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George, William Charles

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:	Locomotive
Designation:	Cleaner

Rail employment notes: Born 30/12/1894. Joined WAGR 12/9/1914 aged 19 as Cleaner, Bunbury. Transferred to Cleaner, Northam 21/9/1914.

("Cleaner" in this case was a common junior position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Granted leave to join AIF 29/1/1915 (Service No.1944). Killed in action at Gallipoli 28/6/1915.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	1944
Date of death:	28 June 1915
Place of death:	Gallipoli, Turkey
Age:	22
Rank:	Private

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

William Charles George, engine cleaner of Northam enlisted in the AIF on 30 January 1915. He declared his Next of Kin to be W A George of Katanning, his father. Following training he was assigned to 5th Reinforcements to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 1944. Pte George departed Australia from the Port of Fremantle on 22 April 1915 aboard A20 HMAT *Hororata*. He had been taken on strength of 11 Bn from the 5th reinforcements on 16 June 1915.

Nothing else is known until he was Killed in Action on 28 June 1915. The War Diary shows that 11 Battalion was engaged in action at Silt Spur on that day with the objective of suppressing Turkish fire. Casualties were high as the troops had little cover and the Turks held higher ground. A Sergeant reported that 15 bodies of 11 Bn soldiers were buried in the cemetery at Shell Green.

Additional/personal information:

William Charles George was born in Victoria (Vic BDM 25247/1893). He was the eldest son of William Augustus and Sarah Dudley (nee Chapman) George, who were married in Victoria in 1892. The births of two more sons are recorded in Victoria – Alfred Augustus in 1894 and Thomas Bertram

in 1896 – and then it appears the family moved west, as did many families after the gold finds of the 1890s. They moved around in WA – a daughter Beatrice was born in Leederville in 1899 whilst a last son Wilfred arrived in Ravensthorpe in 1902.

There would have been a delay before the family received confirmation of William's death in Turkey, and so the only notices seen in the newspaper were placed on the first anniversary:

> GEORGE.—In sad but loving memory of our dear son and brother, William Charles (Charlie), who was killed in action at Gallipoli on June 28, 1915, eldest son of W. A. and S. D. George. —Inserted by his loving parents, brothers and sisters. *The West Australian* 28/6/1916p1

After the War Pte George had a marked grave established at Shell Green Cemetery but there is no personal inscription on the headstone. There is a file in the AWM (not a personal file) with his name and regimental number but it is not digitized. The file is Series PP13/1 Control Number C34746.

He was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were passed to his father.

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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