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Kay, Harry ("Hugh")

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:	Apprentice, Carriage and Wagon Builder

Rail employment notes: Born 30/7/1896. Joined WAGR 25/11/1912 aged 16 as Apprentice Car & Wagon Builder, Midland Workshops. Some WAGR records refer to him as Hugh Kay but his birth was registered as Harry Kay.

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, and also trained apprentices in many trades.

Granted leave to join AIF 21/8/1915 (Service No.3830). 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:	3830
Date of death:	3 September 1916
Place of death:	Mouquet Farm, France
Age:	20
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Serre Road Cemetery No 1, Beaumont Hamel, Picardie, France

Harry Kay enlisted on 30 August 1915, with parental approval as he was under 19. On enlistment he nominated his father, William Ernest Kay as his Next of Kin and declared that he had been serving for the past year in 88th Infantry Regiment and was still serving. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 12th Reinforcements to 12 Battalion with the regimental number 3830.

Private Kay departed from Fremantle aboard A31 HMAT *Ajana* on 17 December 1915 and disembarked in Egypt where he joined the reinforcement pool. As the AIF Divisions were expanded from two to four Private Kay was transferred to the newly formed 52 Battalion on 3 March 1916. The Battalion then engaged in training at the individual and formation level until it departed Alexandria on 5 June 1916 aboard HMT *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Kay was Wounded in Action on 5 July 1916 when he suffered a Gunshot Wound to a finger. He was managed at a number of medical units in France before re-joining 12 Bn on 25 Aug 1916. On 3 September 1916 he was known to have been Wounded in Action but he was also Missing in Action, at Mouquet Farm. His remains were uncovered by an element of 3 Cavalry

Regiment (British Army) and identified by his identity disc. Acting on a memorandum from 3 Cav Regt his status was changed on 6 February 1917 from Wounded in Action and Missing in Action to Killed in Action on 3 September 1916. His remains were originally buried on the battlefield but when the field was cleared in 1923 his grave was moved to Serre Rd Cemetery No 1, some 11 Km NE of Albert.

Additional/personal information:

Harry Kay was born in Albany WA, a son of William Ernest & Ellen (nee Edwards) Kay, but the family then moved to Perth and he attended school in Maylands before gaining a WAGR apprenticeship at Midland.

He enlisted before finishing his apprenticeship.

> KAY.-In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Harry (Lal) Kay, 32nd Battalion, killed in action, Mouquet Farm, France, September 3, 1916, beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. W. E Kay, of Sunnyhurst, Mount Lawley, and. brother of Will (on active service), Arthur, Minnie, and Mrs. L. Dodd, Maylands. … -Inserted by his loving father, mother, sisters and brothers.
>
> KAY.-A tribute to the memory of our dear friend, Private Harry Kay (Lal), of Mount Lawley, who was killed in action at Mouquet Farm, September 3 or 4 1916, 32nd Battalion. He gave his life for his friends. -Inserted by his sincere friends, Mrs. Jenkin and sons, Maylands.
> Both *The West Australian* 3/9/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia. His parents paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: “Fight the Good Fight of Faith Lay Hold on Eternal Life”. Private Kay’s mother, Mrs Ellen Kay received a pension of 15/- per fortnight with effect from 16 Feb 1917. Mr Kay, the NOK, died on 02 Sep 1943 aged 79 years and Ellen Kay (the pensioner) died on 27 Jun 1966 aged 96 years. Pte Kay’s parents are buried in the same compartment 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----------