049

Card, Harold George Blanchard

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



Plaque in memory of Harold Card in May drive, Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Tramways
Designation:	Labourer

Rail employment notes: Born 27/3/1892. Joined Tramways 1/7/1913 aged 21 as Labourer, Perth. Granted leave to join AIF 6/6/1916 (Service No.2299). Killed in action 22/8/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	43rd Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	2299
Date of death:	22 August 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	26
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France

Harold George Blanchard Card enlisted in the AIF on 1 June 1916 at the age of 24 years. At enlistment he reported that he had previously been medically rejected on the basis of varicose veins but this problem had now been surgically corrected. He nominated his mother as his next-of-kin. He was initially assigned to 7th Reinforcements to 51 Battalion with the regimental number 2299 and carried that same number when he was re-assigned to 4th/43Bn. After basic training, conducted in parallel with elements of 44 Bn, he departed Australia through Fremantle on 30 October 1916 aboard A16 HMAT *Port Melbourne*. On 28 December 1916 he landed at Devonport and moved to 11 Training Bn which he reached on 29 Dec 1916 where further training took place until 29 March 1917 when he departed the UK for the British Expeditionary Force through Folkestone. In France, Pte Card passed rapidly through 3rd ADBD and was taken on strength of 43 Bn, in the field, on 1 April 1917. He was Wounded in Action on 31 July 1917 and taken to 2 CCS and then moved on to 3rd London General Hospital where he was admitted on 4 August 1917. His condition improved and furlough was granted between 30 August 1917 and 13 September 1917. Following movement through convalescent units he rejoined his Unit on 3 December 1917.

The Battle of Amiens resulting in the "last 100 days" commenced in August 1918 and 43 Battalion was heavily involved. On 22 August 1918 the Battalion was advancing towards Bray in the Somme Valley when Pte Card was Killed in Action by shellfire along with several other members of his company. He was buried on the field and measurements were recorded as to the position of the grave. Post War the Graves Registration Unit were unable to determine his actual burial site and in consequence he has no known grave but is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Soldiers killed in France are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and right.

The wing walls to both sides of the central watch tower record, carved in stone, the names of Australian soldiers killed in France but with no known grave – tragically, more than 11 000 men. The largest number recorded from one unit is from 28th Battalion – some 365 West Australians.



Additional/personal information:

Harold Card was born in Sydney NSW but moved when young to WA and attended school in Perth.

> CARD.—In affectionate remembrance of my dear son, Harold G. Card, killed in action, somewhere in France, August 22, 1918. … Inserted by his loving mother Mrs. F. Card, 47 St. George's-ter.
>
> CARD.—In sad but loving memory of my dearest friend, Private Harold G. Card, killed in action, somewhere in France, August 22, 1918…. Inserted by his loving friend Muriel.
>
> CARD.—In loving memory of Private Harold G. Card, killed in action, somewhere in France, August 22, 1918. A true comrade, and faithful friend. Inserted by Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Ranford, Bert (on active service), and other members of the family.
> All *The West Australian* 10/9/19018p1

When determining the recipient of his service medals his mother stated that her husband had abandoned her and Harold sixteen years earlier and had committed suicide in the UK one year previously, accounting for the note "father missing" on the file when he enlisted. Harold's service medals and memorabilia were sent to Mrs Card. Pte Card has a memorial tablet in Kings Park (M398) which was dedicated by a friend. (see photo).

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----------