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**Hunter, William Gordon**

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



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

**Rail employment information**

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| Employer: | Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways |
| Branch: | Locomotive |
| Designation: | Cleaner |

Rail employment notes: Born 22/3/1893. Joined WAGR 28/3/1913 aged 20 as Cleaner, Bridgetown. ("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.)

Granted leave to join AIF 13/12/1915 (Service No.4818). Killed in action 15/7/1917.

**Military service information:**

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|---|---|
| Conflict: | First World War 1914-1918 |
| Service: | Australian Imperial Force (AIF) |
| Military unit: | 51st Australian Infantry Battalion |
| Service number: | 4818 |
| Date of death: | 15 July 1917 |
| Place of death: | Belgium |
| Age: | 24 |
| Rank: | Lance Corporal |

Burial/memorialisation: Mud Corner Cemetery, Wallonie, Belgium

William Gordon Hunter was born in Scotland and migrated to Australia at the age of 20. He enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill Camp on 13 Dec 1915 and underwent basic military training at the same camp. On enlistment he nominated his mother, resident in Scotland as his NOK. He had no previous military experience. On completion of basic training he was assigned to 15th/11Bn with the regimental number 4818. He departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle on 01 Apr 1916 aboard A38 HMAT *Ulysses* and disembarked at Alexandria on 25 April 1916.

In the reorganization of the AIF Divisions he was taken on strength of 51 Bn on 20 May 1916. The Bn then concentrated on individual and formation training until 7 June 1916 when it boarded HMT *Huntspill* and sailed for Marseilles where they disembarked on 14 June 1916 and joined the British Expeditionary Force. Private Hunter passed through 4 ADBD and re-joined 51 Battalion on 23 July 1916. In the Battles of Pozieres and Moquet Farm he was Wounded in Action (Gunshot wound Right Leg) and evacuated to 8 Stationary Hospital at Wimereux before re-joining 51 Bn and appointed L/Cpl on 20 April 1917.

He was Killed in Action near Ploegstreet, Belgium on 15 July 1917. L/Cpl Hunter was buried in a small cemetery, of just 84 burials named Mud Corner Cemetery which lies some 12 Km South of Ypres (now Ieper).

**Additional/personal information:**

William Gordon Hunter was born near Glasgow in Scotland, a son of Mrs Mary Hunter of Stirlingshire, and migrated to Australia at the age of 20. He was single when he enlisted, however it appears he had formed a close friendship:

> HUNTER.- In loving memory of Lance-Corporal Hunter, killed in action in France July 15, 1917. Days are dark and lonely, Friends are very few, Gordon, my heart is aching And longing in vain for you. -Inserted by Tealy. *The West Australian* 15/7/1918p1

Official notification of deaths often took some time, and it was quite common for these notices to appear on the anniversary date.

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his mother with other memorabilia direct from Australia House, London. He left a Will in which he bequeathed his entire estate to his mother. Mrs Mary Hunter received a military pension of 40/- per fortnight commencing on 02 Oct 1917. Mrs Hunter paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: “For Glorious Liberty and Truth He offered Up His Stalwart Youth.”

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----------