



Lieutenant James Whamond ANNAT

[1864 – 1900]



D Company 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry – Third Queensland Contingent

James Whamond Annat (sometimes recorded as 'Annant') was born in Lintrathen, Airlie, Scotland in 1864. He left school at 16 years of age in 1880 and joined the Gordon Highlanders to commence a career mainly as a professional soldier (and a short period as a part-time miner in Queensland).

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In January 1881 he was in action in the First Boer war, including the Battle of Majuba Hill, where he was wounded in the groin resulting in a lifelong slight limp. In 1883 - 1884 he saw service with the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders in the Zulu War (1883-1884) and also in Egypt and India. He went to Canada in 1887 and was severely wounded in 1890 at Pine Ridge fighting against the Indians.

He came to Australia where he was an instructor in both the NSW and Queensland Defence Forces. He was posted to 3rd Queensland (Kennedy) Regiment in 1895¹. Sergeant Major J M Annat was provisionally commissioned (lieutenant) in 1896 with a permanent appointment, according to the

Queensland Government Gazette, from 3rd May 1899. In 1899 he was the Officer Commanding the Warwick Company of the Queensland Rifles.

He was engaged in gold mining in the Warwick district, owning a crushing and cyanide plant and mine on the NSW border and had mined on a claim known as the Mountain Maid in the Warwick District.

Lieutenant Annat was selected for service in South Africa as part of the Third Contingent and embarked from Brisbane on 2 March 1900. He saw action in battles in Rhodesia and West Transvaal, with principal engagements including Relief of Mafeking (16-17 May 1900 where he served with distinction in the early days of the siege when "he often went out into enemy-held territory."), the defeat at Koster River (22 July 1900), and defence of Elands River Post (4-16 August 1900).

Lieutenant Annat was killed on 6 August 1900 at the battle of Elands River (one of the most significant engagements fought by Australians in the war). He was struck by a 12lb shell and died about 10 minutes later.

He was 36 years old leaving a wife (Isabella, (née Ferguson) [1865 – 1946]) with five young children. The eldest was seven years old and the youngest was three months. Lieutenant Colonel Baden-Powell (founder of the Boy Scouts) commanded at Mafeking, and Jim and Isabella named their youngest child Hector Baden Mafeking Annat. Jim had written to his wife advising her that he had altered his Will in her advantage in case he joined '*the grand majority in the next few days...*'

The Australian War Memorial lists his War Service and Honours as "*operations in Rhodesia and the Transvaal*".

His family became intertwined with the United Service Club. Whilst not a Club member, his eldest son, also James Whamond Annat [1892 – 1977], served in 25th Battalion (Regimental Number 17) in Gallipoli and France in the First World War – as a Sergeant was twice wounded with gunshot wounds to the neck and face, and awarded the Military Medal, and was commissioned in 31st Battalion in late 1917. James Whamond junior's daughter - Major Isabel M. ("Pixie") Annat MBE, OAM [1930 – 2022] - was a prominent nursing identity in Brisbane and a longstanding member of the Club. She is recognised as a Club "Notable".

The Third Queensland Contingent comprised The Queensland [Citizen] Bushmen; 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry; and 2nd Bushman Regiment. Its strength on embarkation was 316, ordered in two or three mounted rifle companies in each unit. The Commanding Officer was Major Walter H. Tunbridge. They embarked with their horses in Brisbane on 2 March 1900 on the transport *Duke of Portland*.

¹ This Regiment had its headquarters and two rifle companies in Townsville, and rifle companies in Charters Towers, Ravenswood and Mackay. It is not known where Annat was posted.

They were deployed in theatre from April 1900 - April 1901. Initially under General Carrington in Rhodesia and West Transvaal – with principal engagements including Relief of Mafeking (16-17 May 1900), defeat at Koster River (22 July 1900) and defence of Elands River Post (4-16 August 1900). They also served under General Plumer in Northern Transvaal - including the battle of Rhenoster Kop (29 November 1900), and the advance on Pietersburg.

The Contingent returned dismounted to Australia in June 1901, disembarking from the transport *Morayshire* in Sydney and onward movement to Brisbane was by train. The Contingent's casualties were three killed or died of wounds (including Lieutenants Annat and Leask), and five died of disease.

Sources included:

- Australian War Memorial
- National Archives of Australia
- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents