Cheary, Wilfred

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:	Way and Works
Designation:	Cadet

Rail employment notes: Born 10/6/1896. Joined WAGR 25/9/1911 aged 15 as Cadet, Northam. Transferred to Narrogin 1/8/1914.
The Way and Works Branch (later the Chief Civil Engineer's branch) was responsible for track and structures including building and/or maintaining stations and smaller buildings, bridges, wooden culverts, etc. It's thought that Wilfred's cadetship would have been in clerical work - his mother described him as a clerk and as the branch had very widely-spread work and employees, there would have been much clerical work to do.

Granted leave to join AIF 5/10/1915 (Service No.3491). Killed in action 16/8/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	51st Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3491
Date of death:	16 August 1916
Place of death:	Pozierres, France
Age:	20
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Serre Road Cemetery No 2, Beaumont Hamel, Picardie, France

Wilfred Cheary enlisted in the AIF at Narrogin on 1 October 1915. He had previous service as a cadet in the Citizen's Forces where he served under the surname Sendy. He nominated his mother Mrs Florence Sendy, resident in South Australia as his Next of Kin. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was allocated to 8th Reinforcement to 28 Battalion with the regimental number 3491 and departed Australia from Fremantle on 17 January 1916 aboard A30 HMAT *Borda*. On arrival in Egypt he continued to train with the pool of reinforcements in 7 Training Battalion. Following the reorganization of the AIF in Egypt he was transferred to the newly formed 51 Battalion.

The Battalion departed Egypt from Alexandria on 3 June 1916 aboard HMT *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. He moved to the battlefield at Pozieres where he was Killed in action on 16 August 1916. His body was not recorded as being buried in any designated place but in 1927 the Graves Registration Unit discovered his remains which were identified from a pocket book and engraving. He was re-buried in Serre Rd Cemetery Number 2 which received a number of soldier's remains from the area around Pozieres. The cemetery lies some 11 Km NNE of Albert.

 © Rail Heritage WA

Additional/personal information:

Wilfred Cheary was born in 1896 in Goodwood South Australia, a son of Philip Albert and Florence May Cheary but his childhood years were attended by considerable tragedy (Gen.SA 584/471 et al.). A younger brother Herbert Clifford Cheary was born in 1895 but died the same year. Unfortunately Mr Cheary senior died in 1897. Wilfred's mother Florence remarried to Oliver Sendy in 1900. Oliver Sendy already had a son Harold Roy Sendy born 1891. Florence bore a daughter Ivy Sendy, a half-sister to Wilfred, in 1901 but Ivy also died the same year.

It appears Wilfred went through his school years using his new father's name, but reverted later to his first family name.

It seems likely he moved to WA on his own.

> CHEARY.—Killed in action, in France, Wilfred, second son of Mrs. Sendy, of Prospect, South Australia. He died for his country. —Inserted by his friend, E. W. Morris, of Narrogin. *The West Australian* 16/9/1916p1

Notices in Adelaide papers confirmed that his mother was in that city, having remarried:

> CHEARY.—Wilfred, the dearly beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. Sendy, of Shipster's road, Kensington Park, killed in action in France, August 14, 1916, aged 20 years. *The Advertiser*(Adelaide) 28/9/1916p6

The means by which he had been identified were forwarded to his mother in 1928. For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his mother together with other memorabilia. Mrs Sendy received a military pension of 20/- per fortnight with effect from 16 Oct 1916. Ends

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) Gen.SA=Genealogy SA, which makes available SA BDM records

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----------

 © Rail Heritage WA