

**Cathays Cemetery,
Cardiff, Wales
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



W. A. THOMAS

AUSTRALIAN WAR WORKER

6TH NOVEMBER, 1917

William Amos THOMAS

William Amos Thomas was born in 1875 at Aberdare, Glamorganshire, Wales to parents Amos & Mary Thomas. His birth was registered in the June quarter, 1875 in the district of Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, Wales. Aberdare was a parish within the Merthyr Tydfil registration district.

The 1881 Wales Census recorded William Amos Thomas as a 5 year old, Scholar living with his family at 13 Catherine St, Aberdare, Glamorgan, Wales. His parents were listed as Amos Thomas (Coal Miner, aged 28, born Aberdare, Glamorgan) & Mary Thomas (aged 28, born Aberdare, Glamorgan). Two Boarders were also listed – Joseph Heany (Railway Stoker, aged 26) & Evan Giles (Butcher, aged 24).

The 1891 Wales Census recorded William Amos Thomas as a 15 year old, Coal Miner, living with his family at 3d Highland Place, Aberdare, Glamorgan, Wales. His parents were listed as Amos Thomas (Coal Miner, aged 38) & Mary Thomas (aged 37). William was the eldest of two sons listed on this Census – his younger brother was listed as David Amos Thomas (aged 3, Aberdare, Glamorgan).

William Amos Thomas married Lilian Ceciliane Adelaine Brown on 3rd December, 1899 at Aberdare.

The 1901 Wales Census recorded William A. Thomas as a 25 year old Colliery Stoker, living at 9 Joinery Terrace, Eglwysilan, Glamorgan with his wife – Lillian C. Thomas (aged 25) & their daughter – Dorothy Thomas (aged 6 months).

William Amos Thomas was a 37 year old, married, Collier from 6 Lily St., Roath, Cardiff, Wales when he enlisted with Welsh Regiment on 16th February, 1915 at Recruiting Office, Cardiff, Wales. His Service number was 24373. William Thomas stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served six weeks in R.I.F. William Amos Thomas listed his 5 children - Jessie Adeline Thomas (born 15th December, 1901); Martha Mary (born 21st February, 1905); William Amos Thomas (born 9th September, 1907); Charles Amos Thomas (born 6th June, 1909) & Violet Edith Thomas (born 1st November, 1910).

Private William Amos Thomas joined the Welsh Regiment at Colwyn Bay on 23rd February, 1915. He was posted to 19th Battalion on 10th April, 1915.

Private William Amos Thomas was appointed Lance Corporal on 22nd April, 1915.

Lance Corporal William Amos Thomas was posted to 21st Battalion on 5th December, 1915.

A Medical Report was completed on Lance Corporal William Amos Thomas on 15th July, 1916 at Kinmel Farh, Rhyl. His disability was listed as Pulmonary Tuberculosis "*Originated 28 Sept 1915 at Pitt Corner Camp, Winchester. Admitted to Hospital suffering Bronchitis. On the 31st March 1916 was admitted to Hospital suffering haemorrhoids. T.B. found in sputum, on second examination. Not the result of Military Service, not aggravated by it. Permanent [disability]. Earning capacity same as before enlistment.*" The Medical Board recommended on 17th July, 1916 that Lance Corporal Thomas be discharged as permanently unfit for General Service, Home Service of Light Duty at Home. A follow up report on the 10th January, 1918 reported that "*This man's recent condition may be regarded for pension purposes as aggravated by Service since declaration of War. [His] incapacity [was listed as] 5/10 on discharge. Above on review also fresh evidence a man of good physique on enlistment. Dead.*"

Lance Corporal William Amos Thomas was medically discharged from Welsh Regiment on 31st July, 1916. He was no longer physically fit for War Service (Para 392 XVI) King's Reg.) due to Pulmonary Tuberculosis. He had served for 1 year & 152 days & his Military Character was recorded as "very good." "*Discharged owing to sickness not due to Military Service. During his ___ Service his conduct has been very good & I believe him to be sober, honest & trustworthy.*"

S. Auckland, Secretary, of Cardiff War Pensions Local Committee wrote to The Secretary, Ministry of Pensions, Royal Hospital, Chelsea on 19th September, 1917 stating "*I should be glad to know the position of the man named below with reference to pension award. He states that since his discharge he has received no notification as to whether his case has been decided. At present he is suffering from Tuberculosis and total unable to work. As this is*

a case of urgent need I hope you will give it whatever prominence is possible. Mr W. A. Thomas. L. Cpl. 24373 19 Bn Welsh Regt. Discharged 31 July 1916."

The Royal Hospital, Chelsea returned a form which included a statement "*Date of any previous application to this Office*" - the response written was "*so far as is known no application has previously been made.*"

S. Auckland, Secretary, of Cardiff War Pensions Local Committee wrote again to The Secretary, Ministry of Pensions, Royal Hospital, Chelsea on 8th October, 1917 regarding W. A. Thomas. L/Cpl 19th Welsh Regiment "*The above named man applies to this Committee for assistance. He is certified by the District Medical Officer to be suffering from Advanced Phthisis, causing permanent and total disablement. He has had no Pension award and therefore his position with regard to the current Instructions in uncertain. I should be glad if his case could receive early attention. I enclose a certificate as to his pre-enlistment health.*"

William Amos Thomas enrolled to become an Australian War Worker. He was issued a number of 869.

[No further information could be located as the File for William Amos Thomas, at the time of researching, had not been opened for free viewing by National Archives Australia.]

Australian War Worker William Amos Thomas died on 6th November, 1917 at 3rd Western General Hospital, Cardiff, Glamorganshire, Wales.

The Colonel Commanding, 3rd Western General Hospital, Cardiff wrote to D.D. M.S., Chester stating "*This man died on the 6th inst. please.*"

A death for William A. Thomas, aged 41, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Cardiff, Glamorganshire, Wales.

Australian War Worker William Amos Thomas was buried at Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, Wales – Plot number A. 1729 & has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Record Office of Welsh Regiment wrote to the Secretary, Widows & Dependants Branch, in January, 1918, forwarding the discharge documents of Lance Corporal William Amos Thomas "*for necessary action please, man having died 6.11.17.*"

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker W. A. Thomas – service number 869, Australian War Worker. No family details are listed. The CWGC Graves Registration Report Form records "*Australian War Worker, 869, THOMAS, W.A., died 6.11.17 & under remarks – 6 Lily St, Cardiff.*"

Australian Munitions Worker William Amos Thomas 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

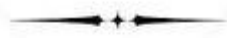
Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance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



**** Note – The Service Record file for Australian War Worker William Amos Thomas, No. 869, 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.**



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.

Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, Wales

During the 1939-1945 War, the city of Cardiff was one of the Royal Naval bases of the Western Approaches Command. It was severely damaged by enemy air attack during the early part of the 1939-1945 War and has been largely rebuilt. The cemetery, known locally as Cathays Cemetery was opened in 1859 and has been extended to cover over 100 acres. The cemetery contains war graves of both world wars. Just over a third of the 1914-1918 burials are contained in a War Graves Plot in the portion of Section EB, this plot is on two converging roadways leading to the main entrance. The remainder of the graves are scattered in other parts of the cemetery. After the 1914-1918 War, a Cross of Sacrifice was erected in front of the plot in the angle formed by the junction of the two roadways, the whole forming a triangular island site. The 1939-1945 War burials are scattered throughout the cemetery in more than 30 different sections. A number of them are airmen who came from the Royal Air Force stations at Cardiff and St. Athan. There are now nearly 500, 1914-1918 and over 200, 1939-1945 war casualties commemorated in this site. Some 40 French and Norwegian Foreign Nationals are also commemorated here.

(Information & Photos from CWGC)





Entrance to Cathays Cemetery (Photo by Peter – Find a Grave)

Photo of Australian War Worker W. A. Thomas' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff, Wales.



(Photo by Nettlyne – Find a Grave)

