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Morgan, Charles Henry

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

Unfortunately Charles Morgan left behind a new wife expecting their first child – a son he would never meet.



Charles Morgan

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Way and Works
Designation:	Carpenter

Rail employment notes: Carpenter, Ways & Works branch.
The Way and Works Branch (later the Chief Civil Engineer's branch) was responsible for track and structures so a carpenter might have been engaged on building and/or maintaining stations and smaller buildings, bridges, wooden culverts, etc.

Granted leave to join AIF 9/1915 (Service No.4435). Killed in action 22/7/1916 aged 28.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	4435
Date of death:	22 July 1916
Place of death:	Pozieres, Somme, Peronne, France
Age:	28
Rank at time of death:	Private
Buried/commemorated:	Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Somme, Picardie, France

Charles Morgan enlisted on 22 September 1915, initially in the 14th Reinforcement Group. He was embarked on 12 February 1916 on HMAT *Miltiades* from Fremantle. He sailed to Egypt and while still an unallotted reinforcement was transported to France, arriving in late March 1916. He was taken on strength by 11th Battalion on 17 May 1916 in France.

He was killed in action at Pozieres on the Somme, sometime between 22-25 July 1916.

His remains have not been located and he is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

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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 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:

Morgan was born in Fremantle in 1887 and his family was apparently living in the Fremantle area when he enlisted as his name is engraved on honour boards in St John's Anglican church, Fremantle, and St Pauls Anglican church, Beaconsfield.



Charles was qualified as a shipwright in Fremantle, however prior to enlistment he was employed at Geraldton. In September 1915 he joined the 1st AIF. In that same month Charles married Alice Whittle at Geraldton. It appears likely that Charles change in employment was brought about by his romance and impending marriage to the daughter of the foreman responsible for repair of carriages/goods vans at Geraldton, and possibly facilitated by his future father-in-law.

Alice was the sister of Arthur (Chum) Whittle who was killed at Gallipoli.

In 1915, in the Geraldton district, Morgan married Alice M Whittle (BDM 39/1915). By the time he embarked, his wife was expecting, because a birth notice read

> "Morgan (nee Alice Whittle) - On July 21, at her residence, East Fremantle, the wife of Corporal C.H.Morgan now on active service – a son. Mother and child well." (*West Australian* 24/7/1916p1)

Tragically, when the baby was only a few days old:

> "Morgan - Killed in action in France, between July 22 and 25, Corporal Charlie Morgan, dearly beloved eldest son of Captain and Mrs Morgan of John St Fremantle, and brother of Nellie, Blanche and Driver Jarrah Morgan (on active duty)."

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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).

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Photo from book "Australia's fighting sons of the empire" (Perth; Palmer & Ashworth, n.d. c1920). Military and personal information researched by A. Pearson. Photo of Honour Board in St Johns Anglican church, Fremantle by G.Higham.

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