098

Eddins, William

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:	Cleaner

Rail employment notes: Born 16/5/1893. Joined WAGR 31/10/1911 aged 18 as Cleaner, Northam. ("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.)

Transferred to Merredin 6/5/1912, Southern Cross 8/5/1912, Merredin 18/11/1912 and Southern Cross 28/6/1913.

Granted leave to join AIF 24/12/1915 (Service No.4112). Killed in action 28/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	4112
Date of death:	28 July 1916
Place of death:	Thilloy, Nord Pas de Calais, France
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Valley Cemetery, Vis-en-Artois, Arras, Nord Pas de Calais, France

Age 23. William Eddins commenced his enlistment at Southern Cross and was formally attested on 04 Jan 1916. On enlistment he nominated his mother Edith Eddins as his NOK although it was subsequently determined that his father Mr W S Eddins was alive and living with his mother in Bayswater WA. He had no previous military experience. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Military Camp. He advanced from being a recruit to a Private soldier on 1 February 1916 and was assigned to 10th Reinforcements to 28 Battalion that same day with the regimental number 4112.

Pte Eddins departed Australia on 1 April 1916 aboard A38 HMAT *Ulysses* from Fremantle. He disembarked in Egypt and then transferred to HMT *Tunisian* which sailed from Alexandria on 29 May 1916 and reached Marseilles on 5 June 1916 where he disembarked to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Eddins was taken-on-strength of 28 Bn on 14 July 1916 and moved to the Pozieres battlefield. He suffered severe wounds (not further specified) on 28 July 1916, was taken by the German as a Prisoner of War but died in German hands sometime between 29 July and 30 July 1916. He was one of two Australian soldiers buried by the German Army in a trench of Thilloy German Cemetery.

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Additional/personal information:

William Eddins was originally from Marsh Green, Kent and migrated to Australia with his family at the age of 18 years. For his service Pte Eddins was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia.

> EDDINS.—Killed in action, between July 28 and 29, in France, Private William Eddins, aged 23 years and 2 months, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Eddins, Garrett-road, Bayswater. He gave his life for his country. —Inserted by his loving mother, father, and sister. *West Mail* 8/9/1916p1

He was one of two Australian soldiers buried by the German Army in a trench of Thilloy German Cemetery. The other soldier was quite well documented as 3279 Pte L Siford, 28 Bn AIF. The Imperial War Graves Commission acting on German documentation and maps carried out a special exhumation on 9 December 1924 at the Thilloy German Cemetery and recovered the remains of two Australian soldiers. The remains were taken to the Valley Cemetery, Vis-en-Artois where they were buried and efforts made to identify which soldier was Siford and which was Eddins. Measurements were taken and their dental status determined. The personal file of Pte Eddins contains a substantial number of folios between Mr Eddins senior and the War Graves Commission and Australia House London, particularly, based on the dental records taken at the exhumation. Mr Eddins resisted all attempts to identify one set of remains as his son. The Siford family seemed to have no concerns about the identification of their son. The correspondence finally terminates and headstones were erected naming one as being the grave of 3279 Pte L Siford and the other as 4112 Pte W Eddins. No personal inscription was added to the headstone of Pte Eddins.

Mr W S Eddins died on 19 September 1941 and his wife Edith died on 30 Jun 1950. Both were cremated at Karrakatta cemetery.

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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