

Walter was born in Albury in 1893, the son of Augustus F Cornell and Elizabeth Cornell, nee O'Connor. On 11th August 1914 he enlisted in the AN&MEF stating that he was a Estate Agents Assistant giving his father at "Weenya", La Mascotte Ave, Concord as his next of kin.

He returned from Rabaul and was discharged, term expired, on 28th Jan 1915 having served 171 days in the AN&MEF.

Seven days later, on 5th Feb, he joined the AIF and allocated to D Company, 18th battalion, regimental number 1145. He was promoted Sergeant on 29th March before embarking with the battalion from Sydney on 25th June aboard the CERAMIC for the Middle East. The action he was involved in is described as follows:

"Aug 19th, Thursday – Lemnos at Daylight, hundreds of vessels here protected by torpedo net and mines about 4 miles long. Anchored outside boom for breakfast and then went into harbour saw Doris, L Nelson, Cornwall anchored near shore.

Heard we were sailing at once. Everyone excited.

August 20, Friday – 18th Batt and 19th Batt moved away at sundown in Osmaniah (Egyptian mail boat our transport from Lemnos to Anzac). We go tomorrow – very dirty ship fleas and filth everywhere. 7 stowaways on board.

Aug 21st – Boat alongside 1 pm. Left Lemnos about 5.45 pm. Ran at 10 knots in darkness. Gun flashes and roar of cannon at 9.15 pm. Big battle on. Saw war boats in action.

Aug 22nd Landed at daylight – no casualties but one of crew wounded in stomach. Took up position in Reserve Gully just near Watson's pier."

The newly arrived 18th battalion failed to break into the Turkish positions and lost half its men killed or wounded. Commonly referred to as the Battle for Hill 60. Walter was one of these casualties.

The following is a report made to Red Cross by Private Frank Mason; -

"I have made exhaustive inquiries concerning Sgt W. G. Cornell who is posted and am now absolutely confident that he is dead. I wish to god I could think otherwise. All the officers of the late soldier's regiment, the 18th, have given up hope. I wrote to Mrs Cornell and explained everything to her, as it was torture for her to be kept in such awful suspense, thinking there might be some lucky mistake, and her son still living. It was much better for her to know the worst, as I am now confident that he is dead. He was a chum of mine, so you can rest assured that I have not left a stone unturned to bring about my conclusion. You may enclose this note to Mrs Cornell, when you write to her, if you think necessary."

Walter is remembered on the Lone Pine Memorial and on Panel 85 at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.