

**Warrington Cemetery,
Warrington, Cheshire/Lancashire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



A. COOPER

AUSTRALIAN WAR WORKER

4TH MARCH, 1919

Arthur COOPER

Arthur Cooper was born in Manchester, England around 1894 to parents Thomas & Mary Cooper.

[The 1891 England Census (before Arthur Cooper was born) listed the Cooper family living at Wood Hut, Saddleworth, Yorkshire, England. Thomas Cooper (Brickmaker, aged 40, born Wolverhampton) & his wife Mary Cooper (aged 36) were listed with seven children – Daniel Cooper (Scholar, aged 15, born Langley Park, Durham), William Cooper (Scholar, aged 13), Thomas (Scholar, aged 11, born Sussex), Kate Cooper (Scholar, aged 9), George Cooper (Scholar, aged 7), John Cooper (Scholar, aged 6) & Henry Cooper (aged 3).]

The 1901 England Census recorded Arthur Cooper as a 6 year old, living with his widowed mother & family at Manchester Rd, Woolston, Lancashire, England. His mother was listed as Mary Cooper (aged 48, born Ireland). Arthur was the youngest of seven children listed on this Census – William Cooper (Foreman Bricklayer (Employer), aged 23, born Hose, Leicestershire), Kate Cooper (aged 19, born Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire), George Cooper (Labourer in Brickworks, aged 17, born New Passage, Gloucestershire), John Cooper (Labourer in Brickworks, aged 16, born New Passage, Gloucestershire), Henry Cooper (aged 10, born St. Fagairs, Glamorgan), Fred Cooper (aged 8, born Saddleworth, Yorkshire) then Arthur (born Droylsden, Lancashire).

The 1911 England Census recorded Arthur Cooper as a 16 year Clerk working from Home, living with his widowed mother & family at Manchester Rd, Woolston, near Warrington in a 5 roomed dwelling. His mother was listed as Mary Cooper (Brickmaking, aged 54). Arthur was the youngest of three children listed on this Census – Henry Cooper (Brickworks, aged 22), Fred Cooper (Brickworks, aged 18) then Arthur. Also listed was Annie Wareing (Domestic Servant, aged 17).

Arthur Cooper, Labourer, aged 23, of 24 Parkham Street, Moore Park, Sydney, NSW, applied for enrolment as a Volunteer for Manufacture of Munitions in Great Britain on 2nd October, 1917. He was employed on Railway Works, NSW (working on the Southern & Western line) as a Bricklayer and navy under the Department of Public Works. Arthur Cooper was given an Australian War Worker Badge number 1664.

Arthur Cooper embarked from Adelaide, South Australia on HMAT *Borda* on 3rd January, 1918 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 4th March, 1918.

Arthur Cooper commenced work on 11th March, 1918 at Messrs Trollope & Colls as a Bricklayer.

Arthur Cooper's War Worker file records the following entry on his Record sheet reported to the Officer-in-Charge, Australian Munitions Workers, Plymouth:- *"16.10.18 Letter to O i/c from M of L Emp:Ex: Attercliffe, stating a communication had been received from Messrs Vickers, Sheffield stating C. had left their employ of his own accord as the charge hand had spoke to him about his work – Had no trace of his present whereabouts."* (Note: references to War Worker's on their Record file addresses them by the initial of their surname – "C" meaning Cooper).

War Worker Arthur Cooper died on 4th March, 1919 at 33 Clarence Street, Warrington, England from Influenza and Pneumonia. His brother – D. Cooper, of 1 Alexandra Street, Warrington, was present at the death. Arthur Cooper's War Worker Record sheet states that 33 Clarence Street, Warrington was the address of Arthur Cooper's mother.

A death for Arthur Cooper, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Warrington, Lancashire, England.

War Worker Arthur Cooper was buried on 7th March, 1919 in Warrington Cemetery (Manchester Road), Warrington, Cheshire/Lancashire, England – Plot number E. CE. 157. The funeral arrangements were made by his relatives. War Worker Arthur Cooper has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Arthur Cooper's War Worker Record sheet states for the date 12th March, 1919 - *"Letter from O.i/c to Mrs Cooper, Mother of deceased, expressing regret at C's death and extending sympathy to her. Asked to be supplied with date, place and cause of death, district where death registered, date and place of burial and registration number of grave. Expenses up to £10 would be guaranteed towards funeral expenses by the Commonwealth Govt: Asked name of the*

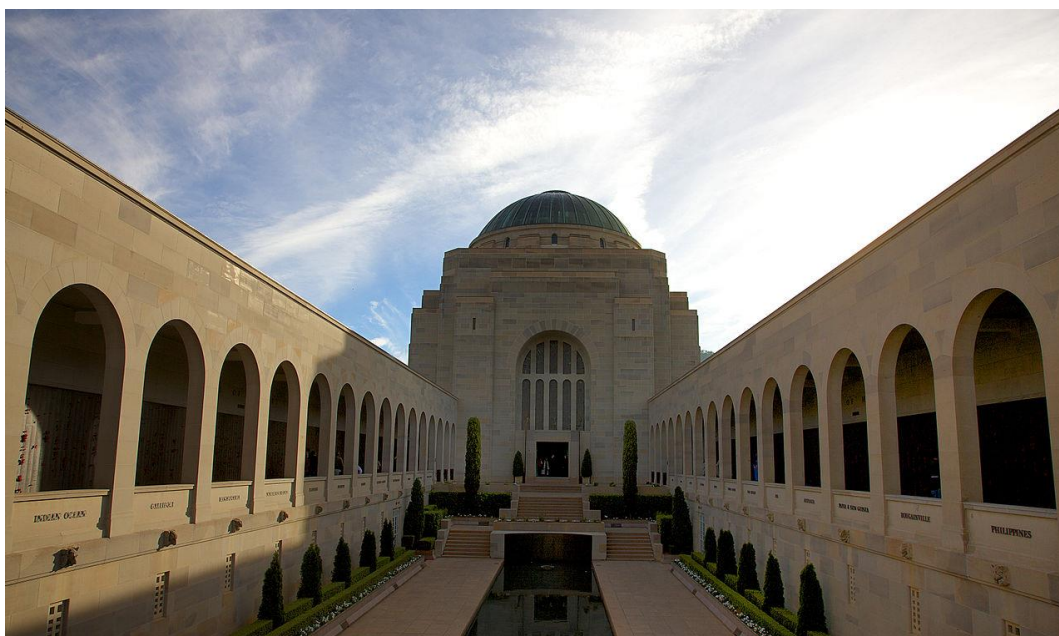
firm with whom deceased was last employ.” Daniel Cooper, brother of the late Arthur Cooper replied with details of his brother’s death & burial. He also advised at a later date that Arthur Cooper had been last employed by Messrs John Dolan & Sons, Farrington.

The personal effects of the late War Worker Arthur Cooper were sent to his mother in England.

The District Paymaster, 2nd Military District wrote to The Secretary, Department of Defence, Melbourne on 15th May to advise that Special Allowance had accumulated in War Worker Arthur Cooper’s account amounting to 370 days – more park £36 17. His mother’s details & address according to their records was Mrs Mary Cooper, “Woolston”, Warrington, Lancashire, England.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker Arthur Cooper, Australian War Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker Arthur Cooper, No. 1664, aged 25, 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 – 52 pages of War Worker Arthur Cooper's file is available for viewing at the National Archives of Australia website.*



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. All but one of these casualties are buried in the UK - the other being in France.

Warrington Cemetery, Warrington, Cheshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards.

Warrington was the depot for the South Lancashire Regiment for both wars and was home to the Lord Derby War Hospital and White Cross Auxiliary Hospital during the First World War. During the Second World War, a shore establishment of the Fleet Air Arm was stationed there. Warrington Cemetery contains 199 First World War burials, 74 of them in a war graves plot with a Cross of Sacrifice. The 102 Second World War burials are scattered. A Polish airman is also buried in the cemetery.

(Information from CWGC)



Cross of Sacrifice & War Graves in Warrington Cemetery *(Photo by David Dixon)*

Photo of War Worker A. Cooper's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Warrington Cemetery, Warrington, Cheshire/Lancashire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Gillon)

