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Allan, William

A West Australian railway employee who was killed while on military service for their country.



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Way and Works
Designation:	Labourer

Rail employment notes: Labourer, Interlocking Branch, Ways & Works, Perth.

Career details have not been located, however the Way and Works Branch (later the Chief Civil Engineer's branch) was responsible for track and structures and included interlocking, i.e. signals, turnouts, signal boxes and other equipment for safe-working.

(AIF Service No.5307) Killed in action 15/9/1917 age 21.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	5307
Date of death:	15 September 1917
Place of death:	Belgium
Age:	21
Rank:	Lance Corporal

Burial/memorialisation: Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium

William Allan enlisted in the AIF on 29 Feb 1916 in Perth. He nominated his foster mother Mrs Mary Campbell as his Next of kin, but as his father Alexander Allan was still alive and living in Brisbane the Army changed the next of kin to his father. He had a total of 5 years military experience in Senior Cadets and 37 Battery Australian Field Artillery in which he was still serving at the time of enlistment. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 14th Reinforcements to 28 Battalion.

Private Allan departed Australia from Fremantle on 9 August 1916 aboard HMAT *Miltiades* and disembarked at Plymouth on 25 September 1916 where he marched into 7 Training Battalion on 26 September 1916. Following training in England he departed for France through Folkestone on 2 November 1916 on HMT *Henrietta* to join the British Expeditionary Force at 2 ADBD. Private Allan was taken-on-strength of 28 Battalion on 18 November 1916, in the field, and was appointed to be a Lance Corporal on 24 February 1917.

On 3 May 1917, 28 Battalion was part of an enormous assault on the German lines on a front of 16 miles from Vimy Ridge to Lagnicourt. L/Cpl Allan was Wounded in action that day and was evacuated to 5 Field Ambulance from there to 3 Casualty Clearing Station and 3 General Hospital before reaching Richmond Military Hospital in England on 15 May 1917. He recovered and was

returned to France on 15 June 1917 before re-joining 28 Battalion on 3 July 1917. He recorded his Will in his paybook on 13 July 1917 nominating his foster mother as sole beneficiary.

Private Allan was Killed in action during the Third Battle of Ypres on 15 September 1917. His body has never been located, he has no known grave, but is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

William was born in Sydney NSW but must have been brought to Perth young as his school is recorded as James Street, Perth.

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These should have been issued to his father under the laws of the day but by then his father had died. His campaign medals and other memorabilia were then issued to his foster mother. Mrs Campbell received a pension of 30/- per fortnight with effect from 20 December 1917.

His adoptive family remembered him in Perth:

> Killed in action, in France, on September 15, 1917, Lance-Corporal William Allan (Bill), aged 20 years and 11 months. His duty nobly done. —Inserted by hie guardian, Mrs. D. Campbell, and family. *The West Australian* 19/10/1917p1.

Further information

Further information may be added as available. Information may also be found on the Australian War Memorial website: *https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people*

Abbreviations: WAGR= Western Australian Government Railways (& Tramways at some periods); MRWA= Midland Railway of Western Australia; BDM=Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages website; AWM=Australian War Memorial (Canberra and website); CWGC= Commonwealth War Graves Commission (including website). DVA=Department of Veterans' Affairs (including website)

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR Honour Roll and WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information researched by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

----------Lest we forget----------