McKillop, Donald

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:	Call Boy

Rail employment notes: Born 11/6/1899. Joined WAGR 18 October 1915 aged 16 as Call Boy, Geraldton. "Call boy" was the most junior job for a young man wanting to join the locomotive crews on the WAGR, involving work around the locomotive shed and also being sent out, usually on bicycle, literally to call/wake crews for their rosters, especially when train times changed. The next step would be Cleaner. Granted leave to join AIF 3/9/1916. Killed in action 15/7/1917.

Military service information

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	48th Battalion.
Service number:	2950
Date of death:	15 July 1917
Place of death:	Belgium
Age:	18
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Underhill Farm Cemetery, Ploegsteert, Wallonie, Belgium

Donald McKillop enlisted in the AIF on 7 August 1916 in Perth with the signed approval of both parents which had been witnessed. He declared that his father, John McKillop, was his Next of kin. His previous military experience was just 4 months in the 89th Regiment of Australian Infantry under the compulsory scheme. He completed his basic military training at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned the regimental number 2950 in 7th Reinforcement for 48 Battalion. He joined A8 HMAT *Argyllshire* in Fremantle on 9 November 1916 and disembarked at Devonport on 10 January 1917. He was hospitalised with influenza for a short period before marching into 12 Training Bn on 6 February 1917 for further training. Private McKillop left the UK to join the British Expeditionary Force on 4 June 1917 via Folkestone. He entered 4 ADBD on 06 June 1917 and from there he was taken on strength of 48 Battalion, in the field, on 21 June 1917. Pte McKillop was Killed in action on 5 July 1917 by shell fire while the Battalion was operating in the Ploegsteert area of the Messines Sector. A detailed description of his death and subsequent burial was provided by 2479 Pte Ward, 48 Bn at Underhill Farm Cemetery, accurate to the degree that he records the position of the "Red Chateau". The cemetery is approximetely12 Km South of Ypres.

Additional/personal information:

© Rail Heritage WA

Donald McKillop was born in Victoria (AWM) to John and Margaret (nee Young) McKillop, but it appears the family moved west while he was very young (as did many families in the goldrush years) as siblings were born in Boulder in 1901 and 1904 (BDM). By the time of the First War, they had moved to Geraldton.

His family notified the his death through the *Western Mail*, 7/9/1917p26:

> McKILLOP – Killed in action on July 15 1917, Private Donald McKillop, beloved only son of Mr and Mrs J. McKillop, and brother of Kitty and Emily, Geraldton, aged 18 years.

For his service he was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. The medals and other memorabilia were subsequently issued to his father. A part pension beginning at 20/- per fortnight was issued to his mother. Mrs McKillop died in 1932, aged 66 years and his father died at the age of 87 years in 1950. His parents paid for a headstone inscription which reads: "The Lord Gave The Lord Taketh Away".

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).

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. Family information added by G.Higham.

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

 © Rail Heritage WA