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Anderson, Frederick James

A West Australian railway employee who was killed while on military service



Private Anderson's plaque in Kings Park with the mystery 'wife'

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Traffic
Designation:	Junior Worker

Rail employment notes: Born 23/9/1896. Joined WAGR 4/9/1912 aged 15 as Junior Porter, Perth. Transferred in same role to East Perth 18/2/1914 and Perth 21/12/1914.
When completing a record form after the war, his father described him as a signalman. As he was not yet 21, at that era, he would not have been appointed a signalman but busy stations such as Perth had assistants in the signal cabin and a junior porter would likely have filled that role.
Granted leave to join AIF 9/12/1916 (Service No.7203). Died of wounds 4/9/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Military unit:	2nd Australian Machine Gun Battalion
Service number:	7203
Date of death:	4 September 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	22
Rank:	Private
Burial/memorialisation:	Fouquescourt British Cemetery, Fouquescourt, Picardie, France

Frederick James Anderson, aged 20 years, enlisted in the AIF on 04 Dec 1916 and commenced a short period of training at Blackboy Hill Camp where he was assigned to the 24th Reinforcements for 16 Battalion. He had some previous military experience as he had served for one year as a senior cadet in 88th Infantry Regiment before transferring to 22 AAMC in the Militia. The Militia Unit cleared him for enlistment in the AIF. The 24th/16 group departed Fremantle aboard HMAT *Miltiades* on 29 January 1917 for Devonport UK where the troops disembarked on 27 March 1917. Private Anderson marched into 4 Training Bn that same day. His training as an infantry soldier was interrupted by a short hospital admission.

On 20 July 1917 he was transferred to Machine Gun Details to commence training as a machine gunner. The records do not indicate if this transfer was at his request or by Army direction. He remained at the MG training for a lengthy period and then departed for France, through Folkestone, and service with the Machine Gun Corps on 11 October 1917. He was taken on strength of 5 Machine Gun Company on 15 October 1917. On 14 April 1918 the machine gun companies of each Brigade within a Division were amalgamated to form a machine gun battalion under the command of a Lieutenant Colonel. Operational direction of machine guns passed from Brigade to Divisional level.

5 MG Coy therefore became an element of 2 Machine Gun Battalion. The Unit was heavily involved in the Battles of San Quentin and later Peronne. Private Anderson was Wounded in Action on 4 September 1918 and taken to 6 Field Ambulance where he subsequently died from his wounds (Died of Wounds). He was buried at the military cemetery of Cappy, 7 ½ miles West of Peronne.

Additional/personal information:

Frederick Anderson was born at Glentromie, which today is a large farm about 7 kms north of New Norcia, and attended the local one-teacher school. His parents were Frederick William and Harriet (nee Branson) Anderson. An older brother was Herbert William and younger sisters were Harriet Maude and Hilda Mary.

> ANDERSON.—Died of wounds on September 4, 1948, somewhere in France, Private Frederick James Anderson (Sonney), loving son of Mr.and Mrs. F W. Anderson, 76 Francis Street Perth Inserted by his loving father, mother, sisters and brothers. *Western Mail* 11/10/1918p26

Following the armistice, the Graves Registration Unit concentrated multiple small cemeteries throughout the region into a single cemetery at Fouquescourt. Private Anderson's remains were one of those relocated. Fouquescourt Military Cemetery lies in an isolated field 8 Km North of Roye.

He has a memorial tablet in Kings Park (M593) which includes the words "dedicated by his wife and mother". This creates a mystery because the army was careful to record marriage details since the wife would normally become the next of kin, but there is no mention in army or public (BDM) records available. There is also no mention in family notices at the time. It is possible that Anderson had a fiancée, who might have promoted the idea of being his wife, especially if she found herself pregnant after he sailed. Unfortunately they would not see him again.

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----------