Sells, James Prideaux

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:	Lifter

Rail employment notes: Employed as Lifter, Midland Workshops. Left to enlist in AIF 19/3/1916. Died of wounds 29/4/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	6579
Date of death:	29 April 1917
Place of death:	Place not yet found
Age:	42
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: St Sever Cemetery Extension, Haute-Normandie, France

James Prideaux Sells enlisted in the AIF on 17 April 1916 and received his basic military training at Blackboy Hill Camp. When enlisted he stated that he had no previous military experience and that his wife, Jessie Sells, was his Next of kin. Following training he was allotted to 21st Reinforcements to 16th Battalion which departed Fremantle aboard A23 HMAT *Suffolk* on 13 Oct 1916. Following arrival at Plymouth on 12 December 1916 he marched into 4 Training Bn that same day. Following that training he departed the UK to join the BEF through the Port of Folkestone aboard the SS *Princess Victoria* on 08 Feb 1917. He spent 3 days at 4 ADBD and was then taken on strength of 16 Bn, in the field, on 13 February 1917. Four days later he reported sick with Mumps and was admitted to12 Field Ambulance before being transferred to 2 Fd Amb and then discharged to duty on 5 March 1917. At the First Battle of Bullecourt on 11 April 1917 he was seriously wounded, resulting in amputation of his right leg. Private Sells was carried to 13 Field Ambulance then transferred to 3 CCS and finally 1 AGH at Rouen. His wounds were complicated by septicaemia. He Died of wounds on 29 April 1917 and was buried that same day in St Sever Cemetery Extension with the Church of England Chaplain officiating.

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*

Additional/personal information:

James Sells had been born in Adelaide SA but moved to WA where he married Jessie Iasbella Bates in 1904 (BDM). It appears they did not have any children.

SELLS.-On April 29. ,died of wounds, at lst Australian General Hospital, James Prideux, dearly loved husband of Jessie I. Sells, of 322 Beaufort street,. and late of Midland Junction Workshops. Sadly mourned (*The West Australian* 9/5/1917p1)

For his service he was entitled to receive the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These were issued to his Next of kin along with other memorabilia. His widow was commenced on a pension of 40/- per fortnight. Mrs Sells died in 1945 at the age of 68 years.

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----------