Rogers, Arthur Wilks

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

Some young men were said to enlist for the ‘excitement’ but Sapper Rogers was a sad reminder that war is not exciting. After volunteering, he spent nearly two years in training, transport, illness and more training before actually reaching the front line where he was seriously wounded after less than a month and transported home as a paraplegic.



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

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Cleaner

Rail employment notes: Born 26/8/1895. Joined WAGR 22/3/1915 aged 19 as Cleaner, Perth. (“Cleaner” in the Locomotive branch was a junior position, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Granted leave to join AIF 20/12/1915 (Service No.4889). Died of wounds 8/5/1919.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Battalion.
Service number:	4889
Date of death:	8 May 1919
Place of death:	Fremantle, Western Australia
Age:	23
Rank:	Sapper
Burial/memorialisation:	Karrakatta General Cemetery (Perth)

Arthur Wilks Rogers enlisted in the AIF on 28 December 1915 and underwent basic military training at Blackboy Hill Camp. On enlistment he gave his Next of Kin as his father John Wilks Rogers and stated that he had no previous military experience. He was allocated to 15th Reinforcement to 16th Battalion with the regimental number 4889. He departed Australia aboard A38 HMAT *Ulysses* on 6 March 1916. His journey to the UK was broken when he was admitted to 2 Stationary Hospital in Egypt suffering from Measles. Pte Rogers arrived at Plymouth on 11 June 1916 and marched into 4 Training Bn that same day. He remained at 4 Training Bn until 16 Nov 1916 when he was transferred to the Pioneer Training Bn. On 30 September 1917 he crossed to France to join the BEF as a member of AGBD and was taken on strength of 14 Field Company Australian Engineers from 15th/16 Bn with

the rank of Sapper. His front-line service was short as he was Wounded in Action on 30 October 1917.

He was initially treated at 3 Canadian CCS then by Ambulance Train to 3 General Hospital at Boulogne where he was treated until transfer to King George Hospital (UK) then to 1 AAH at Harefield. He left the UK as a patient aboard HMHS *Dunluce Castle* and trans-shipped to HMHS *Karoola* at Suez, arriving Fremantle on 20 May 1918 when Sapper Rogers was immediately admitted to 8 Australian General Hospital, Fremantle. His AIF service was terminated on 18 November 1918 but he remained an inpatient as a pension patient. He died on 8 May 1919 and a copy of the Death Certificate on file shows that the doctor attributed his death to "Gunshot wound to back and abdomen". He was buried at the Karrakatta General Cemetery (Perth).

Additional/personal information:

His Medical Board record shows that there was a metallic foreign body lodged in the 2nd Lumbar Vertebrae and he had a mixed sensory and motor deficit related to that level accompanied by incontinence. There were no facilities to treat such patients in the civilian community at that time, so it may have been a relief that he died before 8 AGH closed when the AIF was wrapped up.

He came from a large family:

> ROGERS.—On May 8, 1919, at the No. 8 Australian Base General Hospital, Fremantle, Arthur Wilks Rogers, late 12th Field Company Engineers (returned A.I.F.), and dearly loved son of Eunice Rogers (Mandurah), and brother of Mrs. C.Tuckey (Mandurah), Mrs. Grace Livingston (Perth), J. L. Gallop (Mandurah), J. Rogers (Perth), and Wilfred, Marjorie, and Frank Rogers, aged 24 years. *The West Australian* 10/5/1919p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. After his death it was revealed that his father had deserted his mother (and him) in 1912 and his mother was granted a divorce in 1919. His father's whereabouts could not be determined and in 1922 his medals and other memorabilia were issued to his mother, now known as Mrs Eunice Oldfield as she had re-married to Alfred Oldfield (BDM, Fremantle 167/1919).

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----------