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Beasley, Robert Guildford

A West Australian railway employee
killed while on military service for their country



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

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Way and Works
Designation:	Temp. Draftsman

Rail employment notes: Born 6/6/1893. Joined WAGR 15/6/1914 aged 21 as Temporary Draftsman, Perth. The Way and Works Branch (later the Chief Civil Engineer's branch) was responsible for track and structures so a draftsman would have been engaged on designs for building and/or modifying track, stations and smaller buildings, bridges, culverts, etc.

Granted leave to join AIF 8/6/1915. Killed in action 3/9/1916

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	2347
Date of death:	3 September 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Sergeant

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

Robert Guildford Beasley enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 29 May 1915. He nominated his widowed mother, Brenda Beasley, as his NOK and stated that he had served in the Senior Cadets for 12 months. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 7th/11 Bn and departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A63 HMAT *Karoola*. On arrival in Egypt he moved to Gallipoli aboard HMT *Berrima* and was taken-on-strength of 11 Battalion on 4 August 1915 in the field. He reported sick with diarrhoea on 13 Aug 1915 and was evacuated to Mudros. (His records are somewhat confusing at this period as there is reference to GSW right arm and evacuation to England which cannot be correct.) At Mudros he was admitted to 2 ASH before being moved to Malta aboard HMHS *Ascania*. He recovered and re-joined 11 Bn on Gallipoli on 19 Oct 1915 before the Bn evacuation to Alexandria aboard HMT *Empress of Britain*. In Egypt he was transferred to the newly raised 51 Battalion on 01 Mar 1916 as the AIF Divisions in Egypt were expanded from two to four. Pte Beasley was promoted to the rank of Corporal on 24 May 1916. The Bn departed Egypt from Alexandria aboard HMT *Ivernia* on 5 June 1916 and landed at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. He was hospitalized between 19 July and 21 Aug 1916 suffering from Herpes. Cpl Beasley was promoted to Sergeant on 22 August 1916 and at that time increased his pay allotment to his mother to 6/- per diem. The Battalion entered the Battle for Moquet Farm and Sgt Beasley was posted as Missing in action on 3 September 1916. There is little in his Red Cross file other than a statement by 3505 Davies who reported seeing him in a trench with wounds that appeared

to be fatal. Davies also states that it was impossible to bury him as they had to withdraw. Sgt Beasley has no known grave and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial. A Court of Enquiry held on 23 April 1917 determined that he had been Killed in action on 3 September 1916.

Additional/personal information:

Robert Guildford Beasley was born in Guildford WA in 1893 and attended Perth Boys School. He was the eldest of at least four children of Thomas and Brenda (nee Ridley) Beasley. The father was born in Victoria but moved to WA and married Brenda Ridley in the Carnarvon district in 1892. They must have then moved south as Robert was born in the Guildford district and attended Perth Boys School. The father Thomas Beasley died in 1902.

His mother recorded his occupation as a 'surveyor' but on enlistment he described himself as 'engineering assistant' which at the time was probably a more general term.

> BEASLEY.—On September 3, 1916, killed in action, in France (previously reported missing) Sergeant Robert G. Beasley, beloved eldest son of Mrs. B. Beasley, Guildford, aged 23 years. *The West Australian* 12/5/1917p1.

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal together with other memorabilia which were issued to his mother. Mrs Beasley was forced to request duplicates of the Kings Message and the Memorial Scroll when a professional framing firm accidently destroyed the originals. There is no record of pension payments to his mother but a file (not available remotely) remained open until 1929. Mrs Brenda Beasley died in 1929 (BDM Swan 14/1929).

A younger brother of Robert, Harold Gascoyne Beasley, also enlisted and became a Lieutenant in 38th Battery Australian Field Artillery – he survived the war and returned to Australia.

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----------