

**Westgate Hill General Cemetery,
Newcastle Upon Tyne
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



3487

A. R. BRISTOW

AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER

24TH OCTOBER, 1918

Aubrey Rhys BRISTOW

Aubrey Rhys Bristow was born in Buckinghamshire, England in 1887 to parents Owen Alfred & Emily Mary Bristow (nee West).

The 1891 England Census recorded Aubrey R. Bristow as a 4 year old Scholar, living with his family at 19 Lord Street, Westgate South, Newcastle on Tyne, England. His parents were listed as Owen A. Bristow (Chairmaker, aged 29, born Buckinghamshire) & Emily M. Bristow (aged 31, Born Buckinghamshire). Aubrey was one of four children listed on this Census – all born Buckinghamshire – Gilbert Bristow (Scholar, aged 5) then Aubrey, Walter Bristow (aged 2) & Fredrick (aged 4 months). Also listed were four Lodgers – Mary Boyd (Charwoman, aged 41), George Thompson (Shipyard Labourer, aged 24) & his wife Agnes Thompson (aged 24) & their son George Thompson (aged 7 months).

The 1901 England Census recorded Aubrey Bristow as a 15 year old Errand Boy, living with his family at 62 Hedley Place, Westgate, Northumberland, England. His parents were listed as George H. Bristow (Cabinet Maker, aged 40) & Emily M. Bristow (aged 42). Aubrey was one of six children listed on this Census – Gilbert Bristow (Telegraph Messenger, aged 16, born Downley, Bucks), then Aubrey (born Downley, Bucks), Walter O. Bristow (aged 13, born Downley, Bucks), Frank Bristow (aged 10, born Newcastle on Tyne), Francis H. Bristow (aged 8, born Newcastle on Tyne) & Robert E. Bristow (aged 2, born Newcastle on Tyne).

Aubrey Rhys Bristow served as an apprentice to Household Furnishing Company, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England for 6 years.

Aubrey Rhys Bristow married Isabella Service in 1909. Their marriage was registered in the September quarter, 1909 in the district of Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, England.

The 1911 England Census recorded Aubrey Bristow as a 25 year old, married, Cabinet Maker living with his wife – Isabella Bristow (aged 25, born Sunderland) & their 11 month old son – Walter Bristow (born Newcastle) in a 3 roomed dwelling at 36 Spring Street, Newcastle (under Tyne, England). Aubrey & Isabella had been married for 1 year.

Emily Mary Bristow, mother of Aubrey Rhys Bristow, died in 1911 at Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, England.

Gilbert Bristow, Cabinet Maker & Aubrey Bristow, Chair Maker, were passengers on *Ballarat* which departed from the port of London, England on 11th April, 1912 bound for Australia via Cape Town.

Owen Alfred Bristow, father of Aubrey Rhys Bristow, died in 1913 at Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, England.

Isabella Bristow, aged 24, & her sons - Walter (aged 3) & Aubrey (aged 3 months) were passengers on *Benalla* which departed from the port of London, England on 26th February, 1914. They listed their country of intended future permanent residence as Victoria, Australia.

Aubrey Rhys Bristow was a 29 year old, married, Cabinetmaker from 20 Pratt Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria when he enlisted in Melbourne, Victoria on 19th February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 27485 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs I. Bristow, of 75 Margaret Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria. A later address was given as 2 Stanhope Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England. Aubrey Rhys Bristow stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 4 years with the Volunteer Engineers, Newcastle on Tyne, England.

Aubrey Rhys Bristow was posted to B Company, 22nd Battalion at Royal Park on 4th April, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Field Artillery Brigade at Maribyrnong as Gunner on 8th June, 1916. Gunner Bristow was transferred to 4th Field Artillery Brigade, 9th Reinforcements on 19th September, 1916 with the rank of Driver.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Borda* (30) on 20th October, 1916 with the 4th Field Artillery Brigade, 9th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 9th January, 1917.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was marched in to Camp 3 Parkhouse, from Australia on 10th January, 1917.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was marched out from No. 3 Camp Parkhouse in 2nd February, 1917 & marched in to R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) at Larkhill, Wiltshire, England on 4th February, 1917.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 8th March, 1917 from R.B.A.A. (Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery) Camp 21, Larkhill, Wiltshire, England.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 9th March, 1917.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was transferred to 1st Divisional Ammunition Column on 24th March, 1917 in France.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was sent sick to Hospital on 24th August, 1917. He was admitted to 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with Varicose veins then transferred to No. 21 Ambulance Train. Driver Bristow was admitted to No. 1 Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, France on 26th August, 1917 & discharged to Base Details on 28th August, 1917.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow joined A.G.B.D. at Havre on 30th August, 1917 from Hospital.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was sent sick to Hospital on 3rd September, 1917 from A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot). He was admitted to No. 2 General Hospital at Havre, France with piles. Driver Bristow was discharged to duty & joined the A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) from Hospital on 7th September, 1917.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was transferred to England from A.G.B.D. in France on 23rd December, 1917 & classed as P.B. (Permanent Base - medically unfit for field service).

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, England on 24th December, 1917.

A medical report was completed on Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow on 25th December, 1917 at Medical Office, No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, England regarding his disability of Varicose Veins (pre-existing). The report stated that Driver Bristow had medium varicose veins on right leg & thigh & complained of aching pains on his leg. The Medical Board found that Driver Bristow was permanently unfit for General Service & fit for Home Service.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow returned to Australia on H.T. (A14) Euripides, embarking from Plymouth, England on 30th January, 1918 due to varicose veins & was returning to be operated on. He disembarked in Australia on 21st March, 1918.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was admitted to No. 11 Australian General Hospital, Melbourne, Victoria on 9th April, 1918.

Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force on 30th April, 1918.

Aubrey Rhys Bristow, aged 31, applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Manufacture of Munitions in Great Britain on 16th July, 1918. (Note – the form signed was for those “Without Dependents”). He was trained as a Carpenter, working as a Joiner & married with 3 dependants. Aubrey Bristow stated on his enrolment form that he had worked for 9 years (including apprenticeship) with Household Furnishing Co., Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2 years with Elswick Ship Yard, Newcastle-on-Tyne & 3 years with Newport Railway Shops, Victoria, Australia. Aubrey Rhys Bristow was given a Muniton Worker number of 3487.

Munitions Worker Aubrey Rhys Bristow embarked from Sydney, Australia in *Suevic* on 18th July, 1918 & arrived at Tilbury Dock, England on 13th October, 1918.

Munitions Worker Aubrey Rhys Bristow commenced work with Messrs McAlpine & Sons, Feltwell Aerodrome as a Joiner on 17th October, 1918.

A letter (undated) was received by Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London from Munitions Worker Aubrey Rhys Bristow with reference to an allowance for his wife and family. He stated that his wife had received nothing for some months & was also enquiring as to tools and if he could be supplied with them as his financial position would not allow him to purchase any. A reply was sent by Officer in Charge requesting that Aubrey Bristow send particulars of his dependants & advised that tools could not be supplied free in England but should be brought from Australia by the workmen themselves.

A letter was received by Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London on 23rd October, 1918 from Muniton Worker A. Burkett, 3855, at McAlpine's Aerodrome stating that several of the Australian Munitions Workers at the Firm were ill with Influenza and that Muniton Worker Bristow was not expected to recover. He was being attended to by the village doctor & they were unable to get him into a hospital. The letter requested assistance in the matter. A Telegram was sent on 23rd October, 1918 by Officer in Charge stating enquires were being made with a view to assisting. A Telegram was received from Muniton Worker Burkett on 24th October, 1918 stating that Muniton Worker Bristow has been sent to hospital the previous night.

A Cable was sent on 24th October, 1918 by Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London to Defence Department stating the Muniton Worker Bristow was seriously ill with Influenza.

A telephone call was made to Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London on 24th October, 1918 from Messrs McAlpine & Sons stating that Muniton Worker Bristow had died at Thetford Infirmary.

Munitions Worker Aubrey Rhys Bristow died at 2 am on 24th October, 1918 at Thetford Infirmary, Norfolk, England from Influenza & Pneumonia.

A death for Aubrey R. Bristow, aged 31, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Thetford, Norfolk, England.

A Telegram was sent on 24th October, 1918 from Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London to Mrs Bristow regretting Muniton Worker Bristow's death. The telegram advised her to make the necessary funeral arrangements & stated that the Commonwealth Government would guarantee expenses up to £10.

A letter was sent to Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London from Messrs McAlpine on 26th October, 1918 advising that Mrs Bristow had called at their Office the previous day stating that she wished for the body of her late husband to be conveyed to Newcastle but was unable to pay carriage amounting to £12.6.0. Subscriptions were raised at the Works on her behalf & the Firm guaranteed the amount with the Railway Company.

A letter sent to Officer in Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, London (undated) from Mrs Bristow stated that her late husband was to be buried on the 29th October at Westgate Cemetery, Newcastle.

Australian Muniton Worker Aubrey Rhys Bristow was buried in Westgate Hill General Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne – Plot number G. 124. The A.I.F. arranged a Military Funeral. He has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone. (Note – some forms record that Aubrey Rhys Bristow was buried on 7th November, 1918).

A War Pension was granted to Isabella Bristow, widow of the late Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow, in the sum of 7/9d per fortnight from 25th May, 1918. A Pension was also granted to his 3 children – Walter Rhys, Aubrey Rhys & Margaret Hannah Bristow in the sums of 5/-, 3/9, & 2/6d per fortnight from 25th May, 1918.

On 18th June, 1918 the War Pensions for Isabella Bristow & her 3 children were "cancelled as from 1/5/18".

Isabella Bristow remarried in June, 1920 to John H. Campbell in the district of Newcastle on Tyne, Northumberland, England.

Base Records wrote to Mrs I. Bristow, of 2 Stanhope Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, in October, 1923 enquiring as to whether her husband, ex-No. 27485 Driver A. R. Bristow was residing with her as they wished to transit to him the British War Medal & the Victory Medal on account of his service with the Australian Imperial Force. Their previous correspondence had been sent to 75 Margaret Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria but had been returned.

A letter was sent to Base Records in July, 1945 from Returned Sailors, Soldiers & Airmen's Imperial League of Australia enquiring on behalf of the brother from New Zealand of Aubrey Rhys Bristow who was seeking information as to when & where Mr Bristow was killed & if he was married. Base Records replied in August, 1945 stating that Br Bristow had served in the A.I.F. as No. 27485, 4th Field Artillery Brigade & had been discharged in Melbourne on 30th April, 1918. They stated that he had not been in communication with their Office since his discharge & his next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Isabella Bristow, of 2 Stanhope Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker A. R. Bristow – service number 3487, Australian Munition Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker Aubrey Rhys Bristow 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 – 46 pages of the Munitions Worker Record file for Aubrey Rhys Bristow, Australian Munition Worker No.3487 is open for viewing online at National Archives Australia*

52 pages of Driver Aubrey Rhys Bristow's Australian Army Service Record is available for viewing online from the National Archives 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)

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.

Westgate Hill General Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, England

Westgate Hill General Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne contains 15 Commonwealth War Graves – all from World War 1.



Entrance to Westgate Hill Cemetery from Westgate Road (Photo by Roger Templeman)



Westgate Hill General Cemetery (Photo by Trevor Littlewood - 2010)

Photo of Australian Munition Worker A. R. Bristow's Commonwealth War Graves Headstone in Westgate Hill General Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, England.



(Photo above by Marcel ROSVELDS – Find a Grave; below by Peter Bennett)



From the Commonwealth War Graves Commission - Grave Registration:

“Newcastle-on-Tyne (West Road) Cemetery

The burials listed below are from Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Westgate Hill) General Cemetery. They are now commemorated on a Screen Wall in this Cemetery.”

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Bristow, A. R. (Badge No. 3487) Australian Munition Worker 24th Oct 1918

West Road Cemetery, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Northumberland, England

Newcastle-upon-Tyne (West Road) Cemetery contains 71 Second World War burials. About 50 of them form a war graves plot in Section R, where there are also three non-war burials and four war graves of other nationalities. Also in the cemetery is a Screen Wall commemorating 15 First World War casualties buried in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Westgate Hill) Cemetery whose grave commemorations are currently being reinstated by the Commission.

(Information from CWGC)



Entrance to West Road Cemetery, Newcastle-on-Tyne *(Photo by Kenneth G. Hughes – Find a Grave)*



West Road Cemetery - Commonwealth War Graves (Photo by Anthony Fraser)

The WWII military plot commemorates not only those buried as shown in the photo but also those cremated in the nearby crematorium, and also those from WWI buried in Westgate Hill Cemetery





Screen Wall in West Road Cemetery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne commemorating those from WW1 buried in Westgate Hill General Cemetery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland, England

(Photos courtesy of Peter Bennett)

