035

Budge, 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:	Guard

Rail employment notes: Born 8/10/1882. Joined WAGR 7/1/1911 aged 28 as Casual Porter, Bunbury. Appointed to Shunter, Brunswick Junction 17/1/1911 and transferred to Midland Junction 2/3/1911. Promoted to Head Shunter, Midland Junction 10/7/1912 and transferred to Guard, York 3/3/1913. Granted leave to join AIF 17/6/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	27th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	5811
Date of death:	20 September 1917
Place of death:	Belgium
Age:	35
Rank:	Private
Burial/memorialisation:	Perth Cemetery (China Wall), Ypres, Flanders, Belgium

James Budge volunteered for service in the AIF in 1916. He had his preliminary medical examination in York and having passed he was enlisted at Belmont on 26 May 1916. The available records do not show where he undertook his basic training and it could be Belmont or Blackboy Hill Camp. Originally it was intended that he would be a member of 17th/ to 28th Battalion and he maintained that designation between 21 June 1916 and 5 September 1916 when it was altered to 16th/27 Bn. His regimental number, 5811, was originally issued for 28 Battalion but he carried it to the 27th. He departed Australia through Fremantle aboard A16 HMAT *Port Melbourne* on 30 October 1916 and disembarked at Devonport, England on 28 December 1916 and joined the 7th Training Bn at Rollestone on 29 December 1916. He left the UK for the British Expeditionary Force aboard the *Invicta* from Folkestone. He passed through 2nd ADBD on 9 February 1917 before being taken on strength of 27 Battalion in the field. The 2nd Division became heavily involved in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). In the action at Zillebeke Private Budge was initially reported as Missing in action on 20 September 1917 but later on 29 September 1917 this was amended to Killed in action. He was buried at a site known as Pill Box Cemetery and the map references carefully recorded. In 1920 his remains were moved by the Graves Registration Unit to Perth Cemetery (China Wall) Ypres.

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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*

Additional/personal information:

James Budge had been born in Halkirk, Caithness Scotland. In Scotland he married Jemima Birrell, who was apparently a widow with two sons Thomas Birrell and John Birrell. The family came to WA when Thomas was 14, probably just before James began work with the WAGR.

> BUDGE.—Killed in action somewhere in France, on October 20, 1917, Private James Budge, dearly loved husband of Jemima Budge, Sayer-street, Midland Junction. —Inserted by his loving wife and sons, Tom (on active service). *Western Mail* 16/11/1917p19

The date quoted by Mrs Budge appears to be an error in the stress of the bad news, as military records and a later record field by her widow confirm the 20 September 1917.

James' stepson Thomas Birrell also enlisted, gaining the regimental number 5865 in the same 16th Reinforcement to the same 27th Battalion as his step-father. Thomas survived the fighting but unfortunately also did not return, falling victim to the 'Spanish flu' pandemic in France in 1919.

> BIRRELL.—On March 13, 1919, died of influenza abroad, Private Thomas Birrell, 27th Battalion, dearly beloved son of Mrs. James Budge, and brother of John, loving nephew of Jessie and Bella. Deeply mourned. Inserted by his loving mother, Sayer-street, Midland Junction. *Western Mail* 4/4/1919p27

After he died his wife received a pension and a pension was also paid to stepson John Birrell. Jemima Budge died in Subiaco in 1932 at the age of 59 years. A marriage is recorded in BDM and newspapers between a John Birrell and Olive Louise Back in 1918 and although this appears likely to be James' stepson, it has not been confirmed.

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----------

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