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Ball, John Thomas

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:	Way & Works
Designation:	Repairer

Rail employment notes: Born 3/6/1880. Joined WAGR 14/3/1916 aged 35 as Repairer, Ways & Works Branch, Picton Junction. ("Repairer" was a track maintenance worker in a gang responsible for upkeep of an allocated section of railway line. A typical gang might include between 3 and 6 Repairers with one Leading Hand Repairer and a Ganger in charge.)

Granted leave to join AIF 6/7/1916 (Service No.2871). Died of illness 6/7/1918.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2871
Date of death:	6 July 1918
Place of death:	France
Rank:	Private
Age:	38

Burial/commemoration: Daours Communal Cemetery Extension, Daours, Picardie, France

John Ball had previous military experience, in the 68th Battalion Durham Light Infantry in England.

On 10 July 1916 he joined the 7th reinforcements to 51st Battalion, nominating his wife Mrs. Jane Ball as his next of kin. After training he embarked on HMAT *Argyllshire* from Fremantle on 9 November 1916.

He died of illness in France on 6 July 1918.

Additional/personal information:

John Ball was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, England but came to Australia in 1911. His wife reported that his occupation before emigrating to Australia was a 'boatman', but also indicated that after arrival, and before joining the WAGR, he worked as a mill hand.

Online records indicate he was married before reaching Australia and the family notice after his death shows he had at least seven children:

> BALL.—In loving memory of my dear husband, Private John Thomas Ball, who died of sickness somewhere in France, July 6, 1918, loving father of Minnie, Annie, Gladys, Rosie, Margery, Jacky, Sidney (of Clarenden, Guildford-road, Maylands), late fettler Picton Junction.
> Somewhere in France he is sleeping, Just where I cannot tell,

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With other brave hearts who have fallen Amidst the shot and shell.
But the hardest part is yet to come, When the warriors all return,
When we look for our soldier daddy Who will never more return.
—Inserted by his loving wife and children.
Yorkshire "Evening News," England; East Cumberland "News," please copy.
The West Australian 25/7/1918p1

It appears some from available records that some of the children were born in England but some, at least Rosie and Margery, were born after reaching WA.

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 Company of Western Australia Ltd; BDM= Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages website (Western Australia unless otherwise indicated); 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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