Reid, Solomon

A West Australian railway employee
killed while on military service for their country



Memorial at Railway Workshops Midland (D.Graham/panoramio)

Solomon Reid is a mystery – having emigrated from England to WA, he then appears to have returned to the UK to enlist in the British Army, in a regiment whose records unfortunately were destroyed in the second war bombing of London, leaving little trace of his life.

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Way and Works
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: Joined WAGR 8/1913 as Repairer, Eujinyn and Bruce Rock, Ways & Works Branch. (Eujinyn was a siding approximately 10 km west of Bruce Rock on the connecting railway to York) "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. It could be a hard life, especially in a small town.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	British Army
Military unit:	2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards
Service number:	12508
Date of death:	15 September 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	28
Rank at time of death:	Lance Corporal

Burial/commemoration: No known grave; remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, France.

12508 Lance Corporal Solomon Reid, "C" Company, 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards, aged 28 years was killed on 15 September 1916. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, France. This fact and the date of death indicates that he was killed during the Battle of the Somme.

Additional/personal information:

Solomon Reid was the son of Joseph and Martha Reid, Eastlake, Loughborough, England but had emigrated to WA by 1913. No record of marriage or children has been found.

It is not known why he enlisted in the British Army rather than the AIF. Australian soldiers in the First War were paid more per day than their British counterparts, so he would not have returned to

© Rail Heritage WA

England for monetary gain. Perhaps he had served in the Grenadier Guards before coming to WA, and wished to rejoin former colleagues.

First War historian Dr Michael Galvin comments:

> At the outbreak of the Great War there were 3 Battalions of Grenadier Guards. The 2nd Bn left for France in August 1914 and suffered enormous casualties at Ypres. They were continually reinforced and again suffered greatly on the Somme.
>
> His age suggests that he was not a previous soldier who had retired and was recalled to the colours whilst serving out his time on the reserve. More likely he went back in the UK and enlisted directly. The bulk of other ranks records were destroyed by fire during a Luftwaffe raid on London early in the blitz so further information from military sources is unlikely.

Further information and/or photos may be added as available. Information and/or photographs 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).

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military information for Solomon Reid interpreted by G.M.Galvin.

----------Lest we forget----------

 © Rail Heritage WA