

Bendigo Cemetery



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Powder Factory Explosion at Eaglehawk in 1887

Eight people killed

A terrible explosion occurred at Mr Arblaster's Powder Factory, located near Eaglehawk, at 11 o'clock on Wednesday morning 23rd February 1887. Eight men and boys were to die because of this explosion.

Compiler's note: These notes form part of the cemetery burial details that this compilation USB tries to record but not show detailed explanations of what went wrong. Other writings like the book by John Kelly explain these details in much more detail. With this said, this compilation of these events is still a longish document.

Killed by the explosive blast and burns on site at the factory on Wednesday 23/02/1887.

- **Robert Julius Herman Straub, 13 years, of the Welcome Inn Hotel, Eaglehawk.
Parents: Louis and Lousia Park Nee: Abel)
Robert was buried in the Eaglehawk Cemetery on Friday 25/02/1887.
*His death reg # was 1519***
- **Maxwell John Parker, 15 years 6 months, of the Miners' Arms Hotel, Eaglehawk.
Parents: Joseph Johnson and Christina (nee: Downie)
Maxwell was buried in the Eaglehawk Cemetery on Friday 25/02/1887 at about 10 am.
*His death reg # was 1521***
- **Samuel Arblaster, aged 14 years, residing in Panton Street, Eaglehawk, son of the proprietor.
Parents: Joseph Thompson and Ellen (nee: Sheahan),**

**Samuel was buried at the Eaglehawk Cemetery on Sunday
27/02/1887.**

His death reg # was 1523

- **Arthur Sylvester, 15 years, Frederick Street, Ironbark.
Parents: William and Emma (nee: Picken). Arthur was
buried in the Sandhurst Cemetery
on Sunday 27/02/1887, in an earthen grave, in section A1
grave #7344, int #10216.
*His death reg # was 1526***
- **Frank (Francis) Westphalen, a carpenter aged 22 years,
son of Mr Westphalen, of Garsed Street.
Parents: Harry and Henrietta (nee: Schults)
Frank was buried in the Sandhurst Cemetery on Friday
25/02/1887 at about 4 pm.
Frank was given a full military funeral with a firing party.
*His death reg # was 1527***

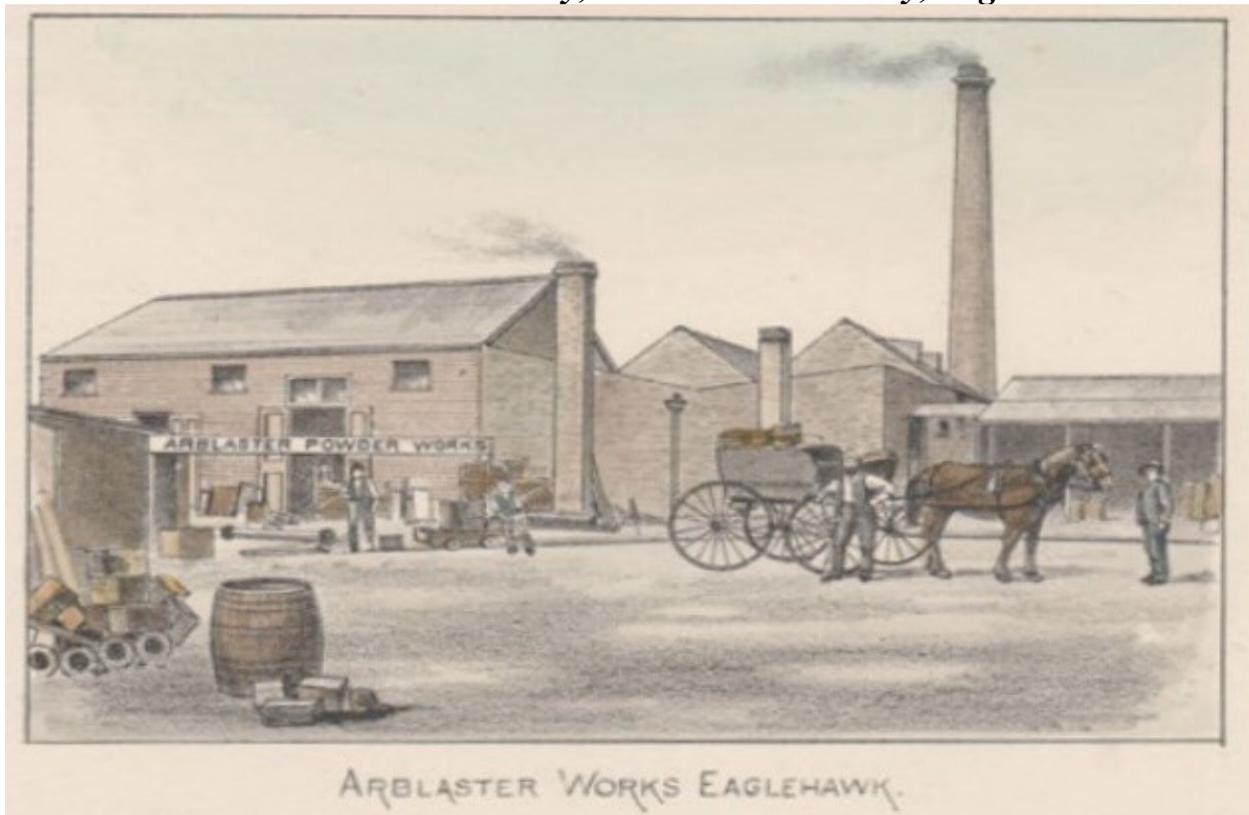
Died in the Bendigo Hospital.

- **George Wild, 15 years old, residing with his parents, off
Loudon Street, Job's Gully.
Parents: James and Esther (Nee: Mills)
George died in hospital at 7 pm on Wednesday 23/02/1887.
George was buried in the Eaglehawk Cemetery on Friday
25/02/1887 at about 4 pm.
He is buried in section A2 grave #122 with his parents.
There is a headstone on the grave.
*His death reg # was 1520***
 - **Amos COOPER, 15 years old.
Parents: Thomas and Lucy Ann (nee: Mason)
Amos died in hospital just after midnight on Thu
24/02/1887
and was buried at the Sandhurst Cemetery on Saturday
26/02/1887
Section Mon A1 grave #6361 int #10215. It is an earthen
grave.
*His Death Index Reg was #4188***
- **Fritz KOENEMANN, 31 years old. He was an expert with
experience in making power and explosives.
Fritz died in the Bendigo Hospital 11.20 pm Friday**

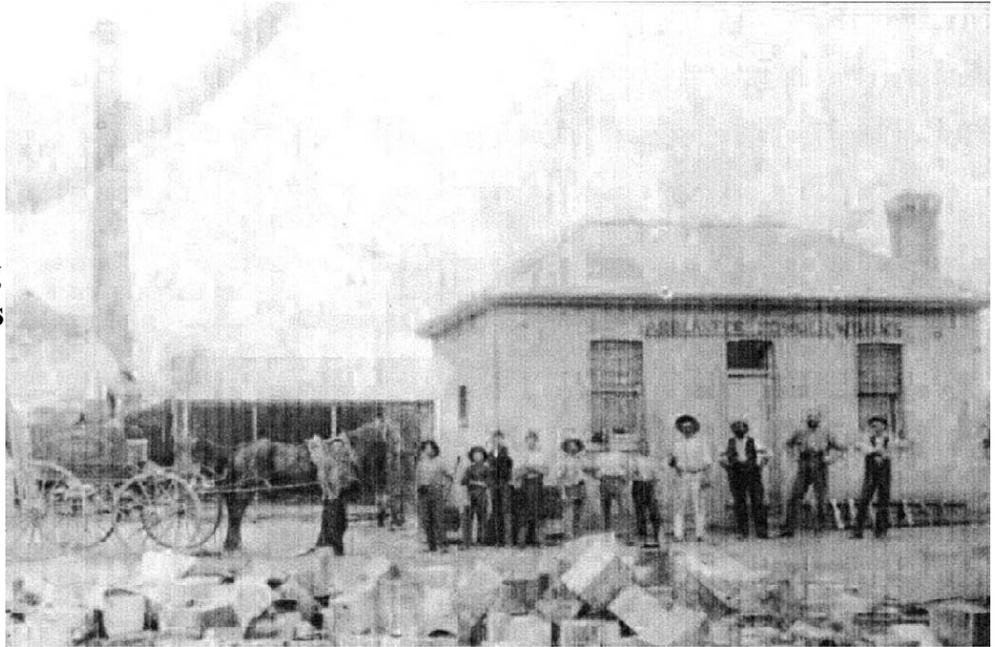
25/02/1887
and was buried at the Eaglehawk Cemetery on Sunday
27/02/1887
in section H2 grave #57, int #3451. It has no headstone on a
fenced grave.

Fritz was married to Eliza Veal and had 2 children
His Death Index Reg was #4181

An early sketch
Mr Arblaster's Powder Factory, located at Job's Gully, Eaglehawk



Workers outside the powder factory just prior to the 1887 explosion. Within days of the photograph being taken, all the boys and two of the men were dead.



An illustration from the Australasian of March 1887 shows the aftermath of the explosion.



The source of these photos and the book by John Kelly from the pages of the [Bendigo Advertiser](#) of May 11th, 2015

As the details unfolded

Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Thu 24 Feb 1887 Page 3

TERRIBLE EXPLOSION AT EAGLEHAWK.

DESTRUCTION OF MR ARBLASTER'S POWDER FACTORY.

SEVEN PERSONS KILLED AND ONE INJURED.

A terrible explosion occurred near Eaglehawk yesterday morning at about

eleven o'clock, which resulted in very serious loss of life, besides destruction of valuable property. At the hour named the residents of Eaglehawk were startled by two loud reports, the shock of which was so great that many people likened it to an earthquake. The noise was also heard in Sandhurst, and the volume of smoke which rose from the scene of the explosion - Arblaster's Powder Factory - was distinctly noticed in many parts of the city.

Very soon hundreds of people were attracted to the spot, and the manager, Fritz Koenemann, and a boy named Amos Cooper were speedily discovered near the factory suffering from serious injuries. They were immediately sent to the Bendigo Hospital, Mr James, of Eaglehawk, conveying them thither by means of his buggy.

Investigation showed that the buildings had been blown to pieces, and the debris was in flames. The magazine was noticed to be intact, although the flames were in close proximity, and had, as a matter of fact, ignited a portion of the roof. The report that there were ten tons of explosives in the magazine had the effect of deterring the crowd which had gathered from approaching too near. The scene was an appalling one of flames, destruction, and death.

The body of a boy named Maxwell Parker, son of the landlord of the Miners' Arms Hotel, Eaglehawk was first discovered. The bodies of two others could be distinctly seen in the flames.

The people who had gathered, upon the scene were unable to do anything to subdue the flames, or search for survivors, if any, and had the fire brigades been available, there was no water with which to extinguish the flames. In many cases the relatives of those employed were vainly seeking for tidings of those saved or dead, but on all hands nothing but confusing stories were forthcoming. The number of men employed at the factory was variously estimated, one report stating it to be twenty one. This was afterwards found to be incorrect.

It was reported that Dewar, the engine driver, Meurer, and Samuel Arblaster, son of the proprietor, had escaped uninjured. The report so far as Dewar and Meurer were concerned was true enough, but although the escape of young Arblaster was repeated on all hands with a convincing degree of definiteness, the fact that he had not come home, and could not be found, made the truth of the good news very doubtful. It was subsequently found that Arblaster did not escape as supposed. Dewar and Meurer, who worked in an outer shed, had been the most fortunate and rendered effective service to their comrades. They got the boy Parker away from the debris, but he was badly burnt and died after they tore his clothes off.

They then assisted Koenemann out, and he in his turn assisted the lad Cooper out, each of them being taken to the hospital. The boy Wild was pinned down by some debris, but was released by Dewar. His injuries, which were very serious, subsequently proved fatal. Information of the disaster was telegraphed to Mr Joseph T Arblaster, the proprietor, who was absent in Sydney.

The report that there were ten tons of explosives in the magazine turned out to be incorrect. Nitro glycerine and dynamite were never kept in stock, but there was a quantity of safety powder, grain powder, and colonial pellets in the magazine.

After some time the magazine was entered by several men, and pronounced out of danger. About two hours after the explosion, F Westphalen, A Sylvester, R Straub, and S Arblaster, were reported to be missing. As soon as it was practicable search was made, the results of which are given in detail below.

During the greater part of the day the fire was burning pretty strongly. The rumour spread about that bodies could be discerned in the flames, and the morbid curiosity of a great number was aroused. Several who considered that their lives were in jeopardy by reason of the fact that large quantities of powder supposed to be stored in the magazine nearby would explode, would run towards the spot, their curiosity getting the better of them, and then retreat hastily to a safe distance. One body could be seen burning and crumbling to ashes, but nothing could then be done to recover it. However, at about two o'clock the ruins were turned over, and the recovery of the bodies was effected.

The remains of two were found lying together. Those, it is supposed were those of Samuel Arblaster and Robert Straub, a buckle of a belt that was worn by the former having been picked up near the body, which led to its identification. Sylvester's bones were found a few yards further off, in what was called the pellet room.

The remains of the poor young man, Francis Westphalen, were come across near the magazine. It is only conjectured that they were the remains of those mentioned. That they were human bones was beyond a doubt but whose they were is only supposed by the positions in which found. The bones were falling to pieces and were placed on sheets of iron and covered over with bags.

The sight was very shocking, and terrified beholders, taking hasty glances, gave vent to compassionate and in some cases heartrending expressions. At about four o'clock the remains were taken to the morgue at the Eaglehawk

Police station.

From the statements of the survivors which are given below, the cause of the explosion appears to be involved in mystery, although they think it most probable that it happened in that portion of the building in which Westphalen, the carpenter, was engaged keggering the powder. Great precautions were insisted on by Mr Arblaster, and the workmen were not permitted to wear any article of a metallic description. No metal buttons were allowed, the men were not allowed to use knives, and galoshes had to be worn in place of boots.

The loss to Mr Arblaster is variously estimated, but £3,000 is the nearest indication in round numbers. As he was unsuccessful in his efforts to effect an insurance of the property, owing to the unwillingness of insurance companies to accept the risk, the disaster will be a very severe blow to him.

THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION.

It was only on the 26th of October last that the works now destroyed were opened. The event was celebrated with great eclat (*meaning brilliant display or effect.*), the fact that the establishment was the first place in the colony at which powder for military purposes could be manufactured rendering the occasion more than usually important. Mr Arblaster has carried on the manufacture of "safety powder" for mining purposes for some years, but about 18 months ago his works were destroyed by fire.

After this disaster Mr Arblaster determined to greatly enlarge his sphere of operations by undertaking the manufacture of "English" powder, similar to Hall's and other well-known makes. For this purpose he ordered the most approved machinery from England, and set about the erection of much larger works, in which the application of steam power plays, for the first time, a prominent part.

Mr Arblaster was also fortunate in securing the services of Mr F Koenemann, an expert with large experience both in Europe and Australia, The erection of machinery and fitting up of premises took many months, but at their completion the firm was able to turn out almost unlimited quantities of granulated powder and powder cartridges, as well as the old "safety powder" which has become so popular.

The machinery and apparatus were contained in a number of different rooms, and every provision was made against accident. The ingredients used in the manufacture of the new "explosive powder," after being purified, were ground and amalgamated, then sifted and wetted in a receiving tub, invented by Mr Koenemann, after which the compound was subjected to hydraulic

pressure capable of being raised to 800 tons, then dried, put through a crusher, dusted and polished. The powder was then in the granulated form. If desired, the powder might be put into hydraulic presses, and formed into perfectly solid cartridges with a cavity in the centre for the fuse. The drying process was carried out in a room on a new principle, the details of which are a trade secret; all the drying was done by steam.

The manufacture of the "safety powder" was carried on in a separate building, and the process was much simpler. In a brick building at the back was the steam engine, and this portion of the building was entirely separate from the manufacturing rooms, the only connection being by the belt shaft. The engine was eleven inches cylinder, with two feet stroke. This engine has a history, as it pulled up many a thousand tons of rich quartz in the once celebrated Kneebone and Jeffrey's claim (now part of the Williams' United Company) on Snob's Hill.

At the boiler there were special provisions to prevent sparks from the fire-box flying about, and any which might escape from the fire-box door were carried by a galvanised iron tube up into the chimney stack, which is 56 feet high. The buildings were surrounded by a high iron fence, and the enclosure covers five acres. Mr Arblaster also secured a quantity of ground outside the fence so as to prevent residences being built too close to the factory, and to provide for the possible future extension of the business.

The force of the explosion threw down most of the walls, only portions of them remaining in position. The burning debris was scattered all over the yard, and the fence was damaged in several places. The stack of firewood was also scattered, and the outer roof of the magazine was partly lifted and burnt. The chimney stack remained uninjured. The fire smouldered all day long, and was an object of interest to hundreds of people, who visited the locality in buggies, cabs, spring carts, and on foot.

It would be impossible to convey anything like an adequate idea of the horror of the scene. The suddenness of the catastrophe, by which five young fellows who up to that moment had been in the enjoyment of perfect health and strength were launched into eternity inspired with feelings of awe the large crowd which gathered in the vicinity.

The spectacle of the burning ruins, which were considered unapproachable inasmuch as further explosions were expected, was a most melancholy one, the knowledge that the bodies of the dead were buried under the burning debris only serving to deepen the gloom which settled like a funeral pall on all. Then when the charred and calcined remains were ultimately recovered, and taken a way by kindly and sympathetic helpers to the homes which the dead had left

full of life and spirits only a few hours before, the grief of those suddenly bereft of their loved ones was heart rending in the extreme, and terrible to behold.

Then there were the survivors, burned and otherwise disfigured, their clothing scorched off their bodies, and suffering generally from such severe injuries as to render recovery in most cases hopeless. Those all needed instant aid, which those present were eager to afford, and tender hands and kindly hearts soon had the injured conveyed either to their homes or the hospital, where every attention was bestowed upon them. Drs Thom and M'Kee were early upon the scene of the catastrophe, and did all they could to alleviate the sufferings of the injured.

From those who survived we were enabled to obtain an account of the circumstances immediately succeeding the disaster, though its origin appears to be enshrouded in mystery. These statements which appear below, are full of pathetic incidents and harrowing details. Poor Parker, we are told, was found with his clothes all in a blaze. He was divested of these, and then he laid down behind a bush, and died. Then there was brave little Wild, fifteen years of age, who after having been subjected to the shock of the explosion, and then pinned to the ground by portions of the fallen roof, manages to walk to his home a quarter of a mile away along a rough road, and give a consecutive narrative to our reporter of the occurrence. He was burnt all over his body, and succumbed to his injuries at a later hour in the day.

THE EMPLOYEES.

The following is a complete list of the employees:-

Fritz Koenemann, manager, a married man residing in Job's Gully, aged 31 years.

Alexander Dewar, engine-driver, married man, residing in Bolt Street, Long Gully.

Frank Westphalen, carpenter, residing in Garsed Street, Sandhurst.

Phillip Meurer, a boy, residing in Sailors Gully.

George Wild, son of a former manager of the Rose of Denmark Company, residing in Job's Gully.

Amos Cooper, a boy, residing in Anderson Street, Sandhurst.

Arthur Sylvester, a boy, residing in Frederick Street.

Maxwell Parker, son of the landlord of the Miners' Arms Hotel, Eaglehawk.

R Straub, son of the landlord of the Peg Leg Hotel.

Samuel Arblaster, 16 years of age, son of the proprietor.

Henry Rodda, a boy who drives the powder cart.

C Tolley, the night watchman, were not at the factory at the time of the accident.

Within the last week, Mr Arblaster had been negotiating for accident insurance upon those employed in the factory, he himself undertaking to pay the premiums. No definite arrangement had, however, been arrived at.

THE KILLED, INJURED AND UNINJURED.

The following is a list of those who were killed, those who were injured, and those who escaped unhurt:-

KILLED.

Samuel Arblaster, aged 16 years, residing in Panton Street, Eaglehawk, son of the proprietor.

Maxwell Parker, 15 years 6 months, of the Miners' Arms Hotel, Eaglehawk.

Arthur Sylvester, 14 years, Frederick Street, Ironbark.

Robert Straub, about 15 years, of the Welcome Inn Hotel, Eaglehawk.

Frank Westphalen, 22 years, son of Mr Westphalen, of Garsed Street.

He was a member of the 4th Battalion (Victorian Militia), as well as the Australian Natives' Association.

George Wild, 15 years old, residing with his parents, off Loudon Street, Job's Gully.

Dr Thom, of Eaglehawk, attended to him. The skin was burnt on the whole of his body, the back being less severely so than the other portions, He suffered greatly from shock to the system caused by the very extensive burns, and he expired in the evening.

The bodies of all, except Parker, were burnt almost beyond recognition.

INJURED

Amos Cooper, youngest son of Mrs Cooper, a widow residing in Anderson Street, Ironbark. He lies in the hospital suffering from shock caused by burns, which extended from head to foot. His face is scorched, but his eyesight is uninjured. The young fellow was delirious in the afternoon, and his case is considered very bad indeed. Dr McKee, of Eaglehawk, attended Cooper prior to his admission to the hospital, Cooper is the youngest of a family of seven. He is about 13 years old, and a short time ago he had two or three of his fingers taken off at the powder factory.

Fritz Koenemann's injuries are similar, though the shock is aggravated by his sudden immersion in the water hole. He is not allowed to be spoken to, and his case is considered critical. In injuries of this nature, there is a great danger of inflammation internally setting in, which it is feared will be the case with the two above mentioned. None but near relatives are permitted to speak to the injured in the hospital.

THE UNINJURED

Alexander Dewar, 25 years, of Bolt Street, Long Gully; Philip Meurer, 15 years, of Leslie Street, Sailor's Gully. There were also two other employees, C Tolley, the night watchman, not on duty; and Henry Rodda, the driver of the delivery cart. He also was fortunately absent at the time of the occurrence.

KOENEMANN'S STATEMENT.

Fritz Koeneman, the manager, when being taken to the hospital in Mr James' buggy, said: I went into the engine house in order to see the time, and on my return I had occasion to go out and do something. I hesitated a moment before going in again, and all of a sudden I was knocked on my left side, receiving the full force of the explosion.

Mr Koenemann, who is 31 years of age, has been employed as manufacturer of blasting powder for the past five years in this colony. For a period of three years he carried on business in Ballarat and eighteen months ago his powder factory there exploded, but fortunately at a time when the employees were away. After this occurrence Mr Koenemann engaged himself to Mr Arblaster as manager, which position he occupied up to the present disaster, a period of only 18 months. During this time he gave every satisfaction, and was most careful in the manufacture of the material under his charge. Fortunately his injuries are not of a serious nature, and yesterday afternoon he was able to converse with his wife and friends.

Mr Koenemann had a very lucky escape. He had just gone outside the building, and when the explosion occurred was struck to the ground and rendered unconscious. On recovering he found his clothing to be in a blaze. He immediately rushed to the dam and jumped in. Hearing groans Koenemann quickly returned and pulled the body of the boy Cooper out of the debris. Cooper's clothing was also on fire, and his rescuer at once put him into the dam. Both Koenemann and Cooper were thoroughly exhausted, and after some time were removed to the Bendigo Hospital. Mr Koenemann was severely burnt, but was conscious, whilst the boy Cooper was delirious.

DEWAR'S STATEMENT.

The enginedriver, Alexander Dewar, who resides in Bolt Street, Long Gully, and who was one of those who fortunately, escaped unhurt, made the following statement to our representative:- My age is 25 years; I have been connected with the factory for a considerable time, in fact, I superintended the erection of the present structure, which I may state is built on the same spot on which the old factory stood, and which was burnt down some time ago. Here I may add as I go along, that no explosion took place, as the powder then was what was known as the "Safety powder."

Well, turning to the present fatality. I was engaged in a small house on the

western side of the engine house; the explosion occurred on the eastern side. A lad named Phillip Meurer was with me. We were both grinding the charcoal used in the manufacture of the powder, and whilst so engaged there suddenly came a tremendous concussion, which we both were unable to make out. The first I can remember is that I found myself outside the fence, about 40 yards from where I was working. Meurer was with me.

I do not know how I came there, but I fancy that I must have run there in the excitement of the moment; however, I do not remember, but this I know that I was there. Whilst, there I heard somebody crying out. It turned out to be Maxwell Parker. He was about 10 yards away from the fence, and was running towards us. He was all in a blaze, and Meurer and myself tore his clothes from him, in doing which I got a few small burns on my hands. Poor Maxwell went away a few yards, and laid himself down behind a bush. I returned in a short time to the spot, but found him lifeless. I now heard Koenemann calling out for aid. He was inside the fence, over which I jumped in order to reach him, and found young George Wild under one of the fallen walls, I helped to take him out. I saw that Koenemann was very badly burned.

His whiskers and hair were all gone. After I had got Wild out, I went to what I considered a safe distance. I ran towards the corner at the western end, and in about two or three minutes a second explosion followed. Koenemann and Wild threw themselves into a water hole in order to extinguish the flames that encircled them, both men's clothing blazing away furiously. When they got out Koenemann leaped over the fence, and his clothing was gone, and young Wild, who was very weak, clambered on to the top of the fence and I lifted him down, and he was taken home.

When was work commenced, and how many were there?

We went to work at the usual hour, 7 o'clock in the morning. There were Frank Westphalen, Robert Straub, Arthur Sylvester, Samuel Arblaster, (son of the proprietor) Amos Cooper, Mr Koenemann, George Wild, Maxwell Parker, Phillip Meurer, and myself. Where were you when the explosion took place? At 11 o'clock it occurred. Wild, Parker, and Koenemann were in the back room, where the explosive powder is made, and Arblaster, Straub, Sylvester, and Cooper were rolling pellets. Westphalen was the carpenter, and was "kegging" powder, Meurer and myself as I said before were grinding charcoal. That is what I know of the occurrence. I am not hurt in the least through the explosion, but I had a great shock.

PHILLIP MEURER'S STATEMENT.

This youth, who is 15 years of age, residing in Lester Street, Sailor's Gully, was one of the uninjured, and volunteered the following statement:-
I was grinding the charcoal in an outhouse set apart for that purpose in

conjunction with Dewar when the explosion occurred - so suddenly that I could not make it out - I ran round the fence, jumped over, and I then heard screams. I went towards the spot from whence they proceeded, and found Parker standing outside the fence. His clothes were burning, and I cut off the belt he was wearing. When I had done this Maxwell fell down. He never moved, but died shortly afterwards. We then heard Koenemann crying out, and Dewar and I again scaled the fence. When going along I met Mrs Arblaster, and she gave me a telegram to send away to Mr Arblaster, who is at present in Sydney. That is what I know. There was a quantity of powder in the dry room, which was put there to be "kegged up."

GEORGE WILD'S STATEMENT

This unfortunate young fellow resided near the factory, off Loudon Street, with his parents, and was 15 years of age. He was badly injured being a mass of burns from head to foot. The boy appears to have been very stout at heart, as he walked home with the aid of another little fellow, the house being situated about a quarter of a mile over hilly and bushy country. He said: I was making pellets in the "new" factory - there being portions of the building known as the "old" and the "new" factory. Maxwell Parker was with me.

All I know is that a flash filled the room in which we worked, and an explosion followed it. I did not receive the full force of the blast. There is some machinery in the room, and this kept part of the force of the explosion from me. I was blown through the door. The roof came down upon me almost as soon as I landed. I was pinned down and I cried loudly for help. In answer to my cries - I had not been long there - Koenemann and Dewar came to me and took me out. I immediately jumped into a water hole close by to put out my burning clothes. When I got out of the water I got over the fence, and by the aid of a boy I came home.

A CONSTABLE'S STATEMENT.

Constable Ralph, who was one of the policemen stationed at the scene of the disaster, states:- I was at the Eaglehawk railway station at the time the calamity occurred. I heard two reports follow one another in rapid succession, and felt the vibration very plainly. In about ten minutes another explosion followed. I looked in the direction of the factory and saw dense volumes of smoke cloud the air. There was also material flying about in the air like thick paper, which afterwards proved to be sheets of roofing iron.

This was at a great height. When I saw this I thought that it was the factory that was blown up. I made my way towards the place with all haste, and found that Sergeant Gleeson was before me. I think a man named Walls was the first on the scene. I saw no way of extinguishing the flames.

THE INQUEST.

The inquest on the remains of five of the unfortunate victims, of the explosion, namely:-

Samuel Arblaster, John Maxwell Parker, Robert Straub, Arthur Sylvester, and Frank Westphalen, was commenced before the coroner, Mr R Strickland PM, at the Miners' Arms Hotel, High Street, Eaglehawk, about six o'clock in the evening.

The jury empannelled was as follows:- Thomas O'Brien, David Moorhead, Walter Harris, Anthony O'Toole, Henry Moon, Thomas Hughes, Francis Parker, William Hall, John Pascoe, Edward Morris, Vincent Johns, John Pearce, and John Heffill (foreman).

Dr J J Thom deposed: I am a legally qualified practitioner, residing at Eaglehawk. This morning at a quarter-past eleven o'clock I was called to Arblaster's factory at Job's Gully. Shortly after my arrival I saw the deceased John Maxwell Parker. He had received a severe scorching all over the body, from which and other injuries he may have received by being blown away by the explosion several yards distant, was no doubt the cause of his death. I have since seen the remains of four others, one evidently full grown, and the others the bodies of lads about 14 or 15 years of age.

Their bodies were so much charred that I could not identify them. I have been informed that the elder one has been recognised as that of the body of the carpenter, Frank Westphalen, and the others as Samuel Arblaster, Robert Straub, and Arthur Sylvester.

At this stage the inquest was adjourned until Saturday, the 12th March next.

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LATER PARTICULARS.**DEATH OF GEORGE WILD.**

The youth, George Wild succumbed to the injuries he received at the explosion about seven o'clock last evening. The poor fellow must have suffered fearful agony, and was very restless, although he never lost consciousness until death put an end to his sufferings. The remains of the deceased will be removed from the residence of his parents near the Cricket Ground at California Gully to the Eaglehawk cemetery at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

The funeral of the deceased Maxwell Parker will take place at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, but in the other cases apparently no decision has yet been arrived at as to when the remains will be buried.

About seven o'clock last evening some more of the remains of the deceased Frank Westphalen were found amongst the ruins by one of the constables on duty there, and put into a box for removal to the police station this morning.

It appears that it is only about two months ago since the lad Amos Cooper met with an accident at the works by having his fingers crushed beneath a large piece of iron which he was endeavouring to remove. He was then taken to Dr Thorn's surgery, where he stood the operation of amputation of two of the fingers with great fortitude. On escaping from the full force of the explosion yesterday, he was immersed in a water hole in the vicinity in order to extinguish his burning clothing. He was subsequently told this was not a safe thing to do, to which he replied:- "Well, what was I to do? I must try and live to support my mother."

In the evening Sergeant Gleeson telegraphed to Sandhurst for two constables to remain near the ruins during the night, so as to afford relief to his men, who had been there all day. They were expected to take charge about ten o'clock, and in the meantime the duty was allotted to Constables Love and M'Kenna.

The ruins were still smouldering last evening, but the fire was confined to two large heaps of charcoal and sulphur. No danger is apprehended to the magazine, which remains standing, and when our representative left, the mayor and Sergeant Gleeson were preparing to have the fire extinguished.

The dreadful catastrophe formed the sole topic of conversation in the borough last evening, and great sympathy was expressed for the unfortunate victims and their relatives.

On inquiry at the Bendigo Hospital at a late hour, we learnt that there was no perceptible change in the condition of Koenemann and Cooper.

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THE DEATH OF COOPER

Between 1 and 2 o'clock this morning we were informed by telephone that Cooper had succumbed to his injuries in the hospital shortly after midnight. This makes the seventh death from this frightful catastrophe, Koenemann being the only one of the injured who survives.

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THE EAGLEHAWK CALAMITY.

LATEST PARTICULARS.

The dreadful explosion, which occurred at Mr J T Arblaster's Powder

Factory at Job's Gully Eaglehawk, and which resulted in such serious loss to human life, formed the theme of conversation amongst all classes yesterday, and throughout the day the ruins were visited by a large number of people.

In the course of conversation on the subject various theories have been advanced to account for the explosion, and the most probable of these are deserving of mention. It appears that whilst searching amongst the ruins on the day of the explosion the night watchman picked up a wax match near where the "pellets" of powder were made and it is thought that one of the employees might have stood on the match and thus caused the accident. Another reason put forth is that in pursuing his occupation of "kegging" the powder Francis Westphalen may have in some way caused friction which set fire to the compound. But these are only suggestions, and it is most probable that nothing will ever be brought to light that will account for the direful calamity.

About eleven o'clock on Wednesday night Constables Love and M'Kenna were relieved by Constables Hayes and Fox, of Long Gully, and these were relieved by Sergeant Gleeson and Constable Ralph, at five o'clock yesterday morning.

The deaths of George Wild and Amos Cooper were reported to the coroner, Mr Strickland yesterday morning, but as he had to proceed to Inglewood to adjudicate at the Warden's Court at that place, Mr A L Wilton was deputised to conduct magisterial inquiries, which were held during the afternoon, and are reported below.

It appears that several members of the Eaglehawk Fire Brigade arrived on the scene with a reel and 759 feet of hose shortly after the explosion took place, but their efforts were rendered useless, as it would require 900 feet of hose to reach from the nearest plug to the fire.

In answer to the telegram sent to Mr Arblaster on the previous day, Mrs Arblaster received a telegram that evening asking to know the worst, and on receipt of this, Mr Arblaster sent another, stating that he would be in Sandhurst this afternoon. He requested that his son's remains might be kept until his return. Mr Kirkwood proceeded to Melbourne on business yesterday morning, and on this becoming known, Mrs Arblaster seized the opportunity of asking him to wait and meet her husband on his return, a request which it is needless to say was at once granted. During the day the remains of Francis Westphalen, Samuel Arblaster, Arthur Silvester, and Robert Straub were removed from the Eaglehawk police station by the relatives of the deceased, and conveyed to the residences of their parents, prior to their interment.

As one of the sad circumstances surrounding the fearful catastrophe, it may be mentioned that Francis Westphalen was engaged to be married at Easter to a Sandhurst young lady. Mr T H Chuck, photographer, of Williamson street, visited the scene of the accident yesterday morning, and secured some excellent negatives of the ruins. We understand these photographs will be used in connection with the illustrations to appear in Melbourne illustrated papers. Mr Chuck is willing, if there be any relief fund started for any of the sufferers, to sell the views for the benefit of the fund.

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THE SCENE OF THE EXPLOSION.

A glance at the ruin and desolation which has resulted from the sad occurrence is sufficient to impress even the most unobservant spectator of the force of the explosion. There are fragments of corrugated iron strewn for many yards away; dismantled machinery lying about; roofs torn bodily away; walls blown away, and the ravages of fire visible in every part of the premises. The smouldering heap of debris, consisting of sulphur, charcoal and other ingredients used in the manufacture of powder, lying nearest the magazine was extinguished at a late hour on Wednesday night, but a large heap in another portion of the ground was still burning yesterday, and from beneath it were raked out some more of the remains of one of the employees.

The lad Phillip Maurer was on the scene during the whole of the day, and in answer to our reporter, said: "I felt very nervous yesterday, but slept well last night and I am all right now."

When asked if he could account for the explosion in any way he said that it occurred in another portion of the building to that in which he was engaged, and he was unable to state how it happened. The wonder is that the chimney stack was not shaken in any way, but the whole force of the explosion appears to have gone in the opposite direction.

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A PATHETIC INCIDENT.

Much has been related of the sad circumstances surrounding the case of the boy Amos Cooper, and the fortitude he displayed under his trying experiences, but there is still another incident regarding him which is worthy of mention. The little fellow and Fritz Koenemann, who was so badly injured, seem to have been companions for some time after the sad disaster. It was a weary journey to them, that journey made to the Bendigo Hospital.

En route he asked two or three times if it was much further to the hospital, and, on being answered in the negative, said "Push on Cabby," and began humming a tune. Arrived at the hospital the sufferers were taken out of the vehicle and conveyed to the operating room, where the poor boy was gently laid on the table for the purpose of being examined.

Fritz Koenemann was sitting in a chair a few yards away. Whilst Cooper was being attended to he appeared to be in great agony, and was heard to exclaim "Kiss me Mr Koenemann." A second time this sentence was repeated, and Mr Koenemann stood up, and walked to the table and kissed the brave little fellow.

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MR KOENEMANN'S CONDITION.

The sole survivor of those who were injured by the fatal catastrophe suffered great pain, and was very restless throughout the whole of yesterday. During the afternoon a rumour gained currency that he had succumbed to his injuries, but this proved to be untrue. About five o'clock Mrs Koenemann was relieved by Mrs Forestal of the duty of attending at the bedside of her husband, and very slight hopes were then entertained of his recovery. Since, then, however, a slight change for the better had taken place, and on inquiry late last night, we learnt that the patient was a little easier.

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TELEGRAM OF SYMPATHY.

The following telegram was received yesterday by Mr P Hayes (the mayor), in reference to the terrible calamity of Wednesday last:- Ballarat East regrets the disastrous loss of life and property by powder explosion. Please accept my profound sympathy.

- James Russell, Mayor, Ballarat East.

*

INQUIRIES INTO THE CAUSE OF DEATH.

At the Bendigo Hospital yesterday afternoon, an inquiry was held by Mr A L Wilton JP, into the cause of the death of the lad Amos Cooper, who died in the institution at an early hour yesterday morning from injuries sustained at the explosion on the previous day. There was no jury empanelled on the occasion.

Dr Colquhoun, duly qualified medical practitioner and resident surgeon at the Bendigo Hospital, deposed: The deceased, Amos Cooper, was brought to the hospital yesterday at about half-past eleven o'clock. He was suffering from burns over the whole of his body. He was delirious and was put under treatment at once. He became partially conscious at intervals, but got gradually weaker and died about half past one o'clock this morning. In my opinion death was caused from shock to the system, the result of burns. He called out to have something done for him, but made no statement. The deceased appeared to be about 15 years of age.

In announcing the verdict, Mr Wilton said he was of opinion that the cause of death was the result of burns received at an explosion which took place at Arblarster's powder factory at Eaglehawk on the 23rd inst, but it was not for him to say by what means the explosion occurred, as this would be

investigated at a coroner's inquest on the 12th March next.

About four o'clock, Mr Wilton then proceeded to the residence of the parents of the deceased George Wild, at California Gully, and held an inquiry into the cause of this poor fellow's death. Sergeant Gleeson conducted the inquiry, and the following evidence was adduced:-

James Wild, miner, residing at California Gully, deposed: The deceased, George Wild, was my son. He was 15 years and 7 months old. He had been engaged at Arblaster's powder factory for five months past. He went to work as usual yesterday morning, and returned shortly after eleven o'clock. I was not at home, but when I returned my wife informed me that he had come home without any clothes. I then saw him and asked him how the explosion had occurred. He said "It never occurred in my room, but in the large room". His clothes were all burnt off him. His wounds were dressed by the doctor, but after lingering in great pain he died about half-past seven o'clock last night. He was sensible up to the time of his death.

Dr Thorn, of Eaglehawk, deposed: About half past eleven o'clock yesterday morning I arrived at the house of Mr James Wild and saw the deceased, who was suffering from pains over every part of his body. In many parts the burns were of a severe character. I dressed his wounds and administered such remedies as were necessary. I was of opinion that there was no hope of his recovery. He lived until about half-past seven o'clock in the evening. The cause of death was shock to the system from the severity of the burns received by the deceased.

Phillip Maurer, the youth who had such a miraculous escape from injury at the explosion, was also present, but it was not necessary that his evidence should be taken until the coroner's inquest into the circumstances surrounding the explosion is held on the 12th proximo. The verdict arrived at by Mr Wilton was the same as in the previous case.

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THE FUNERALS.

Today the funerals of Francis Westphalen and Robert Straub will take place, the former's remains being interred in the Sandhurst Cemetery, and those of the latter at Eaglehawk. Westphalen having been a member of the local military force will be accorded a burial service due to a deceased comrade in arms. At three o'clock the members of A and B companies militia infantry, and A troop Victorian Cavalry are requested to assemble in Garsed Street. Those desirous of forming a firing party are requested to take their rifles with them. The funeral will leave at three o'clock. The A.N.A. members are also requested to follow.

Straub's remains will be removed from the residence of his stepfather (Mr

John Park, of the Welcome Inn Hotel, Eaglehawk), to the Church of England, and then on to the cemetery. Amos Cooper's funeral will take place tomorrow afternoon, and Arthur Sylvester's on Sunday. Both bodies will be buried in the Sandhurst Cemetery.

In consequence of the demand for yesterday's report of the catastrophe, it has been reprinted on our fourth page.

Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Sat 26 Feb 1887 Page 2

THE EAGLEHAWK CALAMITY.

The closing events of the tragic occurrence which has cast such a gloom over the district during the past few days, in the destruction of Mr Arblaster's powder factory and the loss of seven human lives, commenced yesterday, when the mortal remains of four of the unfortunate victims were consigned to their last resting place, at the Eaglehawk and Sandhurst cemeteries. Throughout the whole of yesterday signs of mourning were visible in the partial closing of business places in the city and borough.

The scene of the explosion is still an object of interest and large numbers visited the place during the day. About five o'clock in the afternoon, Mr Arblaster returned to his home in Panton Street, Eaglehawk, and his many friends will be pleased to learn that he is bearing up wonderfully well under the heavy loss which has befallen him. Shortly after his arrival, Mr Arblaster was waited upon by a representative of this paper, who was supplied with some particulars, which should prove of interest to our readers, which will be found below.

We have been shown a portrait of the buildings shortly after the explosion occurred. It is the work of Mr E Ripper, a young photographer, and gives a correct idea of the ruins.

THE FUNERALS.

The first mournful duty was that of conveying to their last resting place the remains of the unfortunate youth Maxwell John Parker, and as the time approached for the funeral to leave the residence of the parents of the deceased at the Miners' Arms Hotel, in High Street, Eaglehawk, a large number of people had congregated in the vicinity. At ten o'clock the coffin was borne to the hearse, and the cortege, consisting of the relatives, about fifty men walking two abreast, and several private and public vehicles, in one of which were seated the mayor (Cr Willan) and Cr Meuat, wended its way to the Eaglehawk Cemetery. On arrival at the gates the remains were borne to the Presbyterian portion of the cemetery, and the burial service of that church was read by the Rev R Lewers.

After the last rites had been performed the rev gentleman addressed a few words to those standing around. He alluded in sorrowful terms to the sad catastrophe that had deprived them of seven promising youths. He hoped that in the example set before them of such sudden deprivation of life, those who were taught the way of Christ might in their last moments be prompted to say "Our Father," and that those who had that day been consigned to the tomb might rest in the bosom of "The Infinite Charity." A short prayer was then offered up, and the gathering dispersed. The mortal remains of the youth Robert Straub were consigned to their last resting place at the Eaglehawk cemetery in the afternoon.

About twelve o'clock the funeral procession, consisting of the hearse, mourning coach, and several vehicles, left the residence of the deceased's step-father at the Welcome Inn Hotel, near the head of Eaglehawk, and wended its way along Victoria Street to St Peter's Church, where the service for the dead was read by the Rev R W Cooke MA. The 400th psalm was rendered by the choir, and after the 15th chapter of St Paul's Epistle had been read, and the 399th hymn sung by the choir, the rev gentleman briefly addressed those present. He said it was when our Lord Jesus Christ was drawing near the city of Jerusalem, that he met a mournful procession similar to the one that had just entered the church.

He beseeched them not to mourn as those who had no hope, but to await the resurrection, when they would again meet the deceased in a glorified state. It was a consolation to know that those who died young, and before the scorching flames of sin had come over them, would find a sure refuge in Heaven. In this case the deceased had been one of their Sunday School scholars, and there was very little doubt but that he had reached the haven of rest. In conclusion, the rev gentleman addressed a few words of consolation to the bereaved. The pulpit, reading desk and altar were draped in black. Whilst the procession was leaving the church, the "Dead March in Saul" was played by Mrs Cooke on the organ. The funeral then proceeded to the Eaglehawk Cemetery, where the remains were interred in the Church of England portion of the ground, and the Rev Mr Cooke read the burial service.

The funeral of the youth George Wild took place about four o'clock, when the remains of the deceased were removed from his parents' residence at California Gully, and interred in the Eaglehawk Cemetery. The procession consisted of the hoarse, two mourning coaches and several vehicles, and when the procession arrived at the cemetery there was a large assemblage on the ground. The burial service of the Church of England was read by the Rev R W Cooke MA, at the grave, and at its conclusion the rev gentleman referred to the sad calamity in an impressive address. He said the deceased had been a good son, a good brother, and a good Christian, and had never brought a

blush of shame to those with whom he had lived. He hoped that this messenger of death might also be a messenger of life to many, and lead them to seek the paths of virtue and wisdom.

The remains of Francis Westphalen, 22 years of age, were taken from the residence of his parents, in Garsed Street, yesterday afternoon, and interred in the Back Creek Cemetery. There was a large assemblage near the house when the funeral started, and considerable sympathy was felt by all for those who had been bereaved by the sad calamity. The scene was a very mournful one.

Detachments from the Militia Infantry and Cavalry forces, under the command respectively of Major Blackham and Serjeant-Major Darling, were present. The coffin - profusely covered with wreaths, and also the deceased's military clothing - was borne by Sergeant Palliser, Corporal F Davidson and Privates Rippar and Button. The procession moved off, headed by a firing party of the Militia, with arms reversed. Following the hearse and mourning coach were the Cavalrymen, and several of the Sandhurst branch of the Australian Natives' Association. Then came a numerous following of vehicles. Among those present were the hon R Burrowes, Dr Quick and Mr Bailes, Ms.L.A.

On arriving at the cemetery the Militia men formed an avenue, and allowed the coffin to be borne past them, their arms meanwhile being at the "reverse." The Rev C H Barnes, of St Paul's, was the officiating clergyman, and as he pronounced the words "I am the resurrection, etc," a solemn silence fell on all around. When the grave was reached the militia men took up a position on one side, and the rev gentleman mentioned above read the Church of England burial service, and also the 39th Psalm.

He also addressed himself to those assembled round the grave. His remarks were very solemn and telling, there being many persons weeping during his address. He said that it did not often fall to their lot to gather on such an occasion as the present, where the bright young life of which they saw the last being lowered into the grave was taken away so suddenly. Callous indeed would be the heart and spirit of those who were not moved with deep emotion when they heard of the terrible calamity, which had just befallen the community. Disasters like this came as a warning in a voice stronger than any human voice saying "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." He trusted that many young men would profit by the lesson, and that the Almighty would comfort those left behind to mourn.

The firing party of the militia then discharged three volleys over the grave, which was afterwards closed over the remains of one who fell a victim to one

of the most terrible calamities that has ever occurred in the history of Bendigo. The funeral arrangements were carried out in a most satisfactory manner by Mr T Sayer, of Bridge Street.

The funeral of James Cooper will take place at two o'clock this afternoon, when the remains of the deceased will be interred in the Sandhurst Cemetery.

The remains of Samuel Arblaster will be interred in the Eaglehawk Cemetery tomorrow afternoon, and the scholars of the Wesleyan Sabbath School are invited to attend.

MR ARBLASTER'S STATEMENT.

When interviewed by our reporter, Mr Arblaster had just arrived by the afternoon train from Melbourne. He appeared to be greatly distressed, but has apparently borne up well under the serious loss which he has sustained. Mr Arblaster stated that he had left Sydney before the telegram arrived to apprise him of the occurrence. He had gone on a visit to his brother at Lampton, near Newcastle, and it was about three hours after his arrival that he received the telegram. They had just finished lunch and were sitting down to sketch out a programme for the time of his stay.

This was about four o'clock, and he was then about a quarter of an hour too late to catch the coach for Newcastle. On arriving at Newcastle he sent a telegram to Eaglehawk to know the worst, and it was eleven o'clock before the next boat started for Newcastle. He arrived in Sydney at six o'clock on Tuesday morning, and first realized the full extent of his loss by reading an account of the explosion in the "Sydney Morning Herald" of that day. He was then too late to catch the train to Melbourne, and was compelled to remain in Sydney until five o'clock on Thursday evening.

On arrival in Melbourne Mr Arblaster was met by Mr Kirkwood, and they immediately came on to Sandhurst, when the mayor was waiting to take them to Eaglehawk. Mr Arblaster stated that great precautions were always used at the factory to guard against fire, and he was never tired of impressing upon the employees the necessity of exercising great circumspection when working on the premises. For this reason he had purchased a quantity of a compound for extinguishing fire, and instructed the employees to throw a bottle of it on the flames if any fire was to happen.

If he had known any one of the employees to have had a wax match in his possession he would have discharged him at once. They were never used at the works, and when the watchman lit the furnace he was compelled to do so with wooden matches. The men were not allowed to smoke, and on one or two occasions when he had asked men if they were in the habit of smoking, and

been answered in the affirmative he refused to engage them. He had, however, engaged the carpenter and the watchman, after getting from them a solemn promise that they would not smoke or keep their possession pipes, tobacco, or matches when on the premises.

In regard to the supposition that the explosion may have been caused by friction, there was not the slightest ground for such a theory. In all the work of "kegging" the powder and hammering on the premises both copper hammer and tacks were used, and the kegs were made of wood with wooden hoops, so that there was no danger of friction causing an explosion. He had no doubt the explosion occurred in the carpenter's room, but from what cause would probably always remain a mystery. There had been about £3,000 worth of damage done, and of this there was £2,000 worth of raw material on the premises.

He felt greatly the loss of poor George Wild, who was the most trustworthy in the place with the exception of his son Samuel, who always noticed anything that went wrong, and informed him of it. There had been about one ton of powder on the premises when the explosion took place, and the largest amount of this, comprising about 30 kegs, was located in the carpenter's room. He had been endeavouring to effect an arrangement with an insurance company, to relieve him of the risk of being rendered accountable for the death of his employees by neglect, but had not made any proposal to insure their lives.

In conversation, Mr Arblaster stated that it was his intention to commence work after a short period, but he would confine himself to the manufacture of safety powder for some time.

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OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE RUINS.

A visit was made to the ruins yesterday by the senior inspector of mines, Mr H. B Nicholas, Mr R Strickland PM, and Sergeant Gleeson. The latter made a minute inspection of the ruins so as to place the facts before the jury at the adjourned inquest in as lucid a manner as possible. In order to enable the jury to come to a conclusion as to the origin of the disaster Mr Nicholas will make careful surveys, and draw up plans.

Mr Davis, a brother in law of Mr Arblaster's, who could not arrive until late yesterday afternoon, showed the party around. The powder magazine could not be examined yesterday, as the doors could not be opened. Mr Strickland informed Mr Nicholas that he had been inside the magazine on Wednesday, when the walls were in a very heated condition. He had made an order that the interior of the magazine should not be interfered with until Mr Nicholas had an opportunity of examining it, and should the inspector not be able to

come to Sandhurst again before the adjourned inquest, Mr Strickland instructed Sergeant Gleeson to take a proper inventory of the contents of the magazine.

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DEATH OF FRITZ KOENEMANN.

It will be learnt with deep regret that Fritz Koenemann, the last surviving victim of the dreadful explosion, succumbed to the injuries he received at twenty minutes past eleven o'clock last evening.

On the previous night, as reported by us yesterday, Mr Koenemann was slightly easier, and hopes were expressed that he might be spared from the list of victims. But yesterday the patient was very restless and appeared to suffer great pain, and inasmuch as Dr Colquhoun had expressed very little hope of his recovery the end was not unexpected.

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Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Mon 28 Feb 1887 Page 2

INQUIRY ON MR KOENEMANN'S BODY.

Mr Koenemann's Supposition as to the Cause of the Explosion. The death of Mr Fritz Koenemann was reported to the district coroner, Mr R Strickland PM, on Saturday morning, and he subsequently held a coronial inquiry at the hospital. Dr Colquhoun, resident surgeon at the Bendigo Hospital, deposed that the deceased Fritz Koenemann was brought to the institution on Wednesday, the 23rd inst, at about midday. He was suffering from burns all over his body. His clothes were wet. He was quite conscious when admitted, but made no statement at that time. He continued in a low, but conscious, state until the morning of Friday, the 25th, when he became delirious. He gradually sank and died about 11 o'clock on Friday night. The cause of death was shock to the system and severe burns.

Dr E Inglis, acting assistant surgeon at the hospital, deposed that he was attending the wards when the deceased was admitted. In answer to questions put by the witness to the deceased in the presence of Dr Penfold, one of the honorary surgeons to the institute, whilst dressing the burns, deceased stated that he attributed the probable cause of the explosion to the carpenter (Westphalen) using an iron hammer instead of a copper one, and that he the deceased (Koenemann) had previously warned Westphalen not to do so.

The coroner stated that he would issue his certificate for the interment of the body, but would not consider the inquiry finally closed. If any further evidence could be obtained that would assist in elucidating the origin or cause of this accident, it would be desirable and appreciated if any person would come forward and give testimony on this point.

A rumour gained currency about town on Saturday evening that the explosion

had been caused by one of the deceased youths smoking a pipe, and it was stated in support of this that a youth named Thomas, who was recently in the employ of Mr Arblaster, had seen young Cooper smoking a pipe in the factory, and when Mr Koenemann was about the lad would secrete it in his shirt. On being interviewed by a representative from this office, however, young Thomas denied that such was the case. He had seen Cooper chewing tobacco, and sometimes saw the engine driver, Alexander Dewar, smoking outside the factory but never inside it.

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THE FUNERALS.

Thousands of people from Sandhurst and elsewhere lined the streets of Eaglehawk yesterday, their desire being to witness the funeral ceremonies in connection with the sad deaths of Samuel Arblaster and Fritz Koenemann.

At about four o'clock the scholars attending the Wesleyan Sabbath school marched in procession to the residence of the lad, and sang a hymn. The funeral procession shortly afterwards started and moved along High Street. When Victoria Street was reached the funeral party of Koenemann was met, preceded by the members of the G.U.C.O.F. The borough councillors and prominent burgesses, together with the Sunday school children, amalgamated with the lodgement, and the double funeral proceeded to the cemetery, accompanied by hundreds of persons.

On arriving at the cemetery an extraordinary number of people thronged the entrance. The coffins were borne to the graves, that of the lad Arblaster being carried to the grave by four Sunday school scholars to the Wesleyan portion of the cemetery, and Koenemann's to the Presbyterian allotment. The pall bearers at the latter place were Mr Wm Burnside, Mr Geo Willan (mayor of Eaglehawk), Messrs Robt Jeffrey and L Eaton.

Both services were held at the same time. The Rev J P M'Cann read the funeral service at Arblaster's grave, and the Rev R Lewers at the other. Very impressive addresses were delivered by both clergymen, Mr Lewers said that Koenemann had gone into the engine house after the first explosion took place to warn his fellow employees to betake themselves to a safe place, and had thus met his death by the second outburst.

A disgraceful scene occurred during the reverend gentleman's address. A man in an intoxicated state interrupted the preacher by interjections. Sergeant Gleeson moved the fellow, and proceedings are to be taken against him. Mr E C Brown had charge other funereal arrangements in connection with Arblaster's funeral, and Mr T Oakley the other one.

The funeral of the youth, Arthur Sylvester, took place yesterday afternoon,

when the remains of the deceased were interred in the Sandhurst Cemetery. About two o'clock the cortege left the residence of the parents of the deceased, amongst those present being the relatives of the deceased had a large number of friends, and proceeded along Barnard Street, View Street and Mitchell Street to the cemetery. About two hundred persons congregated around the grave, and the burial service of the Church of Christ was said by Mr Charles Watt. After the reading another service Mr Watt delivered an eloquent and impressive address to those present. Prayers were then offered up for the bereaved, and after a benediction the gathering dispersed.

The remains of the little boy Amos Cooper were interred at the Sandhurst cemetery on Saturday. About ten o'clock the funeral procession, consisting of the hearse, mourning coach and several vehicles, left the residence of the deceased's mother in Anderson Street, Ironbark, and proceeded to the Back Creek Cemetery, where the remains were interred in the Church of England portion of the grounds. The Rev J Garlick, of All Saints' Church read the burial service, and at its conclusion referred in impressive and touching terms to the terrible explosion, and the pathetic incident surrounding the death of the deceased. Mr and Mrs Arblaster were amongst the mourners.

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Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Mon 28 Feb 1887 Page 2

SANDHURST, MONDAY, FEB. 28, 1887

THE LATE FATAL DISASTER.

The death of that brave young fellow, Amos Cooper, should have the effect of drawing attention to the condition of his relatives and those of other victims of the explosion.

Cooper made many allusions to his mother, which would lead to the inference that she was in some measure dependent upon his earnings for her support. If this, on inquiry, should prove to have been the case, something should be done for the relief of the poor suffering woman. Mr Chuck took some photographic views of the ruins of the factory; and announced that, if a relief fund was required, they should be sold for the benefit of the sufferers. This was an excellent suggestion for which he deserves great credit, and it should certainly be acted upon if money is wanted by any of the bereaved families.

A collection might soon be made in Sandhurst, which might be supplemented by the receipts of entertainments, which could be readily got up. We think too that some memorial, which need not be of a costly kind, should be erected in some public place. A record ought to be made of such a disaster, which would serve as a warning to young men and lads, who may be engaged in dangerous callings, to be ever cautious in their acts; and the fortitude displayed by those two splendid boys, George Wild and Amos Cooper, is worthy of a public memento.

Doubtless those who perished in the flames were equally brave; and the terrible ends they met with call for lasting commiseration. The sufferings of the parents and near relatives of the poor fellows can be readily understood, and it would be only humane to endeavour to alleviate their anguish. Public attention shown to the fate of their lost children would go some way towards relieving them of their heavy burden of sorrow.

We would, therefore, strongly advocate a movement for the purpose of keeping the lamentable event of Wednesday last continuously before the eyes of the public. There would be no necessity for a large expenditure. A plain stone tablet, which could be prepared at some of our monumental works at a small price, affixed to some public building would be sufficient. If this suggestion should find public acceptance, the proprietor of the destroyed works should not be forgotten. The distress of the bereaved families can, as we have said, be readily understood; but who should realise the feelings of Mr Arblaster, in whose service the boys died? It would only be in accordance with the fitness of things that a public address of condolence should be presented to him; and it would be a graceful act on the part of the citizens of Sandhurst and Eaglehawk to give him their written assurance of their deep sympathy.

Barely four months ago his works were opened with a great show of public satisfaction, and his enterprise was lauded as being calculated to be of much benefit to the district and the colony. After the grievous blow he has received, it would be considerate, to say the least of it, to offer him such consolation as a letter or resolution of public condolence would convey.

This singular chapter of horrors closed with the death of Mr Koenemann in the hospital on Friday night. A fine hale man has thus died in the flower of his days, and his widow and two young children have been left lamenting. Time alone, with healing on his wings can assuage the bitter suffering of those to whom the victims of the accidental holocaust of Wednesday last were near and dear. All that the kindly deposed can do is to offer them the sympathy which they certainly want and substantial assistance if it should be required.

Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Tue 1 Mar 1887 Page 2

JUSTICE TO THE DEAD.

[To the Editor of the Bendigo Advertiser.]

Sir, - In giving his evidence at the inquest on the late Mr Koenemann, the acting-assistant surgeon of the hospital (Dr Inglis) deposed that Mr Koenemann had stated to him, in the presence of Dr. Penfold, that he said "he attributed the probable cause of the explosion to the carpenter, Westphalen, using an iron hammer instead of a copper one, and that he (Koenemann) had previously warned Westphalen not to do so."

I desire to say that no proper tools were provided, my deceased brother having often complained in my hearing that he had to use his own ordinary tools, which were frequently made use of, greatly to his annoyance, by the manager and the boys. The accident, therefore, if due to hammering, might have been occasioned by one of the other employees. Mr Koenemann must surely have been mistaken in saying he had often warned him (my brother) not to use an iron hammer, as there was no other kind in the place. That, as I have said, was his own, and was used by others in the factory. I have thought it necessary to make this statement, as Mr Koenemann's remarks might create an impression prejudicial to my unfortunate brother.

-Yours, etc,

OTTO WESTPHALEN,

Garsed Street, Sandhurst 28th February.

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Two memerial notes found in the Advertiser of February 1888

Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918) Thu 23 Feb 1888 Page 2

Family Notices

IN MEMORIAM.

In loving remembrance of our dear son, Frank Westphalen, who departed this life 23rd February, 1887.

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In loving remembrance of our dear son and brother, Robert Julius Herman Staub, who perished at the explosion at Arblaster's powder factory, Eaglehawk, on 23rd February, 1887.

Thy end thou didst not foresee,

From danger thou couldst not flee,

Poor Robert!

But God in His infinite love and wisdom

Will call on resurrection morn,

And bid thee with Him live

In everlasting life and joy.

Obituary notes for Joseph and his wife Christina Arblaster

Joseph Thompson ARBLASTER

died aged 79 years in 7/05/1920.

He was buried at Eaglehawk on 8/05/1920.

The Herald (Melbourne, Vic. : 1861 - 1954) Sat 8 May 1920 Page 1

Personal

Eaglehawk Citizen Dies

Mr J T Arblaster, a prominent resident of Eaglehawk, died yesterday, aged 79 years. In the sixties he was a leading athlete, and won many prizes on the running track. In his early days he worked in the mines, and in the seventies

he was manager of the South New Moon Company. Subsequently he established a powder magazine, which was destroyed in February, 1887, by an explosion, which, killed eight men, including Mr Arblaster's youngest son. For several years he was a member of the Eaglehawk Borough Council.

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Christina ARBLASTER

died aged 68 years in 8/07/1927.

She was buried with her husband in 9/07/1927.

The Age (Melbourne, Vic. : 1854 - 1954) Sat 16 Jul 1927 Page 20

Mrs Christina Arblaster, one of the oldest residents of Jobs Gully, Eaglehawk, died last week. Deceased was a native of Bendigo and was well known throughout the district. She was 68 years of age and was the widow of the late Mr Joseph Arblaster.



The headstone and grave of Joseph Thompson ARBLASTER





**Compiled by Pat & Ian Belmont
in July 2018
for the Bendigo Cemetery Obituaries & Notes**