034

Buckingham, Hugh Alexander

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:	Apprentice, Carriage and Wagon Builder

Rail employment notes: Born 30/9/1897. Joined WAGR 20/10/1913 aged 16 as Apprentice Car & Wagon Builder, Midland Workshops. The WAGR's workshops at Midland (then called Midland Junction) were a major employer and a trainer of many tradesmen, however Hugh Buckingham would never finish his apprenticeship.
Granted leave to join AIF 9/8/1915. Killed in action 4/7/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Battalion.
Service number:	3416
Date of death:	4 July 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	21
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

Hugh Alexander Buckingham was 18 years and 2 months old when, with both parent's permission, he enlisted in the AIF. He had been in Senior Cadets for 2 years and 88th Infantry (Militia) for 3 months and was still serving. He was assigned to 11th Reinforcement to 16th Battalion with the regimental number 3416 for training at Blackboy Hill Camp. At the conclusion of basic training he departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A24 HMAT *Benalla* and disembarked at Alexandria. In Egypt he joined the pool of reinforcements as the AIF in Egypt was restructured from 2 Divisions to 4 Divisions. On 3 March 1916 he was taken on strength of 16 Battalion (C Coy) at Tel-el-Kebir and training continued. The Bn departed Alexandria on 01 Jun 1916 aboard HMT Canada and disembarked at Marseilles on 9 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. On 8 August 1916, 16 Battalion occupied front line trenches between Pozieres and Moquet Farm and were subjected to a furious barrage of German artillery fire. A number of men suffered shell shock from the barrage and were classified as Wounded in Action and withdrawn to medical facilities. Pte Buckingham was admitted to 7 Fd Amb but returned to the Unit on 15 August 1916. After the campaign at Moquet Farm he developed lobar pneumonia and reported sick on16 Jan 1917 and was admitted to 38 CCS then a Hospital Train and was evacuated to the UK where he was admitted to Bath War Hospital on 24 Jan 1917. The pneumonia resolved and he passed through some convalescent units until he returned to France on 20 June 1917 through Southampton. In France, Pte

Buckingham joined 4 ADBD where he remained until 7 July 1917 and then rejoined his Battalion, in the field, on 7 July 1917 just as they commenced 2 weeks of intensive training and route marches. Following this the Bn moved to the Ypres sector in Belgium and prepared for the Third Battle of Ypres where their objectives were Polygon Wood and Zonnebeke. He was given leave between 1 and 19 March 1918. On 4 July 1918 he was Killed in Action by an artillery shell at Vaire Wood along with Corporal A.P.Scott and Privates C.J.Taylor and C.C.Storey. He was buried by 7112 Cpl H J Holt in the Hamelet Communal Cemetery.

Additional/personal information:

Hugh had been born at Mount Magnet, WA and must have looked to a bright future as he attended High School and in 1912 he toured the eastern states with the Young Australia League. But war changes everything.

After the War, the remains of Private Buckingham and the soldiers who died with him were relocated to the Villers-Bretonneux War Cemetery (report dated 08 Oct 1919) and reburied in close proximity. Full details about his death and burial were communicated by Lt R Hooper to 6481 L/Cpl J R Buckingham (B Coy 16 Bn) the brother of Pte Buckingham. L/Cpl Buckingham survived the War and is shown a returning to Australia on 11 December 1918.

His parents paid for an inscription on his tombstone which reads: “Beloved Son of R and K Buckingham of W Perth, WA. His Duty Nobly Done”.

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----------