Cousens, Frank Ernest

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

In this period the WAGR operated two sawmills, whose operations were included in the Commissioner's responsibilities and reports. Frank Cousens thus became an employee of the Commissioner for Railways, although not a 'railwayman' in the normal sense.



Memorial plaque in Kings Park (May Drive), Perth WA. G.Higham

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Stores
Designation:	Saw filer

Rail employment notes: Saw filer, No.2 Railway Mill, Dwellingup. Enlisted in 48th Battalion AIF 10/1/1916. Died of wounds 7/8/1916.

* The WAGR records of individual employees, available from the SRO, do not generally include those who worked at the Railway Sawmills. Names and designations have been listed from local Honour Boards, the Railway Institute Magazine, and/or AWM records.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	48th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	5076
Date of death:	7 August 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	22
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Puchevillers British Cemetery, Puchevillers, Picardie, France

Frank Cousens enlisted as 5076 Private F E Cousens in 16th Battalion on 10 January 1916 and was allocated to the 16th reinforcements. He departed through Fremantle on 31 March 1916 aboard A9 HMAT *Shropshire* following basic training at Blackboy Hill Training Camp. His date of arrival in Egypt is not recorded. When 16 Battalion left Egypt for service with the British Expeditionary Force he remained behind as part of the Suez Canal Guard troops.

He departed Alexandria on 7 June 1916 and entered France through Marseilles on14 June 1916. In France he marched in to 4 ADBD (4th Australian Division Base Depot) and was reassigned to 48th Battalion on 17 July 1916 and was taken on strength of that Unit on 21 July 1916. His active service started in the Pozieres-Moquet Farm sector. On 7 August 1916 he suffered Gunshot wounds to head and chest. He was carried to 13 Australian Field Ambulance and then moved on to 44 Casualty Clearing Station where he died of his wounds that same day. He was buried in the Puchevillers British Cemetery, France.

Additional/personal information:

Frank Cousens was born in Rutherglen, Victoria but the family must have moved to WA when he was very young as the births of younger brothers were registered in Karridale in 1898 and Bunbury in 1900. The birth of a sister was registered in 1903 at Jarrahdale, in which town Frank attended the local State School. There were a total of eleven children in the family, although two had died young before the war.

Frank has a memorial tablet in Kings Park (M726 – see photo).

A younger brother 4996 Pte Reuben L Cousens of 28 Battalion was Killed in action on 8 December 1917 and is remembered on tablet M726A in Kings Park. (1917 also saw the death of their mother Mary Elizabeth Cousens (nee Briggs) at Jarrahdale)

Both brothers are listed on the war memorial at Jarrahdale.





The Jarrahdale War Memorial photographed on 21/5/2022. G.Higham

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).

Acknowledgements: Rail employment notes from WAGR records held by State Records Office, Perth, transcribed by J.Austin 2019. Military and personal information researched and prepared by Dr G.M.Galvin. Family notes and collation by G.Higham.

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