**SECOND CORPORAL PERCY FREDERICK BASTIN**

**484 – 2nd Tunnelling Company**

Percival Frederick Bastin was born in July, 1888 in Hereford and Worcester, Worcestershire, England the son of Harry Andrews and Eva Florence (nee Gresham) Bastin. In 1891 the family were residing at 4 Gregory’s Mill, St Claines, Worcester and made up of Harry A. (34) commercial clerk, Eve F. (30), Ada A, (11), Ada F.G. (10), Arthur A. (8), Florence (6), Harry F. (5), Percival F. (2) and Alexander (9mths), plus a nephew Claude Bastin (2).

A decade later in 1901 they were living at 19 Gay Street, Putney with Harry A (43) commercial clerk, Eva F. (40), Eva Florence (15), Henry Thomas (14), Percival F. (12), Alex Geo. (10), Gertrude S. (8), Francis A. (6), Leonard H. (4), Kathleen (inf.)

He came to Australia where he married in 1912 at Broken Hill, New South Wales to Elizabeth Smith.

At the recruiting depot in Adelaide, South Australia (4th Military District) on 15 October, 1915 the twenty-seven-year-old married miner applied to enlist for active service abroad and passed the medical examination. Attestation forms describe him as 169cms (5ft 6½ins) tall, weighing 57.7kgs (127lbs) with a chest expansion of 87-92cms (34-36ins) and a fair complexion with good vision in his blue eyes and brown hair. Distinctive marks were a vaccination group on his left arm. Presbyterian was his religion. Next-of-kin nominated was his wife Mrs Elizabeth Bastin of Norris Street, Railway Town, Broken Hill and allotted three-fifths of his pay in support of her and their children. He took and signed the Oath of Enlistment the same day.

Acknowledgement to the new recruits was published in the:

*Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide) Friday October 15, 1916:

GONE INTO CAMP

The following men went into camp on Friday:

P.F. Bastin *Article abridged*

Basic training commenced with E Coy, 2nd Depot Battalion until 31 October when allotted to the Miners’ Corps the following day. The volunteers were sent to train with others from around the country at Casula camp, near Liverpool, NSW. On 8 January, 1916 was to be Second Corporal in No. 2 Company.

**At a civic parade in the Domain, Sydney on Saturday February 19, 1916, a large crowd of relations and friends of the departing Miners lined the four sides of the parade ground. Sixty police and 100 Garrison Military Police were on hand to keep the crowds within bounds. The scene was an inspiriting one. On the extreme right flank, facing the saluting base, were companies of the Rifle Club School; next came a detachment of the 4th King’s Shropshire Light Infantry, then the bands of the Light Horse, Liverpool Depot, and the Miners’ on the left, rank upon rank, the Miners’ Battalion.**

**The Corps boarded HMAT A38 *Ulysses* in Sydney, NSW on February 20 and sailed for the European theatre. Arriving in Melbourne, Victoria on February 22 the Miners camped at Broadmeadows for a stay of 7 days while further cargo was loaded.**

**Another parade was held at the Broadmeadows camp on March 1, the Miners’ Corps being inspected by the Governor-General, as Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth military forces.**

**Leaving Melbourne on March 1, *Ulysses* arrived at Fremantle, Western Australia on March 7 where a further 53 members were taken on board.** While on board was reduced in rank on 2 March, 1916 to a Sapper.

**On Wednesday March 8, 1916 the whole force, with their band and equipment, paraded at Fremantle prior to leaving Victoria Quay at 9.30 o’clock.**

**The ship hit a reef when leaving Fremantle harbour, stripping the plates for 40 feet and, although there was a gap in the outside plate, the inner bilge plates were not punctured. The men on board nicknamed her ‘*Useless*’. The Miners were off-loaded and sent to the Blackboy Hill Camp where further training was conducted.**

The Mining Corps comprised 1303 members at the time they embarked with a Headquarters of 40; No.1 Company – 390; No.2 Company – 380; No.3 Company – 392, and 101 members of the 1st Reinforcements.

Finally departing Fremantle on April 1, *Ulysses* voyaged via Suez, Port Said and Alexandria in Egypt. The captain of the ship was reluctant to take *Ulysses* out of the Suez Canal because he felt the weight of the ship made it impossible to manoeuvre in the situation of a submarine attack. The troops were transhipped to HM Transport B.1 *Ansonia*, then on to Valetta, Malta before disembarking at Marseilles, France on May 5, 1916. As a unit they entrained at Marseilles on May 7 and detrained on May 11 at Hazebrouck.

A ‘Mining Corps’ did not fit in the British Expeditionary Force, and the Corps was disbanded and three Australian Tunnelling Companies were formed. The Technical Staff of the Corps Headquarters, plus some technically qualified men from the individual companies, was formed into the entirely new Australian Electrical and Mechanical Mining and Boring Company (AEMMBC), better known as the ‘Alphabetical Company’.

Disciplinary action was taken for the following:

Crime: While on active service in the field

21/8/16 disobedience of orders

Award: Forfeits 1 day’s pay by O.C. commanding Coy

Crime: In the field AWL from 1200hrs on 26/8/16 to 1600hrs 26/8/16

Award: 7 day’s F.P. No. 2 [field punishment] by O.C. commanding Coy

27/8/16

Total forfeiture: 7 day’s pay

The No. 2 Tunnelling Company was officially transferred to the 2nd Tunnelling Company in the field on 29 December, 1916.

On 31 January, 1917 went sick to the 4th London Field Ambulance with P.U.O. (pyrexia (fever) uncertain origin) moving to the 10th Casualty Clearing Station two days later suffering Influenza then conveyed on Ambulance Train no. 24 to Boulogne and admitted with Influenza to the 13 General Hospital.

Was invalided to England on February 6 on the hospital ship *Cambria* entering the Frensham Hill Hospital a day later suffering bronchitis. Granted furlough on 2nd to 12th March and report to Headquarters, London and then marched in to Perham Downs on March 19. Was classified with B1a debility there and sent to the Drafting Depot at the No. 1 Command Depot on 4 April.

Proceeded overseas to France on 9 May, 1917 from Nos. 4 & 5 camps arriving at the Aust General Base Depot at Etaples a day later and re-joined his unit on May 17.

Blue Chevrons were issued to wear on his uniform for serving twelve months abroad.

On 3 February, 1918 was promoted to 2nd Corporal due to 2nd Corporal Savage being promoted.

The following was advertised in Broken Hill in the:

*Barrier Miner* Tuesday September 17, 1918:

NEXT-OF-KIN INQUIRED FOR.

Lieutenant Grimm, adjutant, asks that Mrs Elizabeth Bastin, next-of-kin of Corporal P.F. Bastin of the Mining Corps and Mr G. Hill, uncle of Private J.W. Hill, communicate with him or acquaint him of their present address, in both cases the address is given merely as “Broken Hill.”

He was with his unit when Peace was declared and the Tunnelling Companies remained on the front as part of the Army of Occupation assisting with rehabilitation of their area by clearing roads and bridges of booby traps and delayed action mines left by the enemy.

Leave from France was granted and taken from 10 December until December 24 and re-joined his unit on 9 January, 1919.

Further discipline was taken for the following:

Crime: 24/12/18 W.O.A.S. disobedience of orders in that he in London

on leave when ordered to report R.T.O., Victoria Station at 7.30 a.m.

on 24/12/18 failed to do so and remained absent until 7.30 a.m.

5/1/19

Award: Reprimanded by O.C. 2nd Tun. Coy

Total forfeiture: 12 day’s pay

Orders were received on 30 March, 1919 to report to the Aust General Base Depot and they left on April 4 crossing the English Channel and arriving the next day at No. 2 Group camp to await their voyage home.

After demobilisation Sapper Bastin embarked for Australia from Liverpool, England on 20 May, 1919 on board H.T. *Nestor*.

Base Records advised his wife on 16 June that he was on his way home.

The troopship docked in Port Adelaide (4th Military District) on 29 June, 1919. News of their arrival was reported in the:

*Daily Herald* Tuesday July 1, 1919:

NESTOR’S TROOPS LANDED

After a pleasant voyage from Liverpool during which very little sickness was reported, the Blue Funnel liner Nestor arrived at the Semaphore anchorage on Sunday, and on being granted pratique was moved up to the berth at the Outer Harbor early yesterday morning, when the troops for this State, as well as eight Western Australians, were landed. The men were disembarked at 7.30 a.m. Despite the early hour of the landing there was a large number of relatives and friends on the wharf to greet the homecoming warriors. There were four cot cases, two of which are South Australians. On the wharf Captain Clare represented the Naval Department, Hon. F.W. Coneybeer (Speaker House of Assembly) was present on behalf of Parliament, and Mr Sammy Lunn welcomed the men as usual. The Y.M.C.A. assisted by the V.A.D. provided fruit and smokes and the Semaphore Cheer-ups distributed souvenir buttons and cards of welcome to the men. The disembarkation officer was Lieutenant Mortimer, assisted by Lieutenant Mitchell and Sergeant Gardiner.

After landing the South Australians soldiers the Nestor proceeded to the Eastern States. *Article abridged*

Military Discharge was issued in Adelaide (4th M.D.) on 22 August, 1919 on termination of his period of enlistment.

They were still residing at 106 Ryan Street, South Broken Hill with his occupation as a fitter.

Percy Frederick Bastin passed away at his home on 27 February, 1935 aged 46 years. Family arrangements and small Obituary were published in the:

*Barrier Miner* Thursday February 28, 1935:

FUNERAL NOTICES

BASTIN. —The RELATIVES and FRIENDS of Mr P.F. BASTIN and FAMILY, of 106 Ryan-street, Railway Towns, are respectfully informed that the remains of their late beloved HUSBAND and FATHER (Percival Frederick) were peacefully laid to rest in the Church of England Cemetery, THIS DAY (Thursday) at 4.15 p.m. Rev. Voss officiating.

FRED J. POTTER and SON

Funeral Director

*Barrier Miner* Thursday February 28, 1935:

FUNERAL NOTICES

THE RETURNED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS’ IMPERIAL LEAGUE OF AUSTRALASIA

MEMBERS of the above are respectfully informed that the remains of their late MEMBER (Percival Frederick Bastin) were peacefully laid to rest in the Church of England Cemetery THIS DAY (Thursday), at 4.15 p.m. Rev. Voss officiating.

W.H. HESLOP, Secretary.

ZINC CORPORATION PICNIC COMMITTEE

MEMBERS are reminded that the remains of their MEMBERS (Mr L. BURT) late BROTHER-IN-LAW (P.F. Bastin) were laid to rest THIS DAY (Thursday) at 4.15 p.m.

J. MARIA, Secretary

W.H. BERMINGHAM, Chairman.

NEWS IN BRIEF – DEATH OF MR. P.F. BASTIN

The death occurred at his residence early his morning of an old resident on Broken Hill, Mr Percival Frederick Bastin, at the age of 46 years. Mr Bastin had been a resident of Broken Hill for over 25 years and worked along the line of lode, the last place of employment being on the Central mine. He was placed on compensation seven years ago. He leaves a widow and a grown-up family. He was a member of the W.I.U. of A. the Compensation Association and the Returned Soldiers’ League. The funeral took place this afternoon at 4 o’clock, leaving his residence, 104 Ryan-street, Railway Town. The remains were interred in the Church of England Cemetery, the Rev. G Voss officiating. Fred J. Potter and Son carried out the funeral arrangements.

Interment took place in the Church of England portion of Broken Hill Cemetery within row 2 in grave no. 21. There is no headstone.

A further Obituary was reported in the:

*Recorder* (Port Pirie) Thursday March 7, 1935:

NEWS FROM BROKEN HILL

Mr Percival Frederick Bastin has died at the age of 46 years. Mr Bastin had been a resident of the Barrier for 25 years, and worked along the line of lode, his last place of employment being the Central mine. He was placed on compensation seven years ago. He has left a widow and grown-up family. The funeral left his late residence in Ryan-street, Railway Town, for the Church of England Cemetery, Rev. G. Voss officiated.

A Statement of his service was requested from Base Records by the Sydney branch of the Repatriation Commission and forwarded on 22 March, 1935.

Mrs Elizbeth Bastin was buried on 5 July, 1954 in the Methodist-Rakow portion of Broken Hill Cemetery in row 21 in grave no. 29.

Her Headstone in Broken Hill Cemetery, NSW

Photo taken and transcribed by Simo - May, 2015



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