

Walter Skelton



Private Walter Skelton
3rd Battalion, AIF
Service Number: 6357

Born: 1888 Epsom, England

Died: 5 May 1917, Bullecourt, France

Walter Skelton was born in 1888, the son of George and Fannie Skelton at Epsom, Surrey, England. He is believed to have migrated to Australia in 1908 and worked as a tally clerk and surveyor for A T Goldsmith of Richmond.

Skelton enlisted on 1 May 1916 and after serving with D Company at the Dubbo Depot Battalion, was allocated to the 20th Reinforcements, 3rd Battalion at Liverpool Army Camp. On 7 August 1916, Skelton married Matilda (Lilly), the daughter of Robert Shaw of Castlereagh, just before he sailed for overseas service. On 9 September, he sailed aboard HMAT Euripides for England. After arrival in England in October 1916, Skelton went into training for three months before being sent to the Western Front at Etaples in February 1917.

He was taken on strength by the 3rd Battalion on 11 March 1917. On 11 May 1917, Skelton was listed as missing in action. A fellow soldier, Private Bellinger was in the same trench as Skelton at Bullecourt. The troops were too far forward to receive supplies and the German troops drove them along their trench. When Bellinger last saw Skelton, he was unwounded on the fire step of the trench. Stretcher bearer Private Byrnes found him badly wounded by a bomb. He was brought out of the trench and died about an hour later. His body was then placed on a parapet. Skelton was described severally as a tall thin man, dark with a moustache and always wore glasses. He was believed to have been buried in Maricourt Wood cemetery near Vaulx-Vraucourt. Fred Earp was also buried here. Skelton was declared killed in action by a Court of Inquiry held on 27 October 1917.

Skelton's name appears on his parent's headstone in Ashley Road Municipal cemetery in Epsom, Surrey England. His wife Matilda never remarried and continued to live in the Lower Castlereagh district, close to her family. She died in 1957.

Memorial Details:

- Honour Roll, Villers Bretonneux, France
- War Memorial, Smith Park, Castlereagh

Sources:

- [National Archives Australia](#): B2455, SKELTON W
- [Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry](#)

- Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
- [Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour](#)
- Penrith City Library Biography files