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Rickey, Frederick Joseph

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 1/5/1890. Joined WAGR 1/12/1909 aged 19 as Labourer, Northam. Appointed to Repairer 10/12/1909. ("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang responsible for upkeep of an allocated section of railway line. A typical gang might include between 3 and 6 Repairers with one Leading Hand Repairer and a Ganger in charge. The WAGR Annual report for 1914/15 showed they employed 882 Repairers at 8 shillings per day, with many at very small settlements or tent camps.)

Transferred to Porter 16/12/1912. This meant a transfer from Way & Works Branch to Traffic Branch. Promoted to Shunter 15/6/1914. Transferred to Head Shunter, Collie 28/2/1917.

Granted leave to join AIF 14/1/1918 (Service No.2827). Died of illness 14/2/1919.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	Australian Railway Operating Division Depot
Service number:	2827
Date of death:	14 February 1919
Place of death:	France
Age:	28
Rank:	Sapper

Burial/memorialisation: Ste Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, Haute-Normandie, France

Frederick Joseph Rickey enlisted directly in the Railway Corps of the AIF on 15 Decmber 1917 at Bunbury. He nominated his wife Ada Florence Rickey as his NOK. His personal file does not indicate where he received his basic training or how he got to Melbourne. He was assigned the regimental number 2827 and departed Australia through the Port of Melbourne aboard SS *Zealandic* on 05 October 1918 and disembarked at London on 05 Dec 1918. His group was a multi-state party identified as the "Special Draft 1918 Reinforcements".

Sapper Rickey marched into the Railway Corps Depot on 6 December 1918 where he remained until 2 February 1919 when he departed England for France through Dover. Four days later he reported sick and was admitted to 40 Stationary Hospital but died 14 February 1919. The cause of death was recorded as bronchopneumonia. He was buried in Ste Marie Cemetery at Le Havre. (It was during eh major epidemic of 'Spanish flu').

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Additional/personal information:

Frederick Rickey was born in York, one of seven children born to Joseph George Rickey and Sarah (nee McKay) Rickey in the Avon district of WA.

His marriage to Ada F Friend was registered in the Northam district, (BDM 65/1915) and the couple appear to have had one child, a daughter Winifred M Rickey born 1917.

> RICKEY.—On February 12, in hospital, England, of pneumonia, Frederick Joseph Rickey, of the W. A. Railway Corps, beloved husband of Ada Rickey, of 433 Bagot-road, Subiaco, and eldest son of Mrs. J. G. Rickey, 15 Brown-street, Subiaco, aged 27 years. *The West Australian* 26/2/1919p1

> RICKEY.-In sad and loving remembrance of our dear husband and daddy who died in France on February 14, 1919. Someday we'll understand. Inserted by his loving wife and little Winnie. T*he West Australian* 14/2/1920p1

The Matron of the hospital wrote to his wife supplying all relevant details. Correspondence is on file showing that Spr Rickey held a death policy with MLC. As Spr Rickey reached France after 11 Nov 1918 his service entitlement was the British War Medal only. The medal and other memorabilia were issued to his widow. The family paid for an inscription on his headstone which reads: “He Gave His Life For His Country”.

His widow Ada Florence Rickey married Alexander E Johnson in York. (BDM 4/York 1921) Alexander Johnson had served as 5657 16 Bn during the War. Ada died on 28 Aug 1983 at the age of 92 years.

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----------