Borthwick, James Lough

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



Sunday Times 20/5/1917 (see below)

Rail employment information

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

Rail employment notes: Born 6/8/1886. Joined WAGR 24/5/1911
aged 24 as Porter, Perth. ("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR and Perth, a busy station and terminus of suburban passenger trains, had multiple porters)

Promoted to Clerk, Perth 1/6/1911. This was a change from wages employee to salaried staff, which was unusual in the highly-structured system of those days.

Granted leave to join AIF 15/4/1916 (Service No.2375). Died of wounds 3/4/1917

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2375
Date of death:	3 April 1917
Age:	30
Place of death:	France
Rank at time of death:	Private

Buried/commemorated: Pozieres British Cemetery Ovillers-La Boisselle, Pozieres, Picardie, France

James Lough Borthwick enlisted in the AIF on 3 April 1916. On enlistment he nominated his father John Borthwick, resident in Scotland, as his Next of Kin and declared that he had no previous military experience. He was born in Scotland and migrated to Australia aged 25 years. His basic military training was at Blackboy Military Camp following which he was allocated to 5th Reinforcements to 51 Battalion with the regimental number 2375. He departed Australia from Fremantle on 20 Sep 1916 aboard A66 HMAT *Uganda* and disembarked at Plymouth on 15 Nov 1916 where he marched into 13 Training Battalion the following day.

On 28 December 1916 he left England for France through Folkestone aboard Princess Victoria to join the British Expeditionary Force. He passed through 4 ADBD before being taken-on-strength of 51 Battalion on 1 January 1917. On 2 April 1917 near Noreuil Private Borthwick was Wounded in Action by gunshot wound to abdomen. He was carried to 3 Fd Amb and then moved to 3 Casualty Clearing Station for surgery. However he Died of Wounds at 3 CCS and was buried at Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-La Boisselle.

Additional/personal information:

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James Borthwick was born in Eyemouth, Berwickshire, Scotland in 1885 but arrived in Western Australia in 1911. As far as is known, other family members did not emigrate to WA with him. He was single when he enlisted although the only family notice seen, suggests he had a close friend:

> BORTHWICK.—In loving memory of my dear friend, Private James Borthwick, 51st Battalion, who died of wounds in France, on April 3, 1917. —Inserted by his ever loving friend Elsie. *The West Australian* 3/4/1918p1

He is listed on an honour board in St Paul's Anglican Church, Beaconsfield (a suburb to the south of Fremantle) and so may have lived in that area. (Unfortunately the engraver misspelled his name "Brothwick").



Honour Board in St Paul's Anglican Church Photo A.Pearson

James' father, Mr David Borthwick, wrote that James was a keen athlete and caption of the Perth W.A. Football Club (Association). The caption to a photograph (page 1) in the Sunday Times 20/5/1917p3 noted him as late of Chief Traffic Manager's Office, Railway Department."

Further information and/or photos may be added as available. Information and/or photographs 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 and personal information researched and prepared by A. Pearson and M. Galvin. Collation and family notes by G.Higham.

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

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