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McLeod, Malcolm Donald

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:	Tramwavs
Designation:	Horse Driver

Rail employment notes: Horse Driver, Perth Tramways.

(The tramways of Perth and adjoining suburbs were compulsorily purchased by the WA Government in 1913 and were placed in the management and responsibility of the WA Government Railways. The records of employees, including the honour roll after the war, reflected this combined operation.)

52nd Battalion AIF (Service No.3390). Killed in action 3/9/1916.

Military service information:

Conflict:	First World War 1914-1918
Service:	Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Military unit:	52nd Australian Infantry Battalion
Service number:	3390
Date of death:	3 September 1916
Place of death:	France
Age:	26
Rank:	Lance Corporal

Burial/memorialisation: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France

Malcolm Donald McLeod enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 02 Aug 1915. At the time of enlistment, he stated that his father was dead and his mother Mrs Jessie McLeod was his NOK. He had no previous military experience. His basic military training was conducted at Blackboy Hill Camp following which he was assigned to 11th /12 Bn with the regimental number 3390. The Bn reinforcements departed Australia through the Port of Fremantle aboard A24 HMAT Benalla on 01 Nov 1915 and disembarked at Suez. In Egypt he marched into 3 Training Bn for continuation training.

The AIF was reorganized in Egypt and half the soldiers of 12 Bn returned from Gallipoli were used to create the nucleus of a new “daughter” 52 Battalion on 1 March 1916. The remaining strength of the new 52 Bn were drawn from reinforcements. Pte McLeod was never actually taken on strength of 12 Bn but was allocated to 52 Bn on 02 Mar 1916 while still on the roll of 3 Training Bn. The Bn continued individual and formation training until 05 Jun 1916 when they departed Alexandria aboard *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 12 June 1916 to join the British Expeditionary Force. Pte McLeod had a short hospital admission with septic hands before moving to Northern France where the Bn participated in the Battles of Pozieres and Moquet Farm. Pte McLeod was admitted to hospital on 11 Aug 1916 suffering from exhaustion and shell shock before being returned to duty on 17 Aug 1916 and appointed a L/Cpl the following day.

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On 3 September 1916 he was Killed I Action at Moquet Farm (although the original notification was as Wounded In Action). He was buried on the battlefield as reported by Sgt R Williams who also wrote to L/Cpl McLeod's mother providing details about his death. After the War the Graves Registration Unit was unable to locate his remains so he has no known grave and is remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

The Australian War memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France.

Australian soldiers killed in France, whose bodies could be found for relocation, are buried and marked by the rows of gravestones seen to left and 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:

Malcolm Donald McLeod was born in Victoria, a son of William Angus & Jessie (nee Biggins) McLeod (Vic BDM 1706/1889). At least two other sons had been born before him, then the family moved to WA.

> McLEOD.—Killed in action in France on September 4, Lance-Corporal Malcolm Donald McLeod, the dearly beloved youngest son of the late William A., late of Windsor, Victoria, and Mrs. J. McLeod of 212 Bagot-road, Subiaco, and loved brother of Alec and Aeneas, aged 27 years.
> *The West Australian* 25/10/1916p1

For his service he was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal which were issued to his mother together with other memorabilia. Jessie McLeod was awarded a military pension which she continued to draw until her death at the age of 97 years on 30 Aug 1956. She was buried at Karrakatta 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----------