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Allison, William Smith

A West Australian railway employee who was killed while on military service



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Way and Works
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: Repairer, Korrelocking

Employed as Repairer at Korrelocking, which was a siding east of Wyalkatchem on the line to Merredin. His mother referred to him as at Benjabbering, which was immediately west of Wyalkatchem and probably means he or the gang had been moved recently.
("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang responsible for upkeep of an allocated section of railway line. A typical gang might include between 3 and 6 Repairers with one Leading Hand Repairer, and a Ganger in charge. The WAGR Annual report for 1914/15 showed they employed 882 Repairers at 8 shillings per day, with many at very small settlements or tent camps.)

11th Battalion AIF (Service No.1903). Killed in action at Gallipoli 1/8/1915 age 23.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	1903
Date of death:	1 August 1915
Place of death:	Turkey
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Shell Green Cemetery, Gallipoli Peninsula, Canakkale Province, Turkey

William Smith Allison, sometimes referred to by the surname Alison enlisted in the AIF on 2 February 1915 and underwent basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp. On enlistment he nominated his mother, resident in Scotland as his Next of kin. He had no previous military experience. He had been born and raised in Scotland until he migrated to Australia at the age of 21. Following basic training he was allocated to 5th Reinforcements to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 1903.

The reinforcements departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle on 26 April 1915 aboard HMAT *Hororata* bound for Egypt. On arrival In Egypt he was quickly transferred to Gallipoli as reinforcements were urgently required. Private Allison was taken on strength of 11 Battalion on 16 June 1915 and participated in the major assault and fighting around Lone Pine where he was Killed in action on 1 August 1915. Casualties of 11 Battalion were buried in a number of locations around the battlefield but in the post War period they were concentrated in the Shell Green Cemetery which is Pte Allison's final resting place.

Additional/personal information:

William Smith was born at Pitlessie, Fifeshire in Scotland, and attended school there. He appears to worked as a farm worker and then migrated to WA on his own – his mother Mrs Isabella S Allison was in Scotland when she supplied his details after the war.

A family notice appeared in Perth papers in due course from a lady friend:

> KILLED IN ACTION.
>
> ALLISON.-On August 1, killed in action at Gallipoli, Private William Allison, 11th Battalion, 3rd Brigade. late Fifeshire, Scotland, beloved friend of Bella Cochrane,. Benjaberring, W.A. He died for King and country. Scottish papers please copy. The West Australian 1/12/1915p1

His family paid for an inscription on his tablet which reads: "Dearly Loved and Deeply Mourned". For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and other memorabilia which were issued directly to his mother by Australia House London. The last issue was in 1922. There is pasted in notation which shows that in 1923 his father was still alive and living in British Columbia, Canada. By law the campaign medals should have gone to his father but there is no correspondence on file which shows that any corrective action was ever attempted. Mrs Allison received a military pension of 20/- per fortnight with effect from 12 Oct 1915 but reduced to 8/- per fortnight as from 12 Oct 1917.

Further information and/or photos may be added as available. Information may also be found on the Australian War Memorial website: *https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people*

Abbreviations: WAGR= Western Australian Government Railways (& Tramways at some periods); MRWA= Midland Railway of Western Australia; BDM=Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages website; AWM=Australian War Memorial (Canberra and website); CWGC= Commonwealth War Graves Commission (including website). DVA=Department of Veterans' Affairs (including website)

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR Honour Roll and WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information researched by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

----------Lest we forget----------