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## Senior, Frank Harold

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


Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

**Rail employment information**

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|---|---|
| Employer: | Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways |
| Branch: | Locomotive |
| Designation: | Fireman |

Rail employment notes: Born 4/3/1892. Joined WAGR 14/3/1911 aged 19 as Cleaner, Northam. ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Transferred to Southern Cross 27/4/1912 and Northam 1/3/1913. Promoted to Fireman 10/8/1913 and transferred to Merredin 8/2/1915.

Granted leave to join AIF 8/1/1916 (Service No.22539). Killed in action 17/10/1918.

**Military service information:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Conflict: | First World War 1914-1918 |
| Service: | Australian Imperial Force (AIF) |
| Military unit: | 8th Australian Field Artillery Brigade |
| Service number: | 22539 |
| Date of death: | 17 October 1918 |
| Place of death: | France |
| Age: | 26 |
| Rank: | Bombardier |

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

Frank Senior was enlisted on 26 January 1916. He gave his age as 24 and nominated his father Mr C J Senior of Maylands as his next of kin. He was initially allocated to the 1st Reinforcements to 23rd Howitzer Brigade. After some initial training he was moved to Victoria to join the group, which then embarked from Melbourne on 20 May 1916 on HMAT *Medic,* which had already made several journeys carrying Australian troops.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli the Divisions were reorganised and Gunner Senior became a member of the 8th Australian Filed Artillery Brigade.

He was promoted to Bombardier, which is the Artillery equivalent of a Corporal.

Bombardier Senior died in France on 17 October 1918 in the last weeks of the war, in battle near Amiens.. His remains have not been found and he has no known grave so he is remembered on the Willers-Bretonneux memorial.


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The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Australian soldiers killed in France, whose bodies could be found for relocation, are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and right.

The wing walls to both sides of the central watch tower record, carved in stone, the names of Australian soldiers killed in France but with no known grave – tragically, more than 11 000 men. The largest number recorded from one unit is from 28th Battalion – some 365 West Australians.



**Additional/personal information:**

Frank Senior was born in Prahran in Victoria in 1892, a son of Charles James senior and Mary Jane Senior (nee Partridge). Brothers Charles James and Arthur William, and sister Helen Jean, were also born around Melbourne. After 1896 the family moved west, as did many people after the 1890s gold finds in WA. (Vic BDM 16554/1892 etc)

Frank attended school in Perth and later in 1911 obtained employment with the WAGR. He was single when he enlisted although he appears to have left a close friend behind:

> SENIOR.—A tribute to my dearest friend, Gunner Frank Harold Senior, killed in action somewhere in France on October 17, after nearly three years' service; late W.A.G.R., Northam and Merredin. Greater love hath no man than this. He was everybody's hero, but just my boy. Inserted by his loving friend, Fanny Cunningham, Northam.
> SENIOR.—Killed in action on October 17, 1918, after two and a half years on active service abroad, Gunner Frank Senior, late fireman, W.A.G. Railways. One of the very best of men who died for his King and country. Inserted by Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Cunningham, West Northam.
> SENIOR.—A tribute to our dear friend, Gunner Frank Harold Senior, killed in action some-where in France on October 17, after nearly three years' service; late W.A.G.R., Northam and Merredin. One of the best. Inserted by his sincere friends, Mrs. Cunningham, Baden, and Ivy, Northam.
> All *The West Australian* 19/11/1918p1
> SENIOR.—In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Gunner Frank Harold Senior, killed in action on October 17, 1918, dearly loved son of C. J. and M. J. Senior, and brother of Will, Jack, and Jean. … Inserted by his loving father and mother, 52 Crawford-road, Maylands.
> *The West Australian* 23/11/1918p1

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----------

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