

Thomas Walter Pearce

Thomas Walter Pearce was born in Stawell in 1894, the son of Thomas and Euphemia Pearce (nee McLennan).

Thomas, aged 22 years, enlisted at Ballarat on November 22, 1916. He was a farmer, probably living on his father's property at Warracknabeal. He had previous experience for a short period in the Citizen's Forces.

After training at Royal Park, he was allocated to the 27th Reinforcements, 4th Light Horse Regiment, as a private, service number 3531. Thomas embarked on A42 Boorara on May 10th, 1917, for Suez, Egypt. Interestingly this ship was captured in Melbourne in August 1914, then named the German ship Pfalz.

It appears that Thomas became sick during the voyage as on arrival at Suez he was admitted to an isolation camp at Moasgar. He then attended the Imperial School of Instruction and in November 1917 Thomas was admitted to the Infection Hospital at Choubra with diphtheria.

On December 12, 1917, Thomas was discharged and in January 1918 he rejoined his Regiment.

During early 1918 the 4th Light Horse Regiment was resting after taking part in the charge at Beersheba. It then moved into the Jordan Valley and participated in the raid on Es Salt between April 29 and May 4.

On May 3 Thomas received gun shot wounds to his right shoulder and he was admitted to the 14th Australian General Hospital at Abbassia. He was discharged to his Regiment on July 20, 1918. In August the Regiment was issued with swords and trained in traditional cavalry tactics. Thomas probably then took part in the offensive against the Turks along the Palestine coast towards Damascus and later made way to Homs where the Turks surrendered on October 30. Some soldiers then began returning to home while others waited their turn by taking part in clean[up] operations.

In February 1919 Thomas spent a week in hospital in Tripoli and on June 15 embarked on HT Essex at Kandari for return to Melbourne. There he was discharged on August 24, 1919.

Thomas was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

By 1925, his father, Thomas had moved first to Broadford, then to Flowerdale and later to High Camp where he died in 1938. It is likely his son Thomas was living on his parents farm. Thomas W, of Craigielea, High Camp, became engaged to Nellie Isabel Harper of Wandong in February 1936 and they married later that year. Like his father, he was involved in the local horse racing scene. In 1954 he was a Vice President of the Kilmore Turf Club. With his wife Nellie they lived at 3 Chapel Street, Kilmore.

Thomas Walter Pearce died at the Kilmore Hospital on July 4, 1984 and Nellie in Kilmore in 1999.