Elms, 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:	Boilermaker's Assistant

Rail employment notes: Born 9 March 1882 in England. Joined WAGR 15 February 1916 aged 33 as Boilermaker's Assistant, Midland Workshops.

Granted leave to join AIF 18/5/1916 (Service No.2654). Killed in action 3/5/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	48th Battalion Australian Infantry
Service number:	2654
Date of death:	3 May 1918
Place of death:	Villers-Bretonneux, France
Rank:	Private
Age:	37

Burial/memorialisation: Crucifix Corner Cemetery, Picardie, France

Harry Elms enlisted in the AIF on 22 May 1916 at the age of 34 years. He declared his wife Kate Elms to be his Next of kin and that he had no previous military experience. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Military Camp following which he was posted to 6th Reinforcements to 48 Battalion with the regimental number 2654. He departed Australia on 30 October 1916 aboard HMAT *Port Melbourne* via Fremantle and disembarked at Devonport on 28 December 1916 and entered 12 Training Group that same day.

He departed the UK on 28 March 1917 via Folkestone to join the British Expeditionary Force at 4 ADBD where he remained until 18 April 1917 and was taken on strength of 48 Battalion, in the field on 19 Apr 1917. He actively participated in the various phases of the Third Battle of Ypres throughout the remainder of 1917. Private Elms was granted leave in the UK between 7 and 22 February 1918.

He was Wounded in action in the general area of Albert on 3 May 1918 and was posted as Wounded in action and Missing in action. 3393 Pte H S Bainbridge 48 Bn recorded a finding related to his fate. The Commanding Officer 48 Battalion altered his classification from Wounded in action and Missing, to Killed in action, by his own authority, on 22 July 1918. Private Elms had been buried at the point of casualty and his grave was subsequently located and moved to Crucifix Corner Cemetery, Villers-Bretonneux where he was re-buried.

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Additional/personal information:

Harry Elms was born in Dorking England and migrated to Australia at the age of 28 years.

He was entitled to a Death Benefit by the WA Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees but there is no record of how this benefit was disbursed. Mrs Elms paid for the following inscription on his tombstone: 'I Shall Be Satisfied When I Awake With Thy Likeness'. For his service Private Elms was entitled to receive the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. The medals and other memorabilia were issued to his widow. Mrs Elms died on 06 Dec 1959 aged 75 years and was cremated at Karrakatta. No record of any children has been found.

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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