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Herron, Richard

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:	Traffic
Designation:	Guard

Rail employment notes: Born 28/11/1886. Joined WAGR 5/3/1903 aged 16 as Junior Porter, Coolgardie.

("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR and Coolgardie, then a busy station and terminus of some suburban passenger trains from Kalgoorlie, probably had multiple porters. A Junior Porter was under 21 and paid less.)

Transferred to Porter, Perth Goods 26/11/1906, to Perth station 6/5/1907, Bellevue 5/8/1907, Midland Junction 27/11/1908, Spencers Brook 19/1/1909 and Midland Junction 28/1/1909. Transferred to Shunter, Midland Junction 9/12/1909 and promoted to Head Shunter 28/1/1911. Transferred to Guard, Bunbury 24/10/1911 and Busselton 22/9/1913.

Granted leave to join AIF 3/5/1915 (Service No.1549). Killed in action 29/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	1549*
Date of death:	29 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	29
Rank:	Private

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

Richard Herron enlisted in the AIF at Busselton on 4 May 1915. On enlistment he nominated his wife, Grace Herron nee Cade, as his NOK. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp where he was allocated to 1st Reinforcement to 28 Battalion originally with the regimental number 1548.
*Army administration at some stage changed the number to 1549.

On completion of basic training 1st/28 Bn departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A2 HMAT *Geelong* and disembarked at Suez before moving by rail to Cairo and then entered camp at the Citadel. On 18 August 1915 the 1st Reinforcements were taken-on-strength of 28 Bn with Pte Herron joining C Company; then on 24 August 1915 colour patches were issued to all ranks. The Battalion moved by rail to Alexandria and boarded SS *Ivernia* on 4 September 1915 which reached Mudros on 7 September 1915 and transferred to SS *Sarnia,* landing at Gallipoli on 10 September 1915. Pte Herron was involved in the Bn actions on Gallipoli and his last front-line experience was at Russell's

Top. He departed Gallipoli aboard SS *Osmanieh* on the night of 12 December 1915 for Mudros and then on 10 January 1916 C Company landed at Alexandria from SS *Ansonia.* After refit and further reinforcements, the Bn undertook duties in the canal zone following which it moved by rail to Alexandria where it boarded A32 HMAT *Themistocles* and sailed on 16 March 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Marseilles was reached on 21 March 1916 and the Unit disembarked on 22 March 1916. Pte Herron was temporarily medically unfit for duties suffering from Influenza shortly after arrival. Frontline experience followed in the Armentieres Sector following which the Battalion moved to participate in the Battle for Pozieres which commenced on 23 July 1916. On 29 July 1916 Pte Herron was posted as MIA. A Court of Enquiry held on 04 Jan 1917 determined that he was actually KIA 29 Jul 1916. An eye witness report by 1701 Pte Emery, 28 Bn stated that Pte Herron had been acting as a stretcher bearer on the day when he was struck by a high explosive shell and died instantly. There was no record of a burial at the time and his remains were never recovered. Pte Herron has no known grave and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France in addition to the Australian War Memorial, Canberra and the WA State Memorial in Kings Park.

The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Soldiers killed in France and buried here are 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:

Richard Herron appears to have been born in Victoria, a son of Joseph Kennedy Herron and Margaret Herron (nee McLaren) (Vic BDM 6576/1887). The births of two sisters were registered in Victoria, Margaret in 1883 and Mary in 1889, but Richard later moved to WA, as did many people after the 1890s gold finds.

He married Grace Cade in 1909, registered in the Swan district. A son Richard G Herron was born the same year.

> HERRON.—On July 29, 1916, killed in action in Prance Private Richard Herron, of 28th Battalion,. beloved husband of Grace Herron, of Midland Junction, and father of Richard Herron - Age 29 years. He died a hero. T*he West Australian* 28/2/1917
>
> HERRON.—A tribute to the memory of Private R. Herron, 28th Battalion, late W.A.G.R., killed in action on July 29, 1916. Beloved husband of Grace and father of Richard.
> *The West Australian* 28/7/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal in addition to other memorabilia. His widow was entitled to receive a pension of 40/- per fortnight and his son, Richard, born 1910 a pension of 20/- per fortnight until the age of 16 years. Mrs Herron remarried, to Henry Mitchel Paul in 1919 (BDM Fremantle 194/1919) and her last recorded address in Jan 1921 was South Melbourne. Henry Paul had served in the AIF as 2051 Gunner Paul in Heavy Artillery. Shortly afterwards she died but no cause has been recorded in available records. Entitlement to receive Pte Herron's campaign medals under the terms of the Deceased Soldiers Estates Act (1918)

passed from his widow (now deceased) to his son, a minor. Mrs Priscilla Elizabeth Nicholls a relative of Pte Herron agreed to act as the trustee of the campaign medals until Richard was of age to accept them.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Richard George Herron enlisted in the 2nd/AIF with the regimental number WX9198 and served from 30 Oct 1940 to 01 Oct 1946 which included 552 days outside Australia. Richard Herron died on 13 Apr 1997 aged 87 years and was cremated at Fremantle 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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