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Seddon, Henry

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:	Temp. Porter

Rail employment notes: Born 7/10/1892. Joined WAGR 4/10/1915 aged 22 as Porter, Mundijong. ("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, etc. Mundijong, where timber traffic and occasionally trains from Jarrahdale joined the WAGR, would have had plenty of work for a porter or two.)

Granted leave to join AIF 19/8/1916 (Service No.2627). Killed in action 4/10/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	43rd Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2627
Date of death:	4 October 1917
Place of death:	Zonnebeke, Belgium
Age:	24
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium

Henry Seddon aged 24 enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 21 Aug 1916. He had been born in Manchester (UK) and migrated to Australia at the age of 12. On enlistment he nominated his father William Seddon as his Next Of Kin and stated that he had no previous military experience. He underwent basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp and was held against the roll of 7th/48 Bn for 7 days before being allocated to 5th Reinforcement to 43 Battalion with the regimental number 2627.

He departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A8 HMAT *Argyllshire* on 9 November 1916 and disembarked at Devonport on 10 January 1917. He was held on details until 05 Feb 1917 when he marched into 11 Training Bn. (Note: his personal file incorrectly shows him entering 13 Trg Bn on that date.) After training in the UK, he departed for France to join the British Expeditionary Force through Folkestone on 25 April 1917. Pte Seddon spent just 4 days at 3 ADBD before he was taken on strength of 43 Bn, in the field, on 1 May 1917. He was Killed In Action by a shell on 4 October 1917 in the region of Zonnebeke. The reports on his Red Cross File are confusing but it appears that his parents received a letter from a member of his platoon providing details. He was buried on the field and the coordinates noted.

In 1919 a Captain from 1 Machine Gun Battalion found an identity disc with Pte Seddon's number and Battalion in the area and noted some human remains nearby. He forwarded the disc and map

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coordinates to 43 Bn. Despite these records the Graves Registration Unit were unable to positively identify his place of burial. He therefore has no known grave and is remembered on the Menin Gate at Ypres (now Ieper).

Additional/personal information:

Henry Seddon was born near Manchester in England, a son of William Seddon, but the family moved to WA when he was 12 and he finished his schooling in Perth.

> SEDDON.—On October 4 killed in action, somewhere in France, Private Henry Seddon, beloved youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Seddon, Gosnells, and brother of Harold and Wilfred (on active service), Winnie, Mrs. J. H. Wilson (England), and Mrs L.G. Heyhoe (Cannington), aged 25 years. A devoted son, a true brother, and a brave soldier.
>
> SEDDON.—On October 4, killed in action, somewhere in France, Private Harry Seddon, fond brother-in-law of L. G. Heyhoe, Henry-street East Cannington. Faithful to all at home, and true to his King and country. Both *The West Australian* 30/10/1917

Pte Seddon was a member of the WA Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees and a death benefit was paid to his estate. For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father along with other memorabilia. Mr William Seddon later wrote to Army Records expressing his concern that the Memorial Plaque did not record the date of death. Pte Seddon's parents named their house "Zonnebeke".

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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