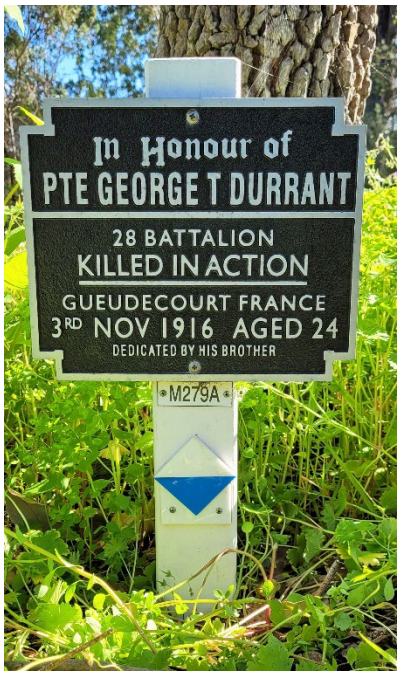
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Durrant, George Thomas

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



Plaque M279A in May Drive, Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 1/1/1892. Joined WAGR 21/12/1909 aged 17 as Junior Porter, Kalgoorlie.
Appointed to Cleaner, Kalgoorlie 2/2/1910.
("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. The promotion to fireman in this case is faster than normal and it may be that the WAGR was short of Fireman willing to transfer to Kalgoorlie at that time.)
Promoted to Fireman, Kalgoorlie 24/12/1911. Transferred to Fremantle 3/8/1914 and to Perth 28/9/1914.

Granted leave to join AIF 8/3/1916 (Service No.4728). Killed in action 3/11/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	4728
Date of death:	3 November 1916
Place of death:	Gueudecourt, France
Age:	24
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

George Thomas Durrant enlisted in the AIF on 1 March 1916. On enlistment he nominated his father Thomas Durrant of Bruce Rock as his Next of kin and stated that he had no previous military experience. His basic training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 12th Reinforcements to 28 Battalion. He departed Australia from Fremantle on 17 April 1916 aboard HMAT *Aeneas*. On arrival in England he marched into 7 Training Battalion for further training.

Private Durrant departed England on 9 September 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force that same day. He was taken-on-strength of 28 Battalion in the field. During the Battle of Fleurs, at the hamlet of Gueudecourt, he was posted as Missing in action sometime between 3 and 6 November 1916. A Court of Enquiry held on 26 July 1917 determined that he had been Killed in action on 3 November 1916. There were no eye witness reports of his death. His remains were never recovered and he is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

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The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Australian soldiers killed in France, whose bodies could be found for relocation, are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and right.

The wing walls to both sides of the central watch tower record, carved in stone, the names of Australian soldiers killed in France but with no known grave – tragically, more than 11 000 men. The largest number recorded from one unit is from 28th Battalion – some 365 West Australians.



Additional/personal information:

George Durrant was a son of Thomas and Sarah Jane (nee Paull) Durrant. His birthplace is not known, although the family was in WA by 1894 when the birth of a brother Percy Hamilton Durrant is recorded in Southern Cross.

> DURRANT.-In loving remembrance of our dear son and brother (George), who was killed in action somewhere in France, on November 5, 1916, and formerly of the W.A.G. Railways, Perth. One of the best that God could send, A loving son, a faithful friend. -Inserted by his sorrowing parents, brothers, and sisters, 22 North Beach-road. North Perth. *The West Australian* 15/8/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and other memorabilia which were issued to his father. There is no Will on file but a slip dated 12 March 1918 records the grant of probate to his mother Sarah Jane Durrant.

Private Durrant has a memorial plaque in Kings Park (M279A) which was dedicated by his brother in 2016. His plaque is positioned next to that of Pte S A Dunstan of 28 Battalion, also a railway employee, who was Killed in action during the same battle.

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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