Robinson, Richard Herbert

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:	Striker

Rail employment notes: Born 19/8/1877. Joined WAGR 13 October 1904 aged 27 as Striker, a role working with blacksmiths, at Fremantle Workshops. Transferred to Midland Workshops 31/10/1904. (The WAGR's very cramped workshops at Fremantle were removed completely to the new site in Midland in 1904-06).

In this era, the "Locomotive" branch of the WAGR, which would later be named the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch, included the major workshops at Fremantel then at Midland (then Midland Junction) employing a wide range of tradesmen to work on locomotives, carriages and freight wagons as they were built or passed through for repairs, and also trained apprentices in many trades.

Enlisted in Australian Army Medical Corps, AIF 31/1/1916 (Service No.17441). Killed in action 1/4/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	Australian Army Medical Corps
Service number:	17441
Date of death:	1 April 1918
Place of death:	Near Corbie, France
Rank:	Private
Age:	40

Burial/commemoration: Bonnay Communal Cemetery, France

Richard Herbert Robinson enlisted in the AIF on 7 February 1916 at the age of 40 years. He stated that he had 4½ years of previous militia service in the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC). He was assigned the regimental number of 17441 in the AAMC and following training he departed Australia aboard A 30 HMAT *Borda* for the UK as a member of 22nd AAMC reinforcements. The lengthy period between his enlistment and embarkation is not explained in his records. It is noted that he was promoted to Corporal on 24 May 1916 and provisional Sergeant that same day. The explanation can be either, he was employed at the Blackboy Hill camp hospital, or as an instructor on the basic training course. That he wore the chevrons of a Sergeant suggests that the Camp made use of his time in the AAMC Militia to put him on instructional duties.

He marched into the Medical Training Depot at Parkhouse, England, on 26 June 1917 and then crossed to France on 1 October 1917 to join 10 Field Ambulance on 12 October 1917. The lengthy period at Parkhouse again suggests he was taken on for instructional duties. On joining 10 Field

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Ambulance he reverted to his substantive rank of Private. On 1 April 1918 he was wounded in action by an “aerial bomb” and taken to the Advanced Dressing Station of 10 Fd Amb where he died of wounds (DOW). These facts are supported by a number of witness statements on his Red Cross File. Burial was in the extension of the Bonnay Communal Cemetery and his grave marked with a named cross. The Military Cemetery is quite small with just 106 graves, 75 of which are members of the AIF, and is situated 1 ¾ miles North of Corbie.

Additional/personal information:

Robinson married Mary Ellen Englett in 1901 (BDM 1386/1901) and family notices after his death show they had at least 3 children - Mary, Alan and Herbert. His widow lived to the age of 80 years and died in 1959 but there is no documentation to demonstrate a pension.

He has a memorial tablet in Kings Park (M641).

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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