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.

His case was submitted to the Australian War Memorial in December, 2016 to be investigated.



Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial (Capital Photographer)

UPDATE: June, 2020

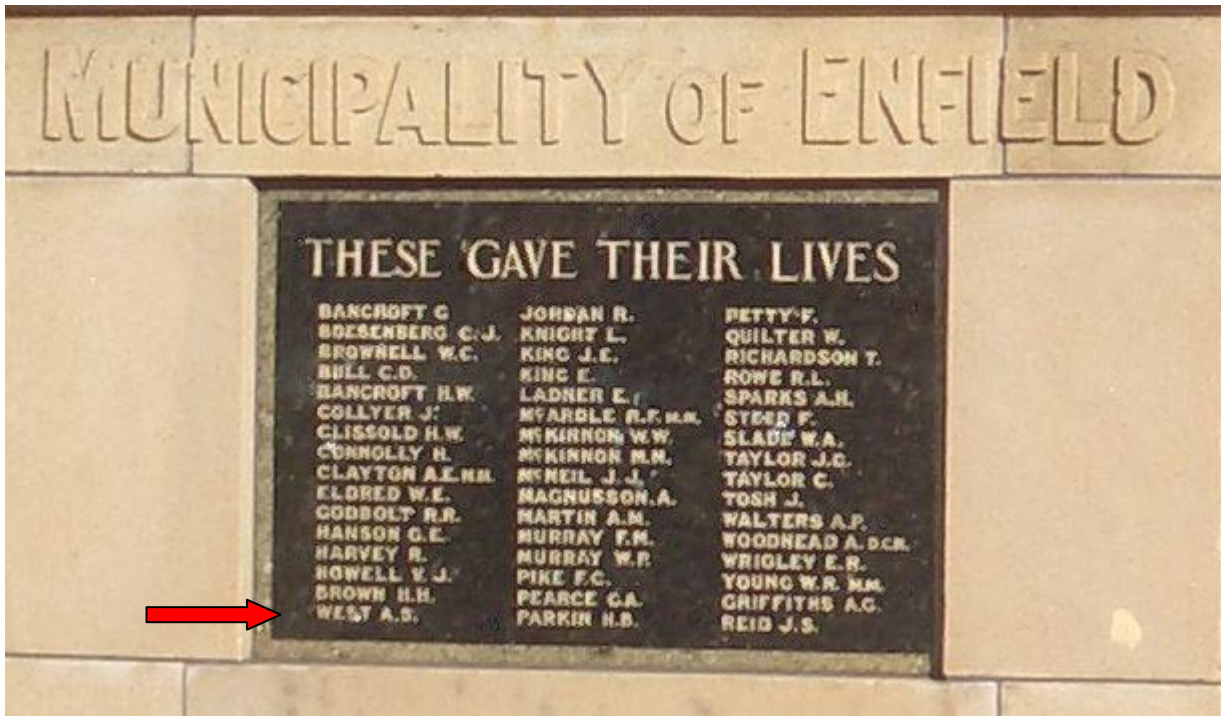
Advice was received on 11th June, 2020 from the Australian War Memorial that Muniton Worker Arthur Sidney West's name has been added to the Commemorative Roll.



Commemorative Roll Book at The Australian War Memorial (Photo from AWM)

A. S. West is remembered on the Enfield War Memorial located at the corner of Coronation Parade and Liverpool Road, Enfield, NSW.





Enfield War Memorial (Photos by J. Bar)

Munition Worker Arthur West is remembered on the St. Thomas' Anglican Church WW1 Roll of Honour which is located inside St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Coronation Parade, Enfield, Sydney, NSW on the back wall of the church.



St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Enfield - WW1 Roll of Honour

(Photos from Register of War Memorials in NSW - David Roden)



St. Thomas' Anglican Church, Enfield - WW1 Roll of Honour



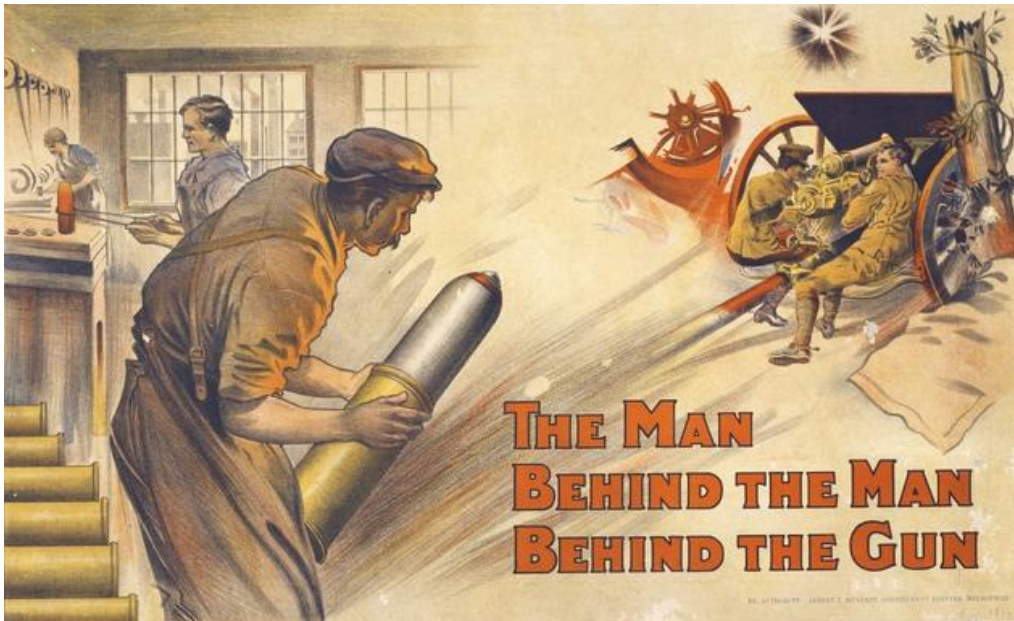
Arthur Sidney West (Photo from Crayford Works (Vickers) Magazine)

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)*



(26 pages of Arthur Sidney West's First World War Munition Worker's dossier is available for viewing on-line at the National Archives of Australia)



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

WEST – November 8, at Vickers, Dartford, England, Jock, third son of W. L. and M. West, Punchbowl-road, Enfield.
(By cable)

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 14 November, 1917)

ROLL OF HONOUR

WEST – Arthur Sydney, fourth dearly-loved son of W. and M. West, Punchbowl-road, Enfield, accidentally killed in a munition factory, England.

Thy will be done

Inserted by his sorrowing parents, brothers and sisters.

WEST – Arthur Sydney (Jock), accidentally killed in a munition factory, England.

He lives in our memory still

Inserted by his aunt and uncle, Mr and Mrs W. Willmott, and cousins, Edie and Charlie.

WEST – My old mate, Arthur Sydney (Jock) West, accidentally killed in a munition factory, England, November 8, 1917.

One of the best. Inserted by J. F. Priestley

WEST – Our friend Arthur Sydney (Jock) West, accidentally killed in a munition factory, England, November 8, 1917. We deeply regret his loss to us as a member. Inserted by members of St. Thomas' Institute, Enfield and Instructor P. Hitchens.

WEST – Arthur Sydney (Jock) West, accidentally killed in a munition factory, England, November,8, 1917. Sadly missed. Inserted by his sincere friends, Mr and Mrs H, Priestley, Ruth and Jim.

WEST – Arthur Sydney, accidentally killed in a munition factory, England. Inserted by his sorrowing friend, E. Hudson, Enfield.

WEST – Passed away, November 8, 1917, Arthur Sydney West (Jock), dearly loved friend of Mr and Mrs Pittman and family, of Enfield.

WEST – Died from injuries accidentally received in Kent, England, November 8, 1917, Arthur Sydney West (Jock), late of Enfield, dearly loved cousin of Mr and Mrs L. Brearley, of Redfern. A noble life ended.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 14 November, 1917)

On Active Service

WEST – In sad and loving Memory of our dear son and brother, Arthur Sidney (Jock) West, killed in munition factory, England, November 8, 1917. Inserted by his loving parents, brothers and sisters.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 8 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. All but one of these casualties are buried in the UK - the other being in France.

Watling Street Cemetery, Dartford, Kent, England

Watling Street Cemetery, Dartford contains 58 Commonwealth War Graves – 28 relate to World War 1 & 30 relate to World War 2.



(Photo from CWGC)



Photo of Munition Worker Arthur Sidney West's Private Headstone in Watling Street Cemetery, Dartford, Kent, England.



Arthur Sidney West



Of Enfield, N.S.W. Australia Who Died From Injuries Received At His Work

(Photos courtesy of Geoffrey Gillon)



November 8th 1917, Aged 28 Years



Erected To His Memory By Fellow Australian Munition Workers And Friends

