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Newman, William Charles Frederick

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



Australian memorial at Villers-Bretonneux

Rail employment information

Employer: Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways

Branch: Locomotive

Designation: Cleaner

Rail employment notes: Born 10/12/1892. Joined WAGR 27/2/1914 aged 21 as Cleaner, Busselton.

("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Granted leave to join AIF 4/5/1915 (Service No.1567). 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:	1567
Date of death:	29 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Private

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

William Charles Frederick Newman commenced his AIF enlistment process in Busselton and was formally attested at Blackboy Hill Camp on 04 May 1915 where he completed his basic military training. On enlistment he nominated his father Charles Newman as his NOK and declared that he had no previous military experience. Following basic training he was allocated to 1st Reinforcements to 28 Battalion with the regimental number 1567.

He departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A2 HMAT *Geelong* on 05 Jun 1915 and disembarked in Egypt where he was taken-on-strength of 28 Bn on 18 August 1915. Following a brief period of training in Egypt he departed Alexandria for Gallipoli on 04 Sep 1915 aboard HMT *Ivernia*. He reported sick with dysentery on 23 Sep 1915 and was evacuated to Mudros aboard SS *Campden* and then transferred to HMHS *Grampian* for England where he was admitted to 2nd Southern General Hospital at Bristol. Following recovery, he was transferred to the Sick Depot (France) on 24 Mar 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Newman was passed fit for duty and returned to 28 Bn on 16 Jun 1916.

He was posted as Missing in Action during the Battle for Pozieres on 29 July 1916. His remains were never recovered and a Court of Inquiry held on 04 Jan 1917 determined that he had been Killed In Action on 29 July 1917. A considerable degree of confusion arose when a soldier, 1051 Pte George Clifton Newman of 28 Bn who had been wounded on 29 Jul 1916 was identified at 7 Trg Bn and was

mistaken for 1567 Pte WC Newman. The matter was resolved and 1567 Pte WC Newman remained as a fatality. His remains were never recovered and he is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

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 rows of 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:

William Newman was born in Coburg in Victoria, a son of Charles & Elizabeth (nee Nielsen) Newman. (vic BDM 2535/1893), but he and his father moved to WA.

> NEWMAN.-On July 29, 1916 killed in action (previously reported missing), Private W. C. P. Newman, 28th Battalion. One of the best. And deeply regretted. -Ever remembered by his loving friends, Mr.and Mrs. Sowry, Mrs. Haddon, Busselton, and Private W. Haddon (now serving in France).
>
> NEWMAN.-A tribute to the fond memory of my dear friend (Bill), Private W. C. F. Newman. 28th Battalion, who was killed in action somewhere in France on July 29. 1916. A boy worthy to be remembered. -Inserted by his dear friend, Gladys Sowry. Both The West Australian 5/3/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia. His father completed the AWM Circular with great accuracy and recorded his son's age at the time of his death to be 23 years, 7 months and 19 days.

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----------

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