499

Westcott, George

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



Memorial to Boer War soldiers in Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer: Western Australian Government Railways

Branch: Traffic

Designation: Porter

Rail employment notes: Joined WAGR 2 August 1897 aged 17 as Junior Porter, Traffic Branch, Pinjarrah (renamed Pinjarra in 1899). Promoted to Porter, Waroona 23/7/1900 and transferred to Pinjarra 25/1/1901.

Accepted for service with the 6th WA Mounted Infantry 7/3/1901 (Service No.413).

Military service information:

Conflict: South Africa, 1899-1902 (Boer War)

Service: Colonial Military Forces

Military unit: 6th Western Australian Mounted Infantry

Service number: 413

Date of death: 23 June 1901

Age: 21 ??

Place of death: Renshoogte, South Africa

Rank: Private

Burial/commemoration: South African war memorial, Kings Park, Perth

The 6th WAMI left with from Fremantle on 10 April 1901 with 14 officers, 214 other men and 237 horses, arriving at Durban on 29th April. Casualties came quickly:

> AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES.
> London, July 6.
> The following casualties have, been sustained by the Sixth West Australian Contingent:
> Privates C.C. Clifford and G. Westcott; killed; and Sergt. W C. Mills and Private H. Hackett severely wounded, at Renshoogte, on the 23rd.ult.
> Lieut. Stanley Reid has died from his wounds. Trooper John Costello, of the Fifth Victorian Mounted Infantry, was dangerously wounded at Middekraal. *The West Australian* 8/7/1901p5

Additional/personal information:

The scale of the 'Boer War' is not often realised, but is reflected in the below paragraph on the same page of *The West Australian* as the above notice of Westcott's death:

> THE BRITISH CASUALTIES.
> 16,717 DEATHS TO JUNE 30.
> London, July 6

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The following is a return. of the British casualties in connection with the war to the end of last month:

Killed or died from disease.. ...,	16,717
Missing...	618
Discharged as unfit for duty...	2083
Total... .. ;..... . ..... :.:	19,413

The 1890s were a time of rapid expansion in WA after the finding of gold in the eastern goldfields, and the WAGR hired many staff from interstate. *The West Australian* newspaper confirmed

Private George Westcott is a Victorian, 21 years of age. He was a Porter at Pinjarrah when he enrolled.





George Westcott's name is recorded on the tablet (right) on the South African monument in Kings Park (above)

Photos G.Higham

Further information and/or photographs may be added as available. Information and/or photographs 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. Other information and collation by G.Higham.

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

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