Walker, Thomas Phillip

A West Australian railway employee
who died after volunteering for military service for their country

The Walker family suffered a double tragedy – Phillip and his brother John both enlisted but both died from illnesses contracted in the war zone.



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Traffic
Designation:	Shunter

Rail employment notes: Born 1/4/1890. Joined WAGR 7/10/1910 aged 20 as Junior Porter, Kalgoorlie and resigned 22/9/1911. Re-employed as Porter, Kalgoorlie 30/7/1915 and promoted to Shunter 20/12/1915. Transferred to Golden Gate 24/3/1916.
("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR and Kalgoorlie, a busy junction station and terminus of some passenger trains, probably had at least 10 porters. Some worked at the station, some in the goods shed, some passed exams to assist with safe-working)
Granted leave to join AIF 5/4/1916 (Service No.6602).

Died of illness at Wooroloo 9/4/1919 – Wooroloo was the main sanatorium for patients with Tuberculosis (TB), which was a too common illness until the 1950s.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	6602
Date of death:	9 April 1919
Place of death:	Western Australia
Age:	28
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Karrakatta General Cemetery, Karrakatta, Western Australia, Australia

Thomas Walker joined the 21th Reinforcements to 11th Battalion, on 11 April 1916. On 10 October 1916 he embarked on HMAT *Suffolk* at Fremantle.

He was wounded fighting in France, but was one of those fortunate enough to return to Australia alive.

However Thomas had developed tuberculosis, from which he would die in 1919.

Additional/personal information:

Thomas Walker was born in Malvern in Victoria in 1890, but the family moved to WA soon afterwards and he attended Kalgoorlie State School.

WALKER.—On April 9, at Wooroloo, Private Thomas P. Walker, of 11th Battalion, dearly loved youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Walker, 117 Keightley-road, Subiaco, and beloved brother of Mrs. W. A. Bottomley, Mrs. B.Pyke, Mr. G. Walker, and the late Private John Walker, of 16th Battalion.

WALKER.—On April 9, at 22nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Thomas Philip, late Machine Gun Section, 11th Battalion, A.I.F. Aged 28 years. Inserted by his loving friend, Zara Knox.

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He was returned to Australia with advanced bilateral Tuberculosis and died on 9 April 1919 which was within the period when he could be recorded as dying of War related illness and he is accordingly included on the Australian War Memorial and Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists. He was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery (Ang 1 A 0095). His mother, 17 May 1927 and father 02 Aug 1936 are also buried in that compartment.

The family had previously suffered the loss of Thomas' brother John Walker, who also enlisted but died of dysentery on Malta in 1915.

Further information and/or photos may be added as available. Information may also be found on the Australian War Memorial website: *https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people*

Abbreviations: WAGR= Western Australian Government Railways (& Tramways at some periods); MRWA= Midland Railway of Western Australia; BDM=Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages website; AWM=Australian War Memorial (Canberra and website); CWGC= Commonwealth War Graves Commission (including website). DVA=Department of Veterans' Affairs (including website)

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR Honour Roll and WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information researched by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

----------Lest we forget----------