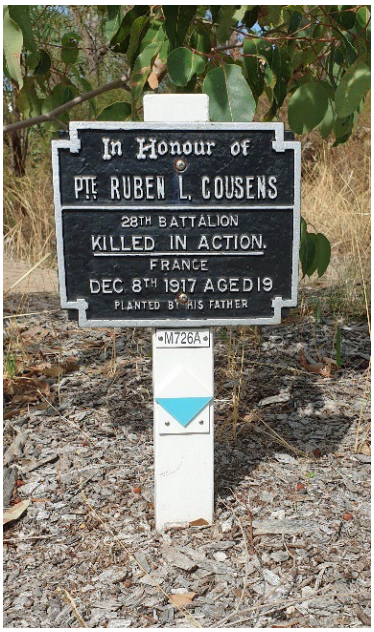
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Cousens, Reuben Leeuwin

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



Kings Park plaque

Rail employment information

Employer:	Millar's Karri & Jarrah Company (1902) Limited
Branch:	Jarrahdale mill
Designation:	Locomotive fireman

Rail employment notes: Reuben Cousens was described both by himself (embarkation papers) and his father as a locomotive fireman based at Jarrahdale, which could only mean that he worked for Millars who had a major timber mill there. The company developed an extensive rail system to transport logs from the cutting areas to various mills, and to take the sawn timber down to Mundijong WAGR station for further transport.

*Comprehensive information on Yarloop mills and rail operations, with maps, can be found in Gunzburg, A. and J.Austin: "Rails through the bush": Perth, 2008, Rail Heritage: WA: ISBN 978-0-9803922-2-7

Military service information:

Conflict:	The Great War 1914-1919
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	28th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	4996
Date of death:	8 January 1917
Place of death:	France
Age:	19
Rank:	Private

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

Reuben Cousens enlisted in the AIF in Perth at the age of 18 years and 10 months on 8 March 1916. At the time of his enlistment he was a serving member of the 86th Infantry Regiment as part of the 1897 quota under the compulsory military training scheme. There is a receipt showing all military equipment was returned to depot before AIF enlistment. His occupation was stated to be a locomotive fireman. He nominated his father William Edwin Cousens as his Next of kin. Following basic training at Blackboy Hill camp he was allotted to 13th reinforcement to 28 Battalion with the regimental number 4996.

Private Cousens departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A48 *Seang Bee* on 18 Jul 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth UK on 9 September 1916. He marched into 7 Training Bn on 10 Sep 1916 where he remained until 02 Nov 1916 when he departed England for France to join the BEF through the Port of Folkestone. In France he underwent final training at 2 ADBD until he joined 28 Bn on 18 November 1916. He was killed in action on 8 January 1917 and buried in the field. After the War his remains were not recovered, he has no known grave and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

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Additional/personal information:

Reuben Cousens was born at Karridale (site of another Millars timber mill) and schooled at Jarrahdale.

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father along with other memorabilia. Pte R Cousens elder brother, 5076 F E Cousens of 48 Bn Died of wounds on 7 August 1916. An application for a military pension by Mr W E Cousens was rejected on the basis that he was not dependent upon his son. Private Cousens is remembered with a memorial tablet in Kings Park, M762A dedicated by his father, as pictured above.

Reuben came from a large family and, as was too often the case, several brothers volunteered to serve, with more than one losing their life.

> COUSENS.-- On January 8, 1917. killed in action in France, Private Reuben L. Cousens, aged 19 years and 9 months, dearly beloved sixth son of W. E. and M.E. Cousens, of Jarrahdale, beloved brother of Privates Will, Bert, Martin (now in action), Mary, Bob, Jeff, Jim, Dorrie. Beloved by all.
> Inserted by his loving parents, brothers, and sisters. Eastern papers please copy.
> COUSENS.--On January 8. 1917, killed in action In France, Private Reuben L. Cousens, aged 19 years and 9 months, dearly beloved sixth son of W. E. and M.E. Cousens, of Jarrahdale, and beloved brother of Privates Will, Bert, Martin (-in action), Mary, Bob, Jeff, Jim, Dorrie.
> Dearly beloved. Inserted by his loving brother-in-law, Private G. Judd and M. Judd and niece May.
> *The West Australian* 26/1/1917p1



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: WAGR rail employment notes from Roll of Honour in WAGR annual report 1919 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----------