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Paul, Philip Reynolds

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


Villers-Bretonneux memorial
(see text)

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Traffic
Designation:	Clerk

Rail employment notes: Born 25/11/1889. Joined WAGR 12/9/1904 aged 14 as Cadet, Fremantle Goods. Transferred to Perth Goods 28/8/1905 and Bunbury 16/11/1909. Promoted to Clerk, Bunbury 1/12/1909.

Granted leave to join AIF 30/8/1915 (Service No.4131). Killed in action 22/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	4131
Date of death:	22 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	26
Rank:	Acting Sergeant (see text)

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

Philip Reynolds Paul commenced his enlistment in Bunbury and completed it at Blackboy Hill Camp on 05 Aug 1915, where he also did his basic military training. He had no previous military training. He had been born in England and migrated to Australia at the age of 9 years. On enlistment he nominated his sister Alice J Paul as his next of kin (NOK) even though his father was alive. The issue of his NOK became quite confusing sometime later. When his basic training was completed, he was allocated to 13th Reinforcement to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 4131. Pte Paul was made up to Acting Sergeant on 8 Nov 1915 (this rank became a source of confusion at a later stage).

His draft of reinforcements departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle on 17 Jan 1916 aboard A30 HMAT *Borda* and disembarked at Suez on 09 Feb 1916. In Egypt he was taken on strength of 11 Bn and then departed Alexandria on 29 Mar 1916 aboard HMT *Corsican* and disembarked at Marseilles on 05 Apr 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. His personal file shows that he had reverted to his substantive rank of Private on 17 March 1916 before departing Egypt but this is not reflected in a Part II Routine Order. Still wearing the chevrons of an acting or temporary Sgt he was admitted to hospital with influenza between 12 and 16 May 1916. The Battalion entered the Battle of Pozieres where he vanished sometime between 22 and 25 Jul 1916. For record purposes he was shown as Killed in Action on 22 July 1916. His remains were never located, he has no known grave, and 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 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:

He had been born in London, England and migrated to Australia at the age of 9 years. It appears he came with his parents and sister, and that his father also worked on the WAGR, although deaths left only his sister Alice to report and reflect:

> PAUL.—Killed in action, Sergeant Philip R. Paul, on about July 23, in France, only son of P. R. Paul, Government Railways, and dearly beloved brother of Alice Paul, Perth. An only brother and only son, His duty was always nobly done. *The West Australian* 25/8/1916p1
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> PAUL.-In loving memory of Nurse Paul, died April 28, 1915, wife of P. Paul, Government Railways, and mother of the late Sergt.Philip Paul, killed fifteen months after his mother's death; also of Alice Paul, Maylands. A true friend to the suffering. The West Australian 28/4/1917p1

His sister described him as a "devoted son to an invalid mother – he enlisted 2 months after her death".

On the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records he is shown as a Sgt but on the Australian War Memorial he is recorded as a Private. Army Records Office continued to deal with his sister as his NOK even to the extent of noting her change of address and later her married name of Alice Josephine Finniss following her marriage recorded at BDM Geraldton 29/1920. At some time, his father appeared and became his NOK but there is no documentation in support of this change.

For his service Philip Paul was entitled to receive the British War Medal and the Victory Medal both of which were issued to his father as well as other memorabilia. Mr Paul (Snr), the second and legal NOK, died on 31 Jul 1948 at the age of 88 and was buried at Karrakatta. Mrs Alice Josephine Finniss, his sister and the original NOK, died on 26 Apr 1979 aged 90 and was buried at Karrakatta.

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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