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Pegler, Claude William Bruce

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:	Traffic
Designation:	Head Shunter

Rail employment notes: Born 4/6/1887. Joined WAGR 16/7/1910 aged 23 as Porter, Perth. ("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR – some had specific roles such as a receiving goods porter, some were general hands while some learnt safe-working and could assist with signals, et. Perth, a busy station and terminus of suburban passenger trains, probably had at least 10 porters)

Transferred to Shunter, Perth 8/4/1911 and promoted to Head Shunter, North Fremantle 27/11/1912.

Granted leave to join AIF 30/3/1916 (Service No.2470A). Killed in action 12/10/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict: First World War 1914-1918

Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2470A
Date of death:	12 October 1917
Place of death:	Zonnebeke, Belgium
Age:	30
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Passchendaele New British Cemetery, Passchendaele, Flanders, Belgium

Claude William Pegler enlisted in the AIF on 03 Apr 1916. On enlistment he nominated his mother Mrs Janet Pegler as his next of kin (NOK) and stated that his father was dead. He had previous military experience of 2 years and 6 months in the WAIR (parttime militia). He commenced training with 44 Bn at Claremont and was allocated the regimental number 2470 but after 10 days was transferred to Blackboy Hill Camp and completed his basic training as a member of 5th Reinforcements to 51 Battalion. While at Blackboy Hill Camp he had a studio photograph taken which shows him in uniform, face on. The photograph is held at the AWM as P06981.001, on his page on the AWM website.

He departed Australia from Fremantle on 20 Sep 1916 aboard A66 HMAT *Uganda* and disembarked at Plymouth UK on 15 Nov 1916 where he joined 13 Training Battalion before departing England through Folkstone on 28 Dec 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force in France. Pte Pegler was 4 days at 4 ADBD before being taken-on-strength of 51 Bn, in the field where "A" was added to his regimental number to avoid duplication. He completed his Will on 04 Jun 1917 nominating his mother as his sole beneficiary.

He was Wounded in action on 11 June 1917 suffering Gunshot wound to the left leg. Pte Pegler was removed from the battlefield to 7 Fd Amb and then to 1 AGH. When recovered he re-joined the Bn

from 4 ADBD on 17 Jul 1917. During the Third Battle of Ypres he was in a close support trench at Zonnebeke on 12 October 1917 when it was struck by a German Shell. He died (Killed in action) instantly and 6 other members of his platoon were wounded including his brother Pte Charles Pegler. Shortly afterwards another shell collapsed the trench burying the dead. His Red Cross file contains a number of eye witness reports, including one from his brother, describing the events at the time. His brother was numbered amongst those Wounded in action and made his statement from hospital in England.

Following the Armistice, the Graves Registration Unit recovered his body in 1921 and it was interred in the Passchendaele New British Cemetery which had been established to accommodate exhumed bodies from the battlefields of Passchendaele and Langemarck.

Additional/personal information:

Claude Pegler was born in NSW but the family moved to WA while he was young and he attended school in Perth.

> PEGLER.—Killed in action in France, October 12, 1917, Private Claude W. B. Pegler, dearly beloved son of Mrs. Janet Pegler. ... —Inserted by his sorrowing mother, brothers, Charles (on active service), George, West Perth; sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Gordon, Carrolup, W.A..
>
> PEGLER.—Killed in action in France, October 12, 1917, Private Claude W. B. Pegler. —Inserted by his sorrowing friends, Mr. C.Skinner and Mr. H. Skinner, jun. Both *The West Australian* 19/11/1917p1
>
> PEGLER.—Killed in action somewhere in France on October 12, 1917, Private Claude W. B. Pegler dearly beloved friend of Ruby Beaumont 17 Moir-street, Perth. *The West Australian* 20/11/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his mother along with other memorabilia. Mrs Pegler received a military pension of 40/- per fortnight commencing on 08 Jan 1918, she died on 10 Dec 1947 at the age of 88 years and was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery. Pte Pegler had two brothers who also served in the AIF. They were 1424 Tpr G Pegler who served in 10 LHR, 02 Aug 1915 to17 Jul 1916 and 2468A Pte C Pegler 51 Bn (wounded by the shell that killed his brother) who served 03 Apr 1916 to 03 Apr 1918.

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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