

**Private Thomas Walton®**  
**Regimental number: 4932**  
**53rd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force**

**born: 1888–died: 20 July 1916**

Thomas Walton was born in the second quarter of 1888 in London, England (birth registered in Hampstead), the third of six children born to Henry Walton and his wife Mary, née Stubbs. The others were Ellen (b. 1885), William (b. 1886), Harry (b. 1890), Elizabeth (b. 1893), and Frederick (b. 1896). William was also born in London, but the four others were all born in Barnsley, Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Walton was a mason/stonemason in Barnsley for most of his career, as recorded in every census from 1871 to 1911.<sup>2, 3, 4, 5, 6</sup> However, in 1884 he was working as a railway employee, according to his marriage record.<sup>7</sup> He and his wife were married in St. Pancras Old Church, London, even though the census records show they were both born in Yorkshire. It would appear that the railway job took them to London for a few years.

Thomas was still living with his parents in Barnsley in 1911, age 22, and was working as a bricklayer.<sup>8</sup> However, on 27 July 1911 he set sail from Liverpool on SS *Persic*,<sup>9</sup> arriving in Sydney, Australia, on 8 September.<sup>10</sup> According to his entry in the database De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour on *Ancestry*, Thomas had been a bricklayer in the employ of Messrs. W. Dunk and Sons in Barnsley, and he followed his trade in Australia, working in Sydney, Yass and Goulburn.<sup>11</sup> He emigrated with two friends from Barnsley, Walter Armitage and Tom Hall, and he lived in Yass with a Mr. Methley, another Barnsley man.<sup>12</sup>

After the start of the First World War, Thomas enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in Goulburn on 14 August 1915.<sup>13</sup> His mother is listed as next of kin, as his father had passed away on 4 January 1914.<sup>14</sup> Thomas was 5' 8" tall and weighed 155 lbs, with blue eyes and black hair. His religious denomination was Anglican.

On 20 April 1916 Private Thomas Walton was transferred from the 1st Battalion to the 53rd Battalion. On 19 June 1916 he embarked at Alexandria, Egypt, to join the British Expeditionary Force and disembarked at Marseilles, France, on 28 June. The soldiers took the train to Thions and then marched to their position in the line near Fleurbaix.<sup>15</sup>

Less than one month later, on 19 July 1916, the battalion was involved in the disastrous Battle of Fromelles.<sup>16</sup> It was designed as a feint to draw the Germans away from the Battle of the Somme further south, but the Germans quickly realized this. A seven-hour preparatory bombardment alerted the Germans to the attack and was ineffective. The



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attackers suffered heavily from German machine guns. Some trenches were captured, but the Australians were forced to withdraw due to lack of support. The battalion started the action with 28 officers and 823 other ranks, but of these, 24 officers and 601 men were killed, wounded or missing.<sup>17</sup>

One of the wounded was Private Thomas Walton, who suffered gunshot wounds to the back and arms. He died of his wounds on 20 July 1916 at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station at Bailleul<sup>18</sup> and was buried the same day in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, Reference II. F. 17.<sup>19</sup> There is no inscription on his headstone. The cemetery lies in the east end of the town of Bailleul, in the Nord department of the Hauts-de-France region; it contains the remains of 4344 soldiers from the two world wars.

No record has been found of his war medals, but he should have received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service. He should also have received the 1914–15 Star, for service in any theatre of the war in 1914–15.

According to a local newspaper article on the death of Thomas, all four sons of Henry and Mary joined the Army during the war.<sup>20</sup> No military record has been definitively attributed to the eldest son, William, but according to the above article, he was training in England in 1916. In 1904 at age 18 he had married Eleanor Johnson, who was 21.<sup>21</sup> At the time of the 1911 Census, they had no children and William was working as a house painter.<sup>22</sup> However, three Walton children were born in Barnsley with mother's maiden name Johnson over the next few years: Joseph William in 1912, Mary in 1916, and Kathleen Joan in 1923.<sup>23</sup> These may be their children.

Third son Harry also got married before the war, in 1913, to Eliza Crossley.<sup>24</sup> He was working as a plumber at the time. On 29 March 1915, Harry enlisted in the Field Artillery Brigade as a driver.<sup>25</sup> He served in France and was promoted several times, ending the war as a sergeant. In 1939 he was back living in Barnsley with his wife and once again working as a plumber.<sup>26</sup>

Youngest son Frederick was working as a house painter in 1911.<sup>27</sup> According to his entry in De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, Frederick enlisted in the 14th (Service) Battalion of the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) on 2 July 1915.<sup>28</sup> He served with the Expeditionary Forces in Egypt and subsequently in France, where he was killed in action on 2 September 1918 during an attack on the village of Moislains.<sup>29</sup> He had risen to the rank of lance sergeant.<sup>30</sup>

Frederick's mother was still alive to learn that she had lost a second son in the war, but she died soon afterwards, at age 58.<sup>31</sup>

Oldest daughter Ellen was working as a tailoress in 1901.<sup>32</sup> Five years later she married John Wesley Bingham.<sup>33</sup> They had two children: Harry, born in 1907,<sup>34</sup> and George Edward, born 13 years later, after the war.<sup>35</sup> In 1921 all four were living together in Bradford at 25 Thirkhill Street, and John Wesley was working as a coffee roaster.<sup>36</sup> Ellen was still living in the same house in 1939 with George Edward. She was now a widow, working as a shop cleaner.<sup>37</sup>

Elizabeth, the other daughter, was living with her parents and working as a tailoress in 1911.<sup>38</sup> She got married after the war, on Christmas Day 1920, to George Peaker Stanley, a blacksmith.<sup>39</sup> They were living in Worsborough, Yorkshire, in 1939, with a child, Leonard, born in 1930.<sup>40</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp#Results](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp#Results): accessed 23 March 2022), search for Walton, mother's maiden name Stubbs
- <sup>2</sup> "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton, Registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 4644, Folio: 76, Page: 52
- <sup>3</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton, Registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 19, Piece: 4604, Folio: 11, Page: 15
- <sup>4</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton, Registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 19, Piece: 3744, Folio: 18
- <sup>5</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton, Registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 08, Piece: 4312, Folio: 209, Page: 43
- <sup>6</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton, Registration district number: 507, Sub-registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 17, Piece: 27576
- <sup>7</sup> "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1936," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](http://ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton
- <sup>8</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Thomas Walton, Registration district number: 507, Sub-registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 17, Piece: 27576
- <sup>9</sup> "UK and Ireland, Outward Passenger Lists, 1890–1960," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 30 March 2022), entry for Thos Walton
- <sup>10</sup> "Victoria, Australia, Assisted and Unassisted Passenger Lists, 1839–1923," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 30 March 2022), entry for Thomas Walton
- <sup>11</sup> "UK, De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 30 March 2022), entry for Thomas Walton
- <sup>12</sup> "Report in the Barnsley Chronicle," *Lives of the First World War* (<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/story/38092>: accessed 31 March 2022)
- <sup>13</sup> "Australia, WW1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 March 2022), entry for Thomas Walton. Unless otherwise specified, all information about his military service comes from this source.
- <sup>14</sup> "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 30 March 2022), entry for Henry Walton
- <sup>15</sup> "Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914–18 war, AWM4 Subclass 23/70/1 - 53rd Infantry Battalion," *Australian War Museum* (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1344872?image=4>: accessed 31 March 2022)
- <sup>16</sup> "Battle of Fromelles," *Australian War Memorial* (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84321>: accessed 31 March 2022)
- <sup>17</sup> "Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914–18 war, AWM4 Subclass 23/70/2 - 53rd Infantry Battalion," *Australian War Museum* (<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1345443?image=7>: accessed 31 March 2022)
- <sup>18</sup> "BIFHSGO Name Index" (<https://www.bifhsgo.ca/search-name-index>: accessed 27 January 2022), search for Walton
- <sup>19</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Thomas Walton, Service No: 4932

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- <sup>20</sup> "Four Sons with the Colours," Barnsley Independent, 5 August 1916, page 8, *British Newspaper Archive* (<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0002855/19160805/140/0008>: accessed 27 March 2022), search for Walton
- <sup>21</sup> "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Eleanor Johnson
- <sup>22</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for William Walton, Registration district number: 507, Sub-registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 06, Piece: 27565
- <sup>23</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* ([https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes\\_search.asp#Results](https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp#Results): accessed 10 April 2022), search for Walton, mother's maiden name Johnson, district of birth Barnsley
- <sup>24</sup> "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Harry Walton
- <sup>25</sup> "UK, British Army World War 1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 4 April 2022), entry for Harry Walton. Unless otherwise specified, all information about his military service comes from this source.
- <sup>26</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 April 2022), entry for Harry Walton, Schedule number: 250, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: KABO, Registration district: 507-1
- <sup>27</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Frederick Walton, Registration district number: 507, Sub-registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 17, Piece: 27576
- <sup>28</sup> "UK, De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 30 March 2022), entry for Frederick Walton
- <sup>29</sup> "UK, World War I War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany,) 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 April 2022), entry for Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), Sub-unit: 14th (Fife and Forfar) Battalion, Piece description: Piece 3152/4, page 15
- <sup>30</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Frederick Walton.
- <sup>31</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Mary Walton
- <sup>32</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 29 March 2022), entry for Ellen Walton, Registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 08, Piece: 4312, Folio: 209, Page: 43
- <sup>33</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 April 2022), entry for Ellen Walton
- <sup>34</sup> "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Harry Bingham [*sic*]
- <sup>35</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 April 2022), entry for Geroge E Bingham [*sic*]
- <sup>36</sup> "1921 Census of England & Wales," *FindMyPast* (<https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=GBC%2F1921%2FRG15%2F21764%2F0433&parentid=GBC%2F1921%2FRG15%2F21764%2F0433%2F04>: accessed 5 April 2022), entry for George Edward Bingham
- <sup>37</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 April 2022), entry for Ellen Bingham, Schedule number: 226, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: KBTJ, Registration district: 498/4

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<sup>38</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 23 March 2022), entry for Elizabeth Walton, Registration district number: 507, Sub-registration district: Barnsley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 17, Piece: 27576

<sup>39</sup> "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 27 March 2022), entry for Elizabeth Walton

<sup>40</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 5 April 2022), entry for Elizabeth Stanley, Schedule number: 159, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: KPBA, Registration district: 507/A