Cogdon, Alfred

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:	Boilermaker's Assistant

Rail employment notes: Boilermaker's Assistant, Midland Workshops

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 to work on locomotives, carriages and freight wagons as they were built or passed through for repairs, and also trained apprentices in many trades.

(AIF Service No.2879) 51st Battalion AIF. Died of illness 11/6/1917 aged 41.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2879
Date of death:	11 June 1917
Place of death:	France
Age:	41
Rank:	Private
Burial/memorialisation:	Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, Longuenesse, Nord Pas de Calais, France

Alfred Cogdon enlisted on 1 July 1916 and was assigned to 51 Battalion. He departed Australia aboard A8 HMAT *Argyllshire* on 9 November 1916. After training in the UK, he crossed to France on 19 April 1917 and was taken on strength of 51 Battalion on 25 April 1917. In preparation for their upcoming role in the Third Battle of Ypres, on 6 June 1917 the Bn were issued with battle stores and prepared to move to the front. The troops were in position when one million pounds of ammonal was detonated under Messines Ridge from the 19 mines which had been previously dug and armed. (This enormous explosion, felt in London, may have been the reason he was thought to have suffered shell shock.)

He became ill and was admitted to 4th Stationary Hospital at Arques on 10 June 1917. Originally thought to have shell shock but this was later changed to Pneumonia. He died the following day (11 June 1917) and was buried in the Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery.

 © Rail Heritage WA

Additional/personal information:

Alfred Cogdon was born in Melbourne, a son of Charles Frederick and Ellen Cogdon. He married Lucy Bell in 1897 (Vic BDM 7183/1897) and three children were born before the family moved to WA where three more children are known to have been born, the youngest (Charles J Cogdon) born only in 1916.

> COGDON.-At 4th Stationary Hospital, France, Private Alf. Cogdon, dearly-loved husband of Lucy Cogdon, and loving father of Charlotte, Jack (on active Service), Will, Etty, Alfie, and Baby Charlie. Victorian papers please copy. *Western Mail* 6/7/1917p26

The eldest son also enlisted, as 2012 initially in 14th Reinforcements to 10th Light Horse Regiment but AWM records indicate he was transferred at some point to be a Gunner in the 2nd Division Trench Mortar Battery. He returned safely to Australia in 1919.

Alfred's widow (Lucy) married Wilfred S Rutherford a veteran of 32 Battalion (regimental number 1358) in 1919. Registration BDM Perth 625/1919.

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