

Private John Frederick Walters[©]

Regimental number:43421

1st Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers

born: 1883–died: 1918

John Frederick Walters was born in Derby on 11 April 1883,¹ the youngest child of John Walters and Emily, née Hazeldine. He had an older brother, William Thomas (born 1874), and two older sisters, Elizabeth Katie (born 1875) and Gertrude (born 1878).²

John Walters (senior) was a joiner who ran a carpentry and undertaking business in Little Eaton, Derbyshire.³ However, he died in 1889 when son John was just 6 years old.⁴ His mother Emily continued the family business, with the help of oldest son William.⁵

John Frederick became a clerk, working in 1911 for a manufacturing firm.⁶ Two years later he married Edith Mary,⁷ the daughter of James Croker, a colour sergeant with the 52nd Foot Regiment and a Chelsea Pensioner.⁸

At some point after the First World War started, John Frederick enlisted with the Royal Scots Fusiliers. It is not known exactly when he signed up, but his war gratuity payment indicates he served for about 21 months, which would make his enlistment date around September 1916.⁹ He would have been 33 years old.

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, which at the time was stationed in Northern France in Mazingarbe, north of Arras.¹⁰ He would have participated in the Battle of the Ancre (the last Battle of the Somme) in November 1916, the Battles of the Scarpe in 1917, and the Battle of Bethune in April 1918.¹¹

In early June 1918, the Battalion was in the trenches near Chocques, just west of Bethune.¹² It was a relatively quiet period, but an exchange of artillery fire on 9 June resulted in some casualties.¹³ This evidently included Private Walters, who was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with wounds to the head and back, penetrating the right lung.¹⁴ He died the next day, June 10, age 35, and was buried later that day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row F, Grave No. 45). The family did not include a personal inscription on his tombstone.¹⁵ The cemetery lies one kilometre west of Pernes-en-Artois, in the region of Pas de Calais, and contains the remains of 1096 soldiers from the two world wars.

Private John Frederick Walters received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918).¹⁶

His older brother William Thomas was 40 when war broke out, and 42 when conscription was introduced in 1916 for those between 18 and 41.¹⁷ He continued as a joiner and timber merchant in Shardlow, Derbyshire, with his son Harry.¹⁸ He died in Little Eaton, Derbyshire, in 1954, age 79.¹⁹

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¹ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca; accessed 23 March 2019), entry for John Frederick Walters, FHL film number: 1041440

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- ² “1891 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 27 March 2019), entry for John Fredk Walter [*sic*], Registration district: Spondon, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 12, Piece: 2726, Folio: 187, Page: 10
- ³ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 21 May 1928, page 3, *British Newspaper Archive* (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk: accessed 20 March 2019)
- ⁴ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 March 2019), entry for John Walters, Registration district: Shardlow, Inferred county: Derbyshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 276
- ⁵ “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 19 March 2019), entry for Emily Walkes [*sic*], Registration district: Shardlow, Sub-registration district: Spondon, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Piece: 3212, Folio: 217, Page: 19, Household schedule number: 149
- ⁶ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 19 March 2019), entry for John Frederick Walters, Registration district: Shardlow, Registration district number: 434, Sub-registration district: Spondon, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 4, Piece: 20854
- ⁷ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 March 2019), entry for John F Walters, Registration district: Shardlow, Inferred county: Derbyshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 989
- ⁸ “UK, Royal Hospital Chelsea Pensioner Soldier Service Records,” *Fold3* (www.fold3.com: accessed 3 April 2019), entry for Croker, James, Piece Number: 1929, Series WO 97, Service Date 1874, Page 1
- ⁹ Based on “War Gratuity Calculator” (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 28 March 2019)
- ¹⁰ “UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920,” *National Archives* (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk: accessed 9 April 2019), entry for Royal Scots Fusiliers Regiment, Sub unit: 1st Battalion, Piece description: Piece 1422/3, Page 47
- ¹¹ “Unit History: Royal Scots Fusiliers” (<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/313/royal-scots-fusiliers/>: accessed 9 April 2019)
- ¹² “UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920,” *National Archives* (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk: accessed 9 April 2019), entry for Royal Scots Fusiliers Regiment, Sub unit: 1st Battalion, Piece description: Piece 1422/3, Page 71
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, Page 72
- ¹⁴ “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 April 2019), entry for Walters, J.F.
- ¹⁵ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 April 2019), entry for Walters, John Frederick, Service No: 43421
- ¹⁶ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 5 April 2019), entry for Walters, John F.
- ¹⁷ “Recruitment to the British Army during the First World War,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recruitment_to_the_British_Army_during_the_First_World_War: accessed 9 April 2019)
- ¹⁸ “1939 Register,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 9 April 2019), entry for Walters, Thomas W., Schedule number: 184, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: RCWM
- ¹⁹ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 9 April 2019), entry for William T Walters, Registration district: Shardlow, Inferred county: Derbyshire, Volume: 3a, Page: 373