Hurlston, Arthur George

A West Australian railway employee killed while on military service for their country



Plaque in May Avenue, Kings Park

Rail employment information

Employer:	Western Australian Government Railways & Tramways
Branch:	Locomotive
Designation:	Fireman

Rail employment notes: Born 3/11/1891. Joined WAGR 1/11/1911 aged 19 as Cleaner, Midland Junction. ("Cleaner" in this case was a position in the Locomotive branch, cleaning locomotives and otherwise employed at a locomotive depot whilst training to be a Fireman, the next step up the ladder.)

Transferred to Yalgoo 9/8/1912, Geraldton 2/5/1913, Perth 15/5/1914, Northam 3/7/1914, Merredin 12/10/1914, Northam 15/10/1914, Kalgoorlie 19/2/1915, Malcolm 16/6/1915 and Kalgoorlie 4/8/1915. The WAGR Honour Roll records Mr Hurlston as a Fireman, however his staff record card does not show when this promotion was reached.

Granted leave to join AIF 14/10/1915. Killed in action 7/8/1916.

Military service information:

Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Military unit:	48th Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	4294
Date of death:	7 August 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	24
Rank:	Private
Burial/memorialisation:	No known grave; Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

Arthur George Hurlston enlisted in the AIF on 11 October 1915 at Kalgoorlie. He had no prior military experience and he nominated his father as his Next of kin. His basic military training was at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 13th/16 Bn with the regimental number 4294. He departed Australia aboard A54 HMAT *Runic* from Fremantle on 29 January 1916 and disembarked at Alexandria on 26 February 1916 where he entered the pool of reinforcements. When the AIF was reorganized in Egypt, he was taken on strength of 48th Battalion on 2 April 1916. The Battalion continued Unit training until departure from Alexandria on 2 June 1916 aboard HMT *Caledonian*, disembarking at Marseilles on 9 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. After service in quiet sectors 48 Bn became engaged in the Battles for Pozieres and Moquet Farm. Eye witness accounts from 2858 Pte C H Alcorn and 4694 Pte W Reidy show that he was Wounded in Action at Moquet Farm and while making his way to the Advanced Dressing Station was Killed by a

high explosive shell. A Court of Enquiry altered his status from Wounded and Missing to Killed in Action 7 August 1916. He was buried at the site of casualty but his grave could not be found after the War, so he has no known grave, and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Soldiers killed in France are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and to right.

The wing walls to both sides of the central watch tower record, carved in stone, the names of Australian soldiers killed in France but with no known grave – tragically, more than 11 000 men. The largest number recorded from one unit is from 28th Battalion – some 365 West Australians.



Additional/personal information:

Arthur Hurlston was a son of George William and Ethel Jane (nee Nettles) Hurlston. His father wrote that Arthur was born in Sydney, NSW, although the birth is not recorded there, but they must have moved soon after to WA because a second son George Henry Hurlston is born in Perth in 1892 (BDM WA 343/1892).

His mother Ethel died in 1895. George remarried in 1901 to Louisa Ann York, and several step-brothers and step-sisters to Arthur were born.

For his service he was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These were forwarded to his father together with other memorabilia. Arthur Hurlston has a memorial plaque (M187) in Kings Park which was dedicated by family in 2006, next to one for his brother.

Private Hurlston's brother George Hurlston also enlisted and was Killed in action on Gallipoli while serving with 11 Battalion AIF. George was also a railwayman but with the privately-owned Midland Railway Company of WA (page 349).

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).

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----------