143

Hill, Alexander McPherson

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



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

Alexander Hill joined the Light Horse but as casualties mounted at the disastrous attack on the Gallipoli, Horsemen were ‘dismounted’ and used for infantry reinforcements, in which role he was killed at Lone Pine.

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 18/4/1893. Joined WAGR 19/6/1911 aged 18 as Car Cleaner, Perth. Transferred to Cleaner, Perth 28/7/1911 and Cue 3/10/1911. (“Cleaner” in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise working around the locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Promoted to Fireman, Cue 11/2/1914 and transferred to Midland Junction 30/3/1914. Granted leave to join AIF 20/10/1914 (Service No.290). Killed in action at Gallipoli 29/8/1915.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	10th Australian Light Horse.
Service number:	290
Date of death:	29 August 1915
Place of death:	Lone Pine, Turkey
Age:	22
Rank:	Trooper

Burial/memorialisation: Lone Pine Memorial, Turkey

Alexander Hill enlisted in the AIF at the Guildford Depot on 17 October 1914. As this was the Light Horse Depot it must have been his intention from the start to gain a position as a Light Horseman. There is no record of his trial of horsemanship but he must have been quite adequate as he was enlisted with the regimental number 290 and allotted to B Squadron by Lt Col Brazier the Commanding Officer of 10 LHR. The Regiment trained at Guildford, Claremont show grounds and the training reserve at Rockingham. Tpr Hill had no previous military experience unlike many members of the original contingent. Following training in WA the Regiment departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A7 HMAT Mashobra on 08 Feb 1915, called at Colombo and disembarked at Alexandria, Egypt on 23 Mar 1915. Training continued in Egypt but high command soon realised that reinforcements were required for Gallipoli and the decision was made to send Light Horse Regiments (dismounted) to serve as infantry. Movement to Gallipoli began on 15 May 1915 leaving behind a total of 150 men and 550 horses. The Regiment soon entered active operations on Gallipoli and absorbed reinforcements from Australia. Tpr Hill was WIA on 29 May 1915 and evacuated to Malta via the Stationary Hospital on Lemnos. Having recovered, he rejoined the Unit on 16 Aug 1915 from Alexandria after hospitalization on Malta. 10 LHR was actively involved in the Battle of Lone Pine when Trooper Hill was Killed in action on 29 August 1915 at Hill 60. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Lone Pine Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

The birth of Alexander Hill was registered at Baddaginnie, Victoria in 1893 (Vic BDM 18743/1893). His parents were Edward Elkins Hill and Annie Hill (neé McPherson). They were still in Victoria in 1897 when the birth of another son Walt Archie Hill was registered, but Alexander moved to WA later.

When he enlisted he gave his Next of kin as his mother but when she died and his father remarried, the position of NOK passed to his elder brother Hy Rowland Hill (born Baddaginnie 1890).

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his eldest brother Mr H R Hill, along with other military memorabilia. Tpr Hill had a younger brother who served as 2510 Pte A W Hill in the Australian Flying Corps in the UK but did not see active service.

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----------