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**Calderbank, Hugh**

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



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

**Rail employment information**

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|---|---|
| Employer: | Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways |
| Branch: | Tramways |
| Designation: | Motorman |

Rail employment notes: Born 23/7/1882. Joined Tramways 1/7/1913 aged 30 as Conductor, Perth. Promoted to Motorman (i.e tram driver), Perth 5/8/1914.

(The tramways of Perth and adjoining suburbs were compulsorily purchased by the WA Government in 1913 and were placed in the management and responsibility of the WA Government Railways. The records of employees, including the honour roll after the war, reflected this combined operation.)

Granted leave to join AIF 17/8/1914 (Service No.161). Killed in action at Gallipoli 25/4/1915

**Military service information:**

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|---|---|
| Conflict: | First World War 1914-1918 |
| Service: | Australian Imperial Force (AIF) |
| Military unit: | 11th Australian Infantry Battalion |
| Service number: | 161 |
| Date of death: | 25 April 1915 |
| Place of death: | Gallipoli, Dardanelles, Turkey |
| Age: | 32 |
| Rank: | Lance Sergeant |

Burial/memorialisation: Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli Peninsula, Canakkale Province, Turkey

Hugh Calderbank was enlisted directly as a Corporal in the AIF on 9 September 1914 at Blackboy Hill Camp. He participated in training following which he was allocated to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 161 and promoted to Lance Sergeant. Corporal Calderbank had been born in Wigan Lancashire and had served in the Royal Marine Light Infantry for 8 years before migrating to Australia at the age of 27 years. His Next of Kin his wife Mrs Sybil Calderbank.

The Battalion (in part) boarded A7 HMAT *Medic* at Fremantle on 31 October 1914. *Medic* then joined the first convoy which had earlier departed from Albany with a substantial Naval escort to provide cover against the German Light Cruiser *Embden* which was thought to roaming the Indian Ocean. Suez was reached on 5 December 1914 and the troops disembarked the following day and established camp at Mena with other elements of the 3rd Brigade. Training continued in Egypt until 2 March 1915 when the Battalion moved by rail to Alexandria, boarded HMT *Suffolk* and sailed for Mudros on Lemnos Island. There was a delay of 7 weeks while the troops practiced the use of scrambling nets and maintained fitness with route marches on the Island. On 25 April 1915 11th Bn as part of the 3rd Brigade landed at Anzac Cove and suffered considerable casualties. L/Sgt Calderbank failed to answer his name at the first roll call held after the landing and he was posted Missing in Action. Statements in his Red Cross fail to provide any accurate knowledge of what happened to him on 25 April 1915.


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A Court of Enquiry was held at Fletre, France almost a year later on 10 April 1916 and determined that he had been Killed in Action on 25 April 1915. No remains were ever found, he has no known grave and is remembered on the Lone Pine Memorial.

**Additional/personal information:**

Hugh Calderbank had been born in Wigan Lancashire before migrating to Australia at the age of 27 years. Hugh was married to Sybil Calderbank, apparently before emigrating to WA, and a dependent daughter (Ivy) was born in Western Australia in 1912.

It appears his wife moved back to the UK after he departed from Perth, presumably for family support – there was almost a year gap before his death was confirmed during which time no pension would have been paid. She was in England by December 1916 and from there she applied for a Death Benefit from the Ancient Order of Druids as her husband had been a member of that Lodge. Sybil Calderbank remarried in England (date unknown) and became Mrs Sybil Hersey. She had been granted a pension of £68 per annum with effect from 2 April 1916 and her daughter Ivy a pension of £1 per fortnight commencing on 2 April 1916 to expire on 12 December 1928. Nothing further is known about her pension when she re-married, or her life back in the UK. For his service L/Sgt Calderbank was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to Mrs Hersey together with other memorabilia.

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----------

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