Press, William Stevens

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:	Tube End Machinist

Rail employment notes: Born 27/4/1874. Joined WAGR 30/1/1902 aged 27 as Labourer, Fremantle Workshops. Appointed a Machinist 11/7/1903 and transferred to Midland Workshops 5/1/1905. Later a Tube End Machinist. Left to enlist in AIF 4/6/1916. Killed in action 27/3/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	6817
Date of death:	27 March 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	43
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Euston Road Cemetery, Colincamps, Picardie, France

William Stevens Press enlisted in the AIF at the age of 41 on 4 July 1916 and underwent basic training at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 22nd reinforcement to 16 Battalion with the regimental number 6817. He nominated his wife Hannah Charlotte Press as his Next of kin. He had no previous military experience. He departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A8 HMAT *Argyllshire* on 9 November 1916. He disembarked at Devonport on 10 January 1917 and marched into 4 Training Battalion the same day. Private Press developed appendicitis and was hospitalised between 27 February 1917 and 21 March 1917 when he returned to the Training Bn. He crossed to France to join the BEF via Folkestone on 11 April 1917. He passed through 4 ADBD before being taken on strength of 16 Battalion on 30 April 1917. The Battalion was in the process of being rebuilt after the disaster at Bullecourt on 11 April 1917 and did not enter the front line again until 11 June 1917. On 9 October 1917 he was detached to the 4th Division Provost Marshal for Acting Provost Duties and returned to 16 Battalion on 30 October 1917. A septic infection of his foot saw him in hospital between 15th and 26th November 1917. The German Army commenced their Spring Offensive on 21 March 1917 and 16 Battalion was ordered to hold the line at Hebuterne at all costs. Private Press was Killed in action on 27 March 1918 and buried at Euston Rd Cemetery, Colincamps.

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*

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Additional/personal information:

William was born in South Australia and attended school there in the town of Burra before moving to WA by 1902. He married Hannah Charlotte Skipworth and they had at least two children, sons Clifford and Thomas both born in WA.

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These were issued to his wife as well as the Memorial Scroll and Plaque. His file contains no record of pensions payable to his widow or son (Clifford Charles Press). Hannah Press died in 1938 BDM Per1190/1938. His son died in 1970 at the age of 68.

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----------

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