

**St. Margaret's Cemetery,
Rochester, Kent
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



H. J. REED

AUSTRALIAN MUNITION WORKER

8TH SEPTEMBER, 1918

Howard John REED

Howard John Reed was born around 1890 to parents Albert and Annie Reed.

The 1912 & 1913 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Swan, Western Australia listed Howard Reed, Brass Finisher of Roleystone. His parents Albert Edward Reed, Orchardist & Annie Reed were also listed at Roleystone.

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Fremantle, subdivision of Canning, Western Australia listed Howard John Reed, Engineer, of Forrest Street, Victoria Park.

Howard John Reed married Rosina A. Rice in Perth in 1914.

The 1916 & 1917 Australian Electoral Rolls for the division of Perth, subdivision of Balkatta, Western Australia listed Howard John Reed, Engineer, of 165 Carr Street, West Perth.

Munitions Worker Howard John Reed died on 8th September, 1918 at Rochester, Kent, England.

A death for Howard J. Reed, aged 28, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Medway, Kent, England.

Howard John Reed was buried in St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England – Plot number P. 68.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Worker H. J. Reed – service number 69, Australian Munition Worker. No family details are listed.

Australian Munitions Worker Howard John Reed 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

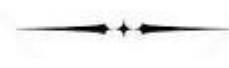
Men enlisted under a joint Australian Commonwealth - Imperial Government scheme for providing skilled Australian workers to British war industries during the First World War. Under this scheme the volunteers would receive free passage to Great Britain, an allowance for travel time, a special allowance 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 Howard John Reed, Australian Munition Worker No.69 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.**



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

REED – On September 8 at Rochester, England, Howard John, the beloved husband of Rosena Reed, of 129 Carr-street, West Perth, and beloved son of Albert and Annie Reed of Roleystone.

Inserted by his loving wife, father and mother.

REED – On September 8, 1918, at Rochester, England, Howard John Reed (late of Dobbie's) loving brother-in-law of Will and May Cox and beloved uncle to little Lionel of Horley-street, York.

(Western Mail, Perth, Western Australia – 27 September, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

Anzac Heroes

REED – In sad and loving memory of my darling husband Howard, who died at Rochester, England, September 8, 1918. Until we meet.

Inserted by his loving wife, Rosena Reed.

REED – In loving memory of our dear brother-in-law, Howard, who fell asleep at Rochester, England, on September 8, 1918.

Some day we will understand.

Inserted by May and Will and little nephew Lionel, of York.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 8 September, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

REED – In sad and loving memory of my darling husband Howard, who passed peacefully away at Rochester, England, September 8, 1918.

Until the day breaks and all shadows pass.

Inserted by his loving wife, Rosena Reed, West Perth.

(The West Australian, Perth, Western Australia – 8 September, 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. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England

St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester, Kent contains 50 Commonwealth War Graves – 23 relate to World War 1 & 27 relate to World War 2.



St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester (Photos by Geoffrey Gillon)



Photo of Australian Munition Worker H. J. Reed's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England.



(Photo courtesy of Kyle Tallett)



St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester *(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)*