Maschmedt, Lawrence Phillip

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:	Cadet

Rail employment notes: Born 1/1/1896. Joined WAGR 6/6/1911 aged 15 as Cadet, East Northam. Transferred to Northam 15/10/1912. The term "Cadet" was most often applied to boys who might be seeking to take clerical or traffic officer roles when older. His mother referred to him as a "Telegraphist" and that may have been his main work as the WAGR used telegrams and morse messages extensively, with their own wired network.
Granted leave to join AIF 28/10/1915. Died of wounds 2/10/1917.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Military unit:	12th Machine Gun Company.
Service number:	Service number to be confirmed
Date of death:	2 October 1917
Place of death:	Place not yet found
Age:	21
Rank:	Second Lieutenant
Burial/memorialisation:	Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Lijssenthoek, Flanders, Belgium

Lawrence Phillip Maschmedt was still 19 years of age when he enlisted in the AIF at Blackboy Hill on 19 Oct 1915 with the approval of both parents. He nominated his mother as his next-of-kin and the enlisting officer failed to ask about his father. He stated that he had been in Senior Cadets for 3 years followed by one year, in the 85th Regiment, of Militia service. The 85th Regiment cleared him for AIF enlistment. He underwent standard training and was assigned the regimental number 4378 in 13th /16 Bn. For the voyage to Egypt he was made a provisional sergeant. He departed Fremantle aboard A54 HMAT Runic on 29 Jan 1916 and disembarked at Alexandria on 26 Feb 1916. In the reorganization of the AIF in Egypt he was one of the soldiers of 16 Bn transferred to the newly raised 48 Bn where he was taken on strength on 23 April 1916 and reverting to his rank of Private that same day. As part of the reorganization 48 Bn was required to allocate soldiers to the 12 MG Coy and Pte Maschmedt was one of those. His posting to 12 MG Coy was dated 4 May 1916. Following training with machine guns they departed Alexandria on 2 June 1916 and landed at Marseilles on 11 Jun 1916 for service with the BEF.

Promotion to the rank of Corporal was on 10 August 1916 while serving in the Pozieres-Moquet Farm sector. Promotion to Sergeant followed on 20 October 1916. It would seem that Sgt Maschmedt was now involved in the supply side of operations as he was appointed Company Quarter Master Sergeant (CQMS) on 30 Jan 1917 and promotion to the appropriate rank of Warrant Officer Class II followed

on 30 April 1917. The Coy was then heavily engaged in the actions in support of the Battle of Arras. In Sep-Oct the Coy fought in the Third Battle of Ypres. On 1 September 1917 Warrant Officer Maschmedt was appointed to the rank of Second Lieutenant in the field. On 02 Oct 1917 he was Wounded in Action and taken to 10 CCS where he died of his wounds (DOW) that same day. He was buried at Lijssenthoek which is the second largest military cemetery in Belgium.

Additional/personal information:

Lawrence Maschmedt was born in Adelaide SA but came to WA when young and attended Northam State School. It was a large family:

> MASCHMEDT.—Died of wounds on October 2,1917, Second-Lieutenant Laurie Maschmedt, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Maschmedt, Weld-street, Northam; aged 21 years. A promising young life cut off in its bloom. He like a soldier fell. —Inserted by his sorrowing parents and Sapper W. H. Maschmedt (on active service), Trooper H. J. Maschmedt (Blackboy Hill), and Steve (brothers), and Flo and Storm (sisters). *The West Australian* 20/10/1917p1

As often happened in the First War, the family risked multiple lives although in this case the two brothers, Sapper Walter and Trooper Harold, both survived.

His mother apparently received a letter from the Officer Commanding 12 MG Coy saying he had been recommended for the award of the Military Cross but that letter is not on file. The AWM website indicates such a recommendation but there is no text and no evidence of a military cross being awarded. As well as making his mother his NOK he left his estate to her entirely. There is no mention of his father until his mother requests specific military memorabilia and is informed that they have been sent to his father. His mother received the Form of Warrant and his Commission Certificate. It would appear that there was a breakdown in family communications following the War.

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----------