Halpin, Lester John Timothy

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



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

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 21/1/1918. Joined WAGR 13/12/1937 aged 19 as Cleaner Locomotive Branch, East Perth. ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning and otherwise working around locomotives whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder).

Transferred to Wongan Hills 9/11/1938, to East Perth 22/4/1940 and Busselton 9/1/1941. Promoted to Fireman 14/9/1941 and transferred to East Perth 18/5/1942. Enlisted in RAN 25/6/1942. Died 8/3/1945.

Military service information

Conflict:	Second World War 1939-1945
Service:	Royal Australian Navy
Military unit:	HMAS *Napier*
Service number:	F4350
Date of death:	8 March 1945
Place of death:	Indian Ocean
Age:	27
Rank at time of death:	Able Seaman

Buried/commemorated: Plymouth Naval Memorial, Plymouth, Devon, England, United Kingdom

Lester Halpin enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy on 25 June 1942, aged 24. He gave his date of birth as 21 January 1918, and his next of kin as Emily Halpin, his mother.

By early 1945 Halpin was an Able Bodied Seaman (A/B) serving on HMAS *Napier*, a destroyer ordered in 1939 and built on the Clyde River near Glasgow in Scotland. She was commissioned on 28 November 1940 into the Royal Australian Navy. Copied from Royal Navy N class destryers, with a standard displacement of 1801 tons and armed with six 4.7 inch guns.

Lester Halpin died at sea 8/3/1945 while HMAS *Napier* was escorting HMS *Formidable* on voyage from Columbo to Fremantle..

Additional/personal information:

Lester Halpin was the son of Lester C Halpin and Emily J V Cream who were married in Geraldton in 1908 (BDM). They had two daughters in 1910 and 1914 then Lester's birth was registered in Geraldton in 1918 (BDM reg 16/1918). His father died before him, in 1936.

He was 27 years old when he died. Death notices in the *Daily News* (Perth) and other papers on 12/3/1945 from shipmates and family say Halpin was "lost at sea" – it is not stated if this was from enemy action or natural causes.

One notice in the *West Australian* of same date is from "loving fiancée Kath" but their engagement would never proceed to marriage.

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. Family information and collation by G.Higham.

----------Lest we forget----------