

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

Ingate, Harry Charles

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

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Tarpaulin Maker

Rail employment notes: Joined WAGR 5/1913 as Tarpaulin Maker, Midland Workshops. Career record cards have not been located, however the Locomotive Branch (later the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch) was responsible for Midland Workshops and for all maintenance of locomotives, carriages, wagons, etc. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of tarpaulins were needed each year for covering grain and other loads in wagons, and for temporary covers for items awaiting repairs.
44th Battalion AIF (Service No.5729). Died of illness in England 4/2/1917.



Titled "Loco shops send off to Soldiers April 19th 1916" this photo shows the fervour of the time for recruiting. Of these 40 men on the raised balcony, eleven of them including Harry Ingate paid the ultimate price and lost their lives. Whatever their job, from car builders to boilermaker's assistants, they joined a range of WA men volunteering to fight. Workers and management had gone to considerable lengths for the occasion with tree branches, band, flags and the name-bearing banner, while a central shield added a whimsical note with "Loco shops W.A. Easter egg for the Kaiser". P. Rogers collection.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion, late 11th Battalion.
Service number:	5729
Date of death:	4 February 1917
Place of death:	In hospital, England
Age:	37
Rank at time of death:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Harry Ingate enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill on 9 March 1916. He had previously been a sailor but had no military experience. He had been born in Yarmouth, England and migrated to Australia at the age of 30 years. On enlistment he nominated his wife Julia Ingate as his NOK. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 18th Reinforcement to 11th Battalion with the regimental number 5729. Pte Ingate departed Australia from Fremantle on A31 HMAT *Ajana* on 15 July 1916. On arrival in England he marched into 3 Trg Bn on 1 Sep 1916 and was taken-on-strength of 44 Bn on 23 Sep 1916. He was admitted to hospital suffering from cerebro-spinal fever on 9 November 1916 where he remained until 30 Jan 1917 when he was transferred to the Sidney Hall (Military) Hospital where he died on 4 February 1917. The cause of death was recorded as hydrocephalus secondary to cerebro-spinal fever. Pte Ingate was buried on 6 February 1917 in the Melcombe Regis Cemetery (Weymouth) with the Rev E Pitt Own officiating.

Additional/personal information:

Harry Ingate was born in Yarmouth, England, but came to Australia when he was 30, where he married Julia McClure in Fremantle (BDM 12/1913). Sons Thomas and Harry were born in WA, registered in Midland in 1913 and 1915. Perhaps experience mending sails as a sailor helped him gain work with tarpaulins for the WAGR.

This man never crossed to France and never saw any active service so his full medal entitlement was just the British War Medal. Meningitis was a pretty common problem when people were concentrated together. It claimed quite a few Australian lives and often men in their third decade.

His wife paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: “In the Midst of Life we are in Death His Loving Wife and Family”. For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal which was issued to his wife together with other memorabilia. There are no pension entitlement documents on his personal file but the Repatriation Department maintained files on his wife until her death. Mrs Julia Ingate died in 1972 at the age of 86 years with a memorial erected in the Midland Cemetery.

Further information 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----------