Tilley, Clarence James

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:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 22/8/1893. Joined WAGR on 21 September 1909 aged 16 as Junior Labourer, Midland Junction. Appointed to Cleaner, Perth 18/9/1911 ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning and otherwise working around locomotives whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder) and transferred to Fremantle 12/8/1912. Promoted to Fireman 2/6/1915. Granted leave to join AIF 16/7/1915 (Service No.3981). Killed in action 30/5/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Battalion.
Service number:	3981
Date of death:	30 May 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	24
Rank at time of death:	Private
Burial/memorialisation:	Rue Petillon Military Cemetery Fleurbaix, France

Clarence James Tilley enlisted in the AIF on 08 Jul 1915 in Perth. He nominated his father James George Tilley of Beaconsfield as his next of kin (NOK). He had some military experience in that he had served in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve for 4 years prior to enlistment. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp During training he was originally identified as a reinforcement for 9th/16 Bn on 05 July 1915 but this was changed to 12th/11 Bn on 16 October 1915 and he was assigned the regimental number 3981. Pte Tilley departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle on 22 November 1915 aboard RMS *Mongolia*. He disembarked in Egypt and was shortly afterwards admitted to 2 AGH suffering from influenza.

Following discharge from hospital he was taken-on-strength of 11 Bn, in the field, on 04 Mar 1916. Private Tilley had a short period of training before he sailed from Alexandria on 29 March 1916 aboard HMT *Corsican* and disembarked at Marseilles on 5 April 1916 to join the BEF. The Bn moved into a "quiet sector" of the frontline of Armentieres but Pte Tilley was KIA on 30 May 1916. He was buried at Rue Petillon Military Cemetery Fleurbaix with the Reverend WK Douglas of 12 Bn officiating.

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Additional/personal information:

Clarence Tilley was born in Exeter, South Australia but it appears the family moved to WA when he was young. He had some military experience before enlisting, as he joined the Naval Reserve, at Fremantle.

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia. His family paid for an inscription on his headstone which reads: “Fond Memories Cling to One we Love so Well”. James George Tilley the NOK of Pte C J Tilley died on 11 December 1950 at the age of 79 years and was buried in Fremantle Cemetery.

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----------