Private C/12183 Henry Walker

(1882- c. 1954)

4th Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps: 1899 - 1906 1ST or 2nd Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps: 1914 - 1919

My Grandad, Henry Walker, was born in 1882 at Butt Lane, Warsop where he lived with his parents Henry Walker (b 1843 in Hamilton, Scotland) and Anne Walker née Wardley (b,

Ty years what the Colours, and B years in the Reserve, or, if the man completes his 7 years' ser with the Colours while beyond the seas, then for a further period, not exceeding one year, with Colours, and the remainder of the 12 years in the Reserve.) No. 243 / Name	1 10 8 68 47	7,4-	SHOF	TO TE	RVI	CE	F	Form B. 265.
Colours, and the remainder of the 12 years in the Reserve.) No. 243 / Name	(7 years	with the Colon	rs and 5 wears	in the Regam	va or if th	o man com	oletes his 7	years' service
No. 243 / Name Herry Development of the Recruit before Enlistment. 1. What is your Name? 2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? 3. Are you a British Subject? 4. What is your Trade or Calling? 5. What is your Trade or Calling? 5. What is your Age? 6. Common the Manage of the Calling? 6. Common the Manage of the Calling? 7. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If is, where? 8. Are you allowed been sentenced to Imprisonment by the College Power! 9. Have you ever been sentenced to Imprisonment by the College Power! 10. Do you now belong to Her Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Manage of the Manage of the College Power! 11. Have you ever been sentenced to Imprisonment by the Manage of	WILL CHE CO	iquis while her	ond the seas. t	then for a fur	ther period	d, not exce	ding one	year, with th
Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment. 1. What is your Name? 2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? 3. Are you a British Subject? 4. What is your Age? 5. What is your Tade or Calling? 6. Have you resided out of your Rather's house for three years continuously in this same place, or compiled shows or land of the yourly if e.g., state where? 1. Subject of the power of the same place of the yourly if e.g., state where? 1. Subject of the power of the same place of the yourly if e.g., state where? 1. Subject of the your Tade or Calling? 6. May you or base you been, an Apprentice? If so, where? I so when I and for what period? 7. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where? I so when I and for what period? 8. Are you Married? 9. Have you ever been entenced to Imprisonment by the Youngary, the Army Reserve, whe Avan Reserve ty the Naval Reserve the Same Height Navy. 10. In you now belong to Her Majesty's Army, the Marian, the Millith Reserve, the Reyal Navy, the Valanders, the Youngary, the Army Reserve, whe Naval Reserve ty the Naval Reserve			Ammī	ESTAT	ION C			
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1847 in Warsop, Notts.).

On 27th December 1899, Grandad joined the King's Royal Rifles on a **Short Service** Enlistment, having given a false birth date as he was still only 17 years of age (See attached enlistment document left). This meant serving 7 years with the Colours followed by 5 years in the reserve.

After training he was immediately sent to South Africa where he served with the 4th Battalion in the Boer War and was at Ladysmith immediately after the siege was relieved.

On leaving the colours he returned to Warsop where he met and married my Grandma, Jesse Lacey, who was born in Wellow, Notts., the daughter of Joseph and Ann Lacey.

They moved to 25 Derby Road, Ilkeston, Notts., where he worked as a coal miner and where my Aunty Norah was born in 1909 followed by my father in January 1912.



They then moved to 111 Gladstone Street, Mansfield, Notts., where my Uncle Reg was born before the start of the First World War.

World War 1: The 'Old Contemptibles'

As war approached, my Grandad was recalled to the Colours with the King's Royal Rifles and was quickly sent to Belgium as one of the "Old Contemptibles" either with the 1st or 2nd Battalions, I can't be sure which, leaving my Grandma pregnant with my Aunty Jesse. She also, of course, had sole responsibility for caring for her three other young children under very difficult circumstances.

They were immediately in action at the first battle of Mons and the retreat to the Marne during which my Grandad was wounded and taken prisoner.

Prisoner of War

Prisoners were treated very badly, and my Grandad was forced to work in the coalmines, effectively as slave labour. They received pitiful amounts of very poor food and in later years he recalled to my older cousin that they were beaten badly if they tried to steal apples from trees overhanging the road when they were marched to and from work.

After the war ended, he returned home around the time of my Father's 7th birthday in January 1919. He was in extremely poor health and spent the next ten years in and out of Military Hospital.



On his return, the residents of Gladstone Street hung banners across the street and turned out in force to give him a big welcome.

Dad was only two when Grandad went to war and only knew him as a man badly damaged by his terrible experiences. Being the oldest boy, he was required to take on responsibilities way beyond his years.

Between the Wars: Recovery

They had one more child, my Uncle Fred, who as born in 1922 and my Grandmother, typical of so many amazing women at that time, bore the responsibility of raising five children whilst supporting my Grandfather in his long and difficult recovery.

My Grandfather was, inherently, a strong resilient man and by the end of the 1920's had recovered well enough to take a fulltime job with Mansfield & District Cooperative Society. He was given a house with his job and they lived at Westgate House in Westgate, Mansfield.



Right: Henry Walker (Grandad) in his Corps of Commissionaires' uniform at Westgate House in the 1930s

World War Two

At the start of the Second World War, determined to serve his country once more, he joined the Home Guard and having already served both Queen Victoria and King George V in uniform, he now served King George V1.



The Mansfield Home Guard: Harry Walker is in the middle of the back row, with medal ribbons

All three of their sons served in the armed forces during the 2nd World War but thankfully all three returned safe and well at the war's end.

Tragically, on Christmas Eve 1947, my Grandmother, Jesse, was hit and killed by a lorry in Mansfield. I was only four and have only very vague memories of her but do know that she was a remarkable woman devoted to her family.



By then Grandad was 65 years old and he went to live with his eldest daughter, my Aunty Norah, in Beeston, Nottingham. None of our family had cars in those days and consequently, we didn't see him very often before he died c1954. Again, I don't have any clear memories of him but do recall a tall impressive figure of a man.

John Walker, The Green, Collingham 28th September 2018

