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Jenkin, Henry Wilkes

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: Asst. Station Master

Rail employment notes: Born 23/1/1893. Joined WAGR 23/9/1910 aged 17 as Junior Porter, Perth. Transferred to Maylands 26/8/1912 and appointed Porter 7/4/1914.
("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR – some had specific roles such as a receiving goods porter, some were general hands while some learnt safe-working and could assist with signals, etc. Whilst a Porter, Henry Jenkin must have studied and passed safe-working, necessary for promotion to station officer)

Promoted to Assistant Station Master, Jarrahwood 25/5/1914 and transferred to Booraan 3/10/1914, Dalwallinu 27/2/1915 and Narngulu 30/6/1915.
(When stations were busy enough to warrant more than one officer, the Station Master normally worked day shift 8am – 4pm and had overall responsibility, the Assistant Station Master worked 4pm-midnight and the Night Station master worked midnight-8am.)

Granted leave to join AIF 16/8/1915 (Service No.3827). Killed in action 3/9/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	52nd Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3827
Date of death:	3 September 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

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

Henry Wilkes Jenkin enlisted in the AIF on 23 August 1915. On enlistment he gave his father William Hurford Jenkin as his next of kin and stated that he had no previous military experience. (William Jenkin died on 19 July 1916 and Henry's mother Eliza Jane Jenkin became his next of kin.) Following basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp he was assigned to 12th Reinforcements to 12 Battalion with the regimental number 3827.

He departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard HMAT *Ajana* on 17 December 1915 and disembarked at Suez where he marched into 3 Training Battalion. He was then taken on strength of 52 Battalion from the reinforcements group on 3 March 1916 in the AIF reorganization of the AIF after the Gallipoli campaign. 52 Bn was the "daughter" Bn of 12 Battalion but Private Jenkin was never actually entered on the roll of 12 Battalion. He departed Alexandria with52 Battalion on 5 June 1916 aboard *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force.

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The Forces was engaged in heavy ongoing fighting at that time. He was killed in action in the battle around Moquet Farm on 3 September 1916. His body was never recovered, so he has no known grave but is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

The Australian War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Australian soldiers killed in France, whose bodies could be found for relocation, are buried and 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:

Henry Jenkin was born in Unley in South Australia in1893, a son of Hurford Henry Jenkin and Eliza Jane Jenkin (nee Wilks). A second son Arthur Frederick Jenkin born 1897 but then the family moved to WA, as did many families after the 1890s gold finds, and another son is born in Perth 1899. Henry attended James Street School in Perth. The family had moved around – their eldest son William Hurford Jenkin was born in NSW in 1888, before they moved to South Australia.

> JENKIN.—Killed in action in France about September 3 1916, Private Henry W. Jenkin,
>
> dearly beloved second son of Mrs. E. J. Jenkin, Tenth-avenue, Maylands, brother of W. H. Jenkin, on active service; Mrs. K.Owens, Sydney; and Ernie, Arthur, and Albert.
>
> JENKIN.—A tribute to the memory of Private H. W. Jenkin, killed in action about September 3, 1916. —Inserted by B. Owens, 16 Glyde-street, East Fremantle. Both *The West Australian* 17/10/1916p1

The family was consulted in in 1936 when AIF remains were uncovered with a ring engraved "Henry" in the area where he died but they felt that the ring had nothing to do with Henry Jenkin.

For his service he was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and other memorabilia. These were all issued to his mother. Mrs Eliza Jane Jenkin received a military pension until she died in 1937 at the age of 77 years. Both Henry Jenkin and Eliza Jenkin are buried in the same compartment (BC0255) in Karrakatta Cemetery.

Private Jenkin's elder brother Private William Hurford Jenkin of 4 Pioneer Battalion, late 16 Bn, had also enlisted. He died of wounds on 9 July 1918 and is buried in the Crouy British Cemetery, France.

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

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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