Pearman, Frederick James

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

Fred Pearman volunteered from eh railway workshops and sailed to England but was soon ruled to be medically unfit due to a heart condition. He was returned to Australia, where he died, the first of a series of tragic family events.



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

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Boilermaker's Assistant

Rail employment notes: Born 1/7/1880. Joined WAGR aged 31 as Boilermaker's Assistant, Midland Workshops. Granted leave to join AIF 5/2/1916 (Service No.15975). Discharged from the AIF, 18.12.1917. Granted leave from the WAGR without pay from 19.12.1917. Died from illness contracted whilst serving with AIF, 26.2.1919 (died at 8th A.G.H., Fremantle). Payment made on 21.5.1919 to widow for holidays accrued to 26.2.1919 (14 days).
He was in a large group farewelled from the Workshops in 1916:



Titled "Loco shops send off to Soldiers April 19th 1916" this photo shows the fervour of the time for recruiting. Of these 40 men on the raised balcony, ten of them including Harold Hodgson paid the ultimate price and lost their lives. Whatever their job, from car builders to boilermaker's assistants, they joined a range of WA men volunteering to fight. Workers and management had gone to considerable lengths for the occasion with tree branches, band, flags and the name-bearing banner, while a central shield added a whimsical note with "Loco shops W.A. Easter egg for the Kaiser". P. Rogers collection.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	Australian Army Medical Corps
Service number:	15975
Date of death:	26 February 1919
Place of death:	Western Australia
Age:	38
Rank:	Private
Burial/memorialisation:	Karrakatta General Cemetery (Anglican HA 0521)

Age 38. Frederick James Pearman enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) on 04 Feb 1916 in Perth with the regimental number 15975. He embarked for overseas service on 9 November 1916 through Fremantle aboard A8 HMAT *Argyllshire*. He joined a party of general reinforcements for the AAMC which originated in New South Wales. There 12 members in the Western Australia group. The vessel carried reinforcements for a wide variety of logistic and service units and berthed at Devonport on 10 Jan 1917. He marched into the Anzac Training Depot (Parkhouse) on 12 Jan 1917. He was then attached for temporary duty at 3 Australian General Hospital, Brighton on 18 Jan 1917.

He was admitted to that Hospital "sick" on 04 Mar 1917. Subsequent medical documentation shows that he had suffered Rheumatic Fever at the age of 10 years. Medical Board proceedings showed that he had Rheumatic Heart Disease manifesting as myocarditis, endocarditis with damaged mitral and aortic valves. The Board found that he was permanently unfit for general service or home service and that his condition was unrelated to military service. He departed England aboard the Hospital Ship *Karoola* on 3 July 1917 reaching Fremantle on 18 Aug 1917. He was immediately admitted to 8 Australian General Hospital, Fremantle. On 29 November 1917 he was discharged from the AIF as Medically Unfit. Although he was now a civilian, he was readmitted to 8 AGH on 23 February 1919 and died on 26 Feb 1919. There is a notation on his file that an inquest was to be held but on 27 Feb 1919 a Death Certificate was issued stating that the cause of death was heart disease. He was buried in the Karrakatta General Cemetery (Anglican HA 0521).

Additional/personal information:

Frederick Pearman was born at Chatham (UK) and apparently migrated to Australia after 1902 as his son Frederick Elvin Pearman was born in Gillingham, England on 29 Nov 1902.

As Pte Pearman did not enter a declared zone of operations his service medal entitlement was the British War Medal only.

Mr Pearman was married at the time of his death, and appears to have had at least 5 children. Neither his marriage nor the children's births are recorded by BDM WA so he may have married before coming to WA.

A death notice in the *West Australian* of 28/2/1919p1 read:

> Pearman. - On February 26, 1919, at the Medical Section, No. 8 Australian General Hospital, Fremantle, Frederick James, dearly beloved husband of Estella Margaret Pearman, late of A.A.M.C., A.I.F., and formerly of Loco. Shops, Midland Junction, and East Street, East Guildford, aged 38 years.

Sadly, his family seems to have suffered a series of tragic events - only 6 months later:

> PEARMAN.—On August 22, 1919, at Blackboy Hospital, Stella Margaret Alice, relict of the late Frederick James Pearman, late of 63 East-street, East Guildford, and mother of Frederick, Ivan, George, Maurice, Horace, and Vernon, aged 37 years. *The West Australian* 23/8/1919p1

On the anniversary of Frederick's death a notice listed the children

> PEARMAN. —In laying memory of our dear father, Frederick James, who died at the Base hospital Fremantle on February 26, 1919, also our darling mother, Estella, M. A. who died on August 22, 1919. Inserted by their loving sons Fred, Ivan, George, Maurice, Horace and Vernon. *The West Australian* 26/02/1920p1:

but then further misfortune

> PEARMAN.—On November 5, at the Children's Hospital, Maurice Charles, dearly beloved son of the late Frederick James and Estella Margaret Alice Pearman, and loving brother of Fred, George, Horace, and Vernon, aged 9 years. *The West Australian* 6/11/1920p1:

It is not known who then supported the children but they must have remained in Perth as the marriages of Frederick and George are later recorded in BDM.

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)

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