

YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT - 85

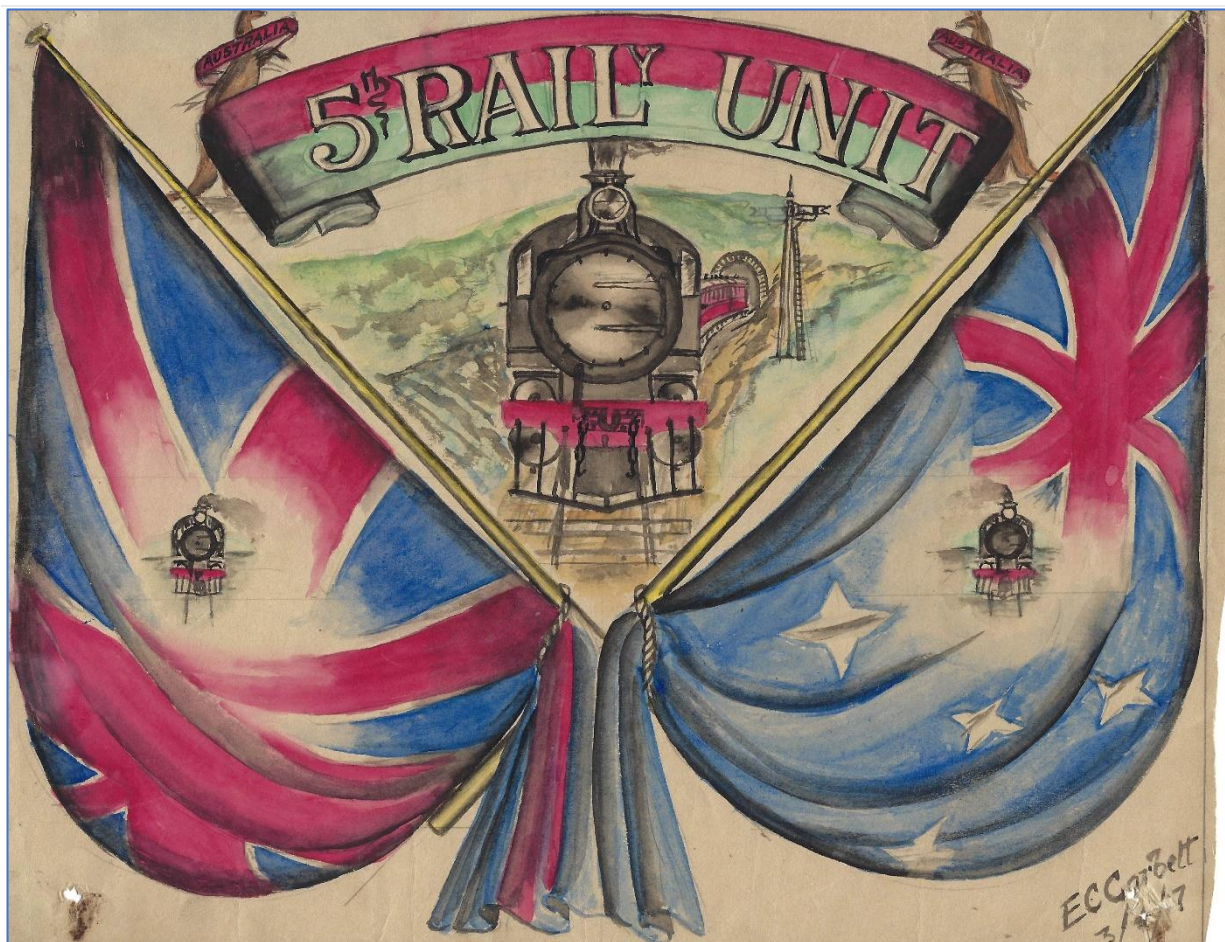
TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY MUSEUM OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Throughout 2021, the Virtual Visit series has been presenting interesting features from the collection and their background stories. . The Australian Army Museum of Western Australia is currently open four days per week, Wednesday through Friday plus Sunday. The Museum will be closed from 20 December 2021 to 4 January 2022 inclusive.

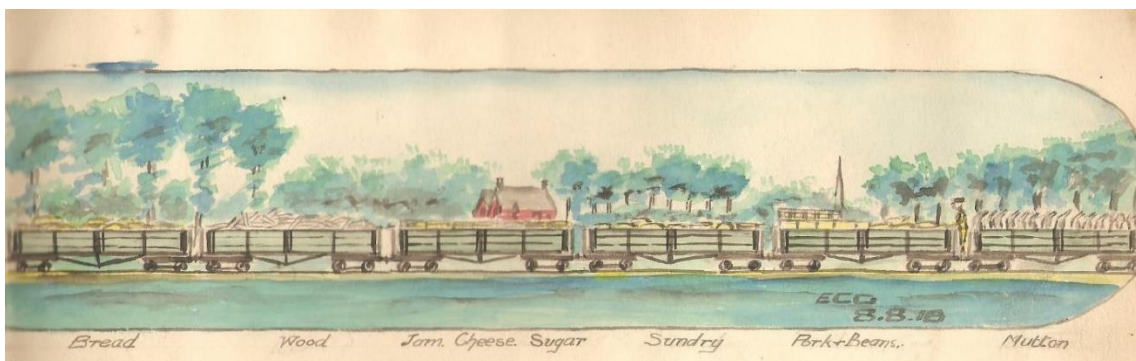
The Divisional Pack

Virtual Visit 84 concluded with a teaser of a forthcoming exhibition in late 2022 featuring the artworks of 1909 Private Edward Charles Garbett. The teaser continues this week with some examples of his watercolours and technical drawings. These works are important documents of record of the functioning of the Railway Operating Division. They provide researchers with contemporary and accurate details of the complexities of equipping, supplying and maintaining mass armies for sustained operations in the field, during World War 1.

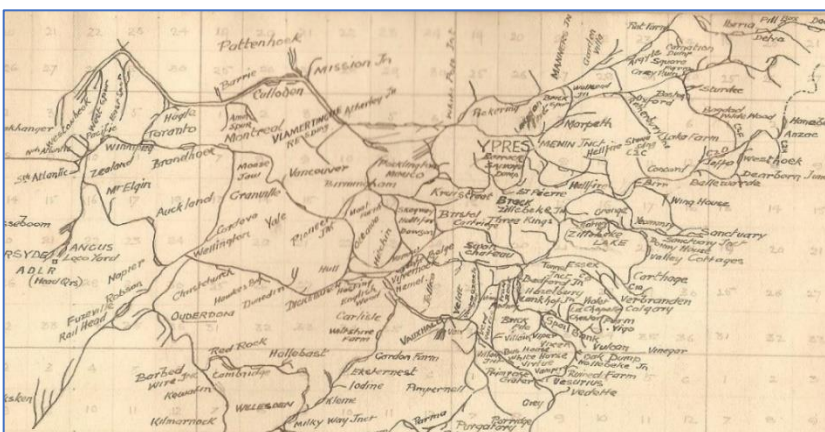


The Australian Army Museum of WA is indeed fortunate to be the custodian of this collection. The documentation accompanying the collection records time and location of creation of the works and their provenance from then to donation. Included with the works are extensive records of rolling stock measurements and notes of equipment details. Further research is underway to determine the uniqueness of the drawings of German rolling stock surrendered as part of the Armistice Agreement.

By early 1916, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had worked out what levels of resupply their formations required on a daily basis. They adopted the infantry division as their standard unit for resupply, having learned what a division consumed daily regardless of the fighting. The contents of what became termed a “divisional pack” filled twenty rail wagons: rations for the troops filled five (two bread, two groceries, one meat), “rations” for the division’s motive power filled ten (four forage, five oats, one petrol) and to this they added a wagon each of coal or coke, mail, ordnance, mechanical transport spares and one additional wagon with miscellaneous goods. The BEF assembled the first fifteen wagons for each division each day at base ports and pushed them forward automatically. The last five wagons were added at a regulating station and the complete train (two divisional packs, forty wagons) arrived at a railhead daily where the two divisions collected the contents.

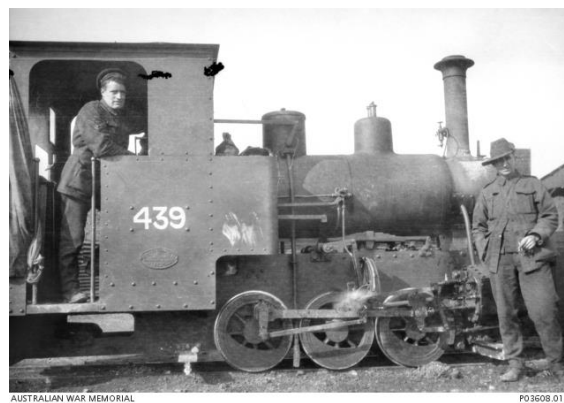
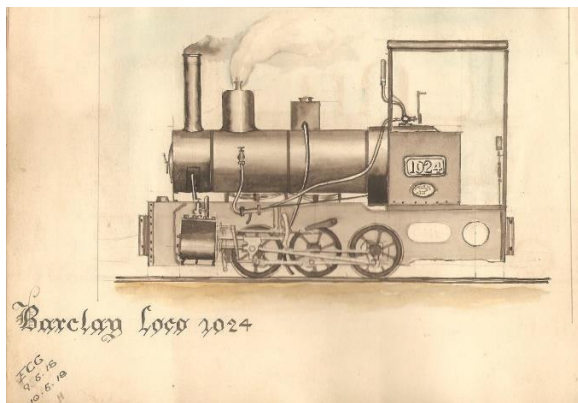


EC Garbett's depiction of a “Ration Train” or “Divisional Pack”



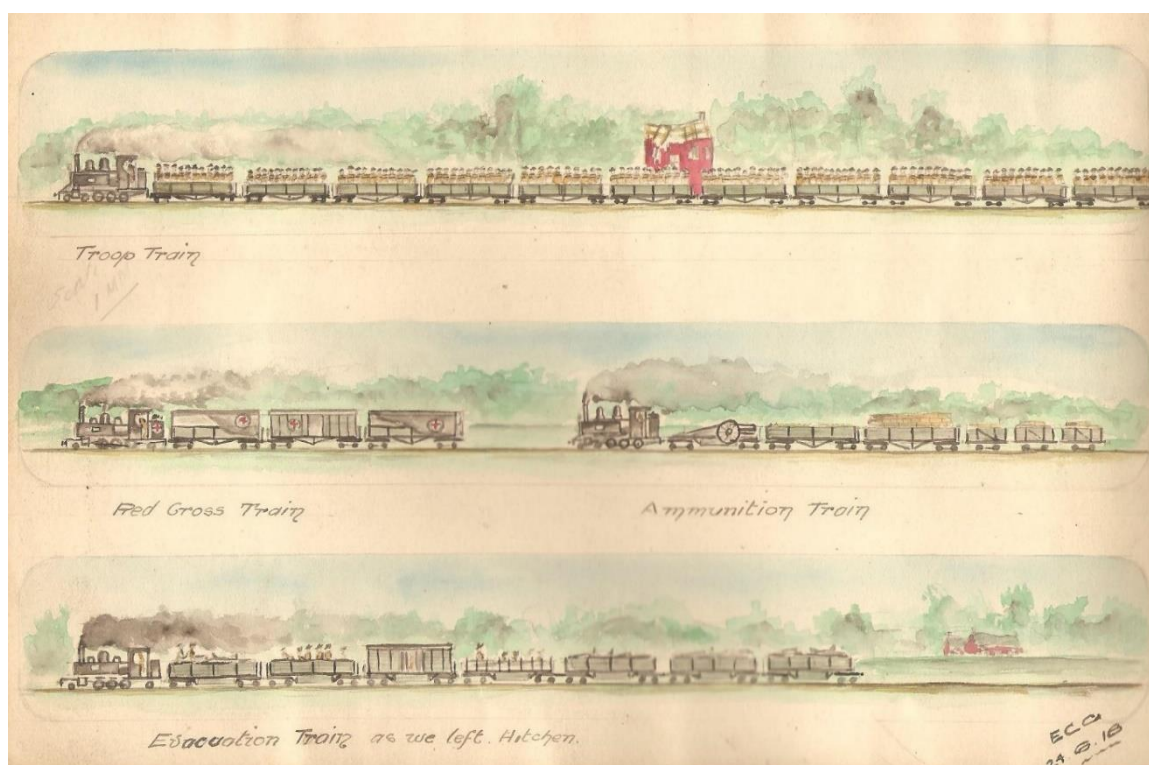
Different track gauges were used in different theatres of war. The military light railways in France were 600 mm (23 and 5/8 inches) and used a variety of French, British and United States engines.

The Germans used a similar gauge “Feldbahn” system. The Trench railways of World War 1 on the Western Front created the greatest concentration of minimum gauge rail ever observed.



Garbett's drawings also provide details of other light rail consists used on the Western Front showing the utility of the light rail network. If you want to understand more fully the contribution of Western Australians in rail operations on the Western Front please consult former guide, Tom Goode's book *The Cold-Footed Mob - A History of the 5th Australian Broad Gauge Operating Company* by Hesperian Press

<http://hesperianpress.com/index.php/booklist/titles-a-d/c-titles/778-cold-footed-mob-the>



https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/transportation_and_logistics

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQh1cvHHVqg>

[Tracks To The Trenches 2018 - YouTube](#)

<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=107075>

This will be the last Virtual Visit for 2021 as we approach the distractions of the busy festive season. Watch for a new format **"From the Galleries"** beginning in 2022