

Biography of Edward Charles Gallard

Edward Charles Gallard was born in Eastwood, New South Wales, Australia, on 22 May 1897 (1). He lived in Eastwood, Ryde, with his father, Hiram S. Gallard, mother Annie J. Gallard, and younger sister Marjorie Gallard. The Gallard family followed the Church of England (2).

From 1909 to 1913, Gallard attended Sydney Technical High School, where he developed an early interest in engineering (3). After finishing school, he became an apprentice at the Sydney Tramway Depot for four years before qualifying as a professional electrical fitter.

On 18 May 1917, four days before his twentieth birthday, Gallard enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) (4). Before this, he had served two years in the 33rd Fortress Company, Australian Engineers. Following training at the Sydney Showground Camp, he was assigned the rank of Sapper in the 1st Australian (Wireless) Signal Squadron (5). This unit, part of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, played a vital role in advancing Allied communications during the First World War, operating across the Middle East, particularly in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and Kurdistan.

Gallard embarked from Sydney on 19 December 1917 aboard HMAT A38 Ulysses, bound for Egypt. The squadron then travelled to Bombay aboard HMAT Eastern before transferring to HMAT Varsova for their voyage to Basra in Mesopotamia. During his service, Gallard operated wireless communication systems between base areas and mounted columns. His technical expertise was crucial for maintaining communication under difficult and often dangerous conditions, including setting up hilltop stations while under sniper fire.

Gallard returned to Australia on 29 January 1919 after the war. For his service, he received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal (6).

After returning home, Gallard resumed his pre-war occupation as an electrical fitter. On 1 June 1922, he married Mildred Louise Gallard, a teacher. Together, they had one daughter, Betty Joan Gallard, whose birthdate remains undisclosed (7). In his spare time, Gallard developed a passion for radio hams—the experimental use of radio wave frequencies for non-commercial communication. His interest in radio was likely influenced by his wartime work with wireless technology (8).

In 1932, Gallard was involved as a witness in the May Miller murder case when his Essex Tourer was stolen on the night of 9 December and later linked to the crime through evidence found in the vehicle (9).

During World War II, Gallard once again contributed to Australia's war effort, this time as a civilian engineer. He collaborated with a chemical engineer to design and manufacture electrical components for RAAF training aircraft, demonstrating his continued dedication to national service and technical innovation (10).

Gallard passed away on 17 May 1979, aged 81, and was buried at Woronora Cemetery, Sutherland (11). After his death, his company, E. C. Gallard Pty Limited, was liquidated on 15 October 1990, with notice published in the Government Gazette of New South Wales under Section 411 of the Companies (N.S.W.) Code (12).

Edward Charles Gallard's life and career reflect the legacy of Sydney Technical High School alumni who used their skills to serve Australia during wartime. His story represents the link between technical education, innovation, and national service—showing how individual contributions can continue to shape our society today.

Bibliography

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Virtual War Memorial Australia: Edward Charles Gallard
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Australian War Memorial: Sapper Edward Charles Gallard

Endnotes

Virtual War Memorial Australia: Edward Charles Gallard

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Ibid.

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