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King, Walter

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:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 26/7/1891. Joined WAGR 24/1/1910 aged 18 as Cleaner, Kalgoorlie. ("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.)

Transferred to Bunbury 8/9/1911 and Busselton 7/10/1911. Promoted to Fireman 24/12/1911 and transferred to Bridgetown 8/1/1912, Geraldton 17/2/1912, Yalgoo 30/9/1913, Cue 8/12/1913 and Mullewa 29/4/1915.

Granted leave to join AIF 16/9/1915 (Service No.3167). Killed in action 30/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	2nd Australian Pioneer Battalion
Service number:	3167
Date of death:	30 July 1916
Place of death:	Pozieres, France
Age:	25
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Gordon Dump Cemetery, Ovillers la Boisselle, Picardie, France

Walter King aged 24 years, enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill Camp on 13 September 1915 having commenced the enlistment process in Coolgardie. He also underwent basic military training at that Camp. He had some previous military experience in cadets and nominated his father Walter King senior as his Next of Kin.

Walter was posted to the 7th Reinforcements to 28 Battalion and departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A7 HMAT *Medic* and disembarked at Alexandria on 16 February 1916. He remained in Egypt for just over one month and during that time transferred from 7th/28 Bn to 2nd Pioneer Battalion on 19 March 1916 and that same day he departed Alexandria aboard *Llandovery Castle* for Marseilles where he disembarked to join the British Expeditionary Force on 26 March 1916. The Bn moved in stages to the Pozieres battlefield.

Private King was Killed In Action by shell fire on 30 July 1916 and was buried in the cemetery at Gordon Dump, Sausage Valley located at Ovillers-La Boisselle 2 Km NE of Albert.

Additional/personal information:

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Walter King was born in Ballarat in Victoria, a son of Walter and Sarah Alice (nee Holden) King. A younger sister Alice Elsie was born in 1895 but then the family moved to WA, as did many families after the 1890s gold finds. He attended Coolgardie State School in the goldfields. A younger brother Albert and sister Doris were born in 1898 and 1902 in Coolgardie (WA BDM)

It often took some time for official confirmation of a death to be given to the family, hence it was not uncommon to see family notices printed on the anniversary of the death:

> KING. — In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Walter King, late fireman on W.A.G.R, who was killed in action in France on the 30th of July, 1916, age 25 years…. — Inserted by his sorrowing parents, sister and brother, Coolgardie.
>
> KING. — In loving memory of our dear brother, Private Walter King, who was killed in action, somewhere in France, on July 30, 1916. —Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, E, and J. Hammersley. Both Kalgoorlie Miner 30/7/1917p4.

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal both of which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia. His parents paid for an inscription on his headstone which reads: "He Died For King And Country".

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----------