

Codford War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



6852 PRIVATE

T. G. BICKLEY

16TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

23RD FEBRUARY, 1917

Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte T. G. Bickley is located in Main Front Row (Right Hand Side)

Grave Plot # 9 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall)

(CWGC Reference - Grave # 85)

Thomas George Bickley was born in Fremantle, Western Australia in 1881, (registered as George Thomas) to parents Assalom & Mary Bickley (nee Brandis). He was a Carpenter, aged 34, from West Wagin, Western Australia when he enlisted on 28th August, 1916 with the 4th Infantry Brigade, 10th Infantry Battalion, 22nd Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6852 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Rose Bickley of West Wagin, Western Australia. His attestation papers show that Thomas Bickley had previously served with the 1st Imperial Light Horse in South Africa. He had completed 11 months active service & was discharged for time expired.

Pte Bickley embarked from Fremantle on the HMAT *Argyllshire (A8)* on 9th November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 10th January, 1917. Whilst on board & during the journey from Australia to England, Pte Bickley was admitted to ship's hospital from 28th December, 1916 to 4th January, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. These were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte Bickley was marched into the 4th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 10th January, 1917. He was admitted to the Group Hospital with Bronchitis on 12th February, 1917.

Pte Thomas George Bickley, of 16th Battalion, died of Bronchitis on 23rd February, 1917, at Sutton Veny Military Hospital, Wiltshire, England.

A death for Thomas C Bickley, aged 35, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

From the burial report of Pte Bickley, he was buried on 26th February, 1917 at St Mary's Cemetery, Grave no. 85, Australian Section Consecrated Portion. The coffin was polished Elm & he was accorded a full Military funeral.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing File contains a letter from The Matron of the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny in reply to a request from Pte Bickley's Relatives asking for all particulars into his death. *"He was admitted to this hospital on February 12th suffering from a severe attack of bronchitis, which was more than his heart could stand and he died on Feb. 23rd. Everything possible was done for him, and he suffered very little. He was buried at Codford (Grave 85) of course with Military Honours. There is no stone to the grave. I am afraid this is very scant information, unfortunately the Matron and both sisters and the orderlies who were in the ward at that time have gone abroad. It is needless to say that the Chaplain was frequently in attendance."* 30.6.17

Pte Thomas George Bickley requested in his Will that he bequeaths all his real or personal estate to his wife Rose Bickley, whom he appoints as Executrix.

Private T. G. Bickley is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 78.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Pte Thomas George Bickley is also remembered on his hometown War Memorial. The Wagin War Memorial is located at the Memorial Swimming Pool complex at Wagin, Western Australia, which is 227 kms south-east of Perth.



Pte Thomas George Bickley was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Bickley's wife – Mrs R Bickley (December, 1921 & April, 1922).

(50 pages of Pte Thomas George Bickley's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives

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Newspaper Reports

CRIMINAL COURT – The March Calendar

The March sitting of the Supreme Court, in Criminal Jurisdiction.....The following indictments – 21 in all – are listed for presentation :-

Thomas George Bickley, perjury, Wagin.

(*The Daily News*, Perth, Western Australia, Friday 3rd March, 1916)

NATIVES AND LIQUOR - Accused's Perjured Evidence

Thomas George Bickley, a man of the labouring class, was presented in the Criminal Court yesterday on a charge of having at Wagin on September 27 last committed perjury. He was defended by Mr J. F. M'Millian and pleaded not guilty.

The case for the Crown was that on the date in question Bickley was charged at the Wagin Police Court with having supplied liquor, to wit whisky and rum, to aboriginal natives. In the course of the hearing of the charge, as a result of which he was convicted and fined £20, he swore that he did not buy a bottle of rum at the Wagin Hotel on September 11. Evidence was given to show that he had purchased the rum at the Wagin Hotel and supplied it to the natives.

Accused did not give evidence, but Mr M'Millan in his address to the jury submitted that there was no evidence to support the charge, inasmuch as the evidence of the one witness who spoke to the purchase of the rum was not corroborated.

The jury found the charge proved, and his Honor, Mr Justice Rooth, on hearing that accused had not previously been in trouble, bound him over in his own recognisances to be of good behaviour for two years.

(The Daily News, Perth, Western Australia, Friday 17th March, 1916)

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

The 279th Casualty List – 5th Military District

DEATHS

T. G. Bickley (Wagin), died of illness, previously reported died cause unknown.

(The Western Mail, Perth, Western Australia, Friday 23rd March, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government. *(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Pte T. G. Bickley does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Pte T. G. Bickley's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery



(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)