



KALGOORLIE-BOULDER

WALK OF FAME

THOMAS LESLIE AXFORD, VC

1894 - 1983

Thomas Leslie (Jack) Axford enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) from Kalgoorlie. He was awarded the Military Medal during WWI as well as the Victoria Cross for his gallantry and initiative at the battle of Hamel.

Thomas Axford was born on the 18th June 1894, at Carrieton, South Australia. His parents were Walter and Margaret Axford. They moved to Coolgardie, when Thomas was two years old. He received his schooling at the Coolgardie State School. He was employed at the Boulder City Brewery Co. Ltd. At the time of this enlistment, his family lived in Bourke Street Kalgoorlie. He enlisted in Kalgoorlie July 1915, in the AIF.

In March 1916 he joined the 16th Battalion in Egypt, and reached France in June 1916. The Battalion attacked near Pozieres on the 9th August, 1916. Axford was evacuated with shell-shock on the 11th August, but quickly re-joined his unit. In August 1917, at Gapaard Farm, Belgium he suffered a shrapnel wound to his knee, but after treatment in England, returned to his unit in January 1918.

The 16th Battalion were part of the 4th Brigade, which in April and May, 1918, stopped a German offensive in Hebuterne, France, after which Axford was awarded the Military Medal.

At the battle of Hamel, on 4th July, 1918, Axford was credited with killing ten enemy soldiers, and capturing six. Axford's gallantry and initiative in the battle won him the Victorian Cross. Of his actions he later commented "I must have been mad".

He was promoted to Corporal on 14th July, 1918.

His Victorian Cross was gazetted on 17th August, 1918, just nine days before his father died in Kalgoorlie.

He returned to Australia on December 1918, and was discharged from the army on 6th February, 1919, and returned to Kalgoorlie.



He married Lily foster on 27th November, 1926, in Perth. They had two sons and three daughters.

In June 1941 he was mobilised n the Militia, and posted to District records Office, Perth.

He was promoted Sergeant in 1943, and discharged in April, 1947.

He attended the Victorian Cross Centenary Celebrations in London in 1956.

Axford died while returning to Australia, from a reunion of the Victorian Cross and George Cross Association, held in London in 1883.

He died 11th October, 1983, and was buried with Military Honours at Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth. His wife predeceased him by three months.

RECOGNITIONS

The Military Cross

The Victoria Cross

A ward at Repatriation General Hospital, Hollywood, was named in his honour.

AXFORD PARK in Mt. Hawthorn, is named in recognition of the Thomas Axford, as he had lived in Mt Hawthorn.

He was also to be recognised with a memorial Plaque at Kirup, on the South Western Highway, W.A., as a part of a Commemorations Way, that was to be established in 2016.