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Peacock, Ralph Wilson

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:	Chief Mechanical Engineer
Designation:	Fitter's Labourer

Rail employment notes: Born 14/9/1886. Joined WAGR 12/6/1911 aged 24 as Labourer, Wagin. Transferred to Lake Matilda 10/10/1912 and back to Wagin 13/3/1913. To Fitters Labourer, Wagin 2/7/1913 and transferred to Narrogin 29/6/1914.
Both Wagin and Narrogin had tradesmen attached to their locomotive depot.

Granted leave to join AIF 15/1/1915 (Service No.1813). Killed in action 25/7/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	1813
Date of death:	25 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	31
Rank:	Lance Corporal

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

Ralph Wilson Peacock enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill Camp on 16 January 1915. He had no previous military experience and nominated his father Thomas Wilson Peacock as his Next of kin. The AWM holds a photograph P05384.001 which shows 3 private soldiers but there is no indication which one is Pte Peacock nor where or when the photograph was taken. Basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill following which he was allocated to 4th Reinforcements to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 1813. He departed Australia from the Port of Fremantle on 19 April 1915 aboard A8 HMAT *Argyllshire*. On arrival in Egypt he was quickly transferred to Gallipoli where he was taken on strength of 11 Bn on 4 June 1915. He was a member of the Bn in August 1915 when they made the last great assault on the Turkish lines. On 3 October 1915 he presented to 1 Casualty Clearing Station with Pyrexia of Unknown Origin (PUO) and was evacuated to Malta aboard HMHS *Assaye*. His time on Malta was complicated when he developed Influenza on 7 December 1915 but he recovered sufficiently to re-join 11 Bn in Egypt on 13 Dec 1915.

Following the reorganization of the AIF Divisions in Egypt he sailed from Alexandria aboard HMT *Kingstonian* on 27 March 1916 and disembarked at Marseilles on 03 Apr 1916 to join the BEF. Pte Peacock was appointed to be a Lance Corporal on 10 April 1916 and for a short period was a Temporary Corporal before reverting to his substantive rank of L/Cpl. The Battalion engaged in the Battle for Pozieres during which he was posted as Missing in action on 22 July 1916. No Court of Enquiry was held but the CO of 11 Bn changed the MIA to Killed in action on 22 July 1916 by a letter

to Army HQ in France dated 19 October 1916. There is no substantial report about his death or burial on his Red Cross File. As he has no known grave he is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

Additional/personal information:

When his belongings were returned to his NOK from the kit store it included a revolver but the make and calibre were not stated so it is not known if it was captured. There was considerable confusion over the whereabouts of a Will but one was eventually located which nominated his father as sole beneficiary. For his service he was entitled to receive the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were all issued to his father together with other memorabilia.

Mr Peacock (Snr) (next of kin) made a claim for a military pension which was granted at the rate of 14/- per fortnight effective from 31 Aug 1917. He died on 27 Dec 1945 at the age of 87 and was cremated at Karrakatta Cemetery.

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----------