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Stranger, Arthur Thomas

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 6/6/1895. Joined WAGR 6/3/1911 aged 15 as Call Boy, Kalgoorlie. "Call boy" was the most junior job for a young man wanting to join the locomotive crews on the WAGR, involving work around the locomotive shed and also being sent out, usually on bicycle, literally to call/wake crews for their rosters, especially when train times changed. The next step up would be Cleaner.

Transferred to Fremantle 7/1/1913 and appointed Cleaner 6/6/1913.
("Cleaner" in this case was the next rank 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.)

Granted leave to join AIF 15/2/1915 (Service No.165A). Killed in action 20/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	165A
Date of death:	20 July 1916
Place of death:	Place not yet found
Age:	21
Rank:	Corporal
Burial/memorialisation:	Ration Farm Military Cemetery, La Chapelle-D'armentieres, Lille, Nord Pas de Calais, France

Arthur Thomas Stranger enlisted in the AIF on 15 Feb 1915. On enlistment he nominated his mother Mrs Eliza Stranger as his NOK and declared that he was a serving member in the 86th Infantry Regiment (Militia). His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Military Camp following which he was assigned to 28 Bn with the regimental number 165. Before he left for overseas, he was photographed in a studio portrait which shows him in a head and shoulders frame slightly off centre to the right. That photograph is held by the AWM as P09291.145.

Private Stranger was appointed to the rank of Corporal prior to departure aboard A11 HMAT *Ascanius* from Fremantle on 9 June 1915 and disembarked in Egypt on 03 July 1915. Following some guard duties and training the Battalion departed from Alexandria on 04 September 1915 aboard SS *Ivernia* for Gallipoli. The Battalion participated in the closing phases of the Gallipoli campaign before returning to Egypt. Cpl Stranger was promoted to Temporary Sergeant on 08 March 1916 and was

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transferred to 2 Pioneer Battalion for a short period and then on 11 March 1916 he was transferred to 32 Battalion and reverted to his substantive rank of Cpl on 06 April 1916. The Bn departed Alexandria on 16 Mar 1916 and disembarked at Marseilles on 22 Mar 1916 to join the BEF. After a short period in a quiet sector 32 Bn participated in the ill-fated action at Fromelles. Cpl Stranger was posted Missing in Action on 20 July 1916 but a Court of Enquiry held much later on 12 Aug 1917 determined that he had been Killed in Action on 20 July 1916 – confirmation the parents waited a year to hear.. An eye witness, 1351 Pte S M Redmond 32 Bn, reported seeing Cpl Stranger hit by shrapnel and lying dead in no man's land. Cpl Stranger's remains were recovered in the post war period and he was buried in Ration Farm Military Cemetery, la Chapelle-D Armentieres.

Additional/personal information:

Arthur Stranger was born in Albany in 1896, the second of four children born to Thomas Stranger and Eliza/Elizabeth Stranger (nee Flintoff). The parents moved around the state – the father was also a railwayman – and they were in Perth when the last child was born in 1897. (WA BDM)

His family paid for n inscription on his gravestone which reads: "In Memory of the Dearly Loved Son of Mr &Mrs T J Stranger". For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his mother together with other memorabilia. Probate of his Will was granted on 08 Nov 1918 to his mother. The issue was to his mother as his father 872 Sgt Thomas Stranger of the Railway Corps had died of illness in England on 10 Apr 1918.

Cpl Stranger has a memorial tablet in Kings Park (M314) dedicated by his mother. His father also has a tablet (M314A) dedicated by his wife. Eliza Stranger died on 05 Aug 1950 aged 84 years and was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery.

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----------