



**Our boy soldiers:
when enhanced content +
improved discoverability =
digital commemoration**

**Jennifer Milward
Australian War Memorial**



It all began with an email...

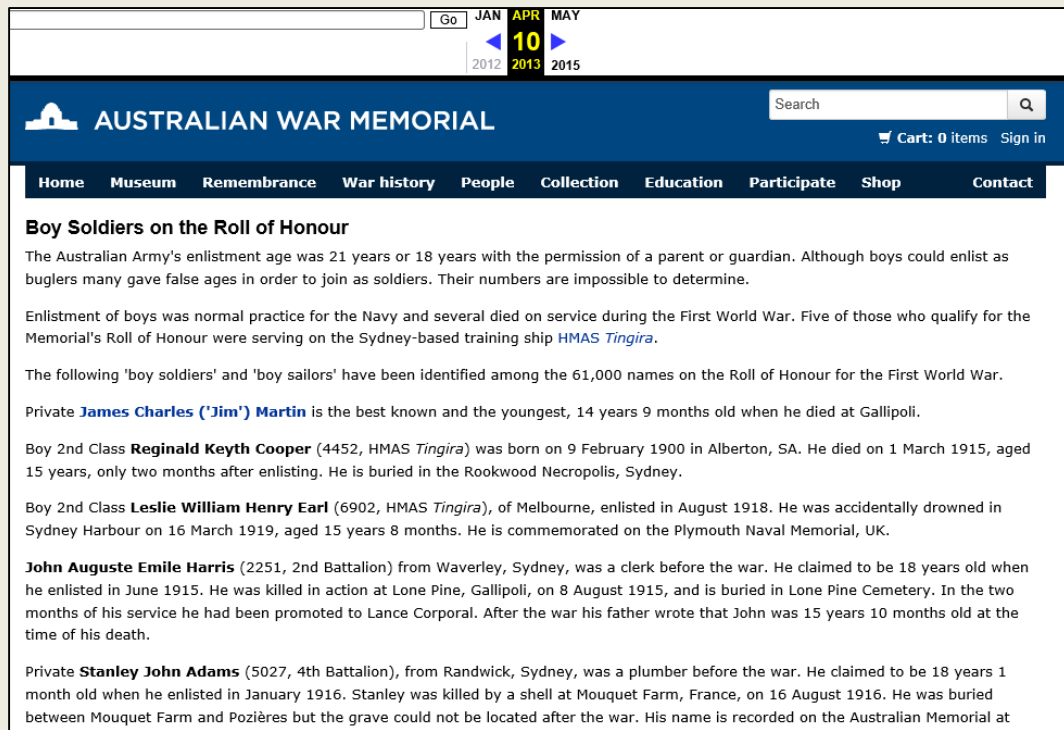
“Hello

I have just been looking at the Boy soldiers on the Roll of Honour for the First World War and cannot find my uncle’s name and I am wondering why. I would be grateful for your comments.”

Source: Personal Correspondence, Australian War Memorial, 2013



The “Boy soldiers” list: Australian War Memorial website, 2013



The screenshot shows the Australian War Memorial website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for Home, Museum, Remembrance, War history, People, Collection, Education, Participate, Shop, and Contact. The main content area is titled "Boy Soldiers on the Roll of Honour" and contains several paragraphs of text. The text describes the enlistment age for boys in the Australian Army and lists several individual soldiers, including James Charles ('Jim') Martin, Reginald Keyth Cooper, Leslie William Henry Earl, John Auguste Emile Harris, and Stanley John Adams. The website's header includes the Australian War Memorial logo and a search bar. The footer of the page features the text "THEIR SPIRIT OUR PRIDE 2014-18" next to a small logo.

Go JAN APR MAY
10
2012 2013 2015

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

Search

Cart: 0 items Sign in

Home Museum Remembrance War history People Collection Education Participate Shop Contact

Boy Soldiers on the Roll of Honour

The Australian Army's enlistment age was 21 years or 18 years with the permission of a parent or guardian. Although boys could enlist as buglers many gave false ages in order to join as soldiers. Their numbers are impossible to determine.

Enlistment of boys was normal practice for the Navy and several died on service during the First World War. Five of those who qualify for the Memorial's Roll of Honour were serving on the Sydney-based training ship [HMAS *Tingira*](#).

The following 'boy soldiers' and 'boy sailors' have been identified among the 61,000 names on the Roll of Honour for the First World War.

Private [James Charles \('Jim'\) Martin](#) is the best known and the youngest, 14 years 9 months old when he died at Gallipoli.

Boy 2nd Class [Reginald Keyth Cooper](#) (4452, HMAS *Tingira*) was born on 9 February 1900 in Alberton, SA. He died on 1 March 1915, aged 15 years, only two months after enlisting. He is buried in the Rookwood Necropolis, Sydney.

Boy 2nd Class [Leslie William Henry Earl](#) (6902, HMAS *Tingira*), of Melbourne, enlisted in August 1918. He was accidentally drowned in Sydney Harbour on 16 March 1919, aged 15 years 8 months. He is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, UK.

[John Auguste Emile Harris](#) (2251, 2nd Battalion) from Waverley, Sydney, was a clerk before the war. He claimed to be 18 years old when he enlisted in June 1915. He was killed in action at Lone Pine, Gallipoli, on 8 August 1915, and is buried in Lone Pine Cemetery. In the two months of his service he had been promoted to Lance Corporal. After the war his father wrote that John was 15 years 10 months old at the time of his death.

Private [Stanley John Adams](#) (5027, 4th Battalion), from Randwick, Sydney, was a plumber before the war. He claimed to be 18 years 1 month old when he enlisted in January 1916. Stanley was killed by a shell at Mouquet Farm, France, on 16 August 1916. He was buried between Mouquet Farm and Pozières but the grave could not be located after the war. His name is recorded on the Australian Memorial at

Source: Internet Archive, image retrieved 14 January 2019



A new approach to the "Boy soldiers" list

1	ANDREWS	JOHN LANCELOT	J L	16	26/09/19
2	WILSON	HARRY NOEL	H N	16	4/08/19
3	CHURCH	CHARLES FRANK	C F	16	18/08/19
4	YOUNG	JAMES	J	16	1/10/19
5	WHITEHOUSE	CHARLES HENRY BENJAMIN	C H B	16	21/09/19
6	SWIFT		LA	16	14/08/19
7	WYLIE	GEORGE	G	16	2/05/19
8	COX	HENRY WILLIAM	H W	16	12/08/19
9	FERGUSON	MILLER MAFFAKING	M M	16	5/05/19
10	FLEMMING	GEOFFREY LIONEL	G L	16	19/06/19
21	O'DONNELL	HUGHIE	H	16	12/05/19
22	BELL	HAROLD THOMAS	H T	16	1/11/19
23	MATHIESON	CLARENCE GEORGE	C G	16	19/07/19
24	MEYERS	COLIN	C	16	19/07/19
25	TRAINER	DAVID CHARLES	D C	16	19/07/19
26	YENDLE	GEORGE ROY REGINALD	G R R	16	19/07/19
27	REDWOOD	MAURICE CHALLIS	M C	16	5/08/1916
28	ROBERTSON	ROY HARRY	R H	16	5/11/1916
29	KERFOOT	ALFRED	A	16	10/11/1916

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [How To Search](#) | [Shop](#) | [Log In](#) | [SUPPORT US](#)

Find war dead & cemeteries Explore history & archives Learn about our activities

FIND WAR DEAD

[How To Search](#)

Last name ?

Initial(s) ? First name ?

 OR

Some records do not include a first name so try searching with initials first.

Country (commemorated in) ?

Cemetery or memorial (commemorated at) ?

Service number ?

Regiment ?

War ?

 First World War Second World War

Match terms exactly ?

CLEAR SEARCH

More Search Options:

[Served with \(country\)](#) [Served in \(army etc\)](#) [Unit](#) [Rank](#) [Secondary regiment](#) [Age at death](#)
[Date of death](#) [Honours & awards](#) [Additional information](#)



Enhanced content: *cleaning the data*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mpeo Id	Individual?	* Name	Service Num...	* Record type
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10080590	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	2005	RCDB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10271135	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	2005	RCDB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10339380	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	5240	RCDB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10365112	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	1576	RCDB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10574298	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	2005	RCDB
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10687666	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis		Master
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10801748	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	213	R
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10801749	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	1576	R
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10801750	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	2005	R
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10801751	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis	5240	R
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11014330	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Williams, Francis		M

People (2)

Church, Charles Frank
Crozier, Frank Rossiter

[View all People >](#)

People (3)

Hart, Leslie
Hart, Leslie
Hart, Leslie

[View all People >](#)

Enhanced content: *adding biographical details and links*

The screenshot displays a digital archive interface. On the left, a blue sidebar contains a tree view of links. The 'Objects' folder is highlighted with a red oval, containing the item 'P08250.001: Black & white - Digital file TIFF'. Other folders include 'Places (2)', 'Conflicts (1)', 'Thesaurus (6)', 'Rolls (4)', and 'Other (2)'. The 'Places' folder is expanded to show 'Birth Place: Wentworthville' and 'Death Place: Belgium'. The 'Conflicts' folder shows 'First World War, 1914-1918'. The 'Thesaurus' folder is expanded to show '54 Infantry', '54th Austral', '54th Austral', 'Australian In', 'Boy soldiers', and 'Private'. The 'Rolls' folder is expanded to show 'First World W', 'Australian R', 'Roll of Honour: Andrews, John Lancelot', and 'First World War Nominal Roll: Andrews, John Lancelot'. The 'Other' folder is expanded to show 'Other (2)'. On the right, a white box displays a 'Web profile' for Private John Gordon. The text in the profile is as follows: 'Private John Gordon (1130, 29th Battalion) was born in Collingwood, Victoria, on 19 September 1900. He enlisted in July 1915 under the name of James Gordon giving his occupation as yardman. John's father gave his consent for enlistment writing "I hope that you will do the best you can for him". John disembarked in France in June 1916 and only one month later he was reported missing, after the battle of Fromelles, 19/20 July 1916. John's name appeared on a German death listed dated 4 November 1916. His identification disc was received from Germany in March 1917 with no information other than that the soldier was deceased. John was officially listed as killed in action in France on 19 July 1916 and is commemorated on the VC Corner Australian Cemetery and Memorial, Fromelles, France. He was 15 years 10 months. John's brother, William Lewis Gordon, tried to enlist in March 1915 but was discharged because of his age.' The words 'Web profile' and 'brother, William Lewis Gordon' are circled in red.

Links

- Authorities (5)
- Objects (1)**
 - P08250.001: Black & white - Digital file TIFF
- Places (2)
 - Birth Place: Wentworthville
 - Death Place: Belgium
- Conflicts (1)
 - First World War, 1914-1918
- Thesaurus (6)
 - 54 Infantry
 - 54th Austral
 - 54th Austral
 - Australian In
 - Boy soldiers
 - Private
- Rolls (4)
 - First World W
 - Australian R
 - Roll of Honour: Andrews, John Lancelot
 - First World War Nominal Roll: Andrews, John Lancelot
- Other (2)

Web profile

Private John Gordon (1130, 29th Battalion) was born in Collingwood, Victoria, on 19 September 1900. He enlisted in July 1915 under the name of James Gordon giving his occupation as yardman. John's father gave his consent for enlistment writing "I hope that you will do the best you can for him". John disembarked in France in June 1916 and only one month later he was reported missing, after the battle of Fromelles, 19/20 July 1916. John's name appeared on a German death listed dated 4 November 1916. His identification disc was received from Germany in March 1917 with no information other than that the soldier was deceased. John was officially listed as killed in action in France on 19 July 1916 and is commemorated on the VC Corner Australian Cemetery and Memorial, Fromelles, France. He was 15 years 10 months. John's brother, William Lewis Gordon, tried to enlist in March 1915 but was discharged because of his age.

Digital commemoration: *about a boy...*




AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P08965.001

Home / Collections / First World War / Menin Gate

Private Arthur Montague Alchin




see P08965-001-001

Service number	2027
Birth Name	Arthur New South Wales, Gunning
Date of birth	22 October 1897
Date of death	18 October 1917
First Name	Arthur
Service	Australian Imperial Force
Unit	35th Australian Infantry Battalion
Place	Belgium
Conflict/Operation	First World War, 1914-1918

Description
Private Arthur Montague Alchin (2027, 35th Battalion) was a mail driver from Gunning, NSW. Arthur was lying on a stretcher after being wounded during the battle of Passchendaele on 12 October 1917 when a shell exploded nearby. Being ill and wounded allowed him to survive the conflict. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Documents in Arthur's Red Cross file reveal that he was "well liked by his chums" and he "had absolutely no fear". His mother later wrote that he was 17 years 11 months at the time of his death. Arthur's uncle, Private Frank Henry Borman, was killed at Polygon Wood.

Collection items



Rolls

Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files:
Unit: 35th Australian Infantry Battalion
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

First World War Embarkation Roll:
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

First World War Nominal Roll:
Unit: 35th Australian Infantry Battalion
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

Timeline

Date of enlistment	26 April 1916
Date of embarkation	24 August 1916
Date of death	12 October 1917
Date of fate	18 October 1917

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Rolls

Roll of Honour:
Unit: 35th Australian Infantry Battalion
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files:
Unit: 35th Australian Infantry Battalion
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

First World War Embarkation Roll:
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

First World War Nominal Roll:
Unit: 35th Australian Infantry Battalion
Conflict: First World War, 1914-1918
Rank: Private

Timeline

Date of enlistment	26 April 1916
Date of embarkation	24 August 1916
Date of death	12 October 1917
Date of fate	18 October 1917

Description

Private Arthur Montague Alchin (2027, 35th Battalion) was a mail driver from Gunning, NSW. Arthur was lying on a stretcher after being wounded during the battle of Passchendaele on 12 October 1917 when a shell exploded nearby killing him and several other wounded soldiers. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Documents in Arthur's Red Cross file reveal that he was "well liked by his chums" and he "had absolutely no fear". His mother later wrote that he was 17 years 11 months at the time of his death. Arthur's uncle, Private Frank Henry Borman, was killed at Polygon Wood.



Improved discoverability: *using subject headings*

Thesauri

Search in

- Labourers
- Lawyers
- Lifesavers
- Manufacturers
- Masseurs
- Mechanics
- Medical personnel
- Merchant Seamen
- Metal workers
- Meteorologists
- Military Advisor
- Military personnel
 - Air force personnel
 - Boy soldiers**
 - Indigenous servicemen
 - Indigenous serviceperson
 - Indigenous servicewomen
 - National servicemen
 - NCOs and other ranks

COLLECTION PEOPLE VISIT COMMEMORATE LEARN GET INVOLVED SHOP

boy soldiers [Advanced Search](#)

All Military events Units Places Library People Articles Collections

Units (1) Library (75) People (179)

35th Australian Light Horse Regiment
[View all Units](#)

Boys in battle.
Soldier boy [music] / words and mus...
The wonder book of soldiers for boy...
Tales of the A.I.F. : digger memori...
Tommy Brown [music] : Australia's s...
[View all Library](#)

Cooper, Reginald Keith
Earl, Leslie William Henry
Wright, Ronald Rothsay
Mills, Clifton
Thompson, Reginald William
[View all People](#)

Articles (5)

...e Lauder family
...nging the boys home: the massive...
...y soldiers on the Roll of Honour ...
...y soldiers
...y soldiers on the Roll of Honour ...

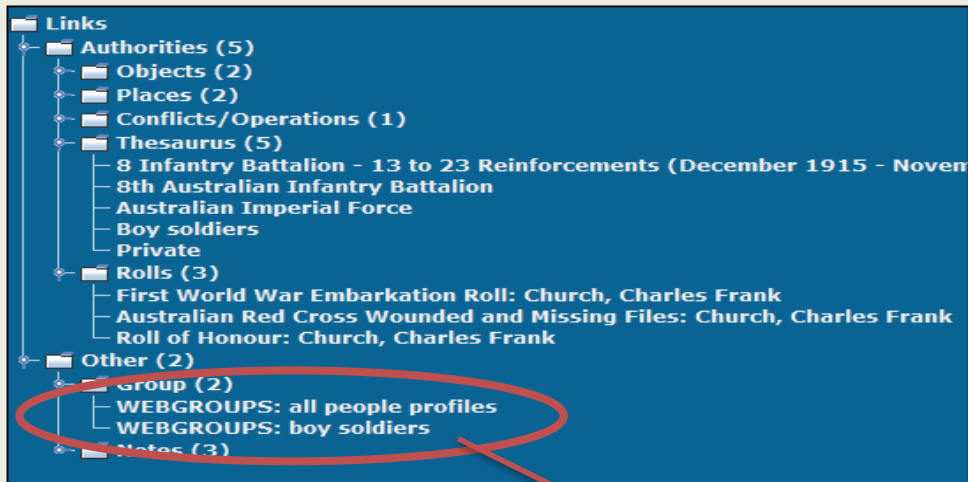
Related information

CONFLICTS
[First World War, 1914-1918](#)

UNITS
[Australian Imperial Force](#)
[35th Australian Infantry Battalion](#)

PLACES
[Belgium](#)
[Gunning](#)

SUBJECTS
[Boy soldiers](#)



**Improved
discoverability:
*creating a MICA
web group***

www.awm.gov.au/webgroups/First%20World%20War%20boy%20soldiers

Media centre

Memorial blog

Memorial Encyclopedia

Wartime Magazine

Journal of the Australian War Memorial

Speeches

Boy soldiers

During the First World War, the Australian Army's enlistment age was 21 years or 18 years with the permission of a parent or guardian. Although boys aged 14-17 could enlist as buglers, trumpeters and musicians, many gave false ages in order to join as soldiers. Their numbers are impossible to determine.

Enlistment of boys was normal practice for the Navy and several died on service during the First World War. Five of those who qualify for the Memorial's Roll of Honour were serving on the Sydney-based training ship HMAS *Tingira*.

Private **James Charles ('Jim') Martin** is the best known boy soldier. He is believed to be the youngest soldier on the Roll of Honour. Jim was 14 years 9 months old when he died at Gallipoli.



Reginald Gerth, a 12-year-old Perth boy who stowed away on the transport RMS Moolan. His three brothers and father enlisted for the First World War and he wanted to be part of what he thought might be an adventure.

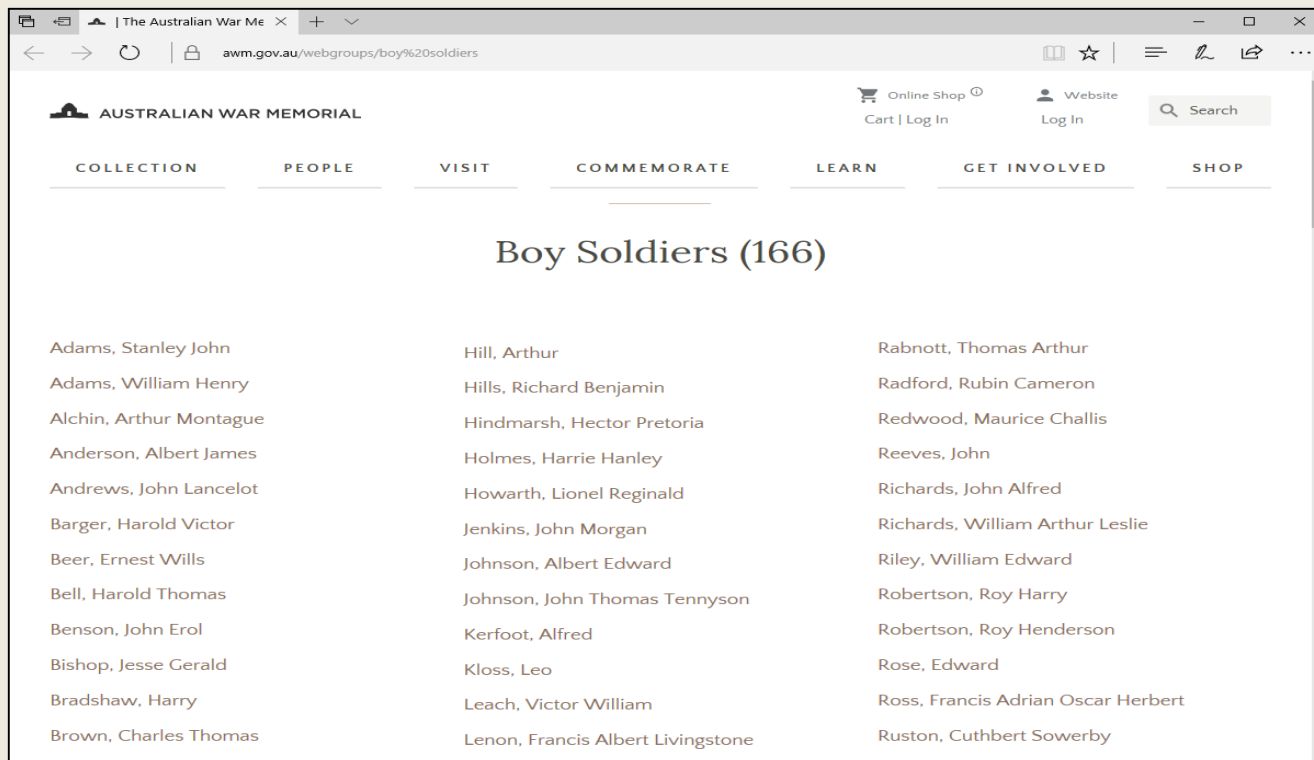
More to see

- [Boy soldiers on the Roll of Honour for the First World War](#)
- [Boy soldiers on the Roll of Honour for the Second World War](#)
- [Private James Charles \('Jim'\) Martin](#)
- [HMAS *Tingira*](#)
- [Enlistment standards](#)
- [Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Register](#)

Last updated: 10/23/2017

**Improved discoverability:
using a MICA web group**

Digital commemoration: *we will remember them*



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `awm.gov.au/webgroups/boy%20soldiers`. The page header includes the Australian War Memorial logo, navigation links for 'Online Shop', 'Website', and 'Log In', and a search bar. The main navigation menu has categories: COLLECTION, PEOPLE, VISIT, COMMEMORATE, LEARN, GET INVOLVED, and SHOP. The page title is 'Boy Soldiers (166)'. Below the title, there are three columns of names:

Adams, Stanley John	Hill, Arthur	Rabnott, Thomas Arthur
Adams, William Henry	Hills, Richard Benjamin	Radford, Rubin Cameron
Alchin, Arthur Montague	Hindmarsh, Hector Pretoria	Redwood, Maurice Challis
Anderson, Albert James	Holmes, Harrie Hanley	Reeves, John
Andrews, John Lancelot	Howarth, Lionel Reginald	Richards, John Alfred
Barger, Harold Victor	Jenkins, John Morgan	Richards, William Arthur Leslie
Beer, Ernest Wills	Johnson, Albert Edward	Riley, William Edward
Bell, Harold Thomas	Johnson, John Thomas Tennyson	Robertson, Roy Harry
Benson, John Erol	Kerfoot, Alfred	Robertson, Roy Henderson
Bishop, Jesse Gerald	Kloss, Leo	Rose, Edward
Bradshaw, Harry	Leach, Victor William	Ross, Francis Adrian Oscar Herbert
Brown, Charles Thomas	Lenon, Francis Albert Livingstone	Ruston, Cuthbert Sowerby

