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Barrass, John James

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:	Shunter

Rail employment notes: Born 7/4/1882. Joined WAGR 2/9/1911 aged 29 as Porter, Kalgoorlie. Worked as a Shunter and Porter, Kalgoorlie from 18/8/1913 until transferred to Shunter, Golden Gate (which was between Kalgoorlie and Boulder and had mine sidings to be shunted) 9/2/1916. Granted leave to join AIF 18/11/1916 (Service No.7213). Died of wounds 5/7/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	7213
Date of death:	5 July 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	35
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Crouy British Cemetery, Crouy St Pierre, Amiens, Picardie, France

John James Barrass enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill Camp on 31 October 1916. He had 4 ½ years of previous Militia service and nominated his father as his Next of kin. He was allotted to the 24th Reinforcements to 16 Battalion. After basic training at Blackboy Camp he departed Australia aboard A28 HMAT *Miltiades* through Fremantle on 29 January 1917 and disembarked at Devonport UK on 27 March 1917.

He marched in to 4 Training Battalion that same day for more training. When that training was completed, he left the UK for France via Southampton on 9 July 1917 and the following day was taken on the roll of 4 Australian Details Base Depot (4ADBD) where he remained until 25 July 1917. On 27 July 1917 he was taken on the strength of 16 Battalion (A Company) in the field.

On 4 July 1918 he was Wounded in action in the famous action at Hamel Woods and Vaire. (In this action 3399 Private T Axford attacks a German machine gun post killing 10 Germans and captures 6 as well as their machine gun, for which he was awarded the VC.) Private Barrass passes through 4 Field Ambulance and both Casualty Clearing Stations supporting the Brigade. He died at 12 Casualty Clearing Station on 5 July 1918 and was buried that same day at the temporary cemetery of Rivierre.

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Additional/personal information:

John Barrass was born at Eagle Hawk near Bendigo, Victoria, in 1882, the seventh of ten children of Robert and Mary Jane (nee Brown) Barrass. (He was the second to be named John James after the previous baby died at age 20 months). He attended school there before moving to WA. It appears that most of the family moved west in the late 1890s – his siter Phillis married Frank Taylor in Victoria in 1894 but his older brother William Robert Barrass married in Kalgoorlie in 1900 and there are several other WA marriages which look like his siblings.

> BARRASS.—In loving memory of our dear brother, J. I. Barrass, died of wounds in France July 5, 1918. … —Inserted by his sorrowing sisters, Mrs. Butler and Mrs. Johnson, Perth. *The West Australian* 16/7/1918p1
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> BARRASS.— Died of wounds, at Twelfth Casualty Station, on 5th July, 1918, Private J. J. Barrass, aged 35 years. His duty nobly done. — Inserted, by his loving aunt and cousins, Mr. R. Brown and family. *Kalgoorlie Miner* 17/7/1918p4
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> BARRASS.— Private J. J. Barrass, died of wounds 5th July, 1918, at 9 Twelfth Casualty Station, France, late Kalgoorlie Railway Station, at the prime age of 35 years. He enlisted one year and nine months ago. Loved by all that knew him. His duty nobly done. — Inserted by his sorrowing parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. Barrass, brother Robert, Ralph (deceased), and Mrs. Brown, and Mrs. Taylor (Melbourne). Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Butler (Perth). *Kalgoorlie Miner* 17/7/1918p4

After the War his remains along with all the others from Rivierre were relocated to Crouy St Pierre, Picardie 16 Km NW of Amiens.

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).

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information researched by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family information added by G.Higham.

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