151

Horner, Ernest 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:	Wood Machinist

Rail employment notes: Born 12/9/1887. Joined WAGR 15/4/1909 aged 21 as Wood Machinist, Midland Workshops.
In this era, the "Locomotive" branch of the WAGR, which would later be named the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch, included the major workshops at Midland (then Midland Junction) employing a wide range of tradesmen to work on locomotives, carriages and freight wagons as they were built or passed through for repairs.

Granted leave to join AIF 25/1/1916 (Service No.532). Killed in action 16/2/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	532
Date of death:	16 February 1917
Place of death:	Armentieres, France
Age:	29
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, Nord Pas de Calais, France

Ernest William Horner enlisted in the AIF on 06 Jan 1916. On enlistment he nominated his wife Alice Maria Horner as his NOK and declared that he had no previous military experience. His basic military training was conducted at the Claremont Showgrounds and surrounding district. On completion of his training he was posted to C Company of 44 Bn with the regimental number 532. The Bn departed Australia from Fremantle on 6 June 1916 aboard A29 HMAT *Suevic* and disembarked at Plymouth on 21 July 1916 and continued training on Salisbury Plains in England. He departed England from Southampton and landed at Le Havre, to join the British Expeditionary Force, and from there into the "nursery sector" of Armentieres. On 16 February 1917 German artillery opened a sustained bombardment of both the front and support lines. One Sergeant and two privates were Killed in action during the bombardment with Pte Horner being one of the casualties. He was buried in the Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres.

Additional/personal information:

His wife paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: Loved Husband of Alice Horner, West Australia at Rest.

HORNER.-On .February 16. somewhere in France. Private E. W. Horner. killed in action. C Company,. 44th Battalion, dearly beloved husband of Alice, and beloved son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. F. Richardson, of Bawson-street, Suhiaco.

HORNER.-On February 16, somewhere in France, Private E. W. Horner, killed in action, C Company. 44th Battalion, dearly beloved second son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm.Horner, of Swan-street, North Fremantle, beloved brother of Harold (Victoria), Mrs.E. Stringfellow, and Stella, North Fremantle. Both *The West Australian* 6/3/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his widow together with other memorabilia. Mrs Horner was granted a military pension of 40/- per fortnight effective from 04 May 1917 and she was also the beneficiary of a payment from the WA Society of Railway Employees.

Alice Horner married again, to Frederick Sales (BDM Perth 112/1921) and lived to the age of 90 years. She died on 24 Jan 1979 and was cremated at Karrakatta cemetery. Her husband pre-deceased her in 1956 at age 80 years. He also was 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----------