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Nugent, Harold Roy

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:	Commissioner's
Designation:	Cadet

Rail employment notes: "Born 30/8/1893. Joined WAGR 5/1/1914 aged 20" as Cadet, Perth. It appears that Nugent had falsified his age, perhaps to be paid more – both BDM records and the papers completed by his father after the war indicate his was 19 when he died, and so only 15 when he joined the WAGR.

"Cadet" was usually a young man seeking a clerical or administrative role – while they were under 21 and unqualified they could be called a cadet and paid on a lower, age-related scale.

Granted leave to join AIF 4/10/1916 (Service No.3206). Killed in action at Polygon Wood, Belgium 26/9/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3206
Date of death:	26 September 1917
Place of death:	Polygon Wood, Belgium
Age:	19
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium

Harold Roy Nugent was a serving member of 38 Bty AFA when he enlisted in the AIF. Because of his age he required parental approval but as his parents were legally separated, he was only able to provide approval from his mother. He still provided his father's name, Robert Howard Nugent, as his Next Of Kin. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 8th Reinforcements to 51 Battalion with the regimental number 3206 and then departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A35 HMAT *Berrima* on 23 Dec 1916. Before departure he had made his Will on 02 Dec 1916 in which he left his entire estate to his mother.

He disembarked *Berrima* at Devonport UK and marched into 15 Training Battalion on 23 December 1916 before transferring to 13 Trg Bn on 2 March 1917. (15 Trg Bn was incorrect for 51 Bn). Pte Nugent left England for France from Southampton on 14 June 1917 and joined the British Expeditionary Force when he entered 4 ADBD. He was taken-on-strength of 51 Battalion on 4 July 1917. During the Third Battle of Ypres he was Killed In Action at Polygon Wood on 26 September 1917. His body was not found, he has no known grave and is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial Ypres (now Ieper).

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Additional/personal information:

Harold Nugent was born in North Fremantle in 1898, a son of Robert Howard Page Nugent & Jane (nee Hogg) Nugent and attended state school in Perth. (BDM 1835/1898) However his parents had only recently migrated from NSW, where an elder brother Cyril Howard Banks Nugent had been born in 1888 and also sisters. Cyril would also enlist and die in the war, before Harold:

> NUGENT.—Killed in action on September 25, Private Harold Roy Nugent, only surviving son of Mrs. J. Nugent of 2 Cullen-street, Subiaco, beloved brother of Nurse Eldrid and Mrs. N. Shipton, aged 19 years and 1 month. The West Australian 30/10/1917p1
>
> NUGENT.—In loving memory of my dear brother, Private Cyril Howard Banks Nugent, who died of wounds, 53 General Hospital, France, on July 20, 1917. …. —Inserted by his loving sister Ida, Nurse Eldrid. The West Australian 20/7/1918p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Their father believed that he should receive both sets of campaign medals in accordance with the Act setting out dispersal of deceased soldiers campaign medals and their mother counter claimed. The officer-in-charge of Army Records went against the Act and awarded the medals of 3206 Nugent to the mother and those of 57 Nugent to the father. Pte Nugent has a memorial in Kings Park (M474) dedicated by his mother. His brother has a memorial (M474A) also dedicated by his mother. Mrs Jane Nugent received a pension of 40/- per fortnight with effect from 24 Sep 1917. She died on 22 Jan 1927 aged 66 years and was buried at Karrakatta cemetery. He former husband died on 27 Feb 1941 aged 91 years and was buried in the same compartment as his wife.

Pte Nugent's elder brother 57 Pte Cyril Howard Banks Nugent, 44 Bn had died before Harold, although whether the two brothers knew of each other's movements in the war, is not known.

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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