

Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Bell, Edward James

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

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Stores
Designation:	Mill hand

Rail employment notes: Mill hand, No.2 Railway Mill, Dwellingup.

* In this period the WAGR operated two sawmills, whose operations were included in the Commissioner's responsibility and reports. However the WAGR records of individual employees, available from the SRO, do not generally include those who worked at the Railway Sawmills. Names and designations have been derived from local Honour Boards, the Railway Institute Magazine, and/or AWM records.

Enlisted in 16th Battalion AIF 9/9/1914 (Service No.385). Died of wounds 25/5/1915.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	385
Date of death:	25 May 1915
Place of death:	Gallipoli, Dardanells, Turkey
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli Peninsula, Canakkale Province, Turkey

Edward James Bell enlisted in the AIF on 09 September 1914 and was assigned to 16 Battalion with the regimental number 385. He and nominated his brother (WH Bell of Kelmscott) as his NOK. After rudimentary training he departed Fremantle for Melbourne aboard SS *Indarra* on 21 November 1914 where the 4th Brigade were to concentrate prior to departure for overseas. In Melbourne there was some more training at Broadmeadows Camp and a ceremonial March through the City before the Battalion sailed from Port Melbourne aboard A40 HMAT *Ceramic.* Alexandria was reached on 3 February 1915 and Camp Aerodrome entered over the next 2 days. His next move was via SS *Haida Pascha* to Lemnos where the Bn practiced the use of scrambling nets and beach landings.

On 25 April 1915 they arrived at Gallipoli but did not land until late afternoon. Heavy fighting was almost continuous through early May and by 4 May 1915 the Battalion has been reduced to half strength despite the arrivals of reinforcements. Pte Bell is shown as Died of Wounds (DOW) on 25 May 1915 and buried on the beach that same day. The Bn was not engaged in any specific action that day which strongly suggests that he killed by shell fire. Members of 14 Bn buried his body. His remains were not disturbed at the end of the War and his burial site remains Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli.

Additional/personal information:

Edward Bell had been born in Cardiff, Wales on 6/12/1891. (AWM)

His estate was divided equally between his 3 brothers and 4 sisters. The eldest brother received his service medals.

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----------