

**St. Bridget's Churchyard,
West Kirby, Merseyside
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1

3451

A. E. SHEPHERD

AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER

6TH DECEMBER, 1918 Age 38

Albert Edward SHEPHERD

Albert Edward Shepherd was born on 1st October, 1880 at Liverpool, Merseyside, England to parents James & Elizabeth Shepherd (nee Wilson).

The 1881 England Census recorded Albert E. Shepherd as a 6 month old, living with his family at 4 Ouse Street, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, Lancashire, England. His parents were listed as James Shepherd (Painter, aged 33, born Liverpool, Lancashire) & Elizabeth Shepherd (aged 30, born Liverpool, Lancashire). Albert was the youngest of five children listed on this Census (all born Liverpool, Lancashire) – William J. (Scholar, aged 9), Sarah A. (Scholar, aged 8), Richard A. (aged 4), Elizabeth (aged 3) then Albert.

James Shepherd, father of Albert Edward Shepherd, died on 11th March, 1888 at Wirral, Cheshire, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Albert E. Shepherd as a 10 year old Scholar, living with his family at Brook Terrace, West Kirby, Cheshire, England. His widowed mother was listed as Elizabeth Shepherd (Laundress, aged 39, born Birkenhead, Cheshire). Albert was one of seven children listed on this Census – William J. (Painter, aged 19), Sarah A. (Apprentice Dressmaker, aged 17), Richard A. (Scholar, aged 13), then Albert, James (Scholar, aged 8, born Liverpool, Lancashire) & Rebecca T. (aged 3, born Liverpool, Lancashire).

The 1901 England Census recorded Albert E. Shepherd as a 20 year old, House Joiner (Carpenter) living with his older brother at 44 South Road, West Kirby, Cheshire, England. Albert's brother – William J. Shepherd (House Painter, aged 29) & his wife Elizabeth (aged 26) had two children – Marion (aged 5) & Hilda (aged 1). Also living in the household was William & Albert's younger brother – James (Plumber, aged 18).

[The 1901 England Census recorded Albert's mother – Elizabeth Shepherd (House-cleaner, aged 45) living with her youngest daughter – Rebecca T. (aged 13) at Norton Road, Hoylake cum West Kirby, Cheshire, England.]

Albert Edward Shepherd married Mary Jane Mackay on 26th November, 1903 in the Parish Church, West Kirby, Cheshire, England.

Mary Jane Shepherd, wife of Albert Edward Shepherd, died on 28th March, 1908 at West Kirby, Cheshire, England

[The 1911 England Census recorded Albert's mother – Elizabeth Shepherd (Laundress, aged 60) living alone at 3 Norton Road, West Kirby, Cheshire in a 3 roomed dwelling.]

The 1914 & 1915 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Bass, subdivision of Lilydale, Tasmania recorded Albert Edward Shepherd, Carpenter of Bangor.

Albert Edward Shepherd married Bertha Elizabeth Atkinson on 26th January, 1916 in Methodist Church, Rosevears, Tasmania.

A son, Frederick George James Shepherd, was born 28th February, 1917.

Albert Edward Shepherd, aged 36, of Rosevears, West Tamar, Tasmania, applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Manufacture of Munitions in Great Britain. He was a Carpenter & joiner, married with one child & his religion was Church of England. Albert's next-of-kin was listed as his wife – Bertha Elizabeth Shepherd of Rosevears, Tasmania. He was given a Muniton Worker number of 3451.

Worker Albert Edward Shepherd embarked from Tasmania on 1st August, 1917 & embarked for Abroad on *Anchises* on 2nd August, 1917.

Munitions Worker Albert Edward Shepherd died on 6th December, 1918 at Slouth, Berkshire, England as the result of an accident – collapse of building.

A death for Albert E. Shepherd, aged 38, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Windsor, Berkshire.

Newspaper Item – *Daily Mirror*, London, England – 7 December, 1918:

Roof Collapses – *Part of the roof of a large building under construction at the War Office Motor Transport Depot at Slough collapsed yesterday. Seven men were injured, one of them dying later.*

Newspaper Item – *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland – 7 December, 1918:

ACCIDENT AT GOVERNMENT MOTOR TRANSPORT DEPOT

An accident occurred at the Government Motor Transport Depot at Chippenham, near Slough, yesterday. AN iron girder in a huge building in course of construction gave way and caused other supports to do the same. As a result, a portion of the roof came down, injuring several men, one fatally.

Newspaper Item – *Illustrated Police News* – 12 December, 1918:

COLLAPSE OF BIG ROOF

Through the collapse of a shed at the Government Motor Transport Depot, near Slough, one man, named Shepherd, was killed and seven were injured.

About a hundred men were working on the scaffolding when part of the building came down with a crash, iron girders collapsing under the weight. There were tons of debris. No German prisoners were at work on the shed, thought they had been employed in preparing materials for it.

Newspaper Item – *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, Dundee, Angus, Scotland – 12 December, 1918:

COLLAPSE OF A ROOF; MAN KILLED

The Windsor Coroner held an inquest today on the body of Albert Shepherd, who was killed by the collapse of the roof of a building at the motor transport works at Slough, several other men being injured. Captain Sankey, War Office, engineering expert, said he had been unable to ascertain definitely the cause of the collapse, but suggested it was set up by oscillation. A verdict of accidental death was recorded.

Munitions Worker Albert Edward Shepherd was buried St. Bridget's Churchyard, West Kirby, Merseyside (Cheshire), England and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The District Paymaster, 6th Military District, wrote to Mrs B. E. Shepherd on 7th July, 1919 to advise that the Muniton Worker's Badge No. 3451, which belonged to her late husband, was enclosed with the letter.

The Public Trustee – Intestate Estate of Albert Edward Shepherd:

"Albert Edward Shepherd late of 43 Kingsley Street, Birkenhead, England, who was accidentally killed in Buckinghamshire, England on the sixth day of December 1918.

Balance of account at Commonwealth Bank - £129: 1: 6

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker Albert Edward Shepherd, aged 38, Australian Muniton Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Worker Albert Edward Shepherd, 3451 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.

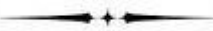
(Source: Australian War Memorial)

(35 pages of Munition Worker Albert Edward Shepherd's Allotment file is available online at National Archives, Australia. His Munition Worker's file was still closed at the time of researching)





Bertha, their son Frederick & Albert (Bert) Edward Shepherd



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

SHEPHERD – December 6, as the result of an accident in Slough, ALBERT EDWARD, the beloved husband of Bertha Shepherd, Tasmania, late of 43 Kingsley-street, Birkenhead, and third son of the late James Shepherd. Interment at West Kirby, to-day (Friday).

(*Liverpool Echo*, Liverpool, Merseyside, England - 13 December, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

SHEPHERD – In loving Memory of my dear husband, Albert Edward Shepherd, munition worker, who was killed in Slough, England, December 6th, 1918.

“So dearly loved, so deeply mourned.”

-Inserted by his loving wife and little son Freddy.

(*Examiner*, Launceston, Tasmania – 6 December, 1920) & (*Daily Telegraph*, Launceston, Tasmania – 6 December, 1920)

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. Bridget's Churchyard, West Kirby, Merseyside, England

St. Bridget's Churchyard, West Kirby contains 11 Commonwealth War Graves – 9 relating to World War 1 & 2 from World War 2.



St. Bridget's Church, West Kirby (Photo by Mike McQuaid)

Photo of Munition Worker A. E. Shepherd's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Bridget's Churchyard, West Kirby, Merseyside/Cheshire, England.



(Photo by Mike McQuaid)

Note – the Grave kerbing surrounding the Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone for the late Munition Worker Albert Edward Shepherd refers to his first wife – Mary Jane Shepherd who died 28th March, 1908.

