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MacFarlane, Archibald Henry

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:	Assistant Analyst

Rail employment notes: Born 9/10/1887. Joined WAGR 21/3/1906 aged 18 as Tester, Midland Workshops. Appointed to Junior Analyst, Midland Workshops 3/5/06 and Assistant Analyst 12/7/1911. Granted leave to join AIF 6/8/1914. Died of wounds 24/10/1917

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. Chemical analysis of metals used, and also of locomotive water and additives, was ongoing work.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	n/a (Officer)
Date of death:	22 July 1916
Place of death:	Pozieres, France
Age:	27
Rank:	Captain

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

Archibald Henry MacFarlane was enlisted directly as a Second Lieutenant in the AIF on 07 Aug 1914. He was a Second Lieutenant serving in the 86th Regiment of Infantry with 2 years seniority. It seems that prior to obtaining his Militia commission he had served in the 25th Light Horse Regiment. He nominated his father John MacFarlane as his Next of Kin. Following training, 11 Bn was formed into a HQ Company and 8 rifle companies. The Battalion (in part) boarded A7 HMAT *Medic* at Fremantle on 31 October 1914. *Medic* then joined the first convoy which had earlier departed from Albany with a substantial Naval escort to provide cover against the German Light Cruiser *Embden* which was thought to roaming the Indian Ocean. Suez was reached on 05 Dec 1914 and the troops disembarked the following day and established camp at Mena with other elements of the 3rd Brigade.

Training continued in Egypt until 2 March 1915 when the Bn moved by rail to Alexandria, boarded HMT *Suffolk* and sailed for Mudros on Lemnos Island. There was a delay of 7 weeks while the troops practiced the use of scrambling nets and maintained fitness with route marches on the Island. Second Lieutenant MacFarlane had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 1 February 1915. On 25 April 1915 11th Bn as part of the 3rd Brigade landed at Anzac Cove and suffered considerable casualties. It appears from Battalion records that Lt MacFarlane was directing the Machine Guns during the last

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great assault on Gallipoli. He was WIA on 11 Aug 1915 suffering GSW to his right hand and evacuated to Lemnos and then on to hospital in Egypt. He recovered and was returned to duty with 11 Bn on 13 September 1915.

He was promoted to Temporary Captain on 7 October 1915 and then assumed the rank of substantive Captain on 1 November 1915. After the Gallipoli campaign ceased, he withdrew to Lemnos and finally crossed to Alexandria on 6 January 1916. For his work in handling the machine guns of the Bn on Gallipoli he was awarded the decoration Mentioned in Despatches. Officially, the MID carries no post nominals but since the Second World War a custom has developed of using the post nominals MID (unofficially) for officers and soldiers so recognized. Capt MacFarlane's MID was promulgated in the London Gazette of 04 Jan 1917.

11 Battalion departed Alexandria on 23 Mar 1916 and landed at Marseilles on 02 Apr 1916 to join the BEF. The Battalion encountered frontline service in the trenches of the Western Front for the first time at Fleurbaix in May 1916. For outstanding efforts over the period 30-31 May 1916 Captain MacFarlane was recommended by the Commanding Officer of 11 Bn for the award of a Military Cross. This was supported by both the Brigade Commander and the GOC 1st Division but no award was ever made.

Captain MacFarlane was Killed In Action in the battle for Pozieres on 22 July 1916. He has no known grave and 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:

Archibald MacFarlane was born in Warnambool in Victoria, a son of John MacFarlane and Martha Macfarlane. (CWGC)

> MACFARLANE.—Killed in action, on July 22, 1916, Captain A. H. Macfarlane, only son of Mr. J. Macfarlane, and brother of Mrs. J. E. Kennedy, Hamilton-street, Subiaco. *The West Australian* 5/8/1916p1
>
> MACFARLANE - In loving memory of Captain A. H. MacFarlane, 11th Battalion A.I.F., killed is action. July 22. 1916, somewhere in France. - Inserted by P. Nenbennett The West Austrlian 21/7/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal with Oak Leaf. These medals, memorial booklet and scroll were issued to his father. His NOK, John Macfarlane, died on 30 Jan 1922 and was buried at Karrakatta Cemetery. The Memorial Plaque was then issued to his sister Mrs B M Kennedy. Interesting to note that his possessions returned from the Kit Store included a Webley automatic pistol and a sword.

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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----------