

RIDLEY

Harold Bernard Walford

Service No: 1061



Harold Ridley

Courtesy National
Archives of Australia

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Harold Bernard Walford Ridley

Service number: 1061

Date of enlistment: 18/5/1915

Age at Enlistment: 19 years 3 months

Civil Occupation: Orchardist

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Height: 5 feet 8 ¼ inches

Weight: 150 pounds

Chest measurement: 35 inches

Complexion: Fair

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Fair

Father: Bernard Walford Ridley

Mother: Jennette Alice Rogers

Siblings: Eric (1894), Marjorie Alice (1898), Geoffrey (1904), Darby (1906)

Married: Gwyneth E. Moore

Children: Jeanette Anne (1932), William Walford (1935)

Family History

Bernard Walford Ridley, the son of a timber merchant, arrived in Western Australia in 1886 on board the *Yeoman*. Bernard was a licensed surveyor who came to W.A. to work on the Great Southern Railway project before forming the Grosvenor Prospecting Company in 1888. He was also involved with early prospecting in the Eastern Goldfields.

Bernard married Jennette Alice Rogers in 1892, and they went on to have five children. She was a competent artist and a relative of May Gibbs, the author and illustrator of the "Gumnut Babies."

Ill-health led Bernard to give up prospecting and return to survey work. He became a draughtsman in the Public Works Department and the founder of both the Institute of Licensed Surveyors in W.A. and the W.A. Cricket Association. At this time, the family was based in Stirling Street, Perth.

Around 1906/1907, the family were residing in Albany. However, by 1913, they were living at "Riverside," near Gwambygine, where Bernard was earning a living as an orchardist. His business venture does not appear to have been a success as, by 1916, he had gone bankrupt. Notices of creditors' meetings continued to be published in the newspapers until the late 1920s, by which time Bernard was living in the metropolitan area.

Bernard and Jennette had returned to live in North Perth by 1919. They later moved to Maylands, where they remained until their deaths; Jennette in 1939 and Bernard in 1944.

Life Story

Harold Bernard Walford Ridley was born in Perth in 1896 to Bernard Walford Ridley and his wife, Jennette. He was educated at Albany Grammar School, Cottesloe High School and Christian Brothers' College in Perth.

Harold Bernard Walford Ridley enlisted as a Private in the 28th Battalion on the 18th May 1915 and embarked with B Company from Fremantle, Western Australia, on the 29th June aboard HMAT *Ascanius*, bound for Gallipoli.

On the 13th August 1916, he was appointed Lance Corporal.

On the 20th September, while serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Harold became ill with bronchitis and was admitted to the *Guildford Castle*, a hospital ship, for treatment. He was transferred to Mudros then to the No. 2 General Hospital at Ghezirah, in Egypt, before being sent to Mena to recuperate.

On the 4th December, Harold was admitted to hospital again and diagnosed with mumps. He returned to duty on the 10th January 1916.

In November 1916, Harold was promoted to Corporal in the Field in France. Five months later, he was detached from his unit and sent to join the 7th Training Battalion at Rollestone in England.

Harold re-joined his unit in France on the 19th October 1917 but was sent back to England to the No. 2 Officers' Cadet Training Battalion at Cambridge in early December. He qualified for a commission in the Infantry at No. 2 Officer Cadet Battalion on the 3rd May 1918 and retained his appointment as a Cadet until he was commissioned.

On the 16th June, 1918, Harold returned to France to fight with the 28th Battalion and, on the 1st October, he was promoted to Lieutenant.

Harold left France on the first leg of his return journey to Australia on the 2nd April 1919.

Harold's immediate movements on his return to Australia are not known for certain though, on his enlistment papers for World War Two, he listed service with the 10th Light Horse between 1920-1921.

In 1921, Harold moved to Harvey to earn his living as a farmer. It is possible that he was a participant in the Soldier Settlement Scheme that was taking place in the southwest at the time.

However, by 1925, Harold was back in Perth, living with his parents and siblings in Maylands. His occupation was listed as surveyor, so he was probably working with his father and brother (a chainman).

Harold married Gwyneth E. Moore in Perth in 1929. The couple made their home at 24 First Avenue, Maylands, though it appears Harold did not bother to change his electoral enrolment from his parents' address in Fourth Avenue.

By 1932, Harold and Gwyneth had moved to Hugh Street, in Claremont, where their daughter was born, and he was working as an Insurance Inspector. They later moved to Viking Road, in Claremont, where they remained until their deaths.

In 1938, Harold was appointed as a valuer with the Taxation Department.

During World War Two, Harold enlisted, initially with the Citizens' Military Forces in 1941 (service number W66673) before being appointed an intelligence officer. He was also made a Lieutenant in 1942.

Gwenyth died in 1966, Harold, in 1982.

Acknowledgements

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