

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Warrant Officer Class 2 Hurtle Frank WALKER, DCM, MM and Bar

(1890-1975)

Frank Walker was a South Australian cellarman and later winemaker and on 7 September 1915 he enlisted as a private in the AIF; he embarked from Melbourne with the 2nd Reinforcements for the 6th FAB. After arriving in France in February 1916, Walker served with the 2nd Division Ammunition Column (DAC) before joining the 6th FAB at Belley-sur-Somme on 19 July. He remained in the unit until the war ended, by which time he had been gassed and twice wounded; he had also risen to the rank of Warrant Officer Class II as Battery Sergeant-Major and become, in the words of the unit war diary, 'the most decorated non-commissioned officer of the Brigade'.

His DCM was awarded for an action in June 1917 at Messines, Belgium, where – under shell fire and with ammunition exploding – Walker displayed 'the greatest gallantry and initiative' in assisting the battery commander to save the guns and ammunition from a fire. At Hooge, Belgium, in October 1917 he gained the MM to which a Bar was added for his actions on 18 September 1918 near Le Verguier, France, when shells hit a field artillery team, wounding or killing four horses and pinning the driver beneath the wagon. While a bombardment of high explosive and gas shells continued, Walker extricated the driver, who died of his injuries, and released the surviving horse but it was killed in the continuing shelling.

Invalided back to Australia in 1919, he spent six months in a military hospital before returning to the wine industry and helping to establish the Romalo Cellars of Australian Wines Pty Ltd and eventually became its manager.

Source: Eric Sparke, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, M.U.P., Vol.12, p.359-360.

For more information follow this link: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/walker-hurtle-frank-8955>