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Nolan, Vivian Michael

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:	Cleaner

Rail employment notes: Born 10/12/1896. Joined WAGR 20/3/1913 aged 16 as Call Boy, Perth. Appointed to Cleaner 29/10/1915 . ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning and otherwise working around locomotives whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder) and transferred to Geraldton 9/6/1916. Granted leave to join AIF 10/10/1916 (Service No.7053). Killed in action 10/8/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	16th Battalion.
Service number:	7053
Date of death:	10 August 1917
Place of death:	Neuve-Eglise, Belgium
Age:	20
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Nieuwkerke Churchyard, Nieuwkerke, Flanders, Belgium

Vivian Michael Nolan enlisted at Geraldton and underwent basic military training at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated the regimental number 7073 of 23rd/16 Bn. He had no previous military training and his father was declared to be his Next of kin. He departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A35 HMAT *Berrim*a on 23 Dec 1916 and disembarked at Devonport on 16 Feb 1917 following which he entered 4 Training Bn. After training at that Bn he crossed to France to join the BEF through 4 ADBD (Etaples) on 23 May 1917 and was later taken on strength of 16 Battalion on 11 June 1917. The Bn had been subjected to heavy losses on the Messines Front between 3 and 9 August 1917 following which they were relieved by 14 Bn and then withdrew to billets at Neuve-Eglise. A high explosive shell struck the billets killing Pte Nolan and 6984 Pte J S R Dick. Their bodies were buried in a nearby churchyard at Neuve-Eglise (now known by its Flemish/Dutch language equivalent as Neuwkerke). A detailed report of the death and burial of Pte Nolan was provided by 6216 Pte A A Eastman, 16 Bn to a Red Cross investigator. Neuwkerke Cemetery lies 12 Km South of Ypres.

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*

Additional/personal information:

Private Nolan was born in Montreal, Canada but the family must have moved to WA when he was young as he attended Upper Swan State School.

As a result of his service Pte Nolan was entitled to receive the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father. Army records became confused when some of the other memorabilia were receipted by Mrs Nolan and it was then revealed that his father had died in 1921 (aged 50) so that his mother automatically became his Next of kin. His mother requested that his headstone be engraved with the words, "Sacred Heart of Jesus have Mercy on his Soul".

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.

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

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