219

Minett, Stanley James*

A West Australian railway employee
killed while on military service for their country

Such was the enthusiasm to fight for the “empire”, that two brothers from this family enlisted, and were both killed in the same battle on the same day. Also, unfortunately, neither soldier’s remains could be located after the war.



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 27/5/1893. * His name was registered in NSW BDM records as James S Minett, however he is referred to in WAGR and army records, and family notices after his death, with the forenames reversed to that used here.

Joined WAGR 2/3/1910 aged 16 as Call Boy, Midland Junction. “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 up would be Cleaner.
Appointed Cleaner 17/7/1911 and transferred to Albany 20/10/1913, Wagin 22/12/1913 and Narrogin 11/3/1914. Promoted to Fireman, Narrogin 18/5/1914 and transferred to Perth 30/7/1914 and Merredin 9/4/1915.

Granted leave to join AIF 28/9/1915 (Service No.3205). Killed in action 29/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3205
Date of death:	29 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

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

Stanley James Minett enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 27 Sep 1915. On enlistment he nominated his father William Minett as his NOK and declared that he had no previous military experience. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 7th/28 Bn with the regimental number 3205. Before departing for overseas he had a photograph taken in uniform, less head dress. The photo is P05301.154 held by the AWM which shows him in a head and shoulders portrait. Pte Minett departed Australia from Fremantle on 18 January 1916 aboard A7 *Medic* and disembarked at Alexandria on 16 Feb 1916. On 20 Feb ruary1916 Pte Minett was admitted to hospital

© Rail Heritage WA

suffering from Diphtheria and remained an inpatient until 15 March 1916 when he was returned to duty and taken-on-strength of 28 Bn.

Private Minett departed Egypt from Alexandria on 16 March 1916 aboard A32 HMAT *Themistocles* and disembarked at Marseilles on 21 March 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. The Battalion was engaged in the Battle of Pozieres on 29 July 1916 when Pte Minett was posted as Missing in action. His classification was later changed to Killed in action when HQ received a letter, dated 30 October 1916, from Chaplain W E Dexter who reported that he had buried the body on the battlefield. The Graves Registration Unit were later unable to locate that grave, Pte Minett has no known grave, and is remembered on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

Stanley Minett was born in the Waterloo district (Sydney) of New South Wales, a son of William and Selena M (nee Beresford) Minett who had been married in the same Waterloo area in 1891.

The family had moved to WA by 1896 when Selena Mary Minett, the mother, died (WA BDM 767/1896). (A sister of Stanley and William Henry, Blanch Evelyn Minett, was also born in Fremantle in 1896 and it is possible the mother died in childbirth)

William Minett senior appears to have remarried – WA records show a William Minett married Elizabeth Reilly in the Peak Hill district in 1901and so the Mrs Minett mentioned in subsequent family notices is William's second wife.

> MINETT.—Killed in action in France on July 29, 1916 Signaller Stanley J. Minett aged 23 years, beloved son of Mr. and Mrs.W. Minett, Helena-street, Guildford, and affectionate brother of Blanche E. and Private W. Minett now missing in France. We mourn your loss, but your actions Sweet balm to your loved ones bring; For he's ever a hero the man who dies For his country, God and King. *The West Australian* 25/10/1916p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father along with other memorabilia. As late as 1944 his sister Blanche wrote to Army Records seeking a copy of his Will. Pte Minett's brother William Henry Minett, also a railway employee, served as 1091 in 28 Bn and was also KIA on 29 Jul 1916 at Pozieres.

The step-mother Eliza Minett died on 22 August 1931 and is buried at Karrakatta cemetery. His father William died on 30 July 1935 aged 66 and was also buried at Karrakatta cemetery.

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----------

 © Rail Heritage WA