497

Graham, Malcolm

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



Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

Rail employment information

Employer:	Commonwealth Railways
Branch:	Construction
Designation:	Guard

Detailed records of Mr Graham's career are not available however rail historian Jeff Austin reports on newspaper references:

"The Post Office Directory 1910, 1912 lists him as 'Guard, Kurramia'. He is also mentioned in the Kalgoorlie Miner, 16.9.1910 p.10 as 'Guard, Kurramia'. Then again in the Kalgoorlie Miner, 29.5.1913 p.1 as 'Guard, Kurrawang'. This last reference was quite a traumatic accident on the woodline and may have made him move on? The tracklaying on the Trans-Australian construction commenced in May 1913 and may have prompted a move"

Kurramia and Kurrawang were both centres of activity on the private railways which brought wood in to Kalgoorlie and Boulder for pit props and fuel for boilers at the mines and power station.

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

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force
Military unit:	16th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	2390
Date of death:	29 July 1916
Place of death:	France
Rank at time of loss:	Private
Age:	29

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

Malcolm Douglas enlisted in the AIF on 2 August 1915. He gave his age as 28, his occupation as engine driver, and named his wife Emily May Graham of Kalgoorlie as hi next of kin. He was allocated to the 5th Reinforcement to 28th Infantry Battalion, a part of the 7th Infantry Brigade with regimental number 2390.

After training in WA, he embarked on HMAT *Thermistocles* from Fremantle on 13 October 1915. In due course his Battalion joined the British Expeditionary Force in France.

After the battle of Pozieres in France he was reported missing, but the body could be found. In due course a court of enquiry was held to xamine witness stemants, POW lists, etc , and determined that he had been killed in action.

© Rail Heritage WA

His body has not been recovered and he has no known grave, but is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Australian National Memorial.

The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Australian soldiers killed in France, whose bodies could be found for relocation, are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and right.

The wing walls to both sides of the central watch tower record, carved in stone, the names of Australian soldiers killed in France but with no known grave – tragically, more than 11 000 men. The largest number recorded from one unit is from 28th Battalion – some 365 West Australians.



Additional/personal information:

The marriage of Malcolm Graham to Emily M Blake was recorded in Boulder (BDM 127/1908). The couple would have at least four children as seen in family notices:

> Private Malcolm Graham, whose wife resides in Vivian-street, Boulder, is reported missing since July 29; 1916. Private Graham, who was a well known footballer, was an engine driver on the trans-Australian line when he enlisted with the A.I.F., and formerly on the Kurramia and Kurrawang lines. He was a son in law of Mrs. G. Kipps, of Vivian-street, Boulder. *The Western Argus* 26/9/1916p30

When the soldier's body could not be immediately found, it took some time before official notice of death could be provided:

> GRAHAM. — Killed in action (previously reported missing) in France, on 29th July, Malcolm (28th Battalion), dearly beloved husband of E. M. Graham, and father of Doris,. Millie, Regie, and Willie, 45 King-street, Boulder. "He died for his country." Kalgoorlie Miner 27/2/1917p4

His widow died in 1973 in Perth aged 84.

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 G.Higham.

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