



## Herbert Thomas "Nutsy" BOLT

<i>Regimental number</i>	3009
<i>Place of birth</i>	Newtown, Sydney NSW
<i>Religion</i>	Church of England
<i>Occupation</i>	Brickmaker
<i>Address</i>	Orpington Street, Bexley NSW
<i>Marital status</i>	Married
<i>Age at enlistment</i>	21 years 11 months
<i>Next of kin</i>	Wife: Mrs Jennie Bolt, Orpington Street, Bexley, NSW 20 Bray St., Newtown 31 Wells Steet, Newtown 144 Wilson Street, Newtown
<i>Enlistment date</i>	R.A.S. Grounds, Paddington Sydney 21.9.1915
<i>Rank on enlistment</i>	Private
<i>Unit name</i>	7 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements 17 <sup>th</sup> Battalion
<i>Embarkation details</i>	Sydney, NSW, per HMAT A29 Suevic on 20.12.1915
<i>Rank from Service Records</i>	Corporal 31.5.1916
<i>Unit from Service Records</i>	Transferred to 55 <sup>th</sup> Battalion 16.2.1916
<i>Fate</i>	Died whilst prisoner of war Germany 20.7.1916 (cause not stated)
<i>Place of burial</i>	Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery (Plot III, Row B, Grave No 6), France

Source: Transcribed from National Archives of Australia  
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=26280>

### **Carole Matthew's research**

Parents: Frederick and Mary BOLT

Other details

War service: Egypt, Western Front

Allotted to and proceeded to join 55th Bn, Zeitoun, 16 February 1916.

Promoted Corporal, 31 May 1916.

Embarked Alexandria to join the British Expeditionary Force, 19 June 1916; disembarked Marseilles, France, 29 June 1916.

Killed in action, 20 July 1916; subsequently reported died whilst a prisoner of war in Germany, 20 July 1916. German Army Headquarters reported, 2 August 1916, 'Bolt. H.T. am 19.7 in Gegend Fromelles gefallen' [fell in the Fromelles area on 19 July].

Statement, Red Cross File No 440705, 3098 Pte F. JOHNSTON, 55th Bn (patient, No 4 Australian General Hospital, Randwick), 3 April 1917: 'On the morning of 20.7.16, at about 5 a.m., at Fleurbaix, in the communication trench near the first line of German trenches as we were retiring from the 3rd line of German trenches. He and I were very close to one another, when we were attacked by the Germans. He got more than six of them with his bayonet and the butt of his rifle, when he got a bullet through the head. He fell instantly, being killed outright.' (Note on file from Sydney Bureau: 'A careful witness'.)

Originally listed as 'No Known Grave' and commemorated on the Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux; subsequently (2010) identified, and interred in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, France.

Corporal Herbert Thomas "Nutsy" Bolt

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16180175/herbert-thomas-bolt>

The following is from Fromelles Naming the Dead: The Scientists Story written by Professor Margaret Cox PhD, Dr Peter Jones, and Dr Louise Loe FSA.

*Herbert Bolt (Nutsy) was born on 10 September 1893 to Frederick Robert Bolt (born in Gurnsey, UK in 18540, and Mary Elizabeth Collier (born 1857 at Lexton, Victoria). He was the youngest of seven children, with four brothers and two sisters. They lived in Newtown in Sydney, and Nutsy attended Newtown Superior Public School. After leaving school, his first job was with the Railways Department (October 1908-March 1909) then he worked at Bedford Steam Brickworks, St Peters, in Sydney. This was not far from the Bolt family home at Erskineville. On 21 April Mr J Gentle from the Brickworks wrote a reference for Nutsy stating he had employed him for four years, and described him as a good and hard worker, wishing him every success. In May 1914, Herbert went back to the Railways, where he worked as a clerk until 30 January 1915.*

*Nutsy met the young Irish woman Jenny Margaret Hughes during these years; she too lived in Newtown. They married in 1914 when they were both 21. Herbert and Jenn's first and only child, a baby girl – Mary Monica was born in February 1915. Nutsy always called her his 'little Mona.' When his daughter was seven months old, he enlisted in the AIF at Sydney Showground on 7<sup>th</sup> September*

1915, just three days before his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. He was ultimately part of the 55<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division.

Nutsy sailed from Sydney on 23 December 1915 on board SS Suevic, bound for Egypt with his mate Frank Johnston. As a young man, Nutsy excelled at rugby league, having played over 50 games for the legendary Newtown Bluebags Rugby League Club between 1912 and 1915. He also represented New South Wales against Queensland twice in 1913. He loved all sport and was also an excellent boxer. An excerpt from his diary on 10 January 1916, while on the ship to Egypt, shows that the men passed their time fruitfully:

*This afternoon I box my opponent in the heavyweight division of the tournament. It may be said here that my opponent is considered the champion of the boat, so the conclusion is certain ... My friends ... advised me to chuck it up before I had commenced, but at the finish, a different aspect was put on the question. The first two rounds were very open, that even in fact, I was credited with being pretty right, but the third round was the one that told ... through him having the better condition, it allowed him to win.*

He admitted afterwards that it was a long time since he had such a hard fight.

On 15 March 1916, after their arrival in Egypt, Nutsy was promoted to Lance Corporal. He wrote that his pay was AUD\$1.03 (UK sterling 10/3d) for 10 days. Nutsy had the misfortune to be on McLay's notorious desert march. He described how on Monday 27 March they had revile at 4.00am., and at 6.00 a.m. began a 25-kilometre march across the desert. Many men fainted and water was scarce. On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> Revelle was at 4.30 a.m. and at 7.00 a.m. they started another 30 Kilometres. He described great suffering. Men dying of thirst and it being absolute murder. He finished by saying that the New Zealanders saved many lives.

Promoted to corporal on Wednesday 31 May, his experience of the war was marred by a lack of letters from home. Josie describes how it was very sad to read in his diary that during his time in Egypt there seemed to be a problem with receiving mail from home. Both he and Jenny complained that her letters were not getting through to him: he apparently received very few letters from his family despite their writing frequently.

On Tuesday 20 June, Nutsy embarked on a journey to France on SS Caledonia. Enemy submarines were known to be active in the Mediterranean, trying to sink troopships, and he described how they had a destroyer as their escort and how grand it was to see her protecting them. Apparently, it would sail ahead and come around them again to the front, rather like a hen watching her chickens. Then, a few days later, they had more significant escort for the most dangerous part of the trip: two destroyers, a cruiser, and a battleship. They obviously guarded them well and on 30 June, they arrived in France, disembarked, and marched to the railway station to begin their railway journey through France. Nutsy found the scenery to be 'simply beautiful' and considered France the most beautiful country in the world. He wrote of how they received a great ovation from the French people along the line.

*That was to be the last entry in his diary. Just 20 days later, on the morning of 20 July 1916, Nutsy was killed in action in the battle at Fromelles. His goof mate Frank Johnston was with him on that fateful morning, and gave this account of his death to the Red Cross:*



*I knew Bolt well. He and I were mates, we enlisted together and left Australia together in the 7<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements to the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion. ... he was called Nutsy, his number was 3009. We joined the 55<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir. On the morning of the 20 July 1916 at about 5 a.m. at Fleurbaix, in the communication trenches as we were retiring from the 3<sup>rd</sup> line of German trenches, he and I were close to one another, when we were attacked by Germans. He got more than six of them with his bayonet and the butt of his rifle, when he got a bullet through the head. Fell instantly, being killed outright. Was as game as any man ... and he was a well-known Newtown footballer.*

*Corporal Herbert Bolt was just 22 years old. He left behind his young wife Jenny and his baby daughter just 17 months old. He was apparently so well thought of and respected that when he was killed, the Rugby League Association generously held a carnival to raise money for Jenny to help raise little Mona. It was a huge success, and they raised the enormous sum of 140 pounds, which they gave to Jenny in payments each month to help with expenses.*

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Following enquiries by the Fromelles association in 2009 Corporal Herbert Bolt was on a working list of the soldiers who being killed at Fromelles and having no known grave contacted Nutsy's granddaughter Josie Shelley. Eventually use of DNA technology his remains were formerly identified. There is a lot more to be read in his story See Fromelles: Naming the Dead pp 194-199. (*Fromelles Naming the Dead ; The Scientists Story Cox Margaret; Peter Joines & Louise Loe : published by Big Sky Publishing Pty Ltd 2022*).