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Anthony Simpson Gilpin



Anthony Simpson Gilpin was born on 26 August 1892 in Balaclava Road, St Kilda, Melbourne, Victoria to Alexander and Hannah (nee Simpson) Gilpin. Alexander, born in Tyrone, Ireland and Hannah in Newcastle on Tyne, England married in Ballarat, Victoria on 6 February 1889. Five siblings completed the family: Allan Virt born in 1890 Frances Maude 1891, Alicia Alexandra 1896, Hannah Florence 1898 and Meta 1901. Sometime after Anthony's birth the family moved

to Ballarat where the three youngest children were born and it seems that Anthony believed that he had also been born there as he mistakenly named Ballarat as his place of birth on his attestation paper. He attended Macarthur Street State School, Ballarat.

Anthony, trained as a Civil Engineer, was working as an Ironmonger in Broken Hill residing care of Mrs Broadbent when he volunteered for service enlisting on 22 August 1914 as 461, Private and became known as Alex to his mates. He had previously served for two years and four months in the 7th A.I.R. with the rank of Corporal. He named his mother living at 103 MacArthur Street, Ballarat as next of kin. On 31 August 1914 he was promoted to Acting Lance Corporal and to Sergeant on 1 September the same year. Unmarried, he was described as five feet ten and a half inches tall, weight one hundred and fifty five pounds, fair complexion, brown eyes and dark hair.

Anthony was killed in action at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, probably on or in the vicinity of 400 Plateau, his death reported in the 41st Casualty List. Official notification of his death was forwarded to his mother on 4 April 1916. His father having died in 1905, Hannah Gilpin was initially granted a war pension of fifty-two pounds per annum increased to two pounds thirteen shillings and nine pence per fortnight effective from 1 August 1915. Anthony's youngest sister, Meta, received a pension of thirteen pounds per annum effective from 19 August 1915 cancelled on 30 August 1917, her sixteenth birthday.

In reply to a request for clarification regarding Anthony's nearest blood relative dated 17 June 1920, Hannah replied:

Lydiard St.
Ballarat
21.6.1920

Late
No 461
Sgt A S Gilpin
10th Battalion
3rd Brigade

Son of Hannah Gilpin and the late Alexr Gilpin.

Hannah Gilpin (mother) is the nearest blood relation of the late Sgt A S Gilpin

George Deane Mitchell described Anthony:

"Alex a big florid chap who could keep up a flow of humour that paralise any opposition, his sayings quoted throughout the battalion. As a sergeant he was peerless and as a tonic he was worth a jar of S.R.D. with a sun burnt face and a budding, inadequate moustache".

Mitchell's diary reveals that Anthony succumbed to a stomach wound, his death described in the following extract from 'The Anzac Landing':

"Darky Stewart called from the right, "My rifle's done in corp., sling me that bloke's." "Blood from back-sight to butt-plate," I said, and was greatly relieved when he said, "Never mind then." From Lieut. Byrne came a message, "Strip the dead and wounded of ammunition." Shuddering afresh, I did so on my side. Alf. [Crowther] doing the same on the other. Alec Gilpin fell in the last advance."

Hannah Gilpin took possession of her son's medals, other official items and his Holy-bible. She died in 1951 in Kew, Victoria.

Anthony's name is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial and the Broken Hill & District War Memorial.

There is nothing in Anthony's service dossier or other sources to indicate that he had lived in South Australia, however, the war memorial at the front of St George the Martyr's Church, Goodwood Road, Wayville, South Australia may indicate otherwise. It commemorates the name of A. Gilpin and there was only one so named who served in the AIF.

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