

Private Johann Berthold Riedel©
Regimental number: 602
32nd Battalion, Australian Infantry Force

born: 29 October 1888–died: 21 July 1916

Johann Berthold Riedel was born in Nuriootpa, South Australia, on 29 October 1888, the eldest child of August Julius Gustav Riedel and Eleonora Hanne Kalleske. Their other children were George Arthur (b. 1890),¹ George Conrad Waldemar (b. 1892),² Sophie Agnes (b. 1893),³ Rosina Hilda (b. 1897),⁴ Paul Gerhard (b. 1900),⁵ Herbert Richard Gustav (b. 1901),⁶ and Meta Hanne (b. 1903).⁷

As one might surmise from his name, Johann Berthold's parents were of German origin. The parents of August Julius Gustav (known as Gustav) emigrated from Germany in 1862, and Eleonora's father Eduard was on the first shipment of German immigrants to South Australia in 1838.⁸

Johann Berthold was known as Bert, or Burt, and will be referred to hereinafter as Bert. His father Gustav was a bootmaker in Nuriootpa.⁹ He was also a keen experimental gardener, introducing the tobacco plant to the area, and growing and curing tobacco.¹⁰ Gustav and Johanne married in 1887 in the Lutheran Evangelical church in Nuriootpa.¹¹ In 1914 their bootmaking business was put up for sale,¹² and in 1922 Gustav was living in Evandale, a district of Adelaide, still working as a bootmaker.¹³

Bert's trade was listed on his service record as fruit preserving.¹⁴ According to his obituary in a local newspaper, he worked for a number of years at Mr. G. Penn's Preserving Works in both Nuriootpa and Adelaide.¹⁵ He then moved to Sydney and joined the Sydney Railway Department, working at the Eveleigh stores. After two years there, he returned to South Australia to work for the Angas Park Preserving Works. He then helped out in his father's bootmaking business prior to enlisting.

Bert enlisted on 9 July 1915, in Keswick, South Australia, becoming a private in the 32nd Battalion of the Australian Infantry Force (AIF), B Company. He was 5 feet 8.75 inches tall, weighed 202 pounds, and had blue eyes and light brown hair. He also had tattoos on both forearms. According to his great-nephew, he spoke fluent German.¹⁶

The first months were spent training at Mitcham, just south of Adelaide. During this time Private Riedel was twice found to be absent without leave; he was confined to barracks for three days on both occasions and docked a day's pay.

On 18 November 1915 Private Riedel embarked on HMAT *Geelong* in Adelaide and sailed with the 32nd Battalion to Egypt. They disembarked on 18 December in Suez. At this time, the Gallipoli campaign was over, and the AIF took some time to reorganize and prepare to be sent to the Western Front.¹⁷ During this time Private Riedel was again found absent without leave from parade in Ismailia, and was confined to barracks for three days and docked two days' pay.



Private John Bert Riedel
Virtual War Museum Australia

On 17 June 1916 the battalion embarked in Alexandria on the HMT *Transylvania* and set sail for Marseilles in southern France, disembarking on 23 June. The battalion traveled by train to Steenbecque in Northern France and set up camp at Morbecque.¹⁸ Much of the next couple of weeks was spent on gas helmet practice.¹⁹

On 19 July 1916, less than a month after arriving in France, the battalion was thrust into action in the Battle of Fromelles. One can only guess how Private Riedel felt about going into battle against the country of his ancestors.

The battalion withdrew the next day, having suffered heavy casualties, with 4 officers and 67 other ranks (ORs) killed, 8 officers and 367 ORs wounded, and 5 officers and 214 ORs missing. One of those killed was Private Riedel. He was admitted on 20 July to the 15th Field Ambulance Station with gunshot wounds to the chest and then moved on 21 July to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station in Bailleul, where he was declared dead on his arrival there. He was buried the same day in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, Reference II. F. 30.²⁰ The inscription on his headstone reads:

THY WILL BE DONE

The cemetery lies in the east end of the town of Bailleul, in the Nord department of the Hauts-de-France region; it contains the remains of 4344 soldiers from the two world wars.

Private Bert Riedel received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service. He also received the 1914–15 Star, for service in any theatre of the war in 1914–15. In addition, his name is commemorated on the Adelaide National War Memorial, the Angaston District WW1 Roll of Honour, the Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour, and the Nuriootpa Honor Board WW1.²¹

Bert's parents continued to live in Evandale, South Australia, where they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1937.²² Gustav died in 1944,²³ and Johanne in 1947.²⁴

Bert's younger brother **George Arthur** married Irene Alma Oakes in 1916, in Newtown, New South Wales (NSW),²⁵ which is a long way (1300 km) from George Arthur's birthplace of Nuriootpa, South Australia. Irene had been born in Orange, NSW.²⁶ They lived for many years in Taree, NSW, where George Arthur was a railway guard.²⁷ They then moved to Kempsey, NSW, where he remained a railway employee.²⁸ George Arthur died in August 1962,²⁹ and Irene just two months later.³⁰

Bert's brother **George Conrad Waldemar** Riedel changed his name to George Riddell by deed poll in 1919,³¹ perhaps because of anti-German sentiment at the end of WW I. Around the same time he married Olive Beryl Knott,³² and they lived in Nuriootpa, where he was an excise officer.³³ In 1934 they moved, with their two daughters, to Gleneig, where he had been transferred to the head excise office.³⁴ George died in 1940, at age 48,³⁵ whereas Olive lived another 41 years, dying in 1981 aged 85.³⁶

Bert's sister **Sophie Agnes** was the organist for St. Petri's Church in Nuriootpa in 1917, the year of its 50th anniversary.³⁷ The following year she married Arthur Schiller in St. Stephen's Church, Adelaide.³⁸ Arthur was a storekeeper in Nuriootpa,³⁹ but in 1932 his drapery business went into bankruptcy.⁴⁰ He was discharged from bankruptcy in May 1935.⁴¹ Sophie died in 1983⁴² and Arthur in 1986.⁴³

Bert's sister **Hilda Rosina** did not live long. She died of whooping cough in 1899, at the age of 17 months.⁴⁴

Bert's brother **Paul Gerhard** had a career in the postal service, going from being a telegraph messenger in Greenock, South Australia, to working as a postal assistant in Edithsburgh,⁴⁵ then a postmaster in Woodside,⁴⁶ and finally a postmen's overseer in Unley.⁴⁷ In 1924 he married Ettie Flora Stockings in Adelaide.⁴⁸ Ettie died in 1974⁴⁹ and Paul Gerhard in 1978.⁵⁰

Bert's youngest brother, **Herbert**, married Florence Pryor in 1933.⁵¹ Florence was a divorcee,⁵² née Wilshire.⁵³ Herbert was a manager in the retail furnishings industry.⁵⁴ He died in 1986,⁵⁵ and Florence in 1990.⁵⁶

Bert's youngest sister, **Meta Hanne**, had a beautiful singing voice, "a rich mezzo-soprano, admirable in its lower register," according to a newspaper report on a concert in 1922.⁵⁷ She married Ronald Arthur Pudney in 1934.⁵⁸ They lived in Hindmarsh, a suburb of Adelaide, where he was a manufacturer.⁵⁹ However, in 1946, when Ronald was admitted into hospital, his occupation was listed as fruiterer employee.⁶⁰ He lived another 50 years, dying in 1996.⁶¹ Meta predeceased him in 1986.⁶²

© 2025 BIFHSGO

¹ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for George Arthur Riedel

² "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for George Conrad Waldemar Riedel

³ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Sophie Agnes Riedel

⁴ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Rosina Hilda Riedel

⁵ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Paul Gerhard Riedel

⁶ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Herbert Richard Gustav Riedel

⁷ "Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Meta Hanne Riedel

⁸ "Golden Wedding at Evandale," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 22 September 1937, page 12, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/74361934?searchTerm=riedel%20nuriootpa>: accessed 17 March 2025), search for Riedel

⁹ "Australia, City Directories and Almanacs, 1845–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Gustave Riedel, 1903

¹⁰ "Obituary," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 9 June 1944, page 9, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/43207766?searchTerm=gustav%20riedel>: accessed 17 March 2025), search for Riedel

¹¹ "Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 18 March 2025), entry for August Julius Gustav Riedel

¹² "Businesses, Partnerships etc.," *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), 29 Jan 1914, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/210338205?searchTerm=riedel%20nuriootpa>: accessed 18 March 2025), search for Riedel

-
- ¹³ "Australia, City Directories and Almanacs, 1845–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for Gustave Riedel, 1922
- ¹⁴ "Australia, WW1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 19 March 2025), entry for John Burt Riedel, service number 602. Unless otherwise specified, all information about his military service comes from this source.
- ¹⁵ "The Late Private J. B. Riedel," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 15 August 1916, page 8, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/6469918?searchTerm=riedel%20nuriootpa>: accessed 19 March 2025), search for Riedel Nuriootpa
- ¹⁶ "Riedel, John Bert, Biography," *Virtual War Memorial Australia* (<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/126580>: accessed 20 March 2025), entry for John Bert Riedel
- ¹⁷ "32nd Battalion (Australia)," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/32nd_Battalion_\(Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/32nd_Battalion_(Australia)): accessed 20 March 2025), search for 32nd Battalion, AIF
- ¹⁸ "Australian Imperial Force Unit War Diaries, 1914–18 War - AWM4 Subclass 23/49, 32nd Infantry Battalion," *Australian War Memorial* (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1342638>: accessed 20 March 2025), search for 32nd Battalion war diary
- ¹⁹ "Australian Imperial Force Unit War Diaries, 1914–18 War - AWM4 Subclass 23/49, 32nd Infantry Battalion," *Australian War Memorial* (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1343029>: accessed 20 March 2025), search for 32nd Battalion war diary
- ²⁰ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 21 March 2025), entry for John Bert Riedel, Service Number 602
- ²¹ "Riedel, John Bert, Biography," *Virtual War Memorial Australia* (<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/126580>: accessed 20 March 2025), entry for John Bert Riedel
- ²² "Golden Wedding at Evandale," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 22 September 1937, page 12, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/74361934?searchTerm=riedel%20nuriootpa>: accessed 17 March 2025), search for Riedel
- ²³ "Australia, Death Index, 1787–1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for August Julius Gustav Riedel
- ²⁴ "Australia, Death Index, 1787–1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Johanna Eleonore Riedel
- ²⁵ "Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for George A Riedel
- ²⁶ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Irene Alma Riedel
- ²⁷ "Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for George Arthur Riedel, 1930
- ²⁸ "Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for George Arthur Riedel, 1943
- ²⁹ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for George Arthur Riedel
- ³⁰ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Irene Alma Riedel
- ³¹ "Public Notices," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 21 March 1919, page 2, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/5638725?searchTerm=george%20conrad%20waldemar%20riedel>: accessed 23 March 2025), search for George Conrad Waldemar Riedel
- ³² "Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for George Riedel

-
- ³³ "Australia, City Directories and Almanacs, 1845–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 17 March 2025), entry for George Riddell, 1930
- ³⁴ "Nuriootpa," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 24 July 1934, page 4, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/35122396?search>: accessed 23 March 2025), search for George Riddell
- ³⁵ "Australia, Death Index, 1787–1985," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for George Riddell
- ³⁶ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Olive B. Riddell
- ³⁷ "St. Petri's Church, Nuriootpa," *The Leader* (Angaston), 1 December 1927, page 1, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/165881232?searchTerm=sophie%20riedel>: accessed 23 March 2025), search for Sophie Riedel
- ³⁸ "Australia & New Zealand, Civil Marriages & Divorce," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com: accessed 23 March 2025), search for Sophie Agnes Riedel
- ³⁹ "Australia, City Directories and Almanacs, 1845–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 23 March 2025), entry for Arthur Schiller, 1922
- ⁴⁰ "Discharge from Bankruptcy Suspended," *The News* (Adelaide), 24 May 1935, page 3, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/128482705?searchTerm=arthur%20schiller>: accessed 23 March 2025), search for Arthur Schiller
- ⁴¹ "Suspended Discharge Granted," *The Chronicle* (Adelaide), 30 May 1935, page 45, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/92323730?searchTerm=arthur%20schiller>: accessed 23 March 2025), search for Arthur Schiller
- ⁴² "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Sophie Agnes Schiller
- ⁴³ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Arthur Schiller
- ⁴⁴ "Deaths," *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), 19 April 1899, page 2, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/209528881?searchTerm=riedel%20nuriootpa>: accessed 24 March 2025), search for Hilda Rosina Riedel
- ⁴⁵ "Postal Department Changes," *The Register* (Adelaide), 3 July 1917, page 4, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/60467278?searchTerm=paul%20gerhard>: accessed 24 March 2025), search for Paul Gerhard
- ⁴⁶ "Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Paul Gerhard Riedel, 1939
- ⁴⁷ "Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Paul Gerhard Riedel, 1943
- ⁴⁸ "Riedel - Stockings Wedding," *The Register* (Adelaide), 28 October, 1924, page 3, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/57886621?searchTerm=paul%20gerhard>: accessed 24 March 2025), search for Paul Gerhard
- ⁴⁹ "Australia Billion Graves Cemetery Index," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com: accessed 24 March 2025), entry for Ettie Flora Riedel
- ⁵⁰ "Australia Billion Graves Cemetery Index," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com: accessed 24 March 2025), entry for Paul Gehard Garry Riedel [sic]
- ⁵¹ "Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Herbert Richard Gustav Riedel

-
- ⁵² "Undefended Divorce Cases," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 15 December 1932, page 10, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/74008996?searchTerm=florence%20rowsell>: accessed 25 March 2025), search for Florence Rowsell Pryor
- ⁵³ "Family Notices," *The Chronicle* (Adelaide), 27 December 1913, page 33, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/88773262?searchTerm=florence%20rowsell>: accessed 25 March 2025), search for Florence Rowsell
- ⁵⁴ "Australian National Passengers Lists 1898–1972," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com: accessed 25 March 2025), entry for Herbert Richard Gustav Riedel
- ⁵⁵ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Herbert Richard Riedel
- ⁵⁶ "Victoria, Australia, Death Index, 1840–1992," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 25 March 2025), entry for Florence Rowsell Riedel
- ⁵⁷ "Oscar Taeuber's Concert," *The Mail* (Adelaide), 9 December 1922, page 9, *Trove* (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63772646?searchTerm=meta%20riedel>: accessed 25 March 2025) search for Meta Riedel
- ⁵⁸ "Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Meta Hanne Riedel
- ⁵⁹ "Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Ronald Arthur Pudney, 1941
- ⁶⁰ "South Australia, Australia, Adelaide Hospital Admission Registers, 1841–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 March 2025), entry for Ronald Pudney
- ⁶¹ "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Ronald Arthur Pudney
- ⁶² "Australia and New Zealand, Find a Grave Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 March 2025), entry for Meta Hanne Pudney. Note that this record does not list the date of death, but the *Geneanet* Community Trees Index for Meta Hanne Riedel gives it as 1986.