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Coppard, Stephen

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:	Way and Works
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: Born 24 May 1887. Joined WAGR 30 December 1913 aged 26 as Repairer, Merredin. Granted leave to join AIF 6 March 1915 (Service No.262). Killed in action 29/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	28th Battalion.
Service number:	262
Date of death:	29 July 1916
Age:	29
Place of death:	Pozieres, France
Rank at time:	Lance Corporal

Burial/commemoration: Buried where he fell (see below). Commemorated on Villers-Bretonneux memorial, France.

Stephen Coppard enlisted at Merredin on 03 March 1915 and at Blackboy Training Camp was assigned the regimental number 262 of 28 Battalion in the new 2nd Division. After basic training the Battalion departed Fremantle aboard A11 HMAT *Ascanius*. After further training in Egypt they embarked for Gallipoli on 4 September 1915 aboard HMT *Iveria*. Private Coppard was appointed a Lance Corporal on 24 November 1915. The Unit saw little action on Gallipoli and in December 1915 withdrew to Egypt. On 16 March 1916 the Battalion departed Alexandria and landed at Marseilles on 21 March 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Their first major action was at Pozieres where they suffered enormous casualties. L/Cpl Coppard was posted 'Missing in action' on 29 July 1916. The dead were buried in trench lines which were constantly churned up by artillery fire. On 29 July 1916 there was a furious exchange of artillery fire which obliterated virtually all land marks. A Court of Enquiry held on 4 January 1917 changed his classification from Missing to 'Killed in action'. No remains have been found.

Information and/or photographs may also be found on the Australian War Memorial website: *https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people*

Additional/personal information:

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Stephen Coppard was born in Tunbridge Wells, England, before coming to Western Australia. He was single when he enlisted. Family newspaper notice indicates he left behind a sister and brother-in-law N. & J. Goldspink, living in South Perth. (*West Australian* 3/3/1917p1)

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).

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

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

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