033

Brown, William Gordon Condrill

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:	Traffic
Designation:	Shunter

Rail employment notes: Shunter, Fremantle Goods.
51st Battalion AIF (Service No.3776). Killed in action 3/9/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion.
Service number:	3776
Date of death:	3 September 1916
Place of death:	Mouquet Farm, France
Age:	24*
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Bouzincourt Ridge Cemetery, Albert, Picardie, France

William Gordon Brown enlisted in the AIF on 29 November 1915 in Perth. On enlistment he nominated his mother as his Next of Kin as his father was dead. He had no previous military experience. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 9th Reinforcements to 28th Battalion with the regimental number 3776. On 11 February 1916 he made his will in which he named his mother, Margaret Brown, as his sole beneficiary. The following day he departed Australia from Fremantle aboard A28 HMAT *Miltiades* and disembarked Suez on 10 Mar 1916 where he joined the reinforcement pool of 7 Trg Bn. On 2 April 1916 he was transferred to the newly formed 51 Bn as the AIF Divisions in Egypt were expanded from two to four Divisions. Training continued from April until June 1916. The Battalion departed Alexandria on 5 June 1916 aboard HMT *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte Brown moved with the Bn to frontline service at the Battle for Moquet Farm. He was recorded as Missing In Action on 3 September 1916. His Red Cross File provides no details of death. A Court of Enquiry held on 30 July 1917 determined that he was Killed in Action on 3 September 1916. At that time, he had no known grave however in 1923 remains were uncovered on the battlefield which were positively identified as those of Pte Brown. He was then buried in Bouzincourt Ridge Military Cemetery, Albert.

Additional/personal information:

William Gordon Condrill Brown was born in Victoria (Vic BDM ref 35526/1890), a son of Charles James and Margaret (nee Don) Brown who had been married in Victoria in 1884. A younger brother

© Rail Heritage WA

Reg Weaver Brown was born in 1892 but it seems the family then moved to WA where William attended Beaconsfield State School.

*When his mother completed a record form after the war, she stated his age as 24, however the Victorian BDM record suggests he was 25 or 26.

After his body was located, his identity disc and silver watch were forwarded to his mother who replied with gratitude. For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his mother together with other military memorabilia. Following the formal burial of Pte Brown his mother paid for an inscription on his tombstone which reads: "Loved Son of Margaret and the Late C J Brown South Fremantle WA". There is no record on Pte Brown's personal file of any pension to his mother but those details are on another file which is not available on line. Mrs Margaret Brown died in 1947 at the age of 89 years and was buried in the Fremantle cemetery.

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). 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----------