

**St. Peter's Cemetery,  
Aberdeen, Scotland**

**War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



2078

**W. GORDON**

**AUSTRALIAN MUNITIONS WORKER**

**25TH APRIL, 1918 Age 50**

## William GORDON

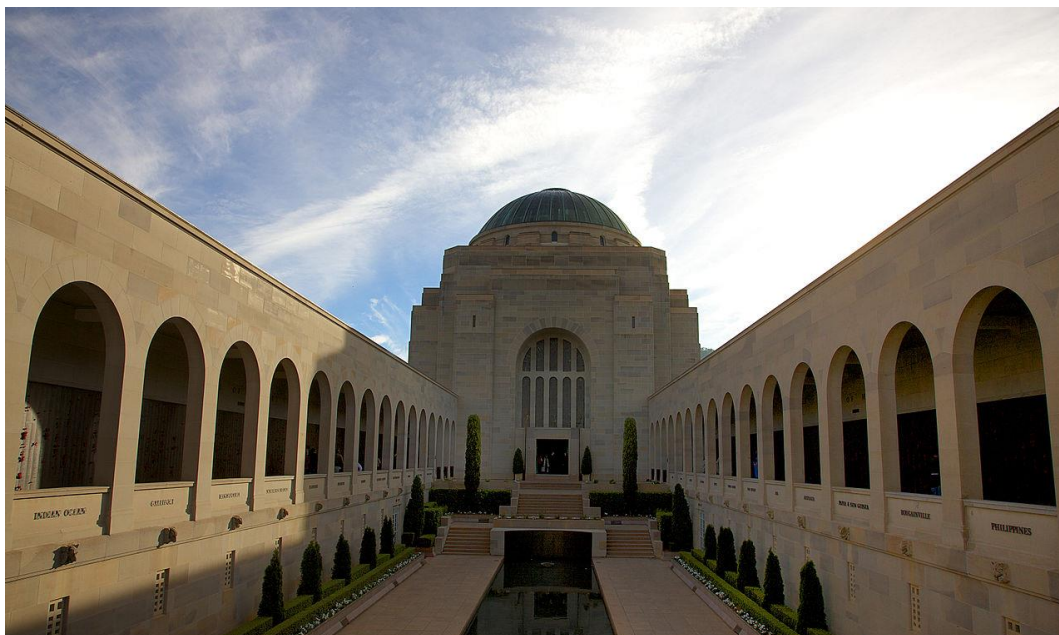
William Gordon was born around 1868.

Munitions Worker William Gordon died on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1918 at Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen, Scotland from valvular disease of the heart.

William Gordon was buried in St. Peter's Cemetery, Aberdeen, Scotland – Plot number Plot D. Row 37. Grave 24.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker W. Gordon - service number 2078, aged 50, of Australian Munitions Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker William Gordon 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**

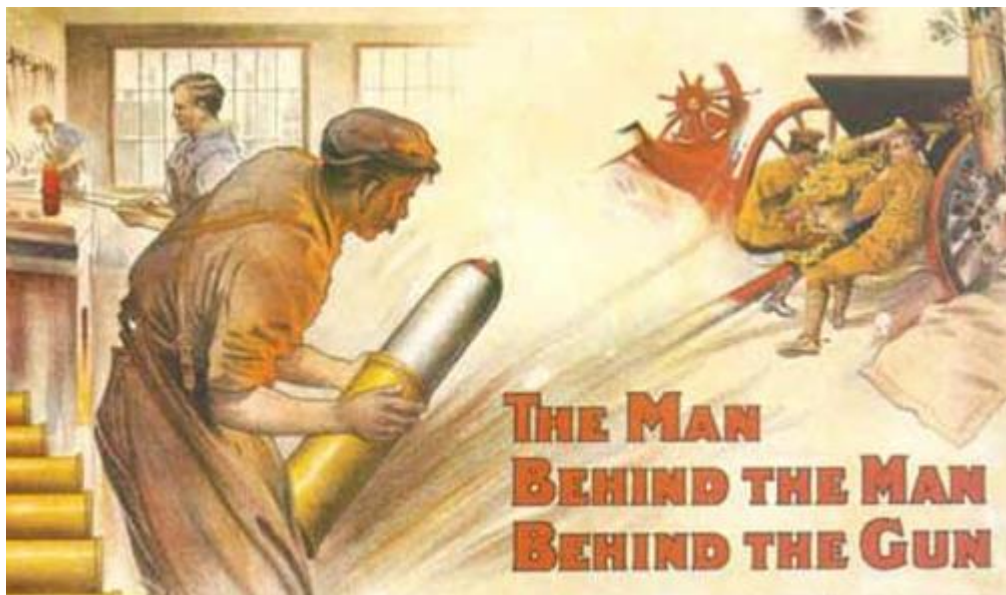
Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance 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)*



### **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.*

### **NEWS OF GEELONG AND DISTRICT SOLDIERS**

Mrs Gordon, Austin Park, East Geelong, has received a cable from the Defence Department, informing her of the death of her husband, a munitions worker, suddenly, at the Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen, on April 25<sup>th</sup>, from valvular disease of the heart.

*(Geelong Advertiser, Victoria – 9 May, 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:

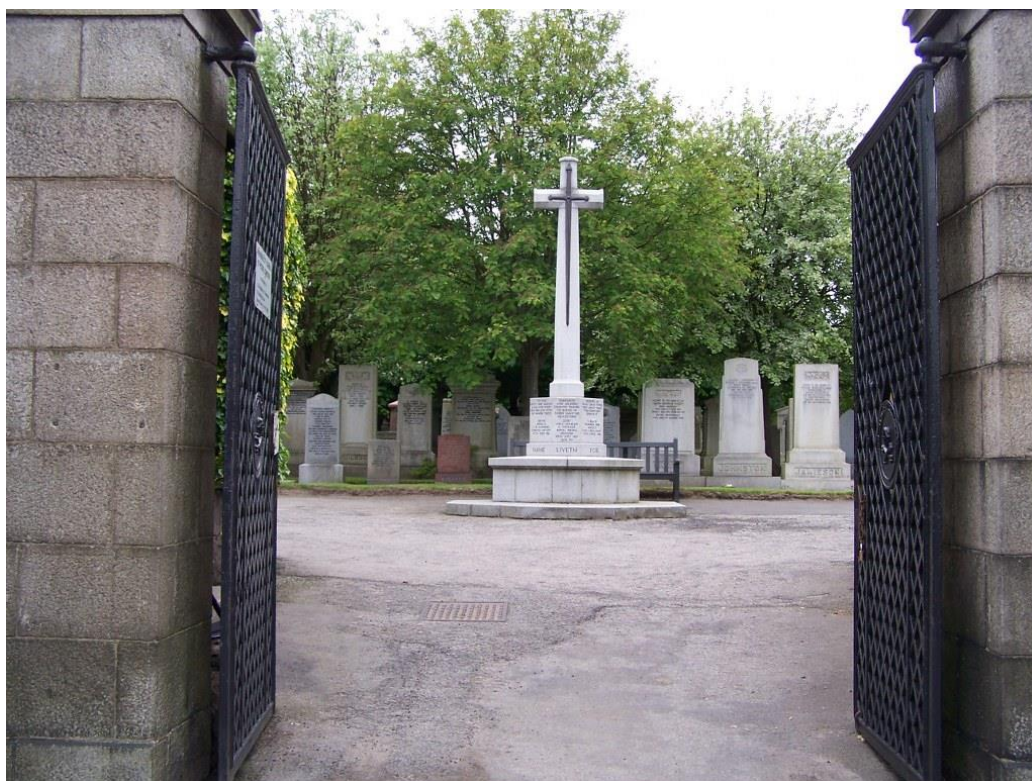
- Each of the dead should be commemorated by name on the headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be no distinction made on account of military or civil rank, race or creed

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.



**St. Peter's Cemetery, Aberdeen, Scotland** (Photo from CWGC)



Photo of Worker W. Gordon's Commonwealth War Graves Commission stoned-face marker in St. Peter's Cemetery



*(Photo courtesy of GariochGraver)*



**Back Gate of St. Peter's Cemetery** *(Photo courtesy of GariochGraver)*