



SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORONER'S INQUESTS



Larkhill

Alfred ATKINS – Australian Soldier 23rd November, 1917

Tragic Discovery in Camp

An Australian soldier named Alfred Atkins was discovered dead at No 3 A Camp, Larkhill, late on Monday night, with a razor in his hand and his throat cut. The Police were communicated with, and the Coroner for South Wilts (Mr F. H. Trethowan) held an enquiry into the sad circumstances on Wednesday at Fargo Military Hospital. PC Maslin, stationed at Bulford, said that on being informed of the discovery he went to the camp and saw the body. The man was fully dressed and had a razor in his right hand. There were no letters throwing any light on the matter, but there was a pay book which gave some personal information. His name was given as Alfred Atkins, AIF, and his religion was stated as Presbyterian. He attested on December 30th, 1915, and was 45 when he enlisted. He appeared to have drawn his last pay on April 21st, 1917. His home was in South Australia. Witness also found a pass giving Atkins 12 hours' leave, which was dated May 3rd, 1917, and he afterwards learnt that the man had been absent from his unit since that date.

Capt Lucas, stationed at Larkhill, said that he first saw Atkins on Saturday, November 17th, when he was given a "shake down" in the hut witness occupied, for the time being. He seemed to be miserable and there was a vacant look about his eyes. The man was waiting for a warrant to go to Sutton Mandeville to join his unit. Witness had heard that Atkins had been sand-bagged in London. He told him his age was 64. Sergt Palmer, AIF, gave details as to finding the body at 11pm, on Monday, and said that it was then rigid as if Atkins had been dead some hours.

The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide while of unsound mind."

(Death Register gives age as 46 – Ed)

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**Pte Alfred Atkins, 5031, 10th Battalion A.I.F. is buried in Sutton Veny (St John) Churchyard, Wiltshire.