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# Boyes, Charles Victor

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## A West Australian railway employee killed after volunteering for 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 15/10/1896. Joined WAGR 22/11/1915 aged 19 as Cleaner, Northam. ("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 3/3/1916 (Service No.323). Killed in action 26/9/1917.

**Military service information:**

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|---|---|
| Conflict: | First World War 1914-1918 |
| Service: | Australian Imperial Force |
| Military unit: | 4th Australian Machine Gun Company |
| Service number: | 323 |
| Date of death: | 26 September 1917 |
| Place of death: | Belgium |
| Age: | 20 |

Rank at time of death: Private

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

He was employed as a railway cleaner when he commenced his AIF enlistment at Northam on 22 February 1916 and was formally attested at Blackboy Hill Camp on 14 March 1916 where he nominated his father as his Next of Kin. He was assigned to 55 Depot Company for basic training. On completion of basic training, he was initially allocated to 14th Reinforcement to 28th Battalion but shortly afterwards this was altered to 4th Reinforcements to 4 Machine Gun Company. He departed Australia from Fremantle on 9 August 1916 aboard HMAT *Miltiades* and disembarked at Plymouth UK on 25 September 1916.

Pte Boyes continued general training until 14 Nov 1916 when he marched into the AIF MG Training Depot at Grantham where he remained until 1 March 1917 when he crossed to the France and entered the MG Depot at Camiers. On 17 March 1917 he was taken on strength of 4 Machine Gun Company, in the field, from the reinforcements. His Unit was deployed in support of the Third Battle of Ypres and assisted in laying down an extensive field of fire on 7 June 1917 forward of Messines. He was Killed in Action on 26 September 1917 but the circumstances of his death cannot be determined from the records. The Unit was able to quickly issue notification of his death and presumably bury his remains on the battlefield.

In the post war period, his grave was not found and he has no known grave. He is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial.

**Additional/personal information:**

He was the third of eleven children of Edward & Jane Eleanor (nee Atkins) Boyes. Charles' birth was registered in Beverley in the Great Southern region in 1896 but the family moved around a gret deal, presumably as the father found work. His siblings births were registered in Pingelly and narrogin in the Great Southern, Broad Arrow, Southern Cross and Kurrawang in the goldfields and finally Subiaco.

The eldest brother Sergeant William Edward Boyes also enlisted, and returned safely to Australia.

For his service Charles was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father. His mother initially received a pension of 14/- per fortnight with effect from 18 December 1917.

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----------