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Crockenberg, Herbert M.M.

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:	Stores
Designation:	Wheelwright

Rail employment notes: Wheelwright, No.2 Railway Mill, Dwellingup.

In this period the WAGR operated two sawmills, whose operations were included in the Commissioner of Railway's responsibilities and reports. WAGR records of individual employees have not been found for Mr Crockenberg, however designation and other information have been listed from WAGR Honour Boards, the Railway Institute Magazine, and other sources.

Enlisted in 11th Battalion AIF 10/7/1916 (Service No.7345). Killed in action 10/8/1918.

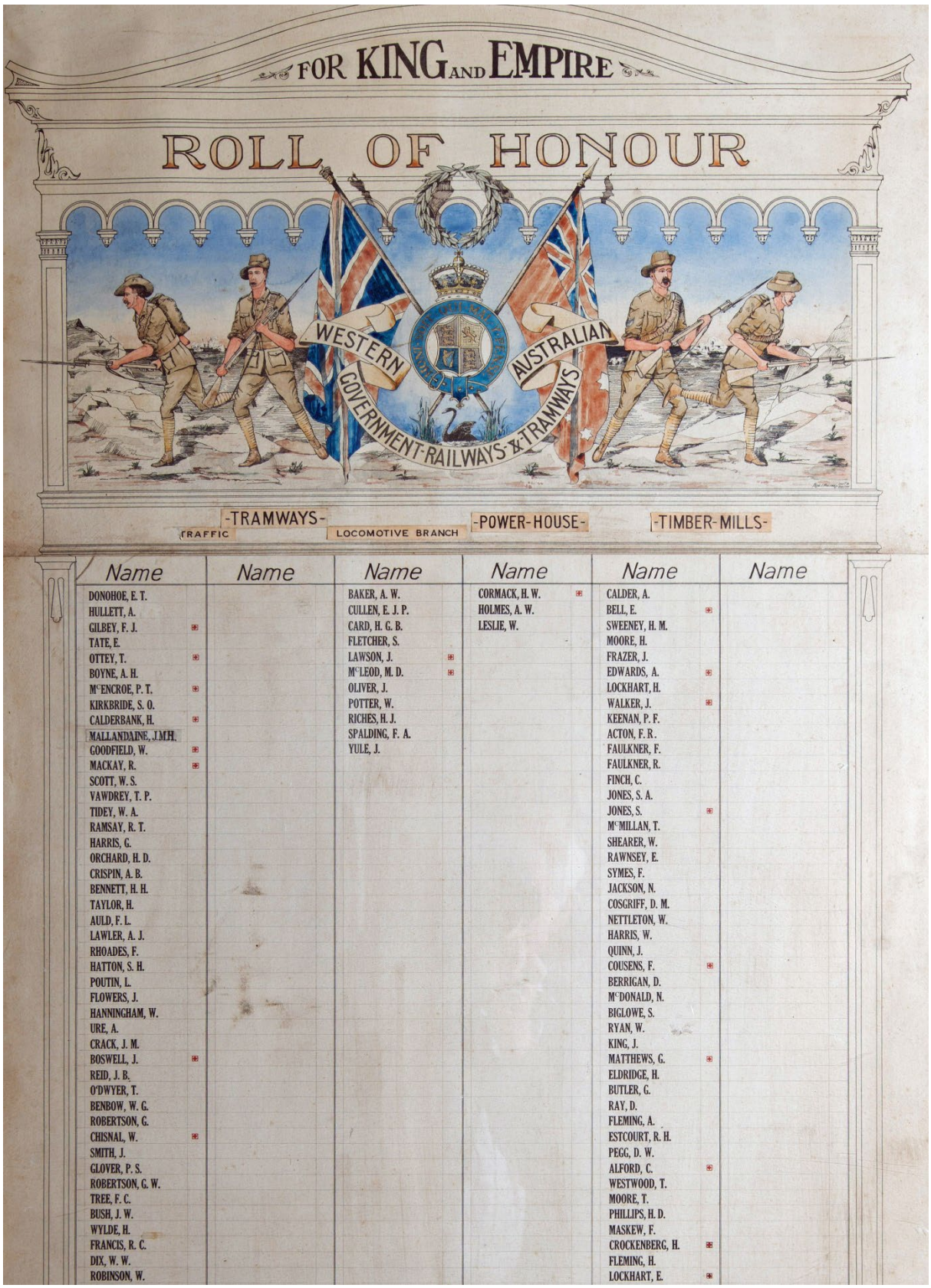
Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	11th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	7345
Date of death:	10 August 1918
Place of death:	France
Age:	31
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, Picardie, France

'Bert' Crockenberg enlisted in Perth on 10 July 1916. He nominated his wife Caroline as his next of kin and stated that he had no previous military experience. He underwent basic military training at Blackboy Hill Camp. After some temporary arrangements, he was finally appointed to 24th Reinforcements to 11 Battalion with the regimental number 7345.

He departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle on 29 January 1917 aboard transport ship HMAT *Miltiades* and disembarked at Devonport UK on 27 March 1917 then marched into 3 Training Battalion the following day. After further training he departed England through Southampton on 9 July 1917 and was taken on strength of 11 Battalion, in the field. He was Wounded in action on 8 October 1917 at Moquet Farm and evacuated to the UK where he was admitted to the Bethnal Green Military Hospital. While in convalescence he received a GOC Commendation Card for brave service. However, his Conduct Sheet showed a number of episodes where he was Absent without official leave (AWOL) and he lost quite a bit of pay. He returned to 11 Battalion on 26 February 1918 but was gassed on 26 March 1918 and was unfit for duty again until 6 May 1918. 11 Battalion was involved in a night action over 02/03 June 1918 at Strazeele where he displayed great courage and leadership. He was recommended for the award of the Military Medal which was approved and published in the London Gazette of 7 October 1918.



One of a series of Honour Rolls prepared after the First World War, and held by the Public Transport Authority of WA in East Perth.

This sheet lists Timber Mill workers, including Mr Crockenberg.

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Private Crockenberg was Killed in action on 10 August 1918 and buried by his comrades in an isolated grave 1½ miles WNW of Lihons. In the post war period, his grave was located by the Graves Registration Unit and his remains were moved to Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres.

Additional/personal information:

Herbert Crockenberg was born in Victoria according to his widow, however records have not been found. It seems his family moved west when he was young and he attended Christian Brothers College in Fremantle. In 1912 he married Caroline C Brown in Perth (WA BDM 365/1912). Bert and Caroline had one son, Frederick Herbert Crockenberg, 1913-1970.

It seems that the WAGR recorded his full name, but in the army and in home life he preferred the shorter 'Bert'.

> CROCKENBERG.—Killed in action, somewhere in France, on August 10, 1918, Bert Crockenberg, loving husband of Caroline Crockenberg, father of F. H. (Teddy), and son of F. Crockenberg, No. 2 State Mill, Dwellingup. *The West Australian* 9/9/1918p1
>
> CROCKENBERG.—In loving memory, of our dear brother Bert, killed in action August 10, 1918, somewhere in France. … Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law Jack and Maggie Nilen, Bullfinch. *The West Australian* 9/8/1919p1

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his widow along with other memorabilia. Mrs Crockenberg was offered the choice of a formal presentation of the Military Medal or to receive it by post. She elected the latter.

Records held by BDM show that Bert's widow Caroline Crockenberg married a William H Miller (BDM Murray 12/1923) but she died in 1927 (BDM Per 948/1927).

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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