334

West, Clarence Henry Guy

A West Australian railway employee
killed while on military service for their country

Clarence West emigrated from the UK with his wife, but in 1915 he volunteered to join the AIF and was sent back to serve with British forces and was killed in France.



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Traffic
Designation:	Porter

Rail employment notes: Born 5/11/1889. Joined WAGR 24/7/1911 aged 21 as Porter, Perth. Transferred to Armadale 3/10/1913 and back to Perth 29/3/1915. Granted leave to join AIF 30/6/1915 (Service No.2009). Killed in action 29/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	28th Battalion.
Service number:	2009
Date of death:	29 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	26
Rank at time of death:	Private
Buried/Commemorated:	Villers-Bretonneux memorial, France

Clarence Henry Guy West enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 23 June 1915. He nominated his wife Kathleen West as his Next of kin and declared that he had no previous military experience. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp and on completion he was allocated to 3rd Reinforcements to 28th Battalion with the regimental number 2009. Private West sailed from Australia aboard A68 HMAT *Anchises* on 02 September 1915 and disembarked in Egypt. After a short period of continuation training, he crossed to Gallipoli where he was taken-on-strength of 28 Bn on 12 October 1915. He participated in the final stages of the Gallipoli campaign and arrived back in Egypt from Lemnos on 10 January 1916. Pte West sailed from Alexandria on 16 March 1916 aboard HMT *Ansonia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 21 March 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. After service in a quiet sector he moved to the Battle for Pozieres. On 29 July 1916 he was posted as Missing in Action but a Court of Enquiry held on 4 January 1917 determined that he was actually Killed in action on 29 July 1916. His remains were never recovered and he is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

He had been born in Deptford, England but his date of arrival in Australia is unknown. He appears to have been married before arriving in the west, but BDM records show a birth of a Jean West in 1912 in in the Perth district who may have been his daughter.

Unfortunately, when soldiers are killed but their body is not located for burial, families have a long wait while the man is posted "missing in action", and most presume he has been killed, but they must await official confirmation, Sometimes the family did not receive official advice until after the war but in Clarence West's case it was the following year.

> WEST.- On July 29 killed in action, at Posieres, Private Clarence H. G. West, beloved husband of K. West, and father of Millie. Jean, and Mollie. 7 Brookman-street Perth.
> *The West Australian* 27/2/1917p1

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his widow together with other memorabilia. His personal file contains nothing in respect of a pension to his widow although it is most likely she was eligible. Mrs West returned to England and her last address was in Essex in a letter dated 10 Jan 1922. Nothing further is known.

Further information 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----------