Randell, Raymond Keith

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



Memorial plaque in Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Accounts
Designation:	Clerk

Rail employment notes: Born 16/4/1893. Joined WA Government Railways 6 December 1909 aged 16 as Cadet, Perth. Promoted to Clerk, Perth in the Accounts Branch 1/12/1914.

Granted leave to join AIF 2/8/1915 (Service No.3393). Killed in action 4/9/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	52nd Battalion.
Service number:	3393
Date of death:	4 September 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank at time of death:	Lance Corporal
Burial/memorialisation:	Serre Road Cemetery Number 2, Picardie, France

Raymond Keith Randell enlisted in the AIF on 02 August 1915. On enlistment he stated that he had no previous military experience and that his father Samuel Randell was his Next of Kin. His basic training was conducted at Blackboy Hill following which he was assigned to 11th Reinforcement to 52 Battalion with the regimental number 3393. He departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A24 HMAT *Benalla* on 01 Nov 1915.

On landing in Egypt, he marched into 3 Training Bn for continuation training. On 03 March 1916 he was taken on strength of 52 Bn from reinforcements. The Battalion continued with individual and formation training until June 1916 when it departed Alexandria on 05 June 1916 aboard HMT *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Randell was appointed a L/Cpl on 18 August 1916 as the Battalion moved to the Battles of Pozieres and Moquet Farm. It was later learned that a shell fell directly into a shelter where 17 soldiers were sheltering and only 3 survived. L/Cpl Randell was one of those killed but at the time he was posted as Missing in action. A Court of Enquiry held on 24 April 1917 determined that his classification should be changed from Missing, to Killed in action on 4 September 1916.

Additional/personal information:

Military historian Dr Michael Galvin comments:

> This is an interesting story – this man was on the cusp of having his particulars entered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial as being Killed in action and having no known grave when his remains were unearthed at Moquet Farm in 1931. His father was an official in the State Treasury and he got the WA Agent General in London well and truly involved in the search for his son.

In 1931 the Imperial War Graves Commission unearthed, near Moquet Farm, a soldier determined to be a member of the AIF. From those remains the IWGC recovered an identity disc and a watch indicating the body to be that of L/Cpl Randell. The body was then given a military funeral in the Serre Road Cemetery Number 2. The identity disc and remains of the watch were forwarded to his father.

For his service L/Cpl Randell was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These medals and other memorabilia were issued to his father. L/Cpl Randell has a memorial tablet in Kings Park (M123) which was dedicated by his mother on 3 August 1919.

Further information 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----------