

Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland

War Memorial



Lest We Forget

World War 1



7438 SERGEANT

R. S. SUMMERS

10TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

30TH MAY, 1918

He Died That We Might Live

Robert Summers GILES

Robert Summers Geils was born at 3 Kintore Terrace, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland around 1884 to parents Robert Lessel Geils & Helen Palmer Geils (nee Reid).

The 1891 Scotland Census recorded Robert S. Geils as a 7 year old Scholar, living with his family at 37 Spa Street, Aberdeen Old Machar, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. His parents were listed as Robert Leslie Geils (Baker, aged 46, born Inverurie, Aberdeenshire) & Hellen Geils (aged 47, born Inch, Aberdeenshire). Robert was the youngest of Robert & Hellen Geils five children listed on this Census – Mary F. Geils (Machinist (Wool), aged 16, born Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire), Antony R. Geils (Baker, aged 14, born Monymusk, Aberdeenshire), Hellen Geils (Assists at Home, aged 12, born Monymusk, Aberdeenshire), George Geils (Scholar, aged 10, born Monymusk, Aberdeenshire) & Robert. Also listed was a boarder - George Pryce (aged 2, born Inverurie, Aberdeenshire).

Robert Summers Geils attended Inverurie Public School in Scotland.

The 1901 Scotland Census recorded Robert S. Geils as a 17 year old Cabinetmaker (apprentice), living with his family at 40 High Street, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. His parents were listed as Robert Geils (Baker, aged 56) & Helen P. Geils (aged 57). Also listed was Robert & Helen's daughter – Helen Geils (Dressmaker, aged 22).

Robert Lessel Geils, father of Robert Summers Geils, died 4th August, 1903 at 14 Hay, Street, Morayshire, Scotland.

Helen Palmer Geils, mother of Robert Summers Geils died 13th March, 1911 at 6 Falconer Place Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

The 1911 England Census recorded Robert Summers Giles as a 27 year old Cabinet Maker (Ship Building) boarding at a Boarding House at 82 Park Road, Newcastle on Tyne, Elswick, Northumberland, England. Margaret Middlemiss (aged 42) was the Boarding House Keeper. Also listed was her uncle – Walter Middlemiss (Widower, Coal Vendor Retired, aged 69). Robert was one of 4 boarders listed on this Census – Archibald Scott (Contractor's Civil Engineer, aged 33), Stuart (Dalgell Robert) Lamb (Widower, Contractor's Civil Engineer, aged 34) & Tom Lambert Wilson (Fitter, aged 30).

According to information provided for his sister for the Roll of Honour - Robert Summers Giles came to Australia when he was 28 years old. A "S. R. Giles", Cabinet Maker, aged 28 was listed as a passenger on *Belgic* which had departed from the port of Liverpool, England on 27th April, 1912 & was bound for Fremantle, Adelaide & Melbourne, Australia.

Robert Summers Giles was a 33 year old, single, Soldier (& Cabinet Maker) from Glenelg, South Australia when he enlisted at Adelaide on 16th February, 1917 with the 10th Infantry Battalion, 25th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 7438 & his religion was Presbyterian. His next of kin was listed as his sister - Mrs Mary Beattie, of 8 Falconer Place, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Robert Giles stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served for 8 years with Gordon Highlanders, 4 years with Field Artillery & 1 year & 5 months with Instructional Staff.

Robert Summers Giles enlisted with substantive rank of Sergeant, previously Acting Staff Sergeant Major Instructional Staff Australia.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was posted to "B" Company at Mitcham on 16th February, 1917. He was transferred to "A" Company the same day then transferred on 16th March, 1917 to "C" Company.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was posted to 25th Reinforcements, 10th Infantry Battalion on 12th September, 1917.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles entrained on 27th October, 1917 from 3rd Military District for embarkation.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Aeneas (A60)* on 30th October, 1917 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 27th December, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was marched in to 2nd Training Battalion at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 27th December, 1917.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was on command at Drill School, Jellalabad Barracks, from Sutton Veny on 23rd February, 1918. He was marched in to 2nd Training Battalion at Sutton Veny from N.C.O. School, Jellalabad Barracks on 17th March, 1918.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles proceeded overseas to France from Sutton Veny via Dover on 1st April, 1918.

Sergeant Giles was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) at Havre, France on 1st April, 1918 & proceeded to join his Unit on 9th April, 1918. Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was taken on strength with 10th Battalion from 25th Reinforcements in the field on 10th April, 1918.

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was killed in action in France on 30th May, 1918.

10th Battalion

The 10th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. The battalion was recruited in South Australia, and together with the 9th, 11th and 12th Battalions, formed the 3rd Brigade.

In March and April 1918 the 10th Battalion helped stop the German spring offensive and was then involved in the operations leading up to the Allied counter-stroke.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 10th Battalion

Merris Sector

29 May, 1918 – Relief was carried out between “C” Company (now Support Company) and “D” Company (now Reserve Company) was completed at 1 a.m.

Casualties:- Killed 1 O.R.

30 May, 1918 – A MOINOR OPERATION was carried out during the night, as per report App. No. XIX. Three counter attacks were repulsed, Casualties:- Killed – O.R.’s 10. Officers 2. Wounded – O.R.’s 52. Officers 4.

(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was buried in La Kreule Military Cemetery, Hazebrouck, France – Plot number I. D. 11. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Sergeant Robert Summers Giles several accounts of the death of Sergeant Giles.

- *“If this is Sergt. Giles of D. Coy. I know him well. He came from Adelaide and had been drill instructor there. About the 30th May we were in front of Merris. We had attacked and taken a German trench and were digging ourselves in about 1.30 in the night. While doing this the Sergeant was hit. It seemed a slight wound and he said at the time that he had a nice one for Blighty. We were surprised to hear that he died later at the D/Station. I know nothing as to burial.”* Informant – Pte W. Carter, No. 7327, A.I.F. 10. D. XVI. Australian Camp, Rouelles.
- *“He was a Sergeant. I knew him from being in the same Company. He was rather tall, about 30. About the 30th May we were at Merris holding the line. In the night we attached, and shortly after I saw him in a shell hole very badly hit. He was living but died shortly after. I don’t know about burial.”* Informant – Pte Watson, No. 2455, A.I.F. 10. D. XIII. Australian Conv. Depot, Rouelles.

- *“He was a Sergeant. I knew him well. He came from Adelaide and had been a carpenter in the Railway shops. He was about 28 and tall. About the 30th May we were at Strascels holding the line. Fritz was strafing and Giles was hit in the head by a piece of shell, and killed out. I saw his body on the stretcher on its way to La Kreule Cemetery between Hazebrouck and _____. I also saw the grave and the white cross over it.”*
Informant – Pte E. G. Grandey, No. 7330, A.I.F. 10. H.Q. Australian Camp, Rouelles.
- *“I knew him. He was a Sergeant and came over with the 25th reinforcement per the S.S. _____ and landed in England Xmas Day 1917. I saw him killed on the right of Strasceke. He would be taken out and would probably be buried but I can’t say where as I was wounded the same night, He enlisted in Adelaide.”*
Informant – Pte J. R. Henschke, A.I.F. 10. D. XIV. Australian Camp, Rouelles

Sergeant Robert Summers Giles was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sergeant Giles’s sister in England – Mrs M. Beattie, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sergeant Robert Summers Giles – service number 7438, of 10th Battalion Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Sergeant R. S. Giles is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 59.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

R. S. Giles is remembered on the South Australian Railways Honour Board located at Adelaide Railway Station, Concourse north end, North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia.



South Australian Railways Honour Board (Photo from RSL Virtual War Memorial)

R. S. Giles is remembered on the Islington Railway Workshops Honour Roll located at Kilburn, Churchill Road, South Australia.



Islington Railway Workshops Honour Roll (Photo from RSL Virtual War Memorial)

R. S. Giles is remembered on the National Soldiers Memorial in Adelaide. The Adelaide National War Memorial commemorates those from South Australia that served in the First World War. The names of those that died are listed inside the Memorial, which is located on the corner of North Terrace & Kintore Avenue, Adelaide.

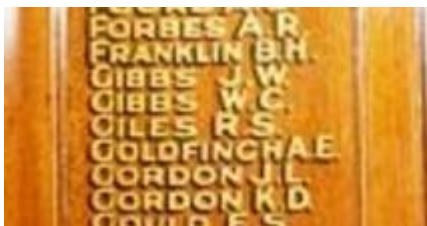
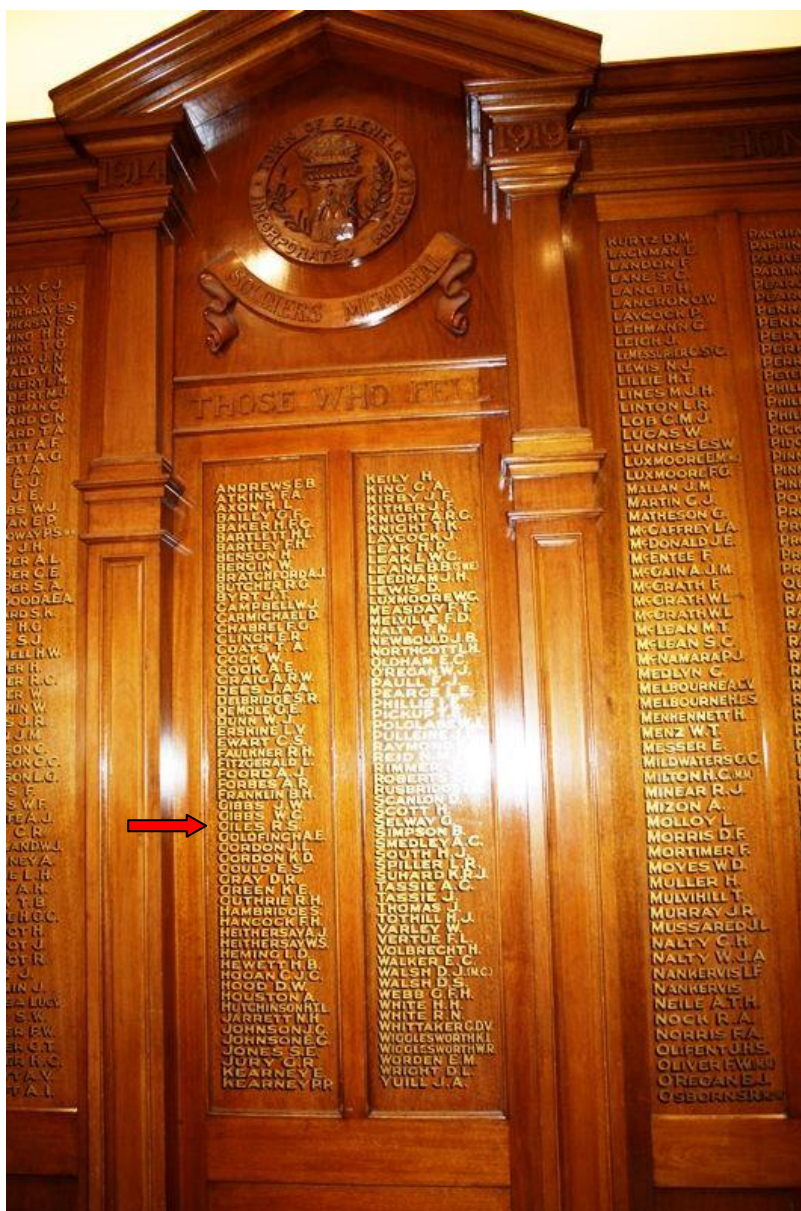


National War Memorial – Adelaide (Photos by Bilby)

R. S. Giles is remembered on the Glenelg Soldiers' Memorial Honour Board which is located in the Town Hall foyer, Jetty Road, Glenelg, South Australia.



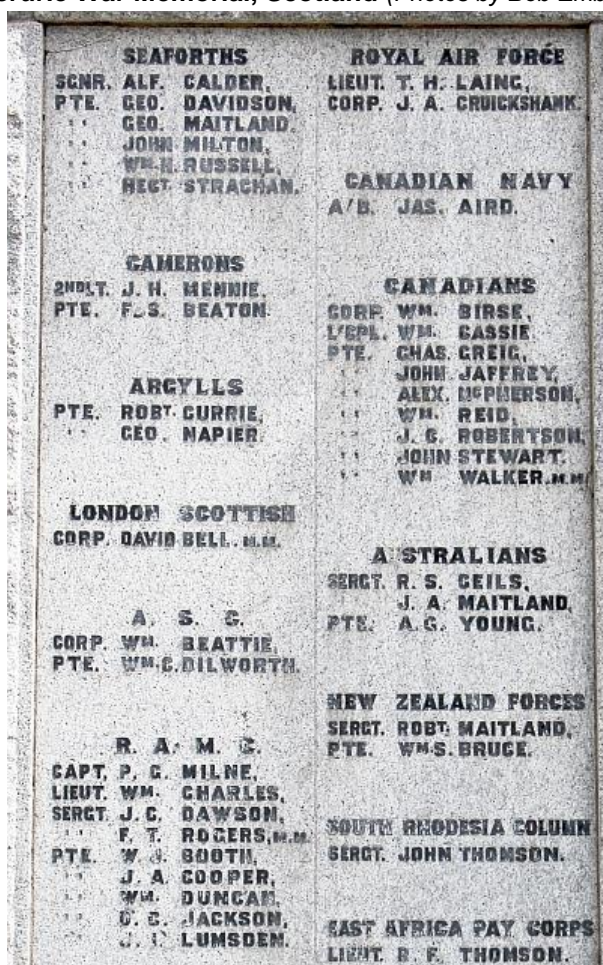
Glenelg Soldiers' Memorial Honour Board (Photos from Monument Australia – Roger Johnson/Bryan Cole)



Sergeant R. S. Geils is remembered on the Inverurie War Memorial, Scotland located at Inverurie Square, Market Place, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.



Inverurie War Memorial, Scotland (Photos by Bob Embleton)



Inverurie War Memorial – west face

Robert Summers Giles is remembered in the Roll of Honour Books held in the Hall of Honour inside The Scottish National War Memorial. The north side of the Hall of Honour is divided by columns into bays, each dedicated to a different regiment and enhanced with battle honours and consecrated colours. On the broad shelf in front of each of the bays, the names of the dead are listed in leather-bound books.



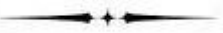
The Scottish National War Memorial & the Hall of Honour & the Roll of Honour Books.

(Photos from The Scottish National War Memorial)



(pages of Sergeant Robert Summers Giles' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

SEND-OFF AT ISLINGTON.

A very pleasing send-off took place at the Islington Workshops yesterday, when the employees of the carriage and waggon shops met to bid farewell to three of their shopmates who are leaving for the front, namely, Sergeant R. S. Giles, Sergeant H. J. Cook, and Corporal P. Wood. Mr. E. Rushton (carriage shop foreman) presented each of the men with a wristlet watch, and said he would like to see many more of the young men in the works enlisting. A band of 25 performers of the works, under the direction of Mr. W. J. Thorne, rendered the "Song of Australia," "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," "Rule Britannia, and "God Save the King" in a capital manner. The meeting ended with three cheers for the boys at the front and the King.

(Daily Herald, Adelaide, South Australia – 18 September, 1915)

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

In the latest casualty list published this week the name of the well-known Glenelgite appears among the killed – Sgt. R. S. Giles, who was killed in France on May 30. He left Australia with his regiment in October, 1917.

(Glenelg Guardian, South Australia – 4 July, 1918)

413th CASUALTY LIST

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Killed in Action

7438, Sgt. S. GILES, Scotland, 30/5/18

(Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 6 July, 1918)

LATE SERGEANT R. S. GILES.

Sergeant R. S. Giles, who was killed in action on May 30, arrived, in Australia in November, 1911, from Scotland. He was employed as a coachbuilder at the Islington workshops, and enlisted in Adelaide in July, 1916. Having had military experience in his native land, and being an expert rifle man, it was not long before he was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant-major. In the capacity of instructor he was diligent in his duties, and always evinced a keen interest in the men under his charge. He earned the esteem of all who came into contact with him. He became attached to the 25th reinforcements to the 10th Battalion, and left Australia for France in October 27, 1917. Sergeant Giles resided at Glenelg.

(Daily Herald, Adelaide, South Australia – 16 July, 1918) & (Chronicle, Adelaide, South Australia – 27 July, 1918)

Robert S. Geils is named on the Geils Family Headstone located at Inverurie Bas Cemetery, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.



Geils Family Headstone (Photos by GariochGraver)

Inscription:

In loving memory of ROBERT LESSEL GEILS baker d.2 Aug.1903 aged 58, his son ROBERT d.in infancy.

His wife HELEN P REID d.13 Mar.1911 aged 67.

Also his mother JANE SEIVWRIGHT widow of GEORGE GEILS d.3 Feb.1844 aged 74.



Also Their Son

SGT. ROBERT S. GEILS

10TH Btn. A.I.F.

Killed In Action

30 May 1918

Aged 34 Years

Buried at La Krenle

Hazebrouck



Sergeant Robert Summers Giles



Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Sergeant R. S. Giles does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

He Died That We Might Live

La Kreule Military Cemetery, Hazebrouck, France

La Kreule is a small hamlet 2 kilometres north of Hazebrouck, on the road to St Sylvestre-Cappel and Steenvoorde.

La Kreule Military Cemetery was opened in April 1918 by the 1st and 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Stations, which came back from Outtersteene ahead of the German advance, and the 17th, which arrived from Lijssenthoek. These three stations, known collectively as "Ana Jana Siding", were posted to the north of La Kreule, but in the middle of April they withdrew to Blendecques, near St. Omer, and the cemetery was then used by heavy artillery and fighting units. In October 1918, the 17th Casualty Clearing Station returned with the 8th and the 64th and the cemetery was closed at the end of the month.

The cemetery contains 576 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 11 German war graves.

(Information & photos from CWGC)





Photo of Serjeant R. S. Giles' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in La Kreule Military Cemetery, Hazebrouck, France.



(Photo from Billion Graves)

