

**Chorleywood Road Cemetery,
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



763 PRIVATE

J. VOLK

2ND AUSTRALIAN BDE. H.Q.

27TH JANUARY, 1916 Age 25

*In Memory Of
Our Loving Son
& Affectionate Brother
Thy Will Be Done*

James VOLK

James Volk was born at Yarraville, Victoria in 1890 to parents Jacob and Elizabeth Volk (nee Scorrar).

James Volk attended Brighton State School, Victoria.

Victoria Police Gazette – March 23, 1905:

JAMES VOLK and WILLIAM MAKEPEACE absconded from the Excelsior Home, Elwood-street, Brighton, on the 20th inst.

Descriptions:- 1st. 15 years of age, 5 feet high, fair complexion, stout build, blue eyes, red hair; wore a tweed coat, brown moleskin trouser, soft-felt hat, blucher boots.

2nd. 13 years of age, about 4 feet 6 inches high, dark complexion, dark eyes, slight build; wore a light-brown tweed suit, a dark-brown soft-felt hat, and lace-up boots. May go to Bendigo or Swan Hill. –O.2084. 22nd March, 1905.

Victoria Police Gazette – March 30, 1905:

JAMES VOLK and WILLIAM MAKEPEACE, absconders, have been arrested by the Kyneton police. – O.2084. 29th March, 1905.

Victoria Police Gazette – May 3, 1906:

JAMES VOLK absconded from the Excelsior Home, Brighton, on the 24th inst. 16 years of age, 5 feet high 2 inches high, fair complexion, blue eyes, red hair; wore a brown tweed coat, black vest, dark tweed trousers, lace-up boots and tweed cap. –O.7015. 28th April, 1906.

The 1913 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Indi, subdivision of Alexandra, Victoria listed James Volk, Coach Driver, of Alexandra.

According to information supplied by his mother for the Roll of Honour, James Volk served three years in Volunteer's Forces of Prahran.

James Volk was a 24 year old, single, Driver from 117 Chomley Street, East Prahran, Victoria when he enlisted on 15th August, 1914 with the 5th Infantry Battalion "F" Company of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 763 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs E. Volk, of 117 Chomley Street, East Prahran, Victoria. James Volk was 5 feet 6 inches, fair complexion with blue eyes and auburn hair.

Private James Volk was posted to Camp with 5th Battalion on 15th August, 1914.

Private James Volk embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Orvieto* (A3) on 21st October, 1914.

Private James Volk embarked from Alexandria with 4th Reinforcements from Infantry Base on 22nd May, 1915.

Private James Volk was transferred to 2nd Infantry Brigade Headquarters from 5th Battalion on 8th June, 1915.

Private James Volk was sent to Hospital at Anzac on 21st August, 1915 & embarked for England on S.S. *Canada* from Mudros on 24th August, 1915.

Private James Volk was admitted to Princess Club Hospital at Bermondsey, London on 9th September, 1915 suffering from Shock.

Private James Volk was transferred to 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield, Middlesex on 25th September, 1915. A Medical Report was completed on Private James Volk, 763, "C" Company, 5th Battalion, on 29th September, 1915. He was suffering from Shell Explosion & Shock which had occurred at Gallipoli on 14th August, 1915. The facts of the case were "After four months & a week in trenches, a shell exploded in front of him blinding him for a short time, deafness for two or three hours and insomnia." It was recommended that Private James Volk be discharged from Active War Service but was fit for Home Service. He was discharged from Hospital on 7th October, 1915.

Private James Volk died on 27th January, 1916 as a result of a Railway accident (misadventure) in Hertfordshire, England.

A death for James Volk, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1916 in the district of Watford, Hertfordshire, England.

Depositions taken at the Inquest into the death of Private James Volk at the Fire Station, Rickmansworth on 28th January, 1916:

INFORMATION OF WITNESSES severally taken and acknowledged on behalf of our Sovereign Lord the King touching the death of JAMES VOLK at Fire Station High Street in the Parish of Rickmansworth in the County of Hertford, the 28th day of January 1916, before Thomas John Broad Esquire, one of His Majesty's Coroners for the said County on view of the body of the said person then lying dead.

MR.F.D. HUXTABLE was present from the District Superintendent's Office.

MARY ANN CHAPMAN. On oath. I live at 58 Norfolk Road Rickmansworth, Widow. I have seen the body of the deceased. It is that of James Volk. He was a Private in the 5th Batt. of the Australian Imperial Force, aged 25. He had lodged with me about 3 months. He, as a rule, left to catch the 7.50 train to London where he was employed. He left on Wednesday, the 26th. I got a wire about 1 p.m. (produced) he was working late & would catch the 12 night train. He was in good health & spirits when he left.

DAVID FENNER. On oath. I live at High Street, Rickmansworth & am a Ganger employed on the Met. & Gt. Central Railways. ON Thursday, the 27th, about 7.10 a.m. I left Northwood Station to walk my length of rail towards Rickmansworth. When about 20 yards the Northwood side of Eastbury Bridge, I saw a soldier lying by the side of the down line, about 8 feet from the rails. His head was towards the Bridge & partly doubled under him. I touched him - he was cold & stiff & appeared to be dead. I returned to Northwood Station & wired to Rickmansworth to inform the Police. I then went back to the body & waited there until the arrival of the Police & helped to remove the body.

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ARTHUR ERNEST CLARKE. On oath. I am Medical Doctor at Rickmansworth. On Thursday afternoon I went to the Mortuary at Rickmansworth & was shewn the body of a man apparently 24 or 25 years of age. I examined the body. I found no marks of violence externally, except a small abrasion on the back of the right hand & a small superficial graze on the right ear. On examining the head & neck I found signs of fracture of the spine - the upper part between the head & shoulders. His hair was full of cinders & dust as if he had fallen on his head. The injuries were sufficient to cause instantaneous death. There were no other signs of fracture of any other bones.

The Inquest was adjourned until Monday, the 14th February 1916 at 4.15, to be held at the same place.

The above Witnesses & all the Jury were bound over in £10 to appear.

THOS. J. BROAD

28th January 1916.

14th February 1916.

Adjourned Inquest.

MR. J. H. GALBRAITH, Solicitor, 32 Victoria Street, W. watched the case on behalf of the Australian Commonwealth.

MR. W. HARRIS for the Met. Railway.

MR. W. HUXTABLE from District Superintendent's Office of Great Central Railway.

MR. N. E. KELLY, Solicitor, Watford, watched the case on behalf of Mr. Brewster, the employer of Miss V. Reynolds.

ALFRED SAUNDERS. On oath. I am Police Constable stationed at Rickmansworth.

On 27th January 1916 at 8 a.m. I was informed by telephone by the Metropolitan Police, Northwood, that the dead body of an Australian soldier had been found on the

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Metropolitan & Gt Central Railway line, near Eastbury Bridge, just in Herts Police District. In company of Inspector Smith I at once proceeded with the ambulance to a spot 21 yards south of Eastbury Bridge where I saw the dead body of an Australian soldier lying face downwards in a narrow water channel, 7 feet from the outer rail of the down line, the soldier's head was towards Rickmansworth & he was lying on right side of face. The body was cold & stiff. The body was removed to the Mortuary, Rickmansworth, where I searched it & found papers showing that he was Pte. James Volk, No. 763 of the 5th Batt. Australian Imperial Force, residing with Mary Ann Chapman 58 Norfolk Rd, Rickmansworth, & that his Mother is Mrs. Elizabeth Volk, 117 Chomley St., East Prahran, Australia, cash 3s. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., a 10s. Treasury note, a Metropolitan Railway ticket, 3rd class, Edgware Rd. to St. James's Park to 31.1.16 for himself, a Gt. Central Railway ticket Rickmansworth to Marylebone to 3.1.16 pocket wallet & various papers.

In the right hand pocket of great coat I found a lady's handbag containing loose cash 1s.5 $\frac{1}{4}$, a leather purse containing 7s.5d. & a Metropolitan -Gt Central ticket (435) Pinner & Northwood to 19 February 1916 on name of Miss V. Reynolds & other small articles.

On the right leg of deceased as he lay there was a lady's black fur, a pair of lady's brown kid gloves lay under the body. About 6 yards away from the body & nearer Northwood was a lady's black fur muff with a paper bag containing chocolates. Deceased had a programme of a dances in his pocket given by the Australian Association at Caxton Hall. The programme of dances was filled up to a certain point.

CLARENCE SIMPSON ELLIOTT. On oath. I am Lance Corpl No.1535 Australian Garrison Military Police, 130 Horseferry Road,

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Westminster, S.W. I have seen the body of deceased & identify it as that of Pte. James Volk, No.763, 5th Battalion Australian Imperial Force, who was employed at above address as a storemans assistant. He was at work as usual on 28th January 1916 & during the day remarked to me that he was going to attend the Corroboree at Caxton Hall, Westminster & he invited me to go with him. I did not go. I last saw him at 5 p.m. when I went to tea. He then appeared to be in his usual health.

JOHN WILLIAM PITCHERN. On oath. I am a Guard & was in charge of the 12 midnight train London to Aylesbury on 26th February. When the above train was travelling between Northwood & Rickmansworth I heard what I thought was somebody in the compartment next to my brake either laughing or screaming. As this is often the case of soldiers having a game, I did not take much notice. Somewhere about Watford Road I heard as if

somebody closed the compartment door & on looking out I did not notice anything unusual, but on arriving at Rickmansworth I found the door just closed but not fastened. On looking into the compartment I found a lady's coat button & a dress hair pin. I called the porter's attention to it & informed him the line wanted searching. I went to the signal box & told the signalman of what I thought had happened. As there was a Rickmansworth policeman on the platform I also informed him & he with the porter searched the line. I also handed the policeman the

hairpin & button, which he took possession of. After arrival at Aylesbury I went to the Police Station & telephoned Rickmansworth Police Station & was informed a lady had been found by the side of the line. I am unable to give any further particulars. The train was delayed 6 minutes & the bogie brake number is 586. I am quite sure the compartment door was fastened before leaving Northwood Station. I had not noticed who were the occupants of the carriage. The communication cord was in order.

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VIOLET REYNOLDS. On oath. I spent the evening of 26th inst. in London & joined the 12 o.c. night train at Marylebone for Northwood. As the train was leaving Marylebone Station a soldier got into the same compartment. He appeared to go to sleep & woke up as the train was nearing Harrow. He then lit a cigarette & asked me if I objected to smoking. I replied "no". He then commenced a general conversation & said I have been to the Australian Anniversary & I live at Rickmansworth. He was sitting opposite me in the compartment & caught hold of my hand & pulled me across to his side & would not let me get away. I struggled with him & rolled to the floor. When the train stopped at Northwood he was holding me with his hand over my mouth. I succeeded in pulling his hand away & screamed out twice but failed to attract any attention & the train moved on towards Rickmansworth. The struggle continued & the next

thing I remember was that I was holding on to the handle of the carriage on the outside. I believe the soldier said something to me then, but have no recollection of what he said.

I remember nothing more until the Police spoke to me, I was then walking on the railway. My hat was knocked off while struggling with the soldier. I also left a handbag, fur & muff in the compartment. I have not seen the soldier before. He appeared to be quite sober. I do not recognise him from the photos now shewn to me. I identify the fur, muff, gloves &c. produced by the police as belonging to me & found by them on or near deceased.

A report was made by John Hammond Galbraith, Westminster, who watched the Inquest of behalf of the Australian Commonwealth, to The Official Secretary, Commonwealth of Australia which reads:

Private James Volk deceased

I beg to report that I attended the adjourned Inquest upon the body of the above-named deceased at Rickmansworth yesterday in accordance with the instructions of Colonel Buckley. The evidence showed the deceased prevented Miss Reynolds a lady passenger from leaving the midnight train from London to Aylesbury, on the 26th ult. at Northwood Station, but that she managed to get out shortly after and was found wandering on the line. The body of Private Volk was found further on, together with various articles belonging to Miss Reynolds. Miss Reynolds alleged that she remembered nothing after leaving the train and could not identify Private Volk by his photograph, which was produced. In summing up the Coroner at my suggestion put before the Jury, the view that the deceased in an attempt to render help to Miss Reynolds, collected her articles and got out of the train and in doing so, unfortunately fell on his head, breaking his neck. The Jury evidently adopted this view and returned a verdict of Death from misadventure.

I return the papers handed me by Colonel Buckley.

Private James Volk was buried on 31st January, 1916 in Chorleywood Road Cemetery, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire – Plot number D. 5. 18 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte James Volk – “Officers and a party of the A.I.F. proceeded to Rickmansworth to attend the funeral.”

The State War Council, Melbourne contacted Base Records in March, 1917 requesting the Military History of Pte James Volk, 763, 5th Battalion. The State War Council again contacted Base Records on 23rd March, 1917 requesting Pte James Volk’s Medical History. Both requests were completed.

A War Pension was granted to Mrs Elizabeth Volk, mother of the late Private James Volk, in the sum of £52 per annum as from 1st April, 1916.

Base Records contacted Mrs E. Volk, of Patrick Street, Cheltenham, Victoria in April, 1920 enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself, “*for instance is his father still alive*” due to the “Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918” which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving

brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Mrs Volk replied to Base Records stating she was the only living next of kin as his father had been dead some years.

Private James Volk was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Volk's mother - Mrs Elizabeth Volk, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1921).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private James Volk – service number 763, aged 25, of 2nd Infantry Australian Brigade Headquarters. He was the son of Jacob and Elizabeth Volk, of Balcombe Rd., Mentone, Victoria, Australia.

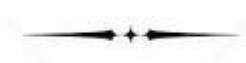
Private J. Volk is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 2.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(86 pages of Private James Volk's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

An Extraordinary Case

(Reported on another page)

SENSATION ON RAILWAY JOURNEY

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER INVOLVED

STORY OF A STRUGGLE

London, Sunday

Further particulars are to hand regarding the strange happening in which a woman named Violet Reynolds was returning home in the midnight train from Marylebone station, when an overseas soldier jumped into her compartment just as the train was moving out. She was subsequently found wandering about in a dazed condition, and the soldier was discovered dead, near by.

The soldier turns out to be Private James Volk, a Victorian, who had been residing at Rickmansworth since last October.

Miss Reynolds' story is to the effect that Volk suddenly rushed across the carriage and knocked her down with his fist. He put his thumbs into her nostrils, and his fingers under her chin to prevent her from shouting. She wrenched away his hands, shrieked, and grasped the handle of the door, which flew open. She clung to the strap, and hung over the side, seemingly for some minutes. She does not remember more. When she fell, she lost her memory for some time as the result of shock.

Volk's landlady describes him as "quite nice." She says he was most regular in his habits.

(*The National Advocate*, Bathurst, NSW, Australia – 31 January, 1916)

AUSTRALIANS IN WAR

140TH CASUALTY LIST

KILLED IN RAILWAY ACCIDENT

Pte J. VOLK, East Prahran

(*Hamilton Spectator*, Victoria, Australia – 10 February, 1916)

TRAIN MYSTERY

Girl's Story in Inquest on Australian

The inquest was resumed at Rickmansworth, yesterday, on Private James Volk, 5th Australian Infantry, who was found dead on the railway near Northwood (Herts) in the early morning of 27 January.

Volk, who had been at the front, was engaged in a military capacity at the Australian Commonwealth offices in London, and on 26 January travelled by the midnight train from Marylebone in a carriage in which a Miss Violet Reynolds, of Northwood, was seated. When the train arrived at Rickmansworth the carriage door was found open,

and on search being made Miss Reynolds was found wandering on the line near Northwood Station, and Volk was discovered dead on the railway.

What the Guard Heard

Near the body were found the young lad's muff, fur, and a pair of gloves. In the deceased's pocket was a lady's handbag containing a small amount of money.

The guard of the train stated that he heard some laughing and screaming in an adjoining carriage after the train left Northwood. After arriving at Rickmansworth he noticed the carriage door was unfastened.

Violet Reynolds said that on 26 January she spent the evening in London, and caught the midnight train at Marylebone. A soldier got in and immediately fell asleep. He awoke at Harrow, and asking permission to smoke, mention that he had been to an Australian banquet.

"Held Me Down"

The Coroner: Did he try to prevent your getting out at Northwood?

Witness: Yes; he held me down on the seat and put his hand over my mouth. I struggled, and tried to open the door, Then I got out, and I remember nothing more.

Witness, who added that the deceased seemed sober, could not identify a photograph of the deceased which the Coroner produced.

The Coroner, in summing up, expressed the opinion that the young lady, finding she was passing Northwood, made an effort and got out, The deceased, in an attempt to render help after collecting all her belongings, opened the door of the carriage and fell on the line, unfortunately breaking his neck.

The jury returned a verdict of "Death from misadventure."

(Birmingham Daily Gazette, Birmingham, West Midlands, England -15 February, 1916)

THE RAILWAY TRAGEDY

VICTORIAN SOLDIER'S DEATH

VERDICT OF MISADVENTURE

London, 15th February

The inquest regarding the death of Private James Volk, a Victorian soldier, whose body was found on 29th January on the Great Central railway line, near Rickmansworth, was concluded yesterday.

It was alleged in evidence at the opening of the inquest that a girl named Violet Reynolds, aged 18, was returning home at midnight in a train from Marylebone. An Australian soldier jumped into the compartment as the train was leaving a station, and it was alleged, interfered with the girl. The latter wrenched away from her assailant, and, the carriage door flying open, she fell to the permanent way. The girl was subsequently found wandering in a dazed condition, and at daylight the body of the soldier was discovered.

Yesterday the police gave evidence that they found Miss Reynolds's hand bag in the pocket of Volk's great coat.

The guard of the train said he had heard laughing and screaming from one of the carriages, but regarded it simply as "larking."

The girl Reynolds gave evidence that Volk held her down, put his hand over her mouth, and would not allow her to alight at Northwood. She struggled to the door, but was unable to say whether she jumped out of the train or was thrown out.

A verdict from misadventure was recorded. The coroner suggested that the girl, on finding she had been overcarried, attempted to alight and that Volk, while trying to help her to pick up her belongings, fell from the train and was killed.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 16 February, 1916)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

VOLK – In loving memory of my dear son, Private James Volk, who was killed on the 27th January, 1916.

Dear is the grave where my son is laid,
Sweet is the memory that never shall face.

- Inserted by his sorrowing mother, brothers and sisters.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 26 January, 1918)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

VOLK – In loving memory of my dear son and our dear brother, Private James Volk, No. 763, 5th Battalion, C Company, killed on active service 27th January, 1916.

He feared not death when honor summoned him to Britain's aid.

And now he lies in shrouds of glory, every debt of honor paid.

- Inserted by his loving mother, sisters and brothers.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 27 January, 1919)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(*Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921*)

Private J. Volk does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

In Memory Of Our Loving Son & Affectionate Brother

Thy Will Be Done

Photo of Private J. Volk's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Chorleywood Road Cemetery, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of julia&keld)

Chorleywood Road Cemetery, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire

Chorleywood Road Cemetery, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire contains 43 Commonwealth War Graves – 18 are from World War 1 and 25 are from World War 2.



Chorleywood Road Cemetery, Rickmansworth *(Photo courtesy of julia&keld)*