

**Arnos Vale Cemetery,
Bristol, England
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5217 PRIVATE

W. WALKER

6TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

11TH DECEMBER, 1918 Age 39

William WALKER

William Walker was born at Tolarno Station, River Darling, NSW on 5th October, 1878 to parents George and Martha Walker (nee Jennings).

William Walker attended School at Wentworth, New South Wales.

William Walker was a 39 year old, single, Labourer from Irymple, Mildura, Victoria when he enlisted in Mildura, Victoria on 1st February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5217 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs M. Walker, Mildura, Victoria.

Private William Walker was posted to 16th Depot Battalion at Bendigo, Victoria from 5th February, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 16th Reinforcements of 6th Battalion on 25th February, 1916.

Private William Walker embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Suffolk (A23)* on 1st April, 1916 with the 6th Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements.

Private William Walker embarked from Alexandria (no date recorded) & disembarked at Plymouth, England (no date recorded).

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

Private William Walker proceeded to France on 29th August, 1916 from 2nd Training Battalion at Perham Downs, Wiltshire, England. He proceeded to join his Unit from 1st Australian Base Depot at Etaples, France on 14th May, 1916 & was taken on strength of 6th Battalion in the Field on 15th September, 1916 from Reinforcements.

Private William Walker was sent sick to Hospital on 23rd March, 1917. He was transferred to No. 45 Casualty Clearing Station on 25th March, 1917 from 3rd Australian Field Ambulance then admitted to 1st Divisional Rest Station the same day. Private Walker was transferred to No. 27 Ambulance Train on 27th March, 1917 & admitted to No. 12 General Hospital at Rouen, France on 28th March, 1917 with S.T.A. (Septic traumatic abrasion/s) to left toe. He was transferred & admitted to No. 2 Convalescent Depot at Rouen on 3rd April, 1917. Private Walker was discharged to Base Details on 21st April, 1917.

Private William Walker joined 1st Australian base Depot at Etaples, France on 24th April, 1917. He rejoined 6th Battalion from Hospital on 11th May, 1917.

Private William Walker was wounded in action on 4th October, 1917. He was admitted to No. 64 Field Ambulance on 5th October, 1917 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to left thigh. Private Walker was transferred & admitted to No. 41 Casualty Clearing Station on 5th October, 1917 then transferred to Ambulance Train the same day. He was admitted to No. 22 General Hospital at Camiers, France on 6th October, 1917 then on 20th October, 1917 Private Walker was transferred to No. 6 Convalescent Depot at Etaples, France. Private Walker was transferred & admitted to 5th Convalescent Depot at Cayeux on 22nd October, 1917. He was discharged to Base Depot on 19th November, 1917.

6th Battalion

The 6th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 7th and 8th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade....

In 1917, the battalion participated in the operations that followed-up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and then returned to Belgium to join the great offensive launched to the east of Ypres. During the battle of Menin Road in September 1917, Lieutenant Frederick Birks earned the 6th Battalion's only Victoria Cross.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 6th Battalion

Operations from 2.10.17 till 9.10.17

At 1845 on the 2nd Oct. the Bn moved forward from DICKEBUSCH area H 20 d to WESTHOEK ridge where it bivouaced until the night of 3rd/4th, when it moved forward to take up its position for the attack.....

Our casualties for the operation were

Officers 5 Killed 2 D. of W. 7 Wounded

O. Ranks 30 Killed 5 D. of W. 148 Wounded 48 Missing

These practically all happened during the enemy barrage on forming up lines & during the advance. Our casualties while consolidating and up till relief were very light.

Prisoners taken numbered 6 Officers and 173 O.R

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mrs M. Walker, Mildura, Victoria was advised by Base Records on 25th October, 1917 that Private Walker had been wounded.

Private William Walker joined 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 20th November, 1917. He rejoined 6th Battalion in the field on 1st December, 1917.

Private William Walker was reported to be still with his Unit (no date recorded).

Private William Walker was wounded in action (2nd occasion) on 23rd August, 1918. He was admitted to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance on 23rd August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to Chest (penetrating). Private Walker was transferred & admitted to No. 53 Casualty Clearing Station on 23rd August, 1918 with G.S.W. (gunshot wound/s) to chest then transferred the same day to No. 15 Ambulance Train. He was admitted to No. 2 General Hospital at Havre, France on 24th August, 1918. Private Walker embarked for England on 16th September, 1918 on Hospital Ship *Guildford Castle*.

6th Battalion

...In March and April 1918 the battalion helped stop the German spring offensive and later participated in the Allies' own offensive, launched near Amiens on 8 August 1918. The advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as "the black day of the German Army in this war".

The battalion continued operations until late September 1918.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 6th Battalion

FOUCAUCOURT – 23rd August, 1918

Sunny day.

3 am Companies move to forming up line

3.45 am Companies ready on tape line.

see NARRATIVE of OPERATIONS

.....

5.15 am Very hard fighting took place on the Ridge summit in R.35.a. and b.

....

8.30 am Enemy has shortened his artillery very quickly and was now pounding the ridge between St DENNIS and HERLEVILLE Woods. M.G. fire very strong from FOUCAUCOURT

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

© Cathy Sedgwick 2020

Mrs M. Walker, Mildura, Victoria was advised by Base Records on 9th September, 1918 that Private William Walker was admitted to 2nd General Hospital, Havre, France on 23rd August, 1918 with gunshot wounds to chest & was dangerously ill. She was advised on 12th September, 1918 that Private Walker's condition was stationary. Mrs M. Walker was advised on 24th September, 1918 that Private William Walker was pronounced out of danger & on 26th September, 1918 she was advised by Base Records that Private William Walker had been removed from the seriously ill list.

Private William Walker was admitted to 2nd Southern General Hospital at Bristol, England on 17th September, 1918 with G.S.W. to chest (penetrating) – severe.

Mrs M. Walker, Mildura, Victoria was advised by Base Records on 3rd October, 1918 that Private Walker had been transferred to 2nd Southern General Hospital, Bristol, England. She was advised on 1st November, 1918 that Private Walker was progressing favourably. Mrs Walker was advised by Base Records on 14th November, 1918 that Private Walker was convalescing.

Private William Walker's body was found drowned on 20th December, 1918. His body was recovered from the River at Bristol, England.

According to a telegram to Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. on 20th December, 1918 from Bristol - Private William Walker was absent from Hospital from 11th December, 1918.

A Coroner's Inquest was held into the death of No. 5217 Private William Walker, 6th Battalion, A.I.F.:

STATEMENTS OF EVIDENCE.

Pte S.J.C. BARKMAN, 60th Batt. A.I.F. a patient in "C" Ward at the Maudlin Street section of the 2nd Southern General Hospital, Bristol, stated that he last saw deceased on the 11th instant.

Miss E.G. THOMAS, Sister in charge of "C" Ward stated that the deceased was Convalescent and she last saw him on the morning of the 11th instant, when he appeared in the same spirits as usual. She stated she had no reason to believe deceased had any intentions to commit suicide.

The deceased's home address, as given on his admission to Hospital was:-

Pte William ORCHARD, A.S.C. M.T. a patient at the 2nd Southern General Hospital, whose home address was 16, Portland Street, Kingsdown, Bristol, stated that he met deceased on the 11th instant, between 2.30 and 3.p.m. on the Broad Quay, St. Augustines. Deceased was looking at the "U" Boat anchored there, and they talked together for about 20 minutes. Deceased seemed quite cheerful and happy and did not appear in any way depressed. When witness left him, he was talking to another man. (A Civilian)

Henry TANNER, who was employed by the Bristol Docks Committee was working on a Dredger at 2.30.p.m. Friday the 20th instant, at that portion of the Docks called the "City Quay". He saw the body of a man floating, head downwards. He secured the body and handed same over to the River Police.

Stephen HAYWARD. 186A. Bristol River Police stated that just after 2.30.p.m. on Friday the 20th instant, Henry Tanner handed over to him the body of deceased, which was conveyed by him to the Mortuary. There was nothing on the body which threw any light on the matter, there being 2/- and a piece of news-paper in the pockets.

George Henry BARKER. M.D. 124 Redland Road, Bristol.

Post-Mortem examination showed scar on right side of chest 4 inches long, from middle of which an un-healed sinus led into interior of chest. There was a break in tendon corresponding to sinus. He had some injuries of apparently Post-mortem nature. A compound fracture of Right leg and Left thigh. Dislocation of knee joint. Collapse of Right lung with adhesions of the pleura, consistent with the open sinus and wound.

The other evidence were those of death from drowning, to which death was attributable.

VERDICT.

FOUND DROWNED IN THE FLOATING HARBOUR.

The following was found located with the Inquest papers in the Service Record file for Private William Walker:

TO BE RECORDED AS DROWNED 11.12.1918.

(Sgd) R.W.Murphy. Capt.

"B" Records.

6.1.19.

A death for William Walker, aged 40, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Bristol, Gloucestershire, England.

Private William Walker was buried on 27th December, 1918 in Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England. His name is remembered on the CWGC Screen Wall & he has a flat Memorial Stone. Cemetery/Memorial reference Screen Wall 6. 704. From the burial report of Private William Walker - *Coffin was good, brass mounts. The deceased soldier was accorded a full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and surmounted by several beautiful wreaths sent from the Sisters and Comrades of Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol. The "Last Post" was sounded at the graveside, and the Rev W. Dawson officiated. The grave will be turfed and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Names of Relatives and friends present at the Funeral – Australian & Imperial Soldiers from Hospital, also Nurses.

Hugh Walker, of Merbein, Victoria, brother of the late Private William Walker, wrote the following letter to Mr C. McGrath, Federal Parliament House on 3rd February, 1919:

"Dear Sir,

On about the 30th December last we received a Cablegram to state that my brother's (Private William Walker's) body was recovered from the River Clyde at Bristol this cable message was followed soon afterwards by another Cable stating the Coroner's verdict found drowned cause unknown so far we have been able to find out little of what has really happened to my poor unfortunate Brother excepting a letter from his Aunt in England stating that the last letter she had from him which was just before this happened was the brightest she had from him through his experience in the war he saw some two years service and they corresponded regularly all the while I also received a letter which he wrote just a while before expressing his pleasure in the war ending and on being able to return home to us. His financial affairs are particularly good. We learned from his aunt that although the Doctor discharged him from the Hospital the head sister detained him and kept him making beads and other decorations for Christmas. It is very unsatisfactory and hard for us to lose one so dear to us without knowing the everdence [sic] at the Coroners inquiry so I am writing to see if you could procure this for me or advise me how to procure it the defence department have so much red tape and I feel that I have more trust in you as you appear to have the soldiers at heart. I am inclosing 10/note which is for postage ect I am quite prepared to pay the cost of a Cable if you think necessary my Brothers address was No 5217 Private William Walker 6 Battalion Australian Imperial Forces Abroad. Trusting dear Sir that I am not incringing too much on your valuable time and that I will be able to reach finality.

I am Dear sir yours respectfully

Hugh Walker"

Mr C. McGrath, House of Representatives, The Parliament of the Commonwealth, wrote to Major Lean, Base Records on 11th February, 1919 for further particulars.

Base Records replied on 14th February, 1919 that a cable message had been despatched to A.I.F. Headquarters, London, requesting all particulars in the case of the late Private William Walker.

A reply was sent on 13th May, 1920 from Base Records to Mr D. C. McGrath, Esq, Returned Soldiers Institute, Sturt Street, Ballarat, Victoria. The following is an extract: *"... according to the records he was drowned on 11.12.18 in the Floating Harbour Bristol Docks. At the Coroner's inquest no evidence was adduced as to how the fatality occurred.....It is regretted there appears no room to doubt the authenticity of this information. With regard to your correspondent's statement that he has every reason to believe his brother is still alive. If he has any evidence at variance with the official records, he should submit same to this office. Reference to his brother's desertion is not understood as there is nothing on the soldier's records to that effect."*

Hugh Walker, of Merbein, Victoria, also communicated with The Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia regarding his late brother - Private William Walker. Their Mildura Sub-Branch wrote to Base Records on 9th August, 1919 asking them to *"look up the records of this soldier and fill in the data required as fully as possible from the Base Records. When completed kindly return to High Walker, Esq., Block 66 D, Merbein, Mildura."* A timeline of the movements of the late Private William Walker from 3rd February, 1916 until his Funeral on 28th December, 1918 were forwarded to Mr H. Walker on 14th August, 1919.

A request was sent to Base Records on 9th May, 1920 from The Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia asking what information they had about the late Private William Walker & also enclosed a letter.

Mr G. Walker, father of the late Private William Walker, wrote to Base Records on 1st September, 1919, stating that his deceased son was a member of a Benefit Society & he was claiming sick pay etc & requested they supply him with the necessary documents. Base Records replied on 9th September, 1919 with a timeline of the movements of the late Private William Walker from 25th March, 1917 until 11th December, 1918 when he was drowned at Bristol, England.

Base Records forwarded on to Mr G. Walker, Senr., Lime Avenus, Mildura, Victoria, father of the late Private William Walker, on 21st July, 1923, 24th September, 1924 & 30th July, 1925, a photograph depicting the Cross erected in the soldiers' corner of the Arnos Vale Cemetery, where the remains of his son were interred, along with a Memorial Card & press cutting of the ceremony. The items had been sent from Mr Robert Bush, Bishop's Knoll, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, England. (see photos below).

Base Records forwarded on to Mr G. Walker, Senr., Lime Avenus, Mildura, Victoria, father of the late Private William Walker, on 16th September, 1930, a copy of the "*Western Daily Press*" containing an article referring to the Anzac Day Pilgrimage and Memorial Service held at Arnos Vale Cemetery, where the remains of his son were interred. The items had been sent from Mr Robert Bush, Bishop's Knoll, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, England. The envelope postmarked 17th September, 1930 was returned to Base Records marked "*unknown.*"

Private William Walker was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Walker's father – Mr G. Walker, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).



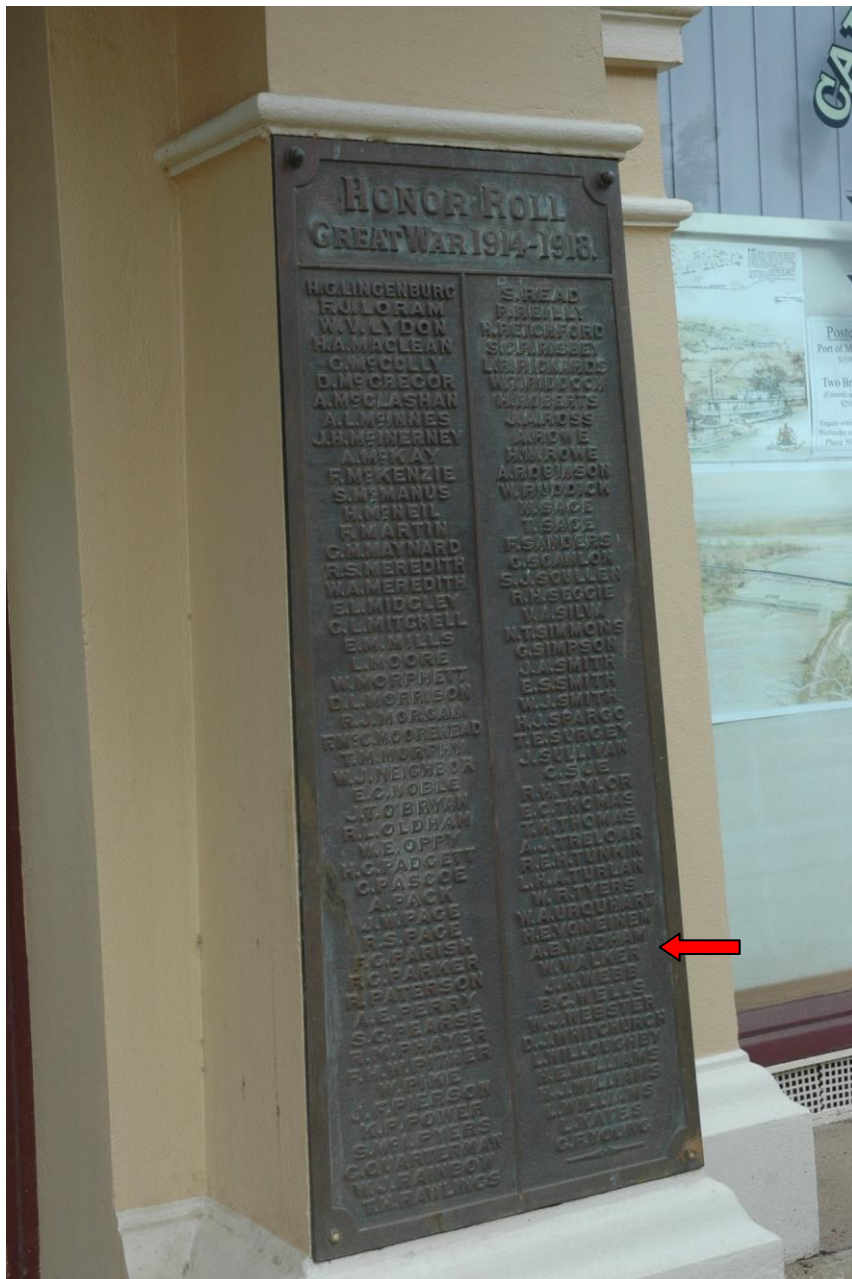
Memorial Plaque (also known as "Death Penny") for the late Private William Walker

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Walker – service number 5217, aged 39, of 6th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of George and Martha Walker, of Lime Avenue, Mildura, Victoria.

W. Walker is remembered on the Carnegie Library Honour Roll for World War One (right Panel), located National Highway A20, Mildura, Victoria.



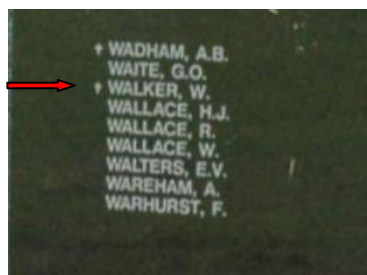
Carnegie Library Honour Roll (Photos from AWM – Places of Pride – Arthur Garland)



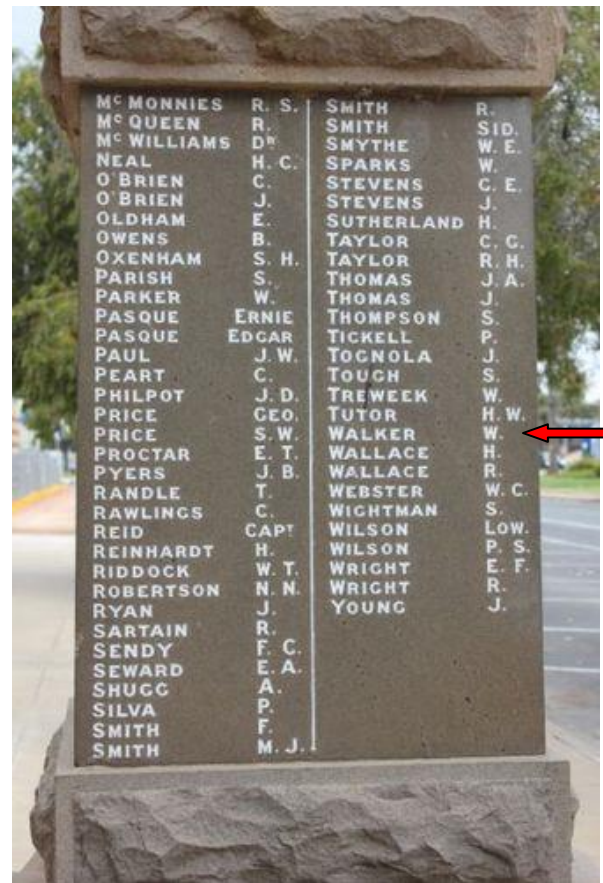
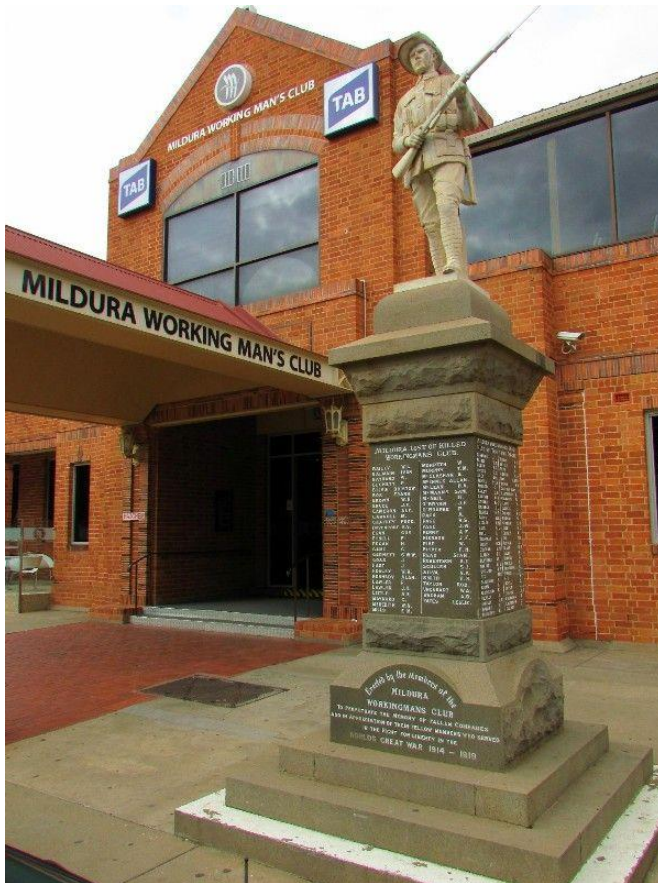
W. Walker is remembered on the Mildura War Memorial, located Henderson Park, Deakin Avenue & Thirteenth Street, Mildura, Victoria.



Mildura War Memorial (Photos from AWM – Places of Pride – Arthur Garland)

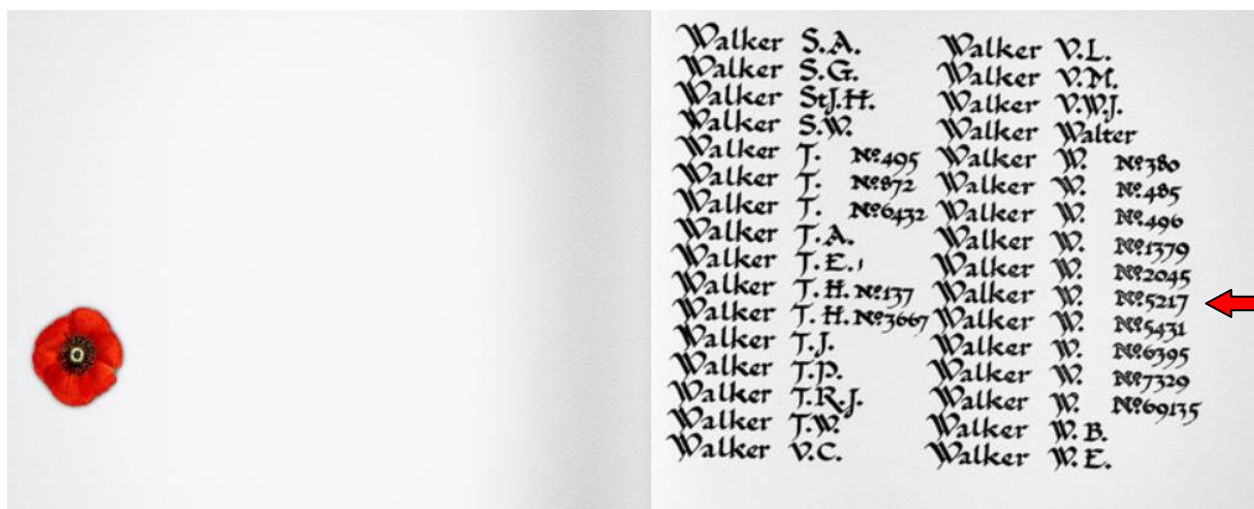


W. Walker is remembered on the Working Man's Club War Memorial, located at Mildura Working Man's Club, 90-124 Deakin Avenue, Mildura, Victoria.



Mildura Working Man's Club War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia)

W. Walker is remembered in the Book of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Victoria.





Private W. Walker is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 48.



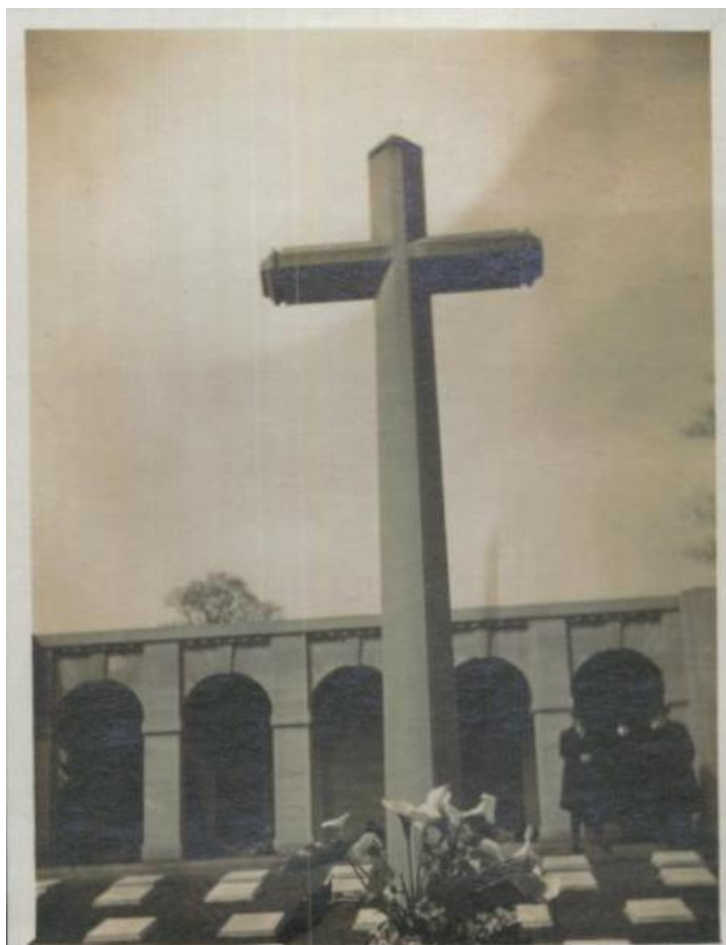
Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(113 pages of Private William Walker's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

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



The following photos were located in the Service Record file of the late Private Walter Barton Bamford, 1st Battalion Australian Infantry who died on 8th September, 1918 & was buried in Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, England. Similar items would have been sent to Mr G. Walker, father of the late Private William Walker (as described previously)



Private W. B. Bamford. 1st Bnlt:

Anzac Day

APRIL 25TH, 1925.



ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

TO
AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SOLDIERS' AND
SAILORS' GRAVES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED KINGDOM

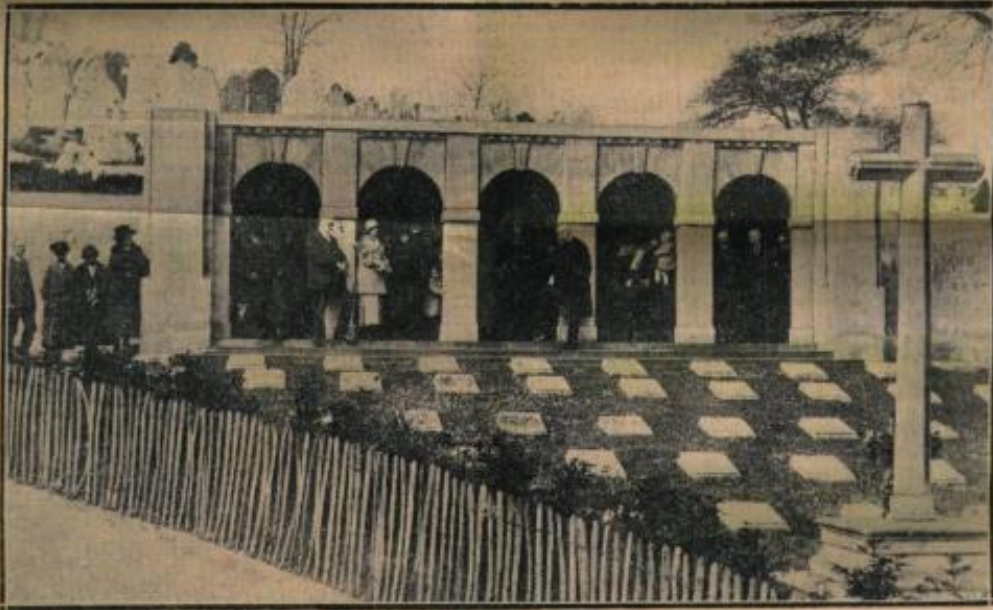
In grateful remembrance
of the brave sons of Australia and New Zealand who fought
and suffered, died and conquered, on many battlefields.



This is their epitaph. "Traveller south or west
Go, say at home we heard the trumpet call,
And answered. Now in the 'Old Home' we rest.
Our end was happy if our country thrives.
Much was demanded. Lo! our store was small—
That which we had, we gave—it was our lives."
L.L.

Y. APRIL 27, 1925.

GALLIPOLI DAY COMMEMORATION



THE SOLDIERS' CORNER, ARNO'S VALE.

Each year, on the 25th of April, a service of remembrance is held for those who died in Bristol of war wounds, and are buried in Soldiers' Corner, Arno's Vale. On Saturday, in the beautiful sunshine of a typical English spring morning, there assembled many who were associated with hospital work in Bristol for overseas troops. Bishop's Knoll, which, as most people know, was given over as a war hospital from 1914 to 1919, was represented by Mr R. E. Bush (Commandant), Mr and Miss Philp, Mrs Herapath, the Misses Nora and Doris Burt, Miss Vera Savile, Miss Goldsmith, Miss Stafford Jones, Miss Ennis, the Misses Spofforth, Miss Thornleigh, Mr E. C. Philp, and Mr A. G. Powell. Mrs R. E. Bush was away from Bristol, and Miss Hall-Houghton and others were unavoidably absent. Miss Laing, another devoted worker at Bishop's Knoll, took a wreath to the one Australian soldier who was buried at Greenbank Cemetery.

Most of those present brought flowers. Mr R. E. Bush placed a very beautiful emblem—the work of one of the Bishop's Knoll sisters—at the foot of the cross in the "Corner," and Mr Philp contributed a wreath of daffodils. Spring flowers there were in plenty, a postman in uniform contributing a bunch of wallflowers, and other sympathetic folk adding their tender tribute.

Bishop Clifford, in his short address, said: "We are gathered here on this 10th anniversary of Gallipoli day to reverently and affectionately commemorate our brethren from various parts of the British Empire who, after having valiantly fought and honourably suffered in the Great War, were brought to this city of Bristol and here breathed their last breath. We laid their bodies in the earth at this spot, and here they rest in hope till the Day of Resurrection. We gratefully cherish their memory. We renew it to-day, and will never allow it to pass from our mind and heart. God's mercy and peace be with them, so is our affectionate regard, and may that great cause for which they gave their lives be ever upheld and prosper and ever honoured among men of goodwill."

Prayer was said, and this simple service which will so greatly comfort the relatives was over.



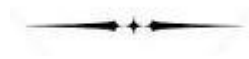
MR. E. C. PHILP AND MR. R. E. BUSH PLACING WREATHS ON THE CROSS.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P09795.004

Private William Walker



Newspaper Notices

THE 350th CASUALTY LIST

WOUNDED

Private W. Walker, Mildura

(*The Mildura Cultivator*, Victoria – 10 November, 1917)

VICTORIA'S ROLL OF HONOR

434th CASUALTY LIST

WOUNDED

W. Walker, Mildura (2nd occ).

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 15 October, 1918)

VICTORIA'S ROLL OF HONOR

CASUALTY LIST NO. 456

DIED OTHER CAUSES

W. Walker, Mildura

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 January, 1919)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England

The cemetery was established in 1837. During both wars, there were a number of military hospitals at Bristol and the city was the depot of the Gloucestershire Regiment. During the Second World War there were also a number of Royal Air Force stations and prisoner of war camps in the area. ARNOS VALE CEMETERY contains burials of both wars. Most of the 356 First World War burials were of men who died at the local hospitals, particularly the 2nd Southern General and the Beaufort, many of whom were landed at Avonmouth from hospital ships from the Mediterranean. Their graves can be found in the 'Soldiers Corner', a plot established by the British Red Cross, near the main entrance. The 238 casualties buried here are commemorated on a memorial at the rear of the plot. The rest of the graves are scattered throughout the cemetery. There are also special memorials to one casualty buried in the cemetery whose grave could not be located and another commemorating a casualty buried in Bedminster Church Cemetery whose grave could not be maintained. There are 149 burials from the Second World War, some forming a small plot in an area in the upper part of the cemetery set aside for burials from the Naval Hospital at Barrow Gurney; the rest are scattered. Those whose graves are not marked by headstones are named on a Screen Wall Memorial. BRISTOL (ARNOS VALE) CREMATORIUM stands within the cemetery. A memorial in front of the crematorium commemorates 68 servicemen and women of the Second World War whose remains were cremated there.

(*Information from CWGC*)

© Cathy Sedgwick 2020



Arnos Vale Cemetery - Main Entrance on Bath Road (Photo by JohnM – Find a Grave)



(Photo from CWGC)



Soldiers' Corner – Arnos Vale Cemetery (Photo by JohnM – Find a Grave April, 2017)



New Memorial Stones (Photo by JohnM – Find a Grave November, 2018)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P09795.005

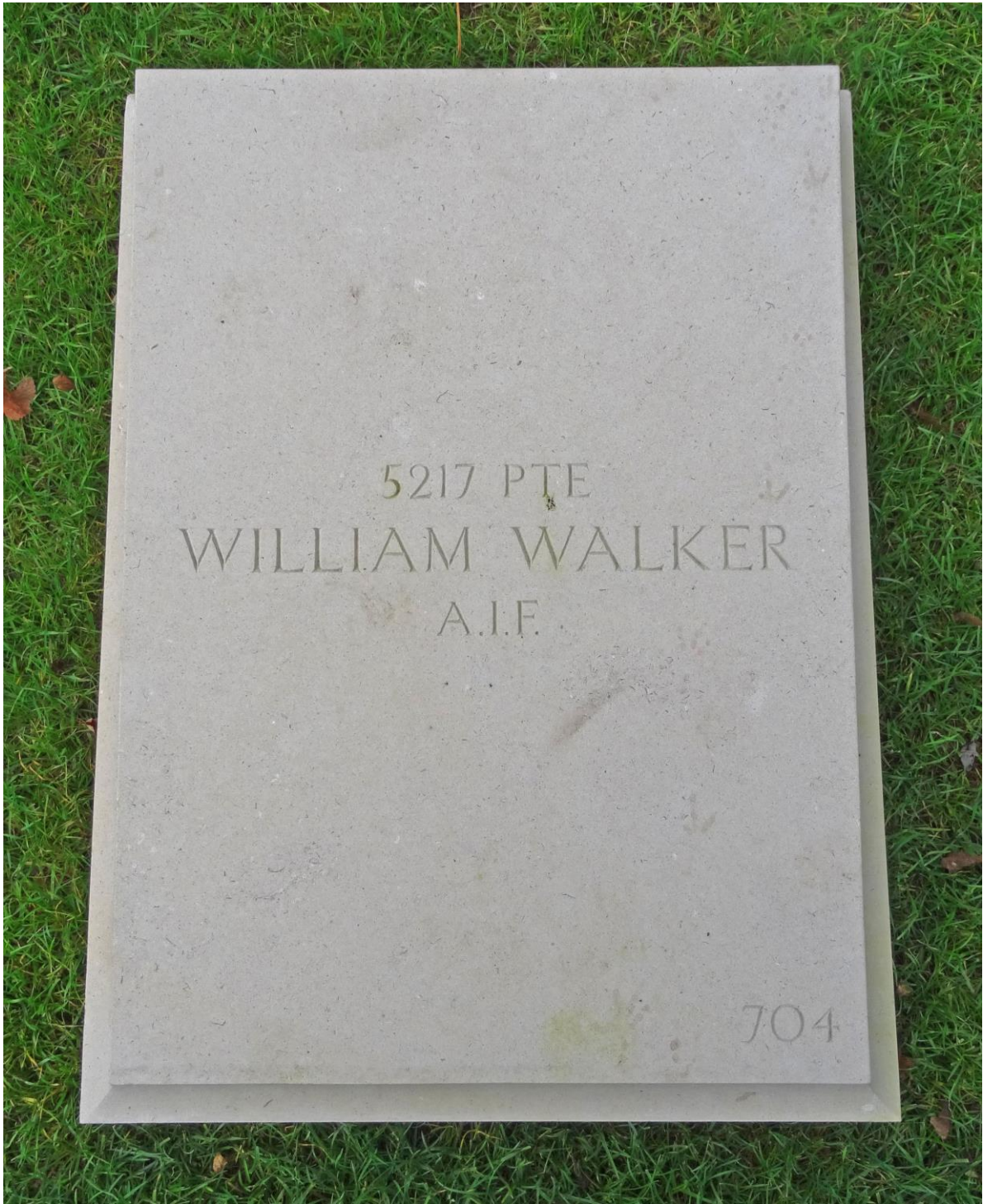
Original Cross Marker for Private W. Walker

Photo of Private William Walker's name on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Screen Wall in Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England & his Memorial Stone in Soldiers' Corner.



(Photos by JohnM – Find a Grave April, 2019)



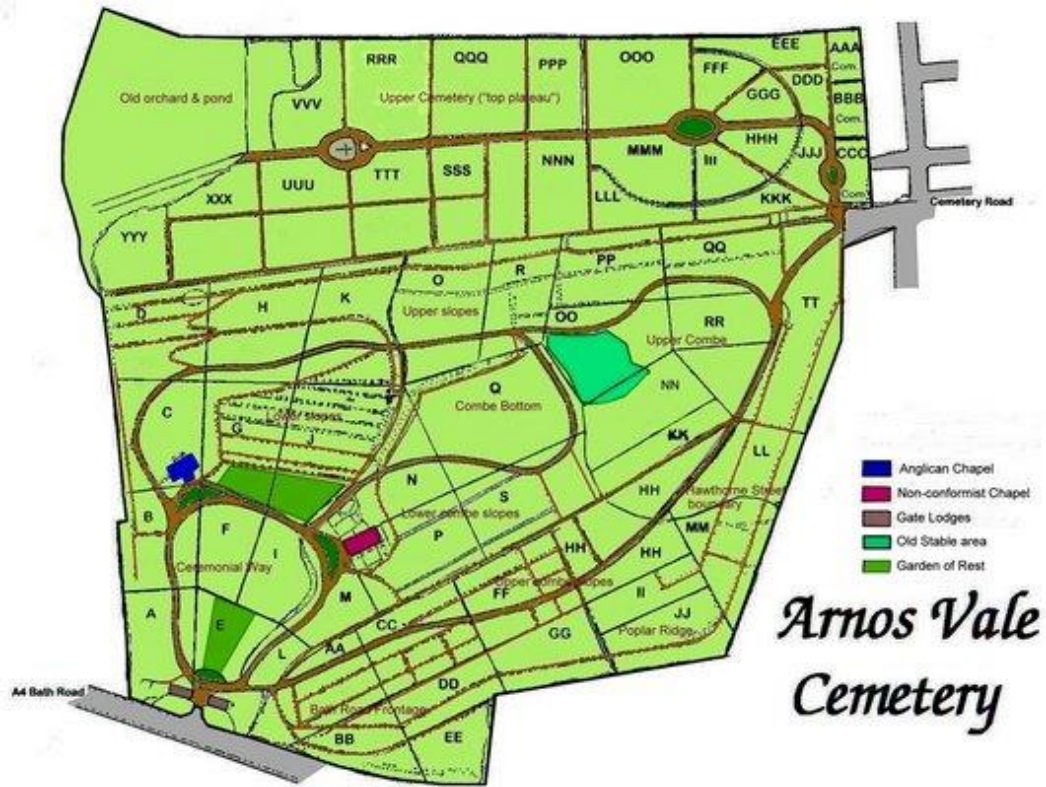


5217 PTE
WILLIAM WALKER
A.I.F.

704



(Photo taken December, 2018 by Julian Walker)



Arnos Vale Cemetery

(Photo by Debra Polly – Find a Grave)