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Hanson, John Waldemar (a.k.a Jack Walter Hanson)

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:	Porter

Rail employment notes: Born 3/4/1894. Joined WAGR 25/4/1910 aged 16 as Junior Porter, Bunbury. Appointed to Porter, Bunbury 19/1/1916.

("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR – some had specific roles such as a receiving goods porter, some were general hands while some learnt safe-working and could assist with signals, etc. Bunbury, a busy junction station and terminus of passenger trains, would have had multiple porters. A Junior Porter was under 21 and paid less.)

Granted leave to join AIF 28/3/1916 (Service No.28408). Died of wounds 14/10/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Field Artillery Brigade
Service number:	28408
Date of death:	14 October 1917
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Gunner

Burial/memorialisation: St Sever Cemetery Extension, Haute-Normandie, France

John Hanson enlisted on 26 April 1916, aged then 22. He had some experience in the 86th Regiment of Citizen Forces of WA (parttime militia) and nominated his father C Hanson of Bunbury as his next of kin.

He actually enlisted using the name Jack Walter Hanson. There was much anti-German sentiment at the time and he may have felt that "Waldemar" would not be popular with fellow soldiers.

After training he was allocated to 7th Reinforcements to 14th Field Artillery Brigade with regimental number 28408. This group embarked in Melbourne on HMAT *Ulysses* on 25 October 1916.

Gunner Hanson was wounded in action on 4 October 1917, and died of his wounds in hospital in Rouen, France on 14 October 1917. He was buried in the St Sever cemetery.

Additional/personal information:

John Waldemar Hanson was born in Perth however the family must have moved soon after as he attended Bunbury State School. He was a son of Christian and Elizabeth Hanson.

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His preference for the less-Germanic name seems to have been accepted by hts family, although with some mixture:

> HANSON.— In loving memory of our dearly loved son and brother, Gunner J. W. Hanson, who died of wounds on October 14, 1917, at Rouen, France … (Inserted by his sorrowing father, another and brother, White-road. Bunbury.) *South Western Times* 15/10/1918p2
>
> HANSON.—Died of gunshot wounds in France, October 14, 1917, Gunner Jack Walter Hanson (late of the Railway Department), dearly loved eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Hanson, and beloved brother of Tom, Stirling-street, Bunbury; aged 23 years and 6 months. *The West Australian* 3/11/1917p1
>
> HANSON.—In loving memory of John Walter Hanson, who was killed in France Ortober 13, 1917, nephew of the late Jack Hutchison. Inserted by his loving auntie Nellie and cousins Charlie and Dollie. *The West Australian* 15/10/1918p1

His family organised an epitaph on his grave "beloved in life revered in death our sacrifice".

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----------