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Lewis, Lewis 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:	Locomotive
Designation:	Apprentice, Fitter

Rail employment notes: Born 8/11/1893. Joined WAGR 6/6/1910 aged 16 as Apprentice Fitter, Midland Workshops.
In this era, the "Locomotive" branch of the WAGR, which would later be named the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch, included the major workshops at Midland (then Midland Junction) employing a wide range of tradesmen to work on locomotives, carriages and freight wagons as they were built or passed through for repairs, and also trained apprentices in many trades.

As Lewis for employed for more that 5 years when he enlsited, it is likely that his apprenticeship was completed however this is not shown in surviving employment records.

Granted leave to join AIF 28/9/1915 (Service No.9972). Accidentally killed 22/12/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	Australian Army Service Corps
Service number:	9972
Date of death:	22 December 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	23
Rank:	Driver

Burial/memorialisation: Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L'Abbe, Picardie, France

Lewis Lewis was enlisted as a Motor Transport Driver from 27 September 1915 with regimental number 82.

After initial training he was allocated to the Army Medical Corps – the WAGR always maintained active frist aid classes and competitions, especially at Midland Workdshops, and it's possible that Lewis had demonstrated skills there. Joining with other AMC enlistees from various ports, he embarked at Fremantle on 21 December 1915 on HMAT *Barambah*.

During a later reorganisation he was transferred to the Australian Army Service Corps, with new number 9972, still classified as a driver.

He was killed on 22 december 1916, his death described as of accidental causes.

He is buried at Heilly Station Cemetery which is just south of Heilly railway station, near the town of Mericourt-L'Abbe in Picardie.

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Additional/personal information:

Lewis James Lewis was born in Melbourne Victoria in 1893, a son of Morgan and Mary (nee Smith) Lewis. (Vic BDM 31751/1893). His parents had married there in 1892.

It seems they soon after emigrated to Western Australia, as did many families after the 1890s gold finds in the west, as his sister Amy Dorothea Lewis was born in North Fremantle in 1897.

His mother died in Claremont in 1915, after which it appears his family moved back to Victoria, where Morgan Lewis died in Footscray in 1950, aged 84 (Vic BDM 567/1950) and Amy Dorothea married Sydney Gill in 1930..

> LEWIS.—On December 22, in France, whilst serving his King and country, Lewis James Lewis the beloved son of Morgan and the late Mary Lewis, late of Claremont and North Fremantle and brother of Amy D.Lewis, Age 23 years. He died as he lived—nobly. —Inserted by his loving father and sister. *The West Australian* 19/1/1917p1
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> LEWIS.-Accidentally killed in France, December 23, 1916, Driver L. J. Lewis, 4th A.A.S.P., A.I.F., loving friend of Mabel I. Hirst, Pearce-st., Cottesloe. *The West Australian* 9/1/1917p1

His lady friend Mabel Isobella Hirst later married Albert Wood (WA BDM 100525/1921)

Further information

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----------