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Matthews, Cecil George

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:	Porter

Rail employment notes: Born 18/9/1888. Joined WAGR 11/1/1909 aged 20 as Junior Porter, Northam. Appointed to Porter, Northam 20/2/1911.
("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. Mr Matthews must have studied and passed safe-working exams before he could be appointed a Guard.)

Promoted to Shunter 30/3/1911 and transferred to Narrogin 26/7/1912. Promoted to Head Shunter, Kalgoorlie 20/11/1912 and transferred to Northam 30/4/1914. Appointed Guard, Northam 24/5/1915 and transferred to Malcolm 18/6/1915, Laverton 24/11/1915 and Kalgoorlie 6/8/1916. Regressed to Porter, Kalgoorlie 14/8/1916 and transferred to Southern Cross 5/9/1916.

Granted leave to join AIF 28/10/1916. Died of wounds 8/7/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3098
Date of death:	8 July 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	29
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: St Sever Cemetery Extension, Haute-Normandie, France

Cecil George Matthews, aged 28, described himself as a railway employee when he enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill Camp on16 October 1916. He had no previous military experience and nominated his father as his next of kin. He completed basic military training at Blackboy Hill and was allocated the regimental number 3098 in 7th Reinforcements to 44 Battalion.

Private Matthews sailed from Fremantle aboard HMAT *Miltiades* on 29 January 1917 which berthed at Devonport UK on 27 March 1917 and he disembarked on 28 March 1917 to join AIF Infantry Details unit before marching into 11 Training Battalion on 18 April 1917. Following further training he sailed to join the British Expeditionary Force through Southampton on 20 Aug 1917. In France he reported sick (nature unspecified) and was hospitalised between 1 September 1917 and 24 October

1917 following which he had convalescent leave until he rejoined 44 Battalion on 5 December 1917. On 2 March 1918 he was granted UK leave and returned on 20 March 1918.

Private Matthews was Wounded in action at the Battle of Hamel on 4 July 1918 (face and wrist) and was progressively evacuated through 4 Field Ambulance, 5 Casualty Clearing Station and then by 19 Ambulance Train to 6 General Hospital (Rouen) where he was placed on the critically ill list on admission on 5 July 1918. He Died of his wounds on 8 July 1918 and was buried the following day at St Sever Cemetery Extension, Haute Normandie.

Additional/personal information:

Cecil Matthews was born in Sydney before moving to WA, apparently with the family:

> MATTHEWS.—Died of wounds in France on July 8, Cecil George, dearly-beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Matthews, and brother of Mrs. Edmondson, Millie, Nellie, Will and Grace (Northam), and of Mrs. Cooke (Osborne) *The West Australian* 15 July 1918p1

For his service he was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were forwarded to his father. His parents arranged for his tombstone to be engraved: "A Soldier and a Man he died honoured by his Country's pride". His father later dedicated a memorial plaque (M183) in Kings Park.

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----------