

## Walker, William Archibald Smail



Not found in any census - probably because he lived in India.

Born in Dum-Dum India on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1874, the son of Major General Alexander Walker (C.S.I.R.A.) and Anne Yewdale Lambert Smail. Educated at Dulwich College and Sandhurst.

Gazetted 2nd Lieutenant, unattached, Indian Army, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1894. Attached to the 46th Punjabis. Was promoted Lieutenant on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1897, Captain on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1903, and Major on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 1912. He served with the 45th Sikhs and the 40th Pathans and was posted to the 46th Punjabis on their formation.

He took part in the operations on the N.W. Frontier of India, 1897-8, including the Defence of Malakand, action at Landakai and operations in Bajaur (medal with two clasps), and in the Tirah Expedition 1897-8 (clasp), and was afterwards employed with the King's African Rifles from the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 1903 to 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1906.

After the outbreak of the European War, he was sent, in January 1915, with a double company to British East Africa and attached to the 130th Baluchis (King George's Own). He was commanding a section of the outpost line with headquarters at Mzima on the Tsava River.

While visiting sentry groups with an escort of seven men on the 12th of April 1915, he came on the spoor of a large party of Germans. He followed this up for some way in order to locate the enemy. Whilst returning he was ambushed by a smaller party of Germans, who were following the main force, and he and two men were shot.

He was buried on the banks of the Tsava River. The grave was marked by a cairn of stones; the two men who fell with him were buried by his side.

A brother officer wrote: "I knew him for a fearless man. He was with my regiment in the Tirah Expedition in 1897. I have never met a braver soldier". Another wrote "His escort, Dogras and Gurkhas, five of whom managed to get away, all bear great testimony to his fearlessness and gallantry. He gave the orders with his last breath for his men to scatter; such is necessary in the bush. He is a great loss to us and to our country, we can ill spare such men."

He *married*, at Peshawar, N.W.P., on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1913, Marion Balfour Crick, youngest daughter of Frederick William Crick, M.A. rector of Litton Cheney, Dorset. Their daughter Anne Margaret was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1914

### **Mzima Springs**

On 12th April at Mzima Springs in the Tsavo Valley an unfortunate incident occurred when Major W.A.S. Walker, 46th Punjabis attached to 130th Baluch, was killed by a Schutztruppe reconnaissance party. (130th Baluch had experienced problems with some of its Pathans who had mutinied in Rangoon, and as a result 2 men were executed and 198 sentenced to hard labour. A company of 46th Punjabis was posted in to make 130th Baluch up to strength for East Africa.)

Major Walker, accompanied by Intelligence Agent (IA) Chitty, seven Kashmiri Sepoys and 18 WaTeita Scouts, went out on patrol from Mzima. Unfortunately for everybody except a nearby German patrol Major Walker fired twice at a buck. The scouts came across very recent enemy tracks of around 40 men which Major Walker followed up; when the Scouts refused to go further Major Walker went on until IA Chitty refused to go further. Major Walker then insisted, despite IA Chitty's advice to the contrary, on returning to camp by the same route used to come out. A Schutztruppe group ambushed the British, killing Major Walker, two Sepoys, one Wateita and IA Chity's bearer. The remainder of the British party ran into the nearby Shetani lava-flow and hid successfully.

Lieutenant P.G.W. McMaster, 1 KAR, was sent out from Mzima with a platoon of "E" Company 1 KAR and a platoon of Kashmiris to investigate. He found the dead bodies and was of the opinion that they had all been first wounded and then finished-off with large-calibre soft-nosed bullets.