330

Ward, Henry Holdford

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:	Traffic
Designation:	Porter

Rail employment notes: Born 14/4/1887. Joined WAGR 4/8/1913 aged 26 as Repairer, Bullfinch.

("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang responsible for upkeep of an allocated section of railway line. A typical gang might include between 3 and 6 Repairers with one Leading Hand Repairer and a Ganger in charge. The WAGR Annual report for 1914/15 showed they employed 882 Repairers at 8 shillings per day, with many at very small settlements or tent camps.)

Transferred to Porter, Kalgoorlie 30/12/1913.

("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR – some had specific roles such as a receiving goods porter, some were general hands while some learnt safe-working and could assist with signals, etc. Kalgoorlie, a busy junction station and terminus of some passenger trains, probably had at least 10 porters.)

Granted leave to join AIF 9/1/1915 (Service No.1669). Died of wounds at Gallipoli 3/5/1915.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	1669
Date of death:	3 May 1915
Place of death:	Gallipoli, Dardanelles, Turkey
Age:	29
Rank:	Lance Corporal

Burial/memorialisation: Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli Peninsula, Canakkale Province, Turkey

Henry Holdford Ward enlisted in the AIF on 11 Jan 1915 at Kalgoorlie. He nominated his mother Mrs Sarah Amelia Ward, resident in the UK as his NOK. Pte Ward had migrated to Australia at the age of 23 years. He had previous service as a Territorial in the British Army. This comprised 2 years in the 1st Middlesex Regiment and 2 years in the 9th City of London Regiment. His military training was conducted at the Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allotted to the 3rd Reinforcements to 16 Battalion with the regimental number 1669.

He departed Australia on 22 February 1915 aboard HMAT *Itonus* from the Port of Fremantle and disembarked at Alexandria where he was taken on strength of 16 Battalion. This soldier's records are quite incomplete and fail to show when he was appointed to the rank of Lance Corporal. After training

in Egypt, the Battalion crossed to Mudros harbour on Lemnos Island where they practiced using scrambling nets to depart a ship. On 25 April 1915 16 Battalion was involved in the Anzac Landing. A party of the reinforcements landed quite early and acted as a beach labour force while the remainder of the Battalion landed in the afternoon. It is not known if L/Cpl Ward was in the beach party or the main body of the Battalion. At some time, date unknown, he suffered a GSW to the abdomen and left hand. His subsequent movements are not documented but most likely he was evacuated from a medical facility on the beach to Lemnos where a Stationary Hospital had been established. He was taken aboard the hospital ship HMHS *Gascon* bound for Egypt but died on 3 May 1915 and was buried at sea. From his mother's comments it seems that an Army Chaplain wrote to his mother and provided some details. His death was recorded as Died of Wounds, and he is remembered on the Lone Pine Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

Henry Ward was a son of Mrs Sarah Amelia Ward, who reported that Henry was born and attended school in West Hampstead, London in England. It appears Henry migrated to WA on his own as his mother remained in England and there is no mention of wife or children.

He was a member of the WAGR and T Employees Fund and there is correspondence from that body. His mother was the sole beneficiary under the terms of his will. 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.

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----------