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Grant, Lionel Alexander

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 25/9/1896. Joined WAGR 19/11/1915 aged 19 as Cleaner, Perth. ("Cleaner" in this case was a 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 26/1/1916 (Service No.4744). Died of wounds whilst a prisoner of war in Germany 22/2/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	4744
Date of death:	22 February 1917
Place of death:	POW camp 5, Cambrai, France
Age:	20
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Porte-de-Paris Cemetery, Cambrai, Nord Pas de Calais, France

Lionel Alexander Grant enlisted in the AIF on 29 January 1916. On enlistment he nominated his father as his Next of Kin and declared that he was a serving member of the 88th Regiment of Infantry. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 12th Reinforcement to 28 Battalion with the regimental number 4744. He departed Australia from Fremantle on 17 April 1916 aboard A60 HMAT *Aeneas*. On arrival in England he marched into 7 Training Bn for further training.

He departed England on 15 September 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force at 2 ADBD. Pte Grant made his Will in his paybook on 25 Sep 1916, nominating his mother as the sole beneficiary and the following day he was taken-on-strength of 28 Battalion in the field. On 16 November 1916 he was captured by the German Army as it counter-attacked Gird Trench, North of Flers. He was taken initially to the POW Camp at Limburg for documentation and then assigned to a work commando for duties around Cambrai. Rations were in short supply and the work very hard. He became ill and was admitted to Krieg's Lazarette (Number 5 Camp) where he died. The cause of death was never officially recorded but one version is that he died of "Dropsy" but a fellow POW stated the cause to be starvation. For record purposes his death is shown as Died of Illness (DOI) whilst a POW. Pte Grant was buried in the Porte-de-Paris Cemetery, Cambrai.

Additional/personal information:

Lionel Baxter was born in the Perth district, a son of Andrew Baxter Grant and Eliza Maria Grant (nee Dettenar) (BDM 1943/1896). As far as is known he had one surviving brother (another was stillborn).

It took some time for news of his death as a POW to be confirmed, and in consequence the family placed their notices on the anniversary of his death:

> GRANT.—In loving memory of our dear son, Lional A. Grant, who died whilst a prisoner of war in Germany, February 22, 1917. No one he loved was by his side … —Inserted by his loving father and mother.
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> GRANT.—In loving memory of my dear brother, Private Lionel A. Grant, who died whilst a prisoner of war in Germany, February 22, 1917. … —Inserted by his loving brother, Driver Leslie J. Grant, on active service.
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> GRANT.—In loving memory of our dear nephew and cousin, Lionel Grant, who died whilst prisoner of war in Germany, February 22, 1917. Dearly loved and sadly missed. —Inserted by his loving uncle, aunt, and cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cadd, Colin, and Douglas.
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> GRANT.—In loving memory of Lionel (Tib), who died whilst a prisoner of war in Germany, February 22, 1917. One of the best. —Inserted by Mrs. Price, Marie, Kathleen, and his friend Stan (on active service). All *The West Australian* 22/2/1918p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal together with other memorabilia. The British War Medal and other material were issued to his father but the Victory Medal was issued to his mother as his father had died before that Medal was issued. His family paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: "Earth Cannot Hide the Glory of his Noble Soul". His father Alexander Grant (NOK) died aged 77 years on 15 September 1920 and was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery. His mother Eliza Grant, recipient of the Victory Medal, died on 4 July 1948 aged 79 years and was buried in the family grave at Karrakatta Cemetery.

Private Grant's elder brother 894 Driver Leslie John Grant 4 ASC also enlisted and served in the AIF 23 August 1914 to 17 June 1918.

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----------