005

Appleby, Frederick William

A West Australian railway employee
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:	Locomotive
Designation:	Testing Officer

Rail employment notes: Born 23/5/1881. Joined WAGR 4/11/1904 aged 23 as Turner, Fremantle. Transferred in same role to Kalgoorlie 23/1/1905. Promoted to Draftsman, Midland Workshops 29/5/1905 and to Testing Officer, Midland Workshops 1/7/1912.

In this era, the "Locomotive" branch of the WAGR, which would later be named the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch, included the major workshops at Midland (then Midland Junction) employing a wide range of tradesmen and others to work on locomotives, carriages and freight wagons as they were built or passed through for repairs, and also trained apprentices in many trades. Mr Appleby's promotion from Turner to Draftsman meant a change from Wages employees to Salaried staff, which was unusual in the WAGR at that time.

Granted leave to join AIF 10/10/1916 and joined Railway Corps 10/1/1917 (Service No.914). Died of illness 20/9/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	5th Australian Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company
Service number:	914
Date of death:	20 September 1918
Place of death:	Abbeville, Picardie, France
Age:	37
Rank:	Company Sergeant Major (see below)
Burial/memorialisation:	Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, Abbeville, Picardie, France

He enlisted on 6 November 1916 and joined 92 Depot Company where he declared his wife to be his Next of kin and stated that he had no previous military experience. He was assigned to Railway Corps on 10 January 1917 with the rank of Second Corporal. He embarked A28 HMAT *Miltiades* at Fremantle on 29 January 1917 and disembarked at Devonport UK on 27 March 1917 where he marched into St Lucia Barracks. He departed England for France through Southampton on 11 June 1917 to join the British Expeditionary Force. On 3 November 1917 he was appointed to be a Temporary Company Sergeant Major and then a substantive CSM on 3 February 1918. (CSM is an alternative title for Warrant Officer Class 2.)

© Rail Heritage WA

Warrant Officer Appleby reported sick with Influenza on 16 September 1918 which was complicated by pneumonia from which he succumbed in the 3rd Australian General Hospital, Abbeville, Picardie, France, on 20 September 1918.

It may be noted that the term "Broad gauge" was used by the military to distinguish these companies working with the existing standard gauge railways in France and Germany, from the narrow gauge temporary lines laid to transport troops and stores to the front line.

Additional/personal information:

Frederick Appleby was born and educated in South Australia before moving to WA. Educated at Way College South Australia. Son of William Frederick and Mary Mayer Appleby. He was in the West by 1908 when he married Ruby Rosalie Ross (BDM Swan district 30/1908). The couple had at least four children, born in WA between 1909~1917.

> APPLEBY.—On September 20, on active service, Sergeant-Major F. W. Appleby, dearly beloved husband of Ruby Appleby, loving father of Willie, Dorrie, Mavis, and Felicia. Deeply mourned.
> *The West Australian* 1/10/1918p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his widow. Military pensions for his widow and children are not detailed in his personal file. Mrs Appleby was also entitled to a benefit from the Australian Natives Association. (The Australian Natives Association, or ANA, was a mutual society active from late in the 19th century for those who were proud to have been born in Western Australia when so many other residents had arrived after the 1890s gold finds.)

Further information and/or photos 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----------

 © Rail Heritage WA