

Walter Story Young



Gunner 949 Walter Story Young (standing 4th from left, back row)

Gunner (Gnr) 949 Walter Story Young enlisted in the 36th Heavy Artillery Group at Queenscliff on 27 February 1917. He embarked overseas on 9 May and disembarked in Plymouth on 29 July. After three months training, he left England on 31 October and landed in France the next day, where he was taken on strength of the 54th Battery at Rousdamme on 12 November 1917.

The group was organised into two batteries, the 54th and 55th, each equipped with six 8 inch Howitzers and 9.2 inch Howitzers respectively. Large and immobile, the guns could not easily be redeployed without lifting equipment and were the largest used by the Australians. They were designed to pulverise enemy defensive positions, which often comprised concrete blockhouses and deep underground dugouts impervious to Field Artillery.

Gnr Young was evacuated sick to hospital with a fever on 16 November. Later diagnosed as epidemic catarrh, he was treated at the 35th General Hospital at Calais between 19 – 29 November, then rejoined the unit on 26 December.

The designation of the group was changed to 36th Heavy Artillery Brigade (HAB) in January 1918 and in early April, the Germans commenced the second stage of their Spring Offensive near Armentieres. The 36th HAB was involved in continuous defensive fire around Messines, Ploegsteert Wood and Neuve Eglise from 9 – 18 April, when the main threat ended, and the unit remained in the north throughout May – September. During this period, Gnr Young also spent two weeks at the 2nd Army Rest Camp between 29 August – 13 September 1918.

While heavy artillery operations wound down from mid-October as it became obvious a major German withdrawal was underway, the unit advanced east. When the armistice was declared on 11 November, they had reached Tourcoing, on the Belgian border.

Gnr Young was granted leave to England from 28 November – 13 December, then promoted to Corporal (Cpl) on 10 March 1919. He left France for the last time on 5 May and embarked for return to Australia on 4 July.

Corporal 849 Walter Story Young disembarked in Melbourne on 18 August, where he was discharged from the AIF on 17 September 1919.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Name: Young, Walter Story | |
| Service Number | 949 |
| Date enlisted | 27 February 1917 |
| Place enlisted | Queenscliff, Victoria |
| Rank on enlistment | Gunner |
| Initial Unit | 36 th Heavy Artillery Group |
| Previous military service | Royal Australian Garrison Artillery - serving |
| Date and ship embarked for overseas | 9 May 1917 HMAT A38 <i>Ulysses</i> |
| Stated age/DOB (if known) | 24 years 2 months (15/11/1892) |
| Place of birth | Mandurang, Victoria |
| Marital status | Single |
| Occupation | Professional soldier |
| Religion | Methodist |
| Next of kin and address | Young, Mrs Mary, mother, Sedgwick via Bendigo, Victoria |
| Permanent address | Artillery Barracks, Queenscliff, Vic. |
| Appearance | Fair complexion, black hair, brown eyes, height – 6 feet 1 inch, weight – 10 stone, 8 lbs, chest measurement – 37/40 inches |
| Final Rank | Corporal |
| Final Unit | 36 th Heavy Artillery Brigade |
| Theatres of war served in | France, Belgium |
| Fate | Returned to Australia |
| Date and ship embarked for Australia | 4 July 1919 HT <i>Norman</i> |
| Date discharged | 17 September 1919 |
| Nature of discharge | Termination of Period of Enlistment |
| Honours/medals | British War Medal, Victory Medal |
| Notes | Also remembered on the Sedgwick State School Roll of Honor, Bendigo Great War Roll of Honor and the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery 3 rd Military District Honor Roll. |