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Mackay, Robert

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:	Tramways
Designation:	Conductor

Rail employment notes: Conductor, Tramways. 16th Battalion AIF. Death reported in the *Western Australian Railway Gazette*, 22/7/1917. (detailed employee record for this man is unfortunately missing from the collection now held by State Records Office WA)

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	2826
Date of death:	14 August 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	33
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Grave not found; Remembered on Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France

He enlisted in the AIF on 28 June 1915 and underwent basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 9th Reinforcemetn to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 2826 before departing Australia aboard A20 HMAT *Hororata* through Fremantle on 5 October 1915. Prior to enlistment he had no previous military experience and he nominated his sister Christina Mackay as his Next of kin. She later married, in Scotland, and he changed her name to Christina Pert. On 7 January 1916 he was taken on strength of 11 Bn at Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt. As the AIF in Egypt expanded from two Divisions to four Divisions, Pte Mackay was reassigned to 51 Battalion at Serapeum. Training at the individual and Unit level continued until 5 June 1916 when they boarded HMT *Ivernia* at Alexandria and disembarked Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Mackay was appointed to be a Lance Corporal on 8 July 1916. The Bn moved through France to take up positions on the Pozierres-Moquet Farm Front. Sometime between 14 and 16 August 1916 L/Cpl Mackay was reported as variously as Wounded in action and Missing in action. A Court of Enquiry held later determined that he had been Killed in action sometime between 14 and 16 August 1916. His body was never found; he has no known grave, and he is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

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*

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Additional/personal information:

Robert Mackay migrated from Scotland at the age of 26. He described himself as a "sheep farmer" which was presumably his occupation in Scotland but the nominal roll shows him to be a tram conductor.

For his service L/Cpl Mackay was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory medals. These were issued in Scotland to his eldest sister, Mrs Christina Pert.

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).

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information researched by Dr G.M.Galvin.

----------Lest we forget----------

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