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Sargant, Harold Marcus

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:	Cleaner

Rail employment notes: Born 1/5/1897. Joined WAGR 8/11/1915 aged 18 as Cleaner, Katanning. ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Granted leave to join AIF 24/8/1916 (Service No.2655). Killed in action 18/4/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	43rd Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2655
Date of death:	18 April 1918
Place of death:	Bonnay, France
Age:	20
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Bonnay Communal Cemetery Extension, Picardie, France

Harold Marcus Sargant enlisted in the AIF on 07 Sep 1916 at Blackboy Hill Camp. On enlistment he gave his father William Sargant as his next of kin (NOK) and stated that he had no previous military experience. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 5th Reinforcements to 43 Battalion with the regimental number 2655.

His reinforcement party sailed from Fremantle aboard A8 HMAT *Argyllshire* on 09 Nov 1916 and disembarked at Devonport UK on 10 Jan 1917. He marched into 11 Training Bn on 05 Feb 1917 for further training. On 25 Apr 1917 he departed England through Folkestone for France where he joined the British Expeditionary Force. He was on the roll of 3 ADBD between 26 and 30 Apr 1917 and was taken on strength of 43 Battalion in the field on 01 May 1917.

Private Sargant developed a septic hand and passed through a number of medical establishments between 21 May 1917 and 12 July 1917 when he re-joined the Battalion, then Scabies took him out of the Battalion from 8 October 1917 until 16 December 1917. He was granted UK leave from 20 February 1918 until 9 March 1918.

During his service he was trained as a signaller and it was in that role that he was Killed in Action attempting to restore a broken communication line on 18 April 1918 in a battle near Bonnay, France. He was buried in the Bonnay Communal Cemetery Extension.

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Additional/personal information:

Harold Sargant was born in Walhalla in Victoria, a son of William and Bessie Sargant. However the family moved west when he was young and he attended school in the Perth suburb of Cannington. They were in Perth by 1904 when a sister was born here.(Vic BDM 15146/1897, WA 963/1904)

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These medals and other memorabilia were issue to his father. In an earlier letter to his father he stated that he was being recommended for a gallantry medal. His father subsequently made enquiries about a medal or recommendation, however there was no medal and no recommendation. The family paid for the following inscription on his headstone: "Our Ideal Son A Gentle Tender Brother A Steadfast Friend". There was no evidence that a military pension was ever applied for.

His mother Bessie Sargant died in 1959 aged 86, the father's fate 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----------