300

Stannard, Joseph Ernest

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 19/7/1893. Joined WAGR 24/1/1913 aged 19 as Cleaner, Northam. ("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.)

Transferred to York 26/5/1913.

Granted leave to join AIF 17/8/1914 (Service No.834). Died of illness in Egypt 3/5/1915.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	834
Date of death:	3 May 1915
Place of death:	Egypt
Age:	21
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Chatby Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Alexandria, Egypt

Joseph Ernest Stannard enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill Camp on 10 Sep 1914 and it was at that camp that he did his basic military training. He had previous military experience as a militia member of 11th Australian Infantry Regiment for 18 months. He nominated his sister Mrs I E Beazley as his next of kin (NOK). Following training he was allocated to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 834. The Bn boarded A11 HMAT *Ascanius* at Fremantle on 31 Oct 1914 but did not depart until 02 Nov 1914. *Ascanius* then joined the first convoy which had earlier departed from Albany with a substantial Naval escort to provide cover against the German Light Cruiser *Embden* which was thought to be roaming the Indian Ocean. Ascanius later suffered minor damage in a collision with Shropshire and was required to enter Aden for repairs before proceeding up the Red Sea.

Suez was reached on 05 December 1914 and the troops disembarked the following day and established camp at Mena with other elements of the 3rd Brigade. Training continued in Egypt until 02 Mar 1915 when the Bn moved by rail to Alexandria, boarded HMT *Suffolk* and sailed for Mudros on Lemnos Island. There was a delay of 7 weeks while the troops practiced the use of scrambling nets and maintained fitness with route marches on the Island. Pte Stannard's records are both incomplete and misleading. The record shows that he was admitted to 1 Stationary Hospital on Lemnos on 08 Apr 1915 but there is no record of when he was discharged from that hospital or transferred to another facility. The Bn landed on Gallipoli on 25 Apr 1915 and it is not known if Pte Stannard participated in

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the Landing. There are marginal notes to suggest that he did and that he suffered some type of wound. By 03 May 1915 he was an inpatient at the Military Hospital at Alexandria where he died. The cause of death was clearly stated to be meningitis but one note attributes the meningitis to wounds received in action. If this was the case it would be most unusual. The unanswered questions are therefore whether his presence in a hospital in Alexandria is related to the admission on Lemnos on 08 Apr 1915, or he participated in the Landing, was wounded and evacuated to 21 General Hospital (Alexandria) where he died of meningitis unrelated to either of the above. He is officially recorded as dying of illness (DOI) but if this was a complication of a wound it should be Died of wounds (DOW). On 04 May 1915 he was buried in the Chatby Military and War Cemetery, Alexandria with the Reverend Ward officiating.

Additional/personal information:

Joseph Stannard was born in Malvern in Victoria in 1893, the third of three children born to William Benjamin Stannard and Isabella (nee Thomson) after Harold in 1889 and Isabel Ethel in 1891. Another son Allen is born in 1895. But the mother, Isabella, died in 1895 (possibly in childbirth. (Vic BDM 8800/1895 et.al)

This left William with 4 young children but he remarried in 1896, to Mary Elizabeth Crawford. This second marriage resulted in 4 more children: 2 step-brothers and 2 step-sisters. The first was born in Victoria in 1897 but then the family moved west and the last 3 are born in WA. Tragedies continue – the eldest of the first family, Harold, dies in WA in 1898 aged 9 (WA BDM). All this would explain the confusion which the Army Records section developed later. The family notice did not get involved:

> STANNARD.-On May 10, died of wounds received in action at the Dardanelles, Private Joseph Ernest Stannard, of Queen's Park and York, aged 21 years. Deeply mourned. *The West Australian* 19/5/1915p1

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. There was great confusion about who should receive the campaign medals. It turned out that Mrs Mary Eliza Stannard who was shown as his mother was actually his stepmother and two of the medals were issued to Mr W E Stannard on the belief that he was a brother. Subsequent enquiry revealed that he was a stepbrother and the only living blood relative was his sister Mrs I E Beazley and the medals should go to her. She however signed a deed of release so that the medals and other memorabilia should remain in the possession of Mr W E Stannard.

Mary Eliza Stannard (stepmother) was granted a military pension of £26 per annum with effect from 10 Jul 1915 but this was subsequently raised to £52 per annum effective from the same date. The stepmother died on 22 Dec 1930 at the age of 64 years and was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery.

Pte Stannard has a memorial plaque in Kings Park (M667) which was dedicated by his stepmother – although it is labelled as mother on the plaque.

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----------