

The Warrnambool Standard

Warrnambool cemetery tour tells sad tales of war

By Peter Collins

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EDWIN Dale and Harold Barton were only 20 when they died within a fortnight of each other at Gallipoli, thousands of kilometres from their homes in Warrnambool.

Their names are on the Lone Pine memorial wall in Turkey, but their bodies never made it back home.



Ray Welsford, from the Warrnambool Family History Group, inspects the headstone of Edwin John Dale who was killed at Gallipoli, and will be featured as part of the group's cemetery walks. 141229DW10 Picture: DAMIAN WHITE

Private Edwin John Dale barely made it ashore, dying during the initial landing on April 25-29, 1915, while Private Harold Eric Getting Barton was one of the first western Victorian soldiers killed in the Gallipoli battle on May 8 and was buried at sea.

Their families back in Warrnambool would have received the tragic news in an official letter from the Defence office, leaving them mourning the losses and unable to bury their loved ones.

The young soldiers are mentioned in family headstone inscriptions in the Warrnambool cemetery.

Other families did the same to recognise the sacrifices of sons who had left their home districts to serve king and country in a war that would be the bloodiest in history.

It's a unique link to the upcoming centenary of the Gallipoli landings. This weekend the public will be given an insight into names inscribed on headstones during cemetery walks carried out by the Warrnambool Family History Group.

More than 30 graves in the Church of England, Presbyterian and Catholic sections of the cemetery have been researched to identify former soldiers. Work on the Wesleyan (Methodist) and independent sections is continuing.

History group secretary and research officer Ray Welsford said the guided walks starting at 10.30am this Saturday from the rotunda would visit a selection of grave sites and include information on the life, service, death and overseas burials of the servicemen along with details on family members in the graves.

"The only way to find these graves was to systematically walk every row examining every inscription," Mr Welsford said.

For the Dale family the loss of Edwin would have hit hard. He was the youngest of six children born to William and Agnes Dale and was a plumber by trade.

The Red Cross report said his equipment bearing blood stains was found but there were no signs of his body and nothing was heard of him afterwards.

Harold Barton's mother Frieda died when he was only two years old while his father William lived to 84.

Other cemetery walks are: January 4, 2pm; January 10, 2pm; January 11, 6pm; January 14, 6pm; January 26, 2pm. A \$5 donation will be requested to help meet the group's costs.