076

Darby, Edward Harry

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 1/10/1892. Joined WAGR 20/4/1910 aged 17 as Junior Porter, West Perth. ("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR and most stations had at least one Porter. A Junior Porter was under 21 years old and paid less.)

Transferred to Locomotive Branch and appointed Cleaner, Northam 15/11/1910, to Toodyay 10/12/1910, Perth 15/8/1911 and Wagin 4/12/1911. ("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, Wagin 22/12/1912 and transferred to Bunbury 5/7/1913 and Midland Junction 19/1/1914.

Granted leave to join AIF 18/8/1914 (Service No.1798). Died of wounds 29/3/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	3rd Australian Field Artillery Brigade
Service number:	1798
Date of death:	29 March 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Bombardier
Burial/memorialisation:	Outtersteene Communal Cemetery Extension, Bailleul, Nord Pas de Calais, France

Edward Harry Darby was born in Fitzroy, Victoria to James Edward and Lottie Darby. He enlisted in Perth on 18 August 1914 stating his occupation as Locomotive Fireman. He nominated his father Edward Harry Darby to be his Next Of Kin and, in his Will, the sole beneficiary of his estate. He stated that he had 2 years Militia experience in 14 Bty AFA. He was assigned to 8 Battery of 3 Field Artillery with the regimental number 1798.

He departed Australia on 14 November 1914 aboard A7 HMAT *Medic*. He disembarked at Alexandria and after a short training period crossed to Gallipoli. Gnr Darby participated in the Gallipoli campaign until 8 August 1915 when he was evacuated to Egypt with 'chest problems' (Not further defined). He was admitted initially to 1 General Hospital on 08 Aug 1915 but later that same day was transferred to 1 Auxiliary Hospital. On 22 November 1915 he rejoined his Unit on Gallipoli for the remainder of the campaign. Gunner Darby departed Egypt from Alexandria on 23 March 1916 and

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landed at Marseilles on 29 March 1916 where he joined the British Expeditionary Force. Shortly after landing in France he reported to the medical centre with a diagnosis of VD which rendered him non-effective for 35 days. Details of his movements throughout the remainder of 1916 and 1917 are not documented.

Gnr Darby was appointed to be an Acting Bombardier on 19 Feb 1918 and this was upgraded to that of Temporary Bombardier the next day (Bombardier in artillery units is equivalent to a Corporal). On 29 March 1918 he was severely gassed and suffered bullet wounds to his feet. Bdr Darby was evacuated to 1 Fd Amb and then moved to 2 Casualty Clearing Station where he died from the effects of the gas poisoning. He was buried in the Outtersteene Communal Cemetery at Bailleul with full military honours.

Additional/personal information:

Edward Harry Darby was born in Fitzroy, Victoria to James Edward and Lottie Darby, but the family moved west when he was young and he attended state schools at North Fremantle and Guildford. In the post War circular his father stated that he had also trained as a plumber. He was part of a large family, and not the only one to serve in the War:

> DARBY.—Died of gas and wounds in France, March 29, 1918, Bdr. Edward Harry Darby (late of W.A.G. Railways), loved son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Darby, 73 Hay-street, Subiaco, and brother of Lilian (Base Hospital), George (on active service), Marjorie, Muriel, Ruby, Winnie, and Frank. Aged 25 years 6 months. Duty done. *The West Australian* 17/3/1918p1

His family paid for a personal inscription on his tombstone which reads: “A Dearly Loved Son and Brother Deeply Regretted”. For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. One of his sisters successfully applied for the Anzac Medallion at the time of the 50th Anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign. Lottie Darby was awarded a military pension of 40/- per fortnight effective from 09 Jun 1918. James Darby died on 23 Apr 1939, aged 77 years. Lottie Darby died on 21 Jun 1951 at the age of 83 years.

Bdr Darby’s brother James George Darby (2566) served as a Company Signaller in 44 Battalion, survived the War and died in Perth on 26 July 1960 aged 66 years.

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----------

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