Fulcher, 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:	Way and Works
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: Repairer, Konnongorring, Goomalling.
("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang maintaining 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. The WAGR Annual report for 1914/15 showed they employed 882 Repairers at 8 shillings per day, with many at very small settlements or tent camps.)

44th Battalion AIF (Service No.3654). Killed in action 8/8/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	3654
Date of death:	8 August 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	50
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, Picardie, France

James Fulcher enlisted at Blackboy Hill Camp on 01 Feb 1917 and nominated his wife Alice Rose Fulcher as his NOK. James Fulcher had served in the Lincolnshire Regiment of the British Army and had been stationed at Khartoum and seen active service during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. He was discharged from the British Army as "time expired". Following basic training Pte Fulcher was allocated to 13th/51 Bn with the regimental number 3654. He sailed from Fremantle on 29 June 1917 aboard A30 HMAT *Borda* and disembarked at Plymouth on 25 Aug 1917. In England he joined 13 Trg Bn until he departed from Southampton on 4 December 1917 to join the British Expeditionary Force. In France he was reassigned to 44 Battalion and was taken-on-strength from 13th/51 Bn on 10 December 1917.

In the assault on Hamel on 8 August 1918 he was shot through the right side of his chest. He was seen to be walking back to the Advanced Dressing Station when he collapsed. Stretcher bearers then carried him to the ADS but he was dead on arrival and classified as being Killed in action. In some correspondence his date of death was incorrectly recorded as 8 September 1918 but this was later corrected. Pte Fulcher was initially buried on the battlefield but his final resting place was Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres with Rev E O Phillips officiating at the burial.

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Additional/personal information:

Official records show this man's age at the time of his death to be 45 years but when his widow completed the AWM circular she stated that his age at death was 50 so it is likely that he lowered his age to gain enlistment. He had been born at Drayton, Norfolk England and migrated to Australia at the age of 43 years.

His widow paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: Father in thy Gracious Keeping Leave we our Loved One Sleeping. For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his widow together with other memorabilia. Mrs Fulcher received a military pension, the details of which are not available remotely (NAA file PP13/1-C11196). Alice Rose Fulcher died on 09 Feb 1933 aged 65 years and was buried in Karrakatta cemetery.

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----------