

No. 2187, L/Cpl. WALTER HICKS

Walter Hicks was a son of Philip (born in Stratford St. Mary 1855, moved to Australia between 1884 and 1889) and Ellenora Hicks of Bathurst N.S.W, Australia.

Walter was born in Bathurst in 1889, brother of Alfred Philip Hicks (1884), and Anthony Deane Hicks (1897(wounded and invalided 1918)).

Walter's attestation form states that he was single with dark brown hair, weighed 159lbs and was 6 feet tall. He was 26 years and 8 months old, and his civilian occupation was given as "Carrier".

Walter attended Cootamundra recruiting office on 14th March 1916, and formally joined up on 23rd March 1916. After his initial training he was posted to the 4th reinforcement draft of the 56th Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces.

He received his inoculations on the 4th and 11th July 1916 and left Sydney Harbour on 18th September 1916 aboard the transport A.15. "Port Sydney". He was hospitalised between 13th and 20th October due to a bout of Mumps, and on the 29th October 1916, disembarked at Plymouth, England. He received more inoculations on 30th October and 17th November and after further training with the 14th training Battalion was cleared to "Proceed overseas – France".

Walter sailed from Folkestone aboard the troopship "Princess Henrietta" on 14th December, arriving at Etaples on 15th.

The following account of Walters's time in the trenches is taken from his casualty and service cards,

1916

23/12 – marched in to unit

29/12 – taken on strength, "B" Company, 56th Battalion.

1917

23/1 – to Hospital sick – Chilblains

31/1 – returned to unit from Hospital

31/5 – appointed Lance Corporal

16/9 – detached from unit for duty with 1st Australian Tunnelling Company

23/9 – rejoined unit

23/10 – wounded in action – Gassed – to 14th Field Ambulance

25/10 – to 8th Field Ambulance – gassed and Laryngitis

11/11 – to base duty

12/11 – to 5th Divisional rest wing from hospital

11/12 – rejoin unit from rest

1918

11/1 – granted leave to England

29/1 – returned from leave
7/7 – to Hospital sick - Dysentery – 12th casualty Clearing Station
15/7 – Diarrhoea – moved to 4th Army Corps Depot
23/7 – to duty
22/8 – Killed in action

Walter left a will thus;

W. Hicks 2187 56th Batt.

On active service

I Pte. Walter Hicks, of Ardlethon N.S.W. bequeath to my mother Ellen Hicks (or if deceased my father Philip Hicks), both of 14 Seymor Street, Bathurst, N.S.W, all moneys and P.N. drawn in my favour which is lodged in the Commercial Banking Company, of Sydney at the Beckona Branch and appoint my father as sole executor. Dated this second day of September in the year of our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred Sixteen.

W. Hicks

On 5th April 1919, a personal effects parcel was sent, and received by Philip Hicks on 30th April. The inventory read, effects received from field 23rd September,
1 Disc, 1 match box cover, 2 metal rings, Badges, Buttons, 1 religious medallion, 1 letter, Photos, Photo films, 1 YMCA wallet, 1 wallet, 1 notebook, 1 book of poems, 1 pipe, 1 metal watch (damaged), 1 knife, 1 Lanyard.

A copy of "Where The Australians Rest" was sent to Philip Hicks on 11th April 1921, on 18th July 1921, Philip received Walter's memorial scroll No. 351297, the memorial plaque, No. 351297, was received on 25th November 1922, and the receipt of the Victory Medal was on 7 April 1923. On 5th May 1927, Philip Hicks received a letter from the Imperial War Graves Commission stating that, now that the cemeteries have been tidied up, memorials and gravestones erected, the final resting place of No. 2187, L/Cpl. Walter Hicks was, Plot1, Row A, Grave 39 in Cerisy-Gailly Military Cemetery, Somme, France.

Walter was entitled to The British War Medal, No.46312, and The Victory Medal No. 45780.

