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Green, Zebulun

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



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

Zeb Green volunteered and enlisted three time. He served with distinction in the First War and returned to life in WA. He volunteered again for the Second War, was shipped home as too old but re-enlisted later and lost his life in an accident while serving in Queensland.

Rail employment information

Employer:	Midland Railway Company of Western Australia Limited
Branch:	Civil
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: At the time of enlisting in WW2, Zeb Green was a Repairer (this is normally a trackwork job in the civil engineering branch) with the Midland Railway Company of WA. This company built, owned and ran the railway from Midland to Walkaway, near Geraldton, until they sold the complete operation to the state government in 1964.

In earlier life he was a farmer at Broome Hill (where his parents lived) and later at Carnamah (near his wife's parents), further details of his work in railways are not known. Enlisted in AIF 1/5/1940 (Service No.W42521). 7 Employment Company. Died in accident whilst serving with the AIF in Mt. Isa, Queensland 31/5/1943.

Military service information

Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Service:	Active Citizens Military Force
Military unit:	7 Employment Company
Service number:	W42521 (previously 726 and WX1989)
Date of death:	31 May 1943
Place of death:	Queensland
Age:	46
Rank at time of death:	Sergeant
Buried/commemorated:	Adelaide River War Cemetery, Northern Territory

First World War:

Zebulun Green had seen service with the original 10th Light Horse Regiment between 1914 and 1919. He had enlisted in November 1914 and was allocated the regimental number 726 and sailed to Egypt aboard A50 HMAT *Itonus* which departed Fremantle on 19 February 1915. Trooper Green was wounded by shrapnel on 8 October 1915 at Gallipoli and evacuated to Egypt for hospital treatment. His records are incomplete but they show that he was again available for active service on 4 November 1916. He moved through 3 Light Horse Training Unit before he joined 10 LHR again in Feb 1917. Tpr Green participated in the remainder of the campaign until the Turkish Armistice in

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October 1918. At the conclusion of the campaign, he was awarded the Military Medal. The citation shows that this was not for just a single act but a combination of brave acts. He returned aboard SS *Dongola* on 17 Aug 1919 and his services in the AIF were terminated on 17 October 1919.

Second World War:

He was a very early enlistment in the Second AIF as evidenced by his very low regimental number of WX1989. When he enlisted in the 2/AIF he gave his correct age and stated his date of birth to be 1 December 1896. He joined the relatively small party of Australian soldiers who departed for England, while the Sixth Division and supporting arms and services were being raised and trained in Australia. The party that deployed to the UK were mostly men with skills in forestry, saw milling and general railway track work. However Private Green was then deemed to be overage for the 2nd AIF even though the Army were aware of both his age and date of birth at the time of enlistment. Army Commanders in Melbourne set definite age limits for both officers and other ranks as the 2/AIF was being formed and the forces previously enlisted were substantially culled. Pte Green was returned to Australia aboard the *Queen Elizabeth.* He disembarked in Sydney and returned to Perth by rail where he was discharged.

Zebulun Green MM then volunteered again and enlisted for full time duty in the Active Citizen Military Forces, where age limits were not vigorously enforced, in Perth in 1941. On enlistment he was appointed to the rank of Sergeant because of his First War service and posted to 7 Employment Company [The Unit consisted mostly of men of Chinese origin and the unit was sometimes referred to as 7 Emp Coy (Chinese)]. The role of the Unit was to provide general labouring support to the Second AIF. The rank and file carried military rank and were issued with regimental numbers. They were also subject to discipline under the Defence Act (1903) and regulations made under that Act.

On 31 May 1943 he was accidently killed by a vehicle while working near Mount Isa.

A report in the *Great Southern Herald* (Katanning) of 19/6/1943p2 says “Sgt. Green was in charge of transport operations at Mt. Isa, and whilst directing the loading of motor wagons ordered a Chinese driver to back a heavy truck into a ramp. There was great activity at the time, and it is assumed that the driver, owing to the roar of numerous engines, failed to hear an order to pull up, with the result that Sgt. Green was struck by the rear wheels of the vehicle, which passed over his body”.

A Court of Enquiry found that his death was a true accident and that he did not contribute to his own death and also no blame could be attached to the Commanding Officer. He was buried with Military Honours in the Mt Isa cemetery but the Australian Burials Unit later concentrated all the small graveyards into one single cemetery at Adelaide River, Northern Territory and that is where he rests today. Two soldiers from the same unit were also first buried at Mt Isa but then moved to Adelaide river - W64013 Shew Chee Ku and W64045 Ah Shun Hsu.

Additional/personal information:

Born at Broome Hill in the Great Southern region of Western Australia in 1896, a son of George and Bridget (nee Reilly) Green who had been married in Kojonup in 1888. Zebulun is a name derived from the Hebrew language and in the Old Testament was a son of Jacob..

A notice in the *Sunday Times* of 23/11/1919 announced the “engagement of Helena, third daughter of Mr. And Mrs. W. B. Sweetman, of Arrino, and Zeb Green, M.M. (late l0th Light Horse), third son of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Green, of Broome Hill”.

Married to Helena Mena Sweetman in 1920 (BDM ref 60/1920 in Perth district). A birth notice for what was presumably their first child, a son born in October 1920, gave the Greens’ address then as Carnamah.

Newspaper notices after Zeb’s death at Mt Isa mention six children - Geoff (married, living in Kalgoorlie), Monica, Rex (A.I.F.), Elvie, Judy and Jill and said that his widow and family were living at Guildford. The “Rex” mentioned was Sergeant Green’s son Bombardier Reginald Zebulun Green, born 1923 who also died in the Second War. He had enlisted (WX41628) and was in the 2/3 Flash Spotting Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery when on 19 December 1945 he was in an aircraft

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which disappeared after taking off from Ambon in Indonesia. He is remembered on the memorial at Ambon, in Indonesia's Molucca Group of islands.

For his Great War service, Zebulun Green was awarded the Military Medal, the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. After the Second War he was also entitled to the Defence Medal, War Medal and Australian Service Medal

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, WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, and other materials transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information research by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

----------Lest we forget----------

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