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Kamman, George

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: Born 28/2/1891. Joined WAGR 9/6/1914 aged 23 as Repairer, Maryvale. Maryvale was a siding in the forest on the now-closed railway from Wonnerup (near Busselton) to Nannup. ("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang responsible for upkeep of 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. Many gangs were posted to small sidings where there was no settlement and they had to establish a tent camp.)

Granted leave to join AIF 23/6/1915 (Service No.3128). Killed in action 11/4/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	3128
Date of death:	11 April 1917
Place of death:	France
Age:	27
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France

George Kamman enlisted in the AIF on 12 July 1915 and after basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp was allocated to 10th Reinforcements to 16 Battalion with the regimental number 3128. He had no previous military experience and had been born in London, migrating to Australia at the age of 16. He nominated his wife Alma Daisy Kamman as his Next of Kin. With basic training completed he departed Australia aboard A32 HMAT *Themistocles* from Fremantle. After some delay in the pool of infantry reinforcements he was taken on strength of 16 Bn on 5 February 1916. After further training the Bn departed Alexandria on 1 June 1916 aboard HMT *Canada* and disembarked at Marseilles on 9 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Kamman served throughout the Battles of Pozieres and Moquet Farm before entering winter quarters. On 25 March 1917 he was detached HQ 4th/Brigade for training as a signaller by 4th/Australian Division Signal Coy following which he returned to HQ 16 Bn as a signaller.

On 11 April 1917 the Brigade attempted to breach the enormous fortifications in front of Bullecourt, France. There was no artillery to cut the wire but instead the new weapon of the tank was to crush a pathway. The tanks were unreliable and either failed to arrive, broke down or were destroyed by German artillery. The attack was a total failure and 16 Bn suffered a huge number Killed in Action, Wounded in Action or Missing (mostly later found to be POW). Pte Kamman was posted Missing in

Action but a Court of Enquiry held on 30 Oct 1917 changed this to Killed in Action. His body was never recovered; he has no known grave, and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

George Kamman was born in London but came to WA when he was 16. In 1915 he married Alma Daisy Lawrence in the Perth district. He came from a large family and it appears they emigrated together as most of his siblings also married in WA.

> KAMMAN.—In sad but loving memory of George, killed in action in France on April 11 (previously reported missing), dearly beloved son of Mrs. L. Kamman; brother of Alice, Mart., and Fred., Harry (prisoner of war), Arthur and Will (on active service, France); also nephew of Mr. and Mrs. J. W.Darkins, Sussex, England; and cousin of Private F. Pattrick and T. Stanford (with the B.E.F., France).
> What though in lonely grief I sigh For thee, beloved, no longer nigh, Submissive would I still reply Thy will be done. —Inserted by his sorrowing mother, sister, and brothers. *The West Australian* 26/11/1917p1

> KAMMAN.—Killed in action, in France, Signaller George Kamman (previously reported missing on April 11, 1917), dearly beloved husband of Alma Kamman and brother-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. H. Nash and Minna, Lawrence, Minilya, Glyde-street, Cottesloe Beach. Loved by all who knew him. *The West Australian* 22/11/1917p1

Pte Kamman had two brothers who also enlisted. They were 6227 Pte Henry Charles Kamman 16 Bn taken as a POW on 11 April 1917 (the same day his brother was killed) but returned to Australia after the War and 4732 Cpl Arthur Kamman, 51 Bn who survived the War and returned home.

For his service Pte Kamman was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His widow received a pension of 40/- per fortnight commencing with effect from 08 Jul 1917.

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----------