



Sergeant Walter Victor TRIGGS 8639 – 21 Army Service Corps, 4th Depot Unit

Born: 1887 Melbourne, Victoria.

Parents: William & Mary Eliza Triggs

Occupation: Clerk/Accountant

District Connection: Yeoval

Enlistment Date: 27 Aug 1915, Liverpool, NSW.

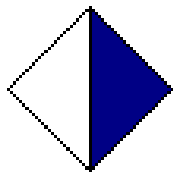
Enlistment Age: 27yrs 10mths.

Embarkation: 27 Nov 1915, Sydney, *HMAT Suffolk A33*

Served: England, France.

Fate: RTA 12 Nov 1916

Honour Boards: Yeoval, Wellington and Cumnock
War Memorial Gates.



Colour Patch Army
Service Corps

Biography

Walter was born in 1887 to William and Mary Triggs (nee Hutchins) of Melbourne, one of 13 children. Although Walter Triggs' name is on the Yeoval, Cumnock and Wellington World War 1 honour rolls, very little is known about his life in the district. The Yeoval honour roll states that it lists those "*who at one time attended Yeoval Public School*". However, in the case of Walter Triggs this is almost certainly not true, and it is much more likely he lived in the Yeoval district for only a brief time prior to the outbreak of World War One. His connection to Cumnock and Wellington is also undocumented.

The Age, Melbourne – 6 Mar 1907, p9, reported that Walter Triggs (aged 19) of Fitzroy, was convicted of larceny from Alfred Edments, fancy goods dealer of 309 Bouke Street, Melbourne, who employed him as a clerk. He was found guilty of stealing a cash cheque worth £13 (\$26) plus goods valued at 25 shillings (\$2.50), including a pipe and tobacco pouch, and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. The judge commented that Walter was a "*very respectably connected man in receipt of a good salary of 25 shillings (\$2.50) per week*".

Walter Triggs, aged 20yrs, married Ila Vera Norman of Launceston, Tasmania at Melbourne on 19 Dec 1908. *The Sydney Morning Herald* – 4 Dec 1915, p9, reported that Ila Triggs had been granted a divorce from Walter Triggs due to his "drunkenness and misconduct". She later married Kenneth Arthur McWells of Henty, Victoria, and died in Melbourne in 1980, aged 90 years.

Nothing else is known of Walter's life until the *Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* – 7 Jul 1915, p4, lists him as a committee member to carry out Australia Day arrangements and a ball at Yeoval. This was the first time Australia Day was observed in Australia – but it wasn't on 26 January. The first Australia Day was held on 30 July 1915 as a national fundraising venture to support wounded soldiers.

The NSW Central Executive for Australia Day provided suggestions in 1915 to local committees "*in order that the style of the celebration shall be uniform throughout the State*". One of the suggestions was to "*arrange for a committee of ladies to sell suitable favors in the streets and business places...*"

A "£5 list" was started to collect donations from the Yeoval residents, while Mr John Munro of "Sterling" Yeoval donated a "very fine trotting colt" to be auctioned on Australia Day. A ball was organised and a football match between the "Country" and "Town" teams arranged. Admission to the football ground was by a silver coin (3 cents to 20 cents). Over £300 was raised in Yeoval, and another £227 in Bournewood, nominally equivalent to over \$1,054, but it was worth considerably more in 1915.

Walter passed his pre-enlistment medical examination in mid-July 1915 around the same time as other Yeoval locals— Harold Sparkes, Harold Edwards, and Ernest Merriman. However, he did not enlist until 27 August 1915, a month after the rest. His younger brother, Pte James Trigg – 1244, 9th Light Horse Regiment and 3rd Machine Gun Squadron, had enlisted in the AIF on 5 Jan 1915.



The Molong Express & Western District Advertiser – 24 Jul 1915, p3, Yeoval Items, reported that Walter “will have a good commission” upon enlisting, presumably meaning that he would be taken on as a commissioned officer such as lieutenant. However, he was taken on as a corporal, but soon promoted to sergeant in September 1915.

Although he lived in Yeoval and enlisted in Sydney, he gave his address as 17 Kent Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne. He variously nominated his mother Mary (of Kent Street, Fitzroy) and his wife (Ila Vera Triggs) as his next of kin, giving a different address in Brunswick Street, East Melbourne for his wife.

Walter was nearly 28 years old at enlistment and was untruthful when he stated on his attestation paper that he had never been convicted by a civil authority. He was 5 feet 8 inches (172 cm) tall, had brown eyes, dark brown hair, a dark complexion, and was of the Church of England religious denomination.

Unlike the others from Yeoval and Obley who enlisted at a similar time and joined fighting units, Walter was allocated to the Army Service Corps (ASC) and embarked at Sydney on the *Suffolk* on 30 Nov 1915 with the 4th Depot Unit of Supply. Sgt Trigg disembarked at Suez on 6 Jan 1916 and stayed in Egypt until 23 Mar 1916, when he left Alexandria to arrive at Marseilles, France, on 30th Mar 1916.

The 4th Depot Unit of Supply (DUS) serviced the 1st Infantry Division of the AIF. The supply depots were responsible for nearly all types of material, except ammunition. This included food, animal feed, water, fuel and equipment. The units generally consisted of men whose occupations included butchers, bakers, grocers, and warehouse workers, as well as accountants and clerks. The supply of goods to the large number of soldiers in the War was a massive task. By November 1918, there were 3 million British troops and half a million horses on the Western Front, requiring 30,000 tonnes of meat, 40,000 tonnes of bread, 15,000 tonnes of forage and 3 million gallons of petrol per month.

Although they were not actively involved in the fighting, the ASC were stationed close enough to the front line to suffer significant casualties. Supply depots were often the target of enemy artillery. A total of 41 soldiers of the ASC were killed in action during the War, while another 61 died of wounds.

Sgt Triggs was admitted to the Australian General Hospital with dyspepsia on 5 May 1916, rejoining the 4th DUS on 25 May 1916. He was with his unit on the Western Front for only another 20 days before being hospitalised with gastritis (inflammation of the stomach lining) on 14 Jun 1916.

He was admitted to hospital at Rouen, France, before being transferred to England and admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth. He spent some time at No 1 Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield, and was discharged on 15 August, only to be readmitted on 20 August. The AIF deemed Sgt Triggs medically unfit for service and he embarked for Australia on the Hospital Transport *Wiltshire* on 12 Nov 1916.



The 3rd London General Hospital. The railway lines which delivered wounded troops can be seen in the forefront and the overflow tent-wards in the background.

Sgt Triggs arrived in Sydney on 31 Dec 1916 and was discharged from the AIF on 30 Jan 1917. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Australian Defence Department advised the State Savings Bank of Victoria in January 1924 that Walter had been discharged medically unfit due to a disability which “*originated prior to enlistment, but was aggravated by exposure on military service*”. Walter, then living at 322 Print Road, South Yarra, had applied to the Bank for a grant under the War Services Homes Act.

Walter married Hilda Amelia Pearl Hogden at Sydney in 1919. Hilda was born at Wellington in 1895, the daughter of Henry and Phoebe Hogden. Henry Hogden owned land in the Gulgong district and ran race horses. Hilda Trigg is listed as living at Redfern, Sydney, in the 1930, 1933 & 1935 Australian Electoral Rolls, but no further trace of her was found after 1935.

The NSW Police Gazettes of 29 May 1919, reports the theft from Walter Triggs, 152 Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, of jewellery and money valued at £20, including a ring engraved “HH” presumably owned by his new wife. This report is similar to one listed in the Victorian Police Gazettes, 7 November 1907, of the theft of a lady’s gold ring and gold medal, valued at £4, from the room of Walter Triggs, clerk, of 17 Kent Street, Fitzroy.

It was reported in the NSW Police Gazettes of 20 Oct 1926, that a warrant in Sydney had been issued by the Children’s Court Bench for the arrest of Walter Trigg for “disobeying a magisterial order for the support of his wife”. He owed £60 (\$120) and was described as being of thin build, dark complexion, with brown hair and eyes. He was a bank clerk who was said to have gone to Victoria.

The Argus, Melbourne – 15 Mar 1927, p14, reported that Walter had been arrested in Victoria in February 1927 for the Maintenance Charge and his case was being heard in the Supreme Court. Walter claimed that Hilda Triggs had deserted him, and he had been granted a divorce on this basis in February 1927 and therefore he did not owe any support to his wife. The judge accepted this claim and ordered that Triggs be “*absolutely discharged from custody.*”

Walter married for the third time, aged 40 years, to Eileen Constance Holmes at Melbourne in 1927. Walter and Eileen are listed in the 1937 Australian Electoral Rolls, Balacalava/St Kilda, as living at 15 Marine Parade, St Kilda, and Walter’s occupation was listed as “agent”.

Walter Triggs died, aged 55 years, on 8 Nov 1942 at Randwick Military Hospital, NSW. He was cremated at Rookwood Crematorium, Sydney, on 10 Nov 1942 (*The Sydney Morning Herald* – 9 & 10 Nov 1942, p8). Eileen Triggs died in 1987 in Victoria.

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WW1 HONOUR BOARDS FOR YEOVAL, CUMNOCK & WELLINGTON

