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## Marchant, William Clarence

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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**

| | |
|---|---|
| Employer: | Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways |
| Branch: | Traffic |
| Designation: | Junior Porter |

Rail employment notes: Born 13/12/1895. Joined WAGR 12/11/1913 aged 17 as Junior Porter, Bunbury. ("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR – some had specific roles such as a receiving goods porter, some were general hands while some learnt safe-working and could assist with signals, etc. Bunbury, a busy terminal station and harbour location, had multiple 10 porters. A Junior Porter was under 21 years and paid less.)

Granted leave to join AIF 21/11/1914 (Service No.1637). Wounded at Gallipoli and died 23/5/1915.

**Military service information:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Conflict: | First World War 1914-1918 |
| Service: | Australian Imperial Force (AIF) |
| Military unit: | 16th Australian Infantry Battalion |
| Service number: | 1637 |
| Date of death: | 23 May 1915 |
| Place of death: | Gallipoli, Dardanelles, Turkey |
| Age: | 19 |
| Rank: | Private |

Burial/memorialisation: Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli Peninsula, Canakkale Province, Turkey

William Marchant was a serving member of 86th Infantry Regiment (Militia parttime) when he enlisted in the AIF on 16 November 1914 and stated that he had previous service in Senior Cadets for 2 years. He nominated his mother Mrs Lydia Marchant as his next of kin. Following basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp he was assigned to the 3rd Reinforcements to 16 Battalion with the regimental number 1637.

His Reinforcement group embarked at Fremantle onto HMAT *Itonus* on 22 February 1915. His records are incomplete and do not show either his date of arrival in Egypt or the date he was taken on strength of the Battalion, which was already on Gallipoli.

On 19 May 1915 the Battalion was in support at Quinn's Post when the Turkish Forces attacked in strength but were beaten off, sustaining heavy losses in the action. The AWM describes Quinns Post as the most advancedd post of the ANZAC line, and the scene of heavy fighting. On 20 May 1915 there was an unofficial truce to collect dead and wounded from no man's land with fighting resumed the following day.


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The records fail to show the date that Pte Marchant suffered the wounds from which he DOW on 23 May 1915. He was buried on the day he died in what was later to be called Beach Cemetery. The burial was supervised by a Chaplain who completed a short report.

**Personal information:**

William Marchant was born in Albany in 1896, a son of William George Marchant and Lydia Ellen Marchant (nee Buck). A sister Dorothy was also born in Albany but it appears the family had other children before moving to WA. (BDM 2066/1896)

> MARCHANT.—On May 30, 1915, died of wounds at the Dardanelles, Private William Clarence Marchant, dearly beloved youngest son of William, Lydia and brother of Hubert, Frank, Lydia and Dorothy Marchant of 203 Hensman-road,; Subiaco, aged 19 years and 5 months. The West Australian 10/6/1915p1

As a result of his service Private Marchant was entitled to receive the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

When Army Records asked his mother if there was a closer living blood relative; she identified his father with the same address as herself. His military pay was finalized in Nov 1916 and his mother signed as receiving £27-17-6.

**For further information**

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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