080

Davies, William Ernest Enoch

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:	Stores
Designation:	Clerk

Rail employment notes: Born 6/8/1886. Joined WAGR 27/10/1902 aged 16 as Cadet, Fremantle. Transferred to Perth 29/1/1904 and to Midland Workshops 14/8/1905. Promoted to Clerk, Midland Workshops 1 October 1907.

Granted leave to join AIF 3/7/1916 (Service No.3100A). Died of wounds 26/9/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3110A
Date of death:	26 September 1917
Place of death:	Paschendaele, Belgium
Age:	32
Rank:	Private (Acting Corporal)

Burial/memorialisation: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Lijssenthoek, Flanders, Belgium

William Ernest Enoch Davies enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 01 Jun 1916. On enlistment he nominated his mother as his Next of Kin even though his father was still living. He had no previous military experience and the greater part of his training was at Blackboy Hill Camp. His early military experience is highly confused and he had different regimental numbers and provisional units before departing Australia. Between 05 Sep 1916 and 31 Oct 1916, he was held against 4th/43 Bn, then for a short time 23rd/11 Bn before being assigned to 8th/51 Bn which departed Australia through Fremantle aboard A35 HMAT *Berrima* on 23 December 1916. His details on the embarkation manifest show his Next of Kin to be his wife Ida May Davies (whom he had married that year) care of a Mrs McLean of Bendigo. He was appointed an Acting Cpl (for the voyage only). In England he passed through 15 Trg Bn from 13 Trg Bn and was hospitalized between 14 March 1917 and 6 April 1917 but the reason for the admission is not stated.

Private Davies departed England through Southampton on 14 June 1917 to join the British Expeditionary Force through 4 ADBD and was taken-on-strength of 51 Battalion on 4 July 1917. His regimental number duplicated one already in use in 51 Battalion so he was designated by adding an A to his number. Pte Davies was appointed an acting Corporal in the field. He made a Will in his paybook in which he nominated his wife Ida May Davies, resident in Victoria, to receive any benefit from his AMP policy and his total estate. Pte (A/Cpl) Davies was seriously wounded at Polygon Wood on 26 September 1917 and evacuated to 6 Field Ambulance and then to 3 Canadian CCS where

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he Died of Wounds. He was buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery SW of Poperinghe (now Poperinge).

Additional/personal information:

William Davies was born in Sawyers Valley in the Darling Range east of Perth, a son of William and Frances (nee Rhoads) Davies (BDM 28750/1886).

In 1916 he married Ida May McLean, the marriage being registered in Victoria (Vic BDM 5312/1916). It is believed the couple had no children – the marriage may have only taken place a short time before he sailed.

> DAVIES.—Died of wounds in France on September 26, Corporal William Ernest Davies (Ernie), beloved eldest son of Mr. and Mrs.W. W. Davies, of James-street, Guildford, and beloved brother of Myrtle, Harold (missing), and Lionel (on active service.) *The West Australian* 1/11/1917p1

> DAVIES.—A tribute to the memory of our dear nephew and cousin, Corporal William Ernest Davies (Ernie), who died of wounds in France on September 26, 1917. His duty nobly done. —Inserted by his aunt and cousins M. Connaughton, Clare, Linda, Percy, and Will (on active service). *The West Australian* 21/11/1917p1

His widow received a pension of £2 per fortnight effective from 13 Dec 1917. His widow married an Ernest Howard Smith but she died shortly afterwards and his father now became the Next of Kin. For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia. William Woodward Davies (the final NOK) died on 17 Sep 1936 and was buried in the Guildford Cemetery. His wife Frances Davies the original NOK died on 13 Dec 1950 at the age of 85 years and was buried with her husband in the Guildford Cemetery. The family paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: “Peace Perfect Peace”.

The family suffered badly from the war: William Davies’ brother, Harold George Davies, served as 4794 of 48 Battalion and was Killed in action on 11 April 1917. A younger brother, Lionel James Davies, also enlisted as 34374 but returned to Australia in 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----------