091

Donnolly, Robert Charles

A West Australian railway employee
killed while on military service for their country



Plaque M325 in Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer: Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways

Branch: Way and Works

Designation: Clerk

Rail employment notes: Born 14/9/1890. Joined WAGR 13/2/1905 aged 14 as Cadet, Perth. Transferred to Geraldton 20/9/1909 and promoted to Clerk 1/2/1910. Transferred to Clerk, Perth 4/7/1910, Northam 1/9/1910 and Perth 15/2/1911.

Granted leave to join AIF 18/8/1914. Killed in action 21/10/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	1) Australian Imperial Force (AIF) 2) British Army
Military unit:	1) 3rd Field Artillery AIF 2) 97th Battery, Royal Field Artillery
Service number:	n/a
Date of death:	21 October 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	26
Rank:	Lieutenant

Burial/memorialisation: Thiepval Memorial, France

Robert Charles Donnolly enlisted first in the AIF on 17 August 1914 and was allocated as a Second Lieutenant to the 3rd Field Artillery battery. However, he was discharged on 19 April 1915. The reason for this is not yet found – pay rates in the Australian forces were better than the British, and Australian soldiers would be repatriated after the war if they survived so it seems unlike that he changed voluntarily.

He then enlisted again, this time with the British Army and served in the 97th Battery, 147th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery.

He was killed in action in France on 21 October 1916 at a time when the British Expeditionary Force (which included both British and allied units) was heavily engaged in battles along the Somme.

His body was not found after the war, and he is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

Robert Donnaly was a son of Robert John Donnolly and Alexina Nevin Donnolly who lived in Mount Lawley, Western Australia when he enlisted.

> DONNOLLY.—Killed in Belgium, October 21, Lieutenant R. C. Donnolly, aged 24, 97th Battery R.F.A. (Existing Lines, Railway Department), only beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Donnolly, First-

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avenue, Mt. Lawley, brother of Mrs. D. R. Edwards, Queensland; Mrs. J. B. Hawkins, Mrs. W. Whitehorn (Mt. Lawley), Mrs. A. W. Green (Perth), Misses Cis and Lily Donnolly; dearly beloved friend of Miss Jessie Hamilton, North Perth. Thy will be done. *The West Australian* 30/10/1916p1

Robert Donnolly has a plaque in Kings Park (M329) dedicated by his father 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----------