071

Cornish, Charles Horace

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:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 30/3/1893. Joined WAGR 29/9/1911 aged 18 as Cleaner, Midland Junction. ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Promoted to Fireman, Midland Junction 8/8/1915. Granted leave to join AIF 25/1/1916 (Service No.170). Killed in action 5/7/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	170
Date of death:	5 July 1917
Place of death:	Belgium
Age:	24
Rank:	
Burial/memorialisation:	

Charles Cornish enlisted in Perth on 7 February 1916 in 44 Battalion (regimental number 170) which was part of the newly raised 3rd Division AIF. This Battalion had a strong association with the town of Claremont. After elementary training the Bn departed for England aboard A 29 HMAT *Suevic* on 6 June 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth UK on 21 July 1917. The Division trained in England at Aldershot under the direction of Major General Monash. The Division were instructed not to turn the brim of their slouch hats until they had been in action.

Prior to departing for France through Southampton on 25 November 1916 the entire Division passed by King George V, in review order. This review required the King to sit his horse for just on 4 hours as Monash, the showman he was, not only used his Division but grafted on all the soldiers he could find in Training Units across England!

On 27 January 1917 Cornish was appointed a Lance Corporal and the following day attended a Divisional School of Instruction. He was WIA on17 March 1917 at the Battle of Messines and was treated at 9 (Australian) Field Ambulance followed by rehabilitation through a number of Units before rejoining the Battalion on 29 April 1917. L/Cpl Cornish was promoted to Temporary Corporal on 6

June 1917 but was Killled in Action on 5 July 1917. He was buried in the small cemetery of Ration Farm, La Plus Douve, Belgium, one and a half miles West of Messines.

Additional/personal information:

Charles Cornish was born in New South Wales but the family appear to have moved to WA when he was young as he attended school at Katanning WA.

He appears to have been from a large and close-knit family who had three sons plus a son-in-law in the war (*Western Mail* (27/7/1917p26)

> CORNISH.—Killed in action somewhere in France, Lance-Corporal Charles Horace. A Company, 44th Battalion, dearly-beloved son of Charles and Sarah Cornish, Margaret Road. Midland Junction; brother of Company Sergeant-Major Richard (44th) and Fred. (H.M.A S. Sydney, on active service), aged 24 years. A kind, affectionate son and brother, and a true friend. —Inserted by his sorrowing father and mother.
>
> CORNISH.—A loving tribute to the memory of our dear brother, Charlie, A Company, 44th Battalion, killed in action somewhere in France; aged 24 years. — Inserted by his loving sisters, Eileen and Petina.
>
> CORNISH.—A loving tribute to the memory of our darling brother, Charlie, who was killed, in action somewhere in France, aged 24 years. — Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Vera and James Old (on active service), and little nephew (Sydney), of Katanning.

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----------