**SAPPER HARRY CLEMENT WALSH**

**7630 – 2nd Tunnelling Company**

York, Western Australia was stated to be the birthplace of Harry Clement Walsh in 1875 the son of Patrick and Margaret Walsh. In 1916 he was working in the Darling River country near Broken Hill, New South Wales.

At the recruiting depot in Broken Hill on 5 February, 1917 the forty-two-year-old boundary rider applied to enlist for active service and passed the medical examination. Attestation forms describe him as 163cms (5ft 4ins) tall, weighing 68kgs (150lbs) with a chest expansion of 84-90cms (33-35½ins) having a fresh complexion, good vision in his blue eyes and black hair going grey. Distinctive marks were five vaccination scars on his left arm and medical note says he stated he has never had consumption or fits. Religion was Roman Catholic.

Next-of-kin nominated was his mother Margaret McKay, care of Mrs McKenzie, “St Rowans”, Beulah Street, Perth, W.A. The Oath of Enlistment was taken and signed the same day.

Acknowledgement to the departing volunteers was published in the:

*Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill) Thursday February 8, 1917:

IN BROKEN HILL – SEND-OFF TO RECRUITS

The Broken Hill recruits for the A.I.F. leaving for camp in Adelaide tonight are the following: L.B.O. De Emienne, William Lawrence Trembath, Albert Miller, **Harry Walsh**, John Jacob Wilks and Jim McCann. Two other volunteers were rejected and two others are undergoing examination this afternoon and may join the six named. Those named were entertained last night by the ladies’ section of the Recruiting Committee at the residence of Mrs M’Kenna. The send-off will be joined in by members of the Recruiting Committee, Returned Soldiers’ Association, Barrier Empire League and Boy Scouts.

Basic training commenced with B Coy at Mitcham camp, Adelaide from 9 February until allotted on 20 February to the Tunnelling Reinforcements. On 26 April was transferred to their training camp at Seymour, Victoria joining the April, 1917 Reinforcements. In preparation for departure military authorities noted his Will was lodged with The Public Curator’s Office, Adelaide, S.A. His rank was Sapper with the regimental number 7630.

The April Reinforcements consisted of 168 members who embarked on the troopship HMAT A68 *Anchises* on August 8, 1917 from Sydney, NSW. Colds and influenza were prevalent at the commencement of the voyage. Crossing the Pacific Ocean the vessel arrived at Colon, Panama on September 2, 1917 departing six days later. Halifax, Nova Scotia was reached on the 18th and after three days in port departed on September 21, 1917. The final journey to England was completed after a 55-day voyage when they docked at Liverpool on October 2, 1917. The troops were detrained to Tidworth. The following day they arrived at Nos 1 and 3 Details Camps at Parkhouse for further training for the front.

The Reinforcement proceeded overseas to France from Southampton on 14 November, 1917 arriving a day later at the Aust General Base Depot in Rouelles. Left there five days later for the1st Anzac Entrenching Battalion which was an advanced section of the Base Depot that organised works near the lines and through duties, usually of ten days duration, would accustom the reinforcements to war conditions before being assigned to a company in the field. Sapper was attached to the 3rd Pioneer Battalion on November 24.

On 13 December, 1917 marched in and attached to the 2nd Tunnelling Company on 22 December. His arrival coincided with Company Headquarters and Nos 2, 3, & 4 Sections leaving camp in Havrincourt Wood on December 15 to the New Camp at YTRES during good winter weather.

About 2 April, 1918 Sapper stated he fell out of march on retreat and reported to P. Marshall Hesden and re-joined his unit on April 15. This was recorded on his records on 1 July, 1918.

Two days later went sick to the 15th Aust Field Ambulance suffering myalgia (muscular pain) moving to the 61st Casualty Clearing Station then conveyed on the Ambulance Train no. 12 to Rouen entering the 10th General Hospital with debility. On 9 July appeared before the 2nd Medical Board and sent to the Aust General Base Depot where he remained until returned to England on July 17 arriving two days later at the No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth classed with B3 debility.

Sapper Walsh embarked for Australia as an invalid due to rheumatism on 24 August, 1918 on board H.T. *Medic.* Base Records advised his mother on 30 September he was returning home.

His name appeared in the list of soldiers returning published in the:

*Barrier Miner* Thursday October 10, 1918:

RETURNING SOLDIERS – LIST “I”

The South Australian military authorities report that the following soldiers (list “I”) have been listed for return to Australia, and are actually en route from abroad.

Sapper H.C. Walsh, Tunnelling Details. *Article abridged*

The transport was to dock in Melbourne (3rd Military District) with their anticipated arrival reported in the:

*Argus* (Melbourne) Friday October 11, 1918:

AUSTRALIAN V.C.’S LAND WITH LIST “I” TO-DAY

ARRIVAL EARLIER THAN EXPECTED

It was announced definitely by the Defence department last night that the Australian V.C. winners accompanying the invalids name in List “I” recently published, would arrive to-morrow or Sunday. The time of the procession of the returning troops through the city has not been fixed but the disembarkation will begin at 1 o’clock. The usual arrangements observed in the welcoming of returned soldiers will obtain, but special arrangements have been made for the reception of the V.C.’s. They will be conveyed at the head of the procession from Port Melbourne and will be entertained in the old council chamber of the Town Hall by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Stapley). The invalids in List “I” after being formally welcomed at the Town Hall “strong point” will proceed to the Sturt Street Drill Hall.

*Article abridged*

The soldiers for South Australia boarded trains for Adelaide arriving on 12 October, 1918 and their arrival was covered in:

*The Advertiser* (Adelaide) Monday October 14, 1918:

TWO SPECIAL TRAINS ARRIVE – FIRST BATCH OF ANZACS

To the accompaniment of stirring music by the Mitcham Camp Band two special trains arrive in Adelaide on Saturday morning with 140 returned soldiers, including the first batch of nine of the 19[blurred] Anzacs, who have been granted furlough. When the first train arrived at 9.5 a.m. there was a large gathering of relatives, friends and the general public, and in the vicinity of the station, and the returned warriors met with a hearty welcome. The second train arrived an hour later. The Minister of Repatriation (on behalf of the Government) and the Mayor of Adelaide (on behalf of the citizens) welcomed the returned men and cheers were given for their comrades still at the front. Then they were hurried off to Keswick in motor cars, provided by the Automobile organisation. As they passed through the streets, they were loudly cheered by the people, who bestowed floral and other gifts on the men.

*Article abridged*

Military Discharge was issued in Adelaide (4th M.D.) on 25 January, 1919 as medically unfit.

For serving his country Sapper 7630 Harry Clement Walsh, 2nd Tunnelling Company was issued to wear the British War Medal (21037) and the Victory Medal (20520) for serving his country.

From 1924 to 1926 he is listed at Redcliffs, Wimmera district of Victoria working as a labourer. In 1930 is a station hand at Netley Station, Menindie and by 1934 working as a gardener residing at 22 Ryder Street, East Sydney. From 1936 to 1937 he is a labourer living at 7 Denham Street, East Sydney.

The Sydney Branch of the Repatriation Commission requested a copy of his service records from Base Records which were forwarded on 15 March, 1932.

He posted to Base Records a Statutory Declaration in request for a duplicate returned soldier’s badge giving his address care of the Matraville Post Office and residential address as 569 Borre Street, Surry Hills declaring the lost occurred: *I don’t exactly know. Lost accidentally. When I looked for it, it was gone.*

Base Records replied to him on 24 June, 1941 referring to his Declaration and advised that the cost of replacing the lost Returned Soldier’s Badge was one shilling. As his declaration was not dated it was returned for completion to be returned to their office with the remittance of one shilling and on receipt a new badge would be issued.

The ex-soldier receipted delivery by post of a duplicate Badge (no.9336) on 9 July, 1941.

In 1943 he was listed at 709 Bourke Street, East Sydney giving no occupation and by 1954 he was at May’s Rest, Appin Road, McArthur and no occupation.

Harry Clement Walsh passed away about 27 October, 1955 age given as 83 years with his death registered at Liverpool, NSW. Interment took place on October 28, 1955 in the Catholic section 16 of Liverpool General Cemetery in grave no. 321.



Liverpool General Cemetery, NSW

Photo sourced from Find-a-Grave images

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Note:

The Australian War Memorial Embarkation Roll records his Regimental number as 7629.

The Australian War Memorial Nominal Roll records his Regimental number as 7630.

The Australian War Memorial Embarkation Roll records the Regimental number of Gomer Jones as 7619.

The Australian War Memorial Nominal Roll records the Regimental number of Gomer Jones as 7629.