055

Chisholm, Leonard Aubrey

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:	Junior Porter

Rail employment notes: Born 19/4/1895. Joined WAGR 19/5/1910 aged 15 as Junior Porter, Geraldton.
("Porter" was a very general category in the WAGR and Geraldton, a busy junction station and terminus of some passenger trains, probably had several porters. Junior Porters were under 21 years and therefore paid less.)

Granted leave to join AIF 28/2/1916 (Service No.621). Died of wounds 3/10/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	44th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	621
Date of death:	3 October 1917
Place of death:	Ypres, Belgium
Age:	22
Rank:	Private

Burial/memorialisation: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Lijssenthoek, Flanders, Belgium

Leonard Aubrey Chisholm enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill on 01 March 1916. On enlistment he nominated his father Walter Chisholm as his Next of Kin and declared that he had a total of 5 ½ years of service in total in Cadets, Senior Cadets and 88th Regiment of Infantry. He was a serving member of the Militia on enlistment. His basic military training was conducted at Claremont showgrounds, Osbourne rifle range and Blaxland Hill following which he was allocated to C Coy, 44 Battalion with the regimental number 621. The Battalion departed Fremantle on 6 June 1916 aboard A29 HMAT *Suevic* and disembarked at Plymouth on 21 July 1916 where they marched into 11 Trg Bn. Following extensive training in England 44 Bn moved to France to join the British Expeditionary Force on 25 November 1916.

A series of relatively minor illnesses between 27 Jan 1917 and 28 Apr 1917 rendered him unfit for full duty. He had a nine-day trial with 11 Machine Gun Coy but was not taken-on-strength as a machine gunner. Pte Chisholm participated in the Battles for and around Messines in 1917. For unknown reasons he declined to make a Will on 16 September 1917. On 29 September 1917 he was Wounded in action during the Third Battle of Ypres suffering multiple bomb fragment wounds. He entered the medical evacuation system and was moved to 3 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, then located at Poperinghe (now Poperinge), where he Died of Wounds on 3 October 1917 and was buried at the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, 12 Km West of Ypres (now Ieper).

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Additional/personal information:

Leonard Chisholm was born in Geraldton, Western Australia in 1895, a son of Walter and Mary Ann (nee Windell) Chisholm.

> MR. and MRS. WALTER CHISHOLM, of Burges Street, Geraldton, desire to THANK all kind friends and relations for letters, telegrams, cards, personal visits and messages of condolence in their recent sad bereavement occasioned by the death of their son. Private Leonard A.Chisholm, who died of wounds in France on October 3, 1917. *Geraldton Guardian* 13/11/1917p2

Although his parents thanked friends as above, most notices from family and friends appeared on the first anniversary of Leonard's death. This was not uncommon, usually indicating that the family only had the official confirmation from the AIF sometime after the initial news filtered through.

> CHISHOLM - In sad and loving memory of our dearly loved son and- brother, L.A. Chisholm (Len), who died of wounds on October 3rd, 1917. Also his loved comrade F, Smith, who died of wounds on October 14th, 1917. We who loved you sadly miss you, As it dawns another year, And in our lonely hours of thinking Our thoughts of you are ever dear. For ever remembered.
> — Inserted by his sorrowing parents, sisters Alma and Ethel, brothers Victor and Fred, and Clem on active service. *Geraldton Guardian* 3/10/1918p2

Leonard's brother Clement enlisted in 1917 but returned safe to Australia.

His parents paid for an inscription on his gravestone which reads: "Ever Remembered". For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his father together with other memorabilia. Private Chisholm was entitled to a death benefit as a member of the WA Amalgamated Society of Railway Employees but as he died intestate it is unknown how this benefit was disbursed. His mother Mrs Mary Chisholm received a military pension of 40/- per fortnight with effect from 16 Dec 1917. The database of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission incorrectly shows Pte Chisholm to be a member of 24 Bn AIF and also shows his age as 27, however his WAGR records and his father's form after his death show 22. Pte Chisholm's father died in 1948 (BDM Geraldton 7/1948) and his mother in 1963 (BDM Geraldton 138/1963).

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----------

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