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Hurlston, George Henry

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



Plaque in May Drive Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Midland Railway Company of Western Australia Ltd
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Employed as a locomotive fireman by the Midland Railway Co. which owned and operated the railway between Midland and Walkaway (south of Geraldton) they sold the complete operation to the state government in 1964.

Detailed records have not been found for MRWA employees.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	1135
Date of death:	20 May 1915
Place of death:	Gallipoli, Dardanelles, Turkey
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

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

George Henry Hurlston enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 07 Sep 1914 and commenced basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp. He nominated his mother (actually his step-mother) as his Next of Kin even though his father was alive. He had some minimal military training as a Senior Cadet. Private Hurlston was allocated to 1st Reinforcements to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 1135. He departed Australia through the Port of Melbourne on 22 December 1914 aboard A32 HMAT *Themistocles*. On arrival in Egypt 11 Bn established camp at Mena with other elements of the 3rd Brigade. Training continued in Egypt until 2 March 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.

Private Hurlston landed on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and participated in all the early battles. He was Killed in Action on 20 May 1915 and buried in a temporary cemetery in Monash Gully with Fr Fahey officiating. His remains were moved to the Cemetery at Brown's Dip after the War but when it was realized that his grave was likely to wash away in torrential rain his grave was moved to the Lone Pine Cemetery. During these moves his name was altered slightly and he is shown on the AWM register as "Hurlstone".

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Additional/personal information:

George Henry Hurlston was born in Jarrahdale, a sawmilling town in the Darling Range south-east of Perth, a son of George William and Ethel Jane (nee Nettles) Hurlston. His parents had moved from NSW. His mother Ethel died in 1895. George remarried in 1901 to Louisa Ann York, and several step-brothers and step-sisters to Arthur were born.

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His campaign medals and other memorabilia were issued to his father. The family paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: “Greater Love Hath No Man he Laid Down His Life For a Friend”.

Pte Hurlston has a memorial plaque in Kings Park (M187A) which was dedicated by his family on 16 Dec 2006. His brother Arthur George Hurlston enlisted as 4294 in 16 Bn on 11 October 1915 and was Killed in Action in France on 7 August 1916. The brothers have adjacent plaques in Kings Park.Their father was refused a military pension on the basis that he was not a dependent.

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----------