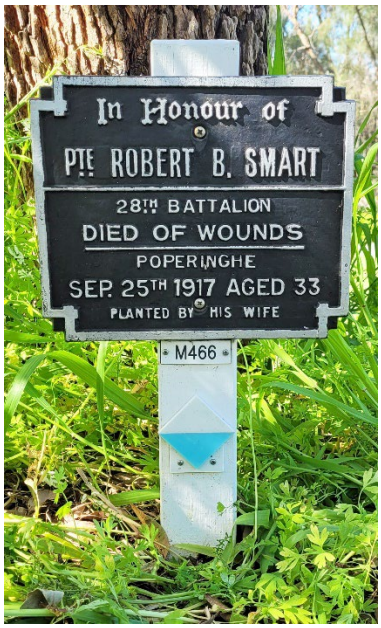
293

Smart, Robert Brown

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



Plaque M466 in May Drive, Kings Park

Rail employment information

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

Rail employment notes: Born 24/3/1884. Joined WAGR 17/1/1911 aged 26 as Labourer, Midland Workshops. Appointed Lifter, Midland Workshops 17/5/1911 and promoted to Examiner, Coolgardie 20/3/1914. Transferred to Kalgoorlie 13/11/1914 and re-appointed Lifter, Midland Workshops 15/1/1915.

Granted leave to join AIF 7/3/1916 (Service No.5083). Died of wounds 25/9/1917.



Titled “Loco shops send off to Soldiers April 19th 1916” this photo shows the fervour of the time for recruiting. Of these 40 men on the raised balcony, eleven of them including Robert Smart paid the ultimate price and lost their lives. Whatever their job, from car builders to boilermaker’s assistants, they joined a range of WA men volunteering to fight. Workers and management had gone to considerable lengths for the occasion with tree branches, band, flags and the name-bearing banner, while a central shield added a whimsical note with “Loco shops W.A. Easter egg for the Kaiser”. P. Rogers collection.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	5083
Date of death:	25 September 1917
Place of death:	Belgium
Age:	33
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Lijssenthoek, Flanders, Belgium

Robert Brown Smart enlisted in the AIF on 6 March 1916 and nominated his wife Jeanie Smart as his Next of Kin. He previously had a short period of military experience (190 days) in the Highland Light Infantry. Robert Smart had been born in Dundee, Scotland and migrated to Australia at the age of 26 years.

His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 13th Reinforcements to 28th Battalion and departed Australia from Fremantle on 18 June 1916 aboard A48 HMAT *Seang Bee* and disembarked at Plymouth on 9 September 1916. In England he joined 7 Training Battalion for continuation training until 2 November 1916 when he departed for France and joined the British Expeditionary Force at 2 ADBD where he remained until 09 Jan 1917 when he was taken-on-strength of 28 Bn, in the field. After a short time, he developed trench feet and this required evacuation to England on 23 Jan 1917 where he was admitted to the 1st Birmingham War Hospital.

Following recovery, he was given a short furlough before departing England from Southampton on 22 May 1917 to join 2 ADBD before he re-joined 28 Bn on 12 June 1917. He was Wounded in Action at Polygon Wood on 24 September 1917 suffering severe shell wounds to his side, chest and abdomen. Pte Smart was evacuated to 17 CCS where his injuries were judged to be critical and he shortly Died of Wounds. He was buried in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe (now Poperinge) and his grave site marked.

Additional/personal information:

Robert Smart was born in Dundee, Scotland and came to WA when aged 26 years. It appears he was married and had a son before arriving in the west, but the births of the two later children are recorded in WA, Hugh in 1912 and Isabella in 1913.

> SMART.-On September 25 died of wounds somewhere-in France, Private R B. Smart of Bayer-street, Midland Junction, aged 33 years, dearly loved husband of Jeanie Smart, and loving father of Robert, Hugh, and Isabella, late of Glasgow, Scotland. , *The Western Mail* 19/10/1917p30

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his wife together with other memorabilia. Prior to departing Australia Pte Smart made a Will in which he made his wife his sole beneficiary. She was also named in a benefit made by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees. Military pensions were issued to his widow at 40/- per fortnight, his son Robert Erskine Smart 20/-, son Hugh Pollock Smart 15/- and his daughter Isabella 10/- per fortnight, all to date from 5 December 1917.

Jeanie Smart later married John McCalman Grainger (BDM Per 808/1920). She died on 2 June 1937 aged 56 and was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery. Her husband died in 1974, aged 82 years.

Private Smart has a memorial plaque in Kings Park (M466) dedicated by his wife in 1919.

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----------