Bowra, Frederick Douglas Atlee (Lieut.)

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



Plaque in May Ave, Kings Park

Rail employment information

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

Rail employment notes: Born 9/10/1887. Joined WAGR 9/3/1903 aged 15 as Cadet, Perth. Transferred to same role at Karrijine 18/11/1906 and Perth 1/9/1907. Promoted to Draftsman, Perth 1/7/1909.

The Way and Works Branch (later the Chief Civil Engineer's branch) was responsible for track and structures so a draftsman might have been engaged on a wide range of drawings for building and/or maintaining stations and smaller buildings, bridges, wooden culverts, etc.

Karrijine, renamed Coates in 1914, was a siding on the former Eastern Railway between Wundowie and Koojedda.

Granted leave to join AIF 28/7/1915. Killed in action at Gallipoli 29/10/1915.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	4th Field Company, Australian Engineers
Service number:	n/a (Officer)
Date of death:	29 October 1915
Place of death:	Gallipoli, Dardanelles, Turkey
Age:	28
Rank:	Lieutenant

Burial/memorialisation: Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey

Frederick Douglas Atlee Bowra was the son of Frederick James and Maria Jane (nee Coffin) Bowra and the husband of Minnie Bowra. He had approximately 5 years Militia service which included 4 years commissioned service in 13 Field Company Australian Engineers when he applied for an AIF commission on 30 June 1915 which was successful. Lieutenant Bowra spent little time in Perth before he sailed from Australia on 9 July 1915 as a member of the 2nd Division Engineering contingent. On arrival at Alexandria, he trans-shipped, without delay, to the Gallipoli Peninsula. On Gallipoli consideration was given to posting him to 3 Field Company Australian Engineers but this did not happen and he was taken-on-strength of 4 Field Company Australian Engineers on 16 August 1915 from 2 Division Engineers. Lieuenant Bowra died on 29 October 1915. His death was recorded as Killed in action and there is an annotation that this was due to gas.

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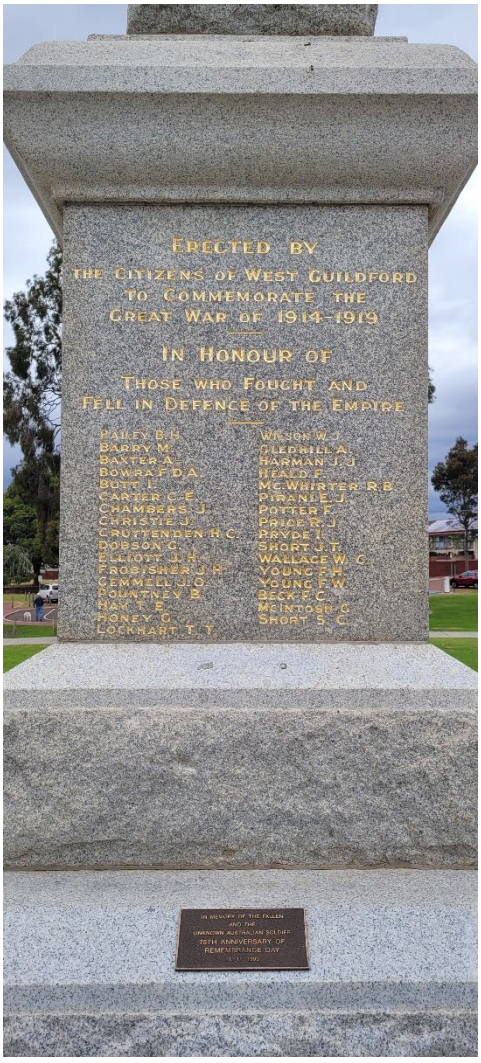
In 1915 the use of noxious gases for military purposes was not yet a weapon. Although the word Gas is used several times in relation to his death a better term would have been asphyxia and inhalation of toxic fumes while engaged in tunnelling. Lieutenant Bowra was buried on the day of his death in Shrapnel Valley Cemetery with The Reverend Bennett officiating.

Additional/personal information:

Frederick Douglas Atlee Bowra was the son of Frederick James and Maria Jane (nee Coffin) Bowra who had married in Perth in 1885. He was born in 1887 in the Perth district, followed by brother Herbert and sister Phyllis. He married Minnie Salter in 1911 and the couple had two sons, Douglas Samuel (b.1912) and Geoffrey Frederick (b.1914).

> BOWRA.-On October 29, 1915, killed in action at the Dardanelles, Lieut. Frederick D. A., beloved husband of Mrs. F. D. A. Bowra, Devon-road, West Guildford, late of 19th Australian Engineers and Existing Lines Branch, Railway Department, aged 26 years. He did his duty. *The Western Mail* 12/11/1915p30

His gravestone bears the inscription: He offered all that we might live. For his service he was entitled to receive the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. The service medals and other memorabilia were issued to Minnie Bowra. He has a memorial plaque in Kings Park (M63) which was dedicated by his wife. His widow received a military pension of £91 per annum, Douglas and Geoffrey each received £13 per annum, all pensions to date from 30 Dec 1915. Mrs Bowra was also the recipient of a payment from the AMP Society resulting from the death of her husband.



Lieutenant Frederick Bowra is remembered on the Bassendean War Memorial.

Frederick's son Douglas Bowra served in the 2/AIF as NX204115 between 1944-1947 and was discharged with the rank of Lieutenant from an equipment workshop unit. Geoffrey enlisted in the RAAF with the service number 406050 and served between 1940-1945. His rank on discharge was Flight Lieutenant and his final Unit was 3 Air Observers School. Minnie Bowra died on 5 September 1960 and was cremated at Karrakatta Cemetery.

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*

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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----------