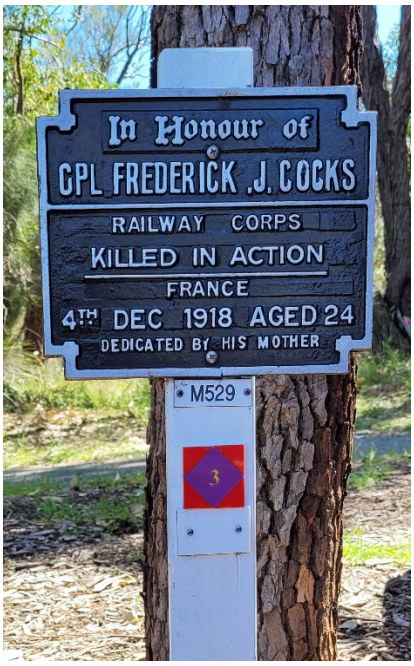
062

Cocks, Frederick James

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



Memorial plaque M529 in Kings Park

Frederick Cocks enlisted and served until the end of the war in France, but while still in France he died in a shunting accident - a major cause of fatalities among railway workers everywhere.

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 14/5/1894. Joined WAGR 8/10/1912 aged 18 as Cleaner, Perth. ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning and otherwise working around locomotives whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.) Transferred to Pinjarra 9/7/1913 and to Perth 23/2/1914.

Honour Rolls prepared after the War show him as "Fireman" although his records do not include this promotion – however employees often passed their tests to step up the ladder but had to wait for a vacancy in the higher grade.

Granted leave to join AIF 17/1/1917 – see below for military service (Service No.918). Killed in shunting accident 4/12/1918, France.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	3rd Australian Light Railway Operating Company
Service number:	918 (previously 2801, see below)
Date of death:	4 December 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	24
Rank at time:	Corporal

Burial/commemoration: Don Communal Cemetery, Annoeulin, France

Frederick Cocks enlisted twice in the AIF. His first enlistment was as 2801 Private F J Cocks into the 9th Reinforcement for 11th Battalion. He was 21 on enlistment and gave a history of previous service in the 86th Infantry Regiment (a Western Australian cadet unit). He departed Fremantle aboard A20 HMAT *Hororata* on 5 October 1915. He had injured a knee prior to sailing and was unable to function as a soldier in Egypt so was returned to Australia on 28 January 1916 for discharge. Cocks underwent operative treatment at 8 Australian General Hospital, Fremantle following which he was discharged as Medically Unfit.

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Cocks re-enlisted on 9 January 1917 and declared that he had served in 11th Battalion for 314 days. He was allocated to the Railway Corps with a regimental number 918. He departed Fremantle aboard A28 HMAT *Miltiades* on 29 Jan 1917. In France he served as a Corporal with 3rd Light Railway Operating Company. The army used the term "light railways" to describe narrow gauge lines, often temporary tracks laid to move troops, ammunition or supplies to and from the front lines.

He survived to the end of the war but while still on service, on 4 December 1918 he was fatally injured in an accident in the Marquillies Railway Yard. (Marquillies is about 15 km SW from Lille – in 2018 there was still a passengers stopping place but no longer any yard.) His injuries were reported as fractured left clavicle, collapsed left lung, ruptured spleen and crushed testes. He was taken to 15 Casualty Clearing Station but was dead on arrival. The accident was investigated and statements collected from all present. The death was noted to be accidental and recorded as Died of Injuries (Accidental). No charges were laid. He was buried in the Don Communal Cemetery, Annoeulin which is a few km east of Marquillies.

Additional/personal information:

Frederick Cocks was born in Bendigo, Victoria in 1894 but appears to have been brought to WA while young as he attended Kalgoorlie Central School (a primary school). He was not married when he enlisted. His mother recorded that he served in Home Defence between his first and second enlistments (AWM).

He has a memorial plaque (M529) in Kings Park which shows that he was killed in action.

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----------

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