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Parker, Alfred

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:	Relief Officer

Rail employment notes: Born 22/8/1892 (doubtful – probably 1884). Joined WAGR 22/7/1912 as Casual Porter, Perth Goods. Appointed Goods Porter 5/2/1913 and transferred to Maylands 2/4/1913. ("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. Mr parker must have studied and passed course in safe-working, necessary to be promoted to station officer roles.)

Promoted to Assistant Station Master, Woolgangie 27/5/1913, Gosnells 5/12/1913 and transferred to Station Relieving Officer, Perth 5/8/1915.
(When stations were busy enough to warrant more than one officer, the Station Master normally worked day shift 8am – 4pm and had overall responsibility, the Assistant Station Master worked 4pm-midnight and the Night Station master worked midnight-8am.)

Granted leave to join AIF 7/4/1916 (Service No.2032). Killed in action 4/7/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2032
Date of death:	4 July 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	33
Rank:	Sergeant

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

Alfred Parker enlisted on 3 February 1916, nominating his wife Sarah Hannah Parker of Bayswater as his next of kin. He was allocated to 3rd Reinforcements to 44th Infantry Battalion, with the regimental number 2032.

After training in WA, his reinforcement group embarked on HMAT *Suffolk* on 10 October 1916 at Fremantle.

The 44th battalion were engaged in fighting I France for most of 1917 and 1981. Sergeant Parker was killed in action in the battle for Hamel in France on 4 July 1918.

He was buried in the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery near Villers-Bretonneux in France

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The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Australian soldiers killed in France, whose bodies could be found for relocation, are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and right.

The wing walls to both sides of the central watch tower record, carved in stone, the names of Australian soldiers killed in France but with no known grave – tragically, more than 11 000 men. The largest number recorded from one unit is from 28th Battalion – some 365 West Australians.



Additional/personal information:

Alfred Parker was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England. His widow stated after his death that he was aged 33 years and 11 month, indicating he was born in mid-1884 – the WAGR record appears to be an error, although it is possible that he thought that by putting his age under 21, therefore a lower pay rate, he would get preference for a job.

His wife also wrote that he came to Australia when he was 26 years old which would be about 1910. It appears he was already married and his wife Sarah Hannah Parker came out with him, however the WA BDM records show their son was born in Perth in 1910. Notices after Alfred's death indicate there was only the one child.

> PARKER.—Sergeant Alfred Parker, killed in action, France, July 4, 1918, dearly-loved husband of S. H. Parker, Garratt-road, Bayswater, and loved father of Steve. The West Australian 22/7/1918p1

His widow later used the surname Milton so it appears she remarried, however that was likely in Doncaster in Yorkshire which she gave as her address in the 1920s

For 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----------