

WAR WORKERS.

During the 1914-18 War, assistance from Australia to the United Kingdom was by no means confined to the support given to the Allied cause by the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth, who volunteered their services to help win the war.

There was also the ready response by the Australian civil population to the appeal by the British authorities for assistance, initially, of chemists to help in expanding the production of explosives in British factories and, subsequently, also for draughtsmen, skilled engineering tradesmen and, early in 1917, even for "... strong laborers for constructional work for munitions of war factories, especially navvies".

In total the Australian Department of Defence recruited and sent to England 5050 civilian volunteers under this voluntary Munitions Workers Scheme and, in addition, 231 others, discharged from the A.I.F. in England, undertook munitions or other war work in England under the same agreement.

Of these, the largest group was "navvies" or "unskilled workers" of whom 2222 had been sent to England before the Scheme was suspended in mid-1918. Skilled workers included 530 fitters, 230 turners, 49 tool-makers, 143 boiler-makers, 35 draughtsmen, 102 chemists and varying numbers in 28 other categories.

Administered by the Department of Defence in Australia, supervised in England by Leighton and organised by the Arsenal Branch of the Australian High Commissioner's Office, the Scheme not only provided invaluable assistance in the British section of the war effort but also assured valuable side effects for Australia. It enabled a large number of Australians skilled in a wide variety of trades to ^{acquire} ~~acquire~~ practical experience in virtually all the skills involved in the production in quantity under war-time conditions of the munitions of war in use and being developed at that time.

When the time came to staff the Australian Munitions Factories developed after the 1914-18 War ended, many of these "war workers" were given the opportunity of assisting in bringing into successful production the same or similar munitions for the Australian Forces.

FACTORY	1948	1949	1950	1952	1953	1954	1956	1957
<u>AMMUNITION</u>								
Footscray, Vic.	994	1,063	1,123	1,405	1,252	1,355	1,693	1,471
Hendon, S.A.	=	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Finsbury, S.A.	221	160	175	53	40	42	40	4
Rutherford, N.S.W.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Welshpool, W.A.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rocklea, Q'ld.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derwent Park, Tas.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
"Minor" Factories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-Total	1,215	1,223	1,298	1,458	1,292	1,397	1,733	1,475
<u>EXPLOSIVES</u>								
Maribyrnong, Vic.	584	619	668	1,102	1,031	1,047	1,331	842
Ballarat, Vic.	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salisbury, S.A.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	New St. Mary's 25
Villawood, N.S.W.	26	15	8)	149	162	153	141	152
St. Mary's, N.S.W.	107	82	92)			Albion 8	Albion 204	Albion 227
Mulwala, N.S.W.	187	224	226	331	315	449	320	283
Sub-Total	945	940	994	1,582	1,508	1,657	1,996	1,529
<u>SMALL-ARMS</u>								
Lithgow, N.S.W.	1,360	1,338	1,468	1,667	1,318	1,263	1,167	870
Bathurst, N.S.W.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Orange, N.S.W.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
"Minor" Factories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-Total	1,360	1,338	1,468	1,667	1,318	1,263	1,167	870
<u>ORDNANCE</u>								
Maribyrnong, Vic.	1,342	1,402	1,435	1,500	1,377	1,243	1,229	982
Bendigo, Vic.	673	759	953	1,205	1,205	1,131	1,218	837
Echuca, Vic.	213	208	187	254	217	203	231	240
Port Melbourne, Vic.	110	111	118	146	160	164	167	168
Central Drawing Office, Maribyrnong, Vic.	103	108	105	104	102	89	108	101
"Minor" Factories	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-Total	2,441	2,588	2,798	3,209	3,061	2,830	2,953	2,328
<u>Totals - All Establishments</u>								
	5,961	6,089	6,558	7,916	7,173	7,117	7,919	6,202