Carroll, John Sylvester

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



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

John Carroll was lost in a double tragedy for his family, as his son also enlisted and was killed two months before John.

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Way and Works
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: Joined WAGR 8/1911 as Repairer, Geraldton, later at Chidlow's Well (later renamed Chidlows). Enlisted in 28th Battalion AIF 31/3/1917 (Service No.7038) aged 40. Killed in action 15/6/1918.
Mr Carroll's individual employment record has not been found in the normal series. His name, and the details shown are taken from the Honour Roll published by the WAGR after the 1914-18 War and articles in the staff magazine, etc..
("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang working to maintain an allocated section of railway line. A typical gang might include between 3 and 6 Repairers with one Leading Hand Repairer and a Ganger in charge.)

Military service information:

Conflict: First World War 1914-1918

Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	7038
Date of death:	15 June 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	41
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension, Picardie, France

John Sylvester Carroll commenced his enlistment in the AIF at Chidlow and was signed on at Blackboy Hill Camp on 31 March 1917. He had no previous military experience and nominated his wife Annie Cecilia Carroll as his Next of Kin. His basic training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 21st Reinforcements to 28th Battalion with regimental number 7038.

He departed Australia through Albany aboard A16 HMAT *Port Melbourne* on 23 July 1917 and disembarked at Liverpool on 16 September 1917. Pte Carroll marched into 7 Training Bn the following day. He was amongst a number of men picked for transfer to other Units and moved from 7 Training Bn to 6 Training Bn on 8 November 1917. He departed the UK through the Port of Southampton and was taken on strength of AIBD on 24 Jan 1918 where he remained until 29 January

1918 when he was taken on strength of B Company16 Battalion, in the field. He was Killed in Action by shell fire on 15 June 1918 near Hamelet while 16 Battalion were in the reserve lines. He was buried in the Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension that same day.

Additional/personal information:

John Carroll was born in Allansford Victoria but was in WA by 1917 when his marriage to Annie Cecilia Carr was registered in Leederville district (BDM 32/1917).

By this time he had at least three children, including the eldest who also enrolled in the 1914-18 war and unfortunately died just before his father - 4483 Pte Charles W Carroll originally of 14th/16 Battalion but later 51 Battalion who Died of Wounds on 5 April 1918 and was also buried in France.

It appears from the wording of family newspaper notices that these were John and Annie's children, although that would indicate a common law or defacto marriage before 1917, which was unusual at that time. Alternately John may have had an earlier marriage, and Annie might have adopted the children after the first wife's death. It is not possible to confirm either case from the records available online.

> CARROLL-Died of wounds on April 6, 1918, somewhere in France, Private C. W. H. Carroll, aged 25 years, late of Kalgoorlie, beloved eldest son of Mrs. A. C. Carroll, and Private J. S. Carroll (on active service), late of Chidlow's Well, now at Bayswater; Guildford-road. Loved by all who knew him. -- Inserted by his loving mother, brother, and sister. Eastern papers please copy. *The West Australian* 23/4/1918p1

Other notices followed the death of John Carroll:

> CARROLL.—The friends of Mrs. Annie Carroll will regret to hear of the death of Private J. Sylvester Carroll, late of Kalgoorlie and Chidlow's Well, killed in action in France June 15, 1918, father of C.W. H. Carroll, who was killed April 5, 1918. In a foreign land our dear daddy and brother Are taking their last long sleep. —Inserted by his loving wife and children, Mary and Phillip of Guildford-road, Bayswater. *The West Australian* 9/7/1918p1

> Mrs. Annie Carroll, of Guildford-road, Maylands, wishes to THANK all kind friends for their letters; telegrams, and expressions of sympathy in her recent sad bereavement in the loss of her husband, J. S. Carroll, killed in action on June 15, 1918. Melbourne papers please copy. *The West Australian* 29/7/1918

When John Carroll's widow returned a record card to the military after the war she gave John's age as "41-42" but given the age of his son it seems likely John was older and may have mis-quoted his age to gain enlistment. This was not uncommon.

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----------