

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



676 LANCE CPL.

S. POLKINGHORNE MM.

32ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

22ND FEBRUARY, 1919 AGE 28

In Loving Memory Of

Our Only Son

*CWGC Headstone for Lance Cpl. S. Polkinghorne is located in
Grave Plot # 75. K. 4. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Samuel POLKINGHORNE

Samuel Polkinghorne was born at St Arnaud, Victoria in 1891 to parents William and Eliza Jane Polkinghorne (nee Beal).

The 1914 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Gippsland, subdivision of Warragul listed Samuel Polkinghorne, a drover, of Sea View. Also listed at Sea View were Samuel's parents – William, farmer, and Eliza Jane.

Samuel Polkinghorne was a 24 year old, single, Agent from Warragul, Victoria when he enlisted at Melbourne on 9th July, 1915 with the 8th Infantry Brigade, 29th Infantry Battalion, "B" Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 676 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Will Polkinghorne of Warragul, Victoria.

Private Samuel Polkinghorne embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ascanius* (A11) on 10th November, 1915 & disembarked at Suez on 7th December, 1915.

Private Polkinghorne embarked to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) on 16th June, 1916 & disembarked from *Tunisian* Troop Ship at Marseilles, France on 23rd June, 1916.

Private Polkinghorne was wounded in action on 11th September, 1916 & taken to 15th Field Ambulance with a gunshot wound to left hand. He was transferred to Casualty Clearing Station on 12th September, 1916 & admitted to 7th General Hospital at Boulogne on 14th September, 1916. Private Polkinghorne was transferred to England on 2nd October, 1916 on Hospital Ship *St. Denis*. He was admitted to County of Middlesex War Hospital at Napsbury, St Albans, Herfordshire the same day. Private Polkinghorne was transferred to 2nd Auxiliary Hospital at Southall on 20th October, 1916 & discharged on 24th October, 1916.

A Medical report was completed on Pte Samuel Polkinghorne at No. 2 Australian Command Depot at Weymouth on 22nd October, 1916 into the disability of Pte Polkinghorne's gunshot wound to left hand. The details included in the report – date of disability – 11th September, 1916 at Armentieres, France while on active service – *"while in the trenches was wounded by rifle bullet passing through the index, middle and ring fingers of the left hand, fracturing the middle and ring fingers at their last phalanx. The result of injury is to impair the use of fingers, which cannot be bent at present and the use of the hand is at present lessened."* Pte Samuel Polkinghorne was found by the Medical Board to be temporarily unfit for general service for more than 6 months but fit for home service.

Private Polkinghorne was marched into No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth on 18th November, 1916 & marched out to 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 20th November, 1916.

Private Polkinghorne was appointed Acting Corporal at 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott on 21st October, 1917.

Acting Corporal Polkinghorne was on command at QMS School at Candahar Barracks, Tidworth, Wiltshire on 22nd October, 1917.

Acting Corporal Polkinghorne was marched in from 8th Training Battalion to 15th Training Battalion at Codford, Wiltshire on 5th November, 1917. He was on command at Rifle Lewis Gun Course at Tidworth, Wiltshire on 5th December, 1917.

Acting Corporal Polkinghorne attended the 16th Rifle Course at the School of Musketry at Tidworth from 6th December to 18th January, 1918 & qualified as 1st Class with a fair working knowledge of the Lewis Gun.

Acting Corporal Polkinghorne was marched in to 15th Training Battalion from Rifle & Lewis Gun Course. His rank reverted to Private on 12th February, 1918 & he proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 12th February, 1918. He was marched in at Le Havre on 13th February, 1918 & was marched out to his Unit on 15th February, 1918.

Private Polkinghorne rejoined his Unit – 29th Battalion in the field on 23rd February, 1918.

Private Polkinghorne was appointed to Lance Corporal on 12th June, 1918.

Lance Corporal Polkinghorne was wounded in action (second occasion) on 19th July, 1918 but remained on duty.

Lance Corporal Polkinghorne was appointed Temporary Corporal vice 1375 Cpl. Dowell wounded – 6th August, 1918.

Temporary Corporal Polkinghorne was transferred to 32nd Battalion on 12th October, 1918 & taken on strength the same day. His rank reverted to Lance Corporal being in excess of Establishment.

Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne was awarded the Military Medal.



Military Medal showing both sides

Lance Corporal Polkinghorne was marched out from the field ready for return to Australia on 3rd February, 1919.

Lance Corporal Polkinghorne embarked for England from Havre, France on 14th February, 1919 & disembarked on 15th February, 1919.

Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne was admitted to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 15th February, 1919 with Influenza from Codford, Wiltshire. He was listed as dangerously ill with Broncho pneumonia on 17th February, 1919.

Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne died at 3.15 am on 22nd February, 1919 at the 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny of Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for S. Polkinghorne, aged 27, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne was buried on 25th February, 1919 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 75. From the burial report of L./Cpl. Polkinghorne - *Coffin was Elm with Brass Mounts – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the coffin draped with the Australian flag being conveyed to the graveside on a Gun Carriage preceded by a Firing Party from No. 1 Australian Command Depot Sutton Veny. Six of deceased's late Unit comrades supported the Pall. The "Last Post" was sounded and volleys fired over the grave. A number of Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men followed the remains and were present at the graveside ceremony. Flowers were sent by "Ivy", "W.R.A.F." and Orderlies Officers Mess Old Sarum, and from 46 Colver Street. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral. Also in attendance as friends were – Miss Burton, Miss Jeffrey, Miss Maidment, Miss Vrichell & Miss I. N. Rowthorp all of 46 Colver St, Salisbury.*

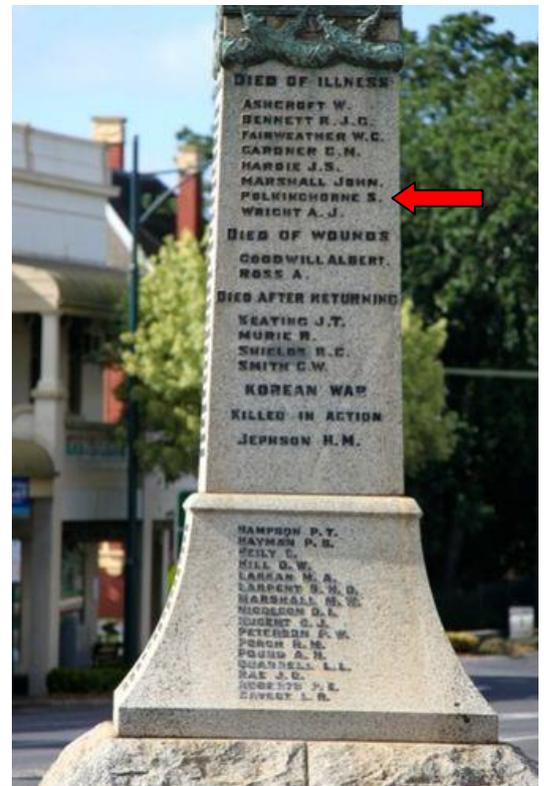
The Trustees Executors and Agency Company Limited were appointed as Executor of the Will of Pte Samuel Polkinghorne, dated 23rd July, 1915. William Polkinghorne was prescribed as Legatee.

Lance Corporal S. Polkinghorne is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 121.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

S. Polkinghorne is remembered on the Warragul War Memorial located at Victoria & Smith Streets, Warragul, Victoria.



Warragul War Memorial (Photos from Monument Australia – Nancy Alford)

Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lance Corporal Polkinghorne's father – Mr W. Polkinghorne (Scroll sent October, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

Base Records wrote to Mr William Polkinghorne on 16th June, 1919 stating that the Military Medal that was awarded to his son, the late Lance Corporal S. Polkinghorne, was available & wished to find out if Mr Polkinghorne would like the decoration to be handed to him publicly on the first suitable occasion, or whether he would prefer it to be transmitted direct from this office.

Mr W. Polkinghorne replied to Base Records on 17th June, 1919 stating that he would like his son's Military Medal forwarded to him & *"when doing so I would be glad if you could let us know what he was awarded the medal for, my reason for asking you this favour is because he never told us why he was awarded the medal he only said we would be pleased to know that he had been awarded a Military Medal and told us not to make a song of it in the papers, and as this was his wish I would rather not receive it publicly, trusting you will let me know if possible why he was awarded the medal."*

Base Records replied to Mr W. Polkinghorne on 23rd June, 1919 & the letter reads:

"It is with feelings of admiration at the gallantry of a brave Australian soldier who nobly laid down his life in the service of our King and Country, that I am directed by the Honourable The Minister to forward you, as the next-of-kin of the late No. 676 Lance Corporal S. Polkinghorne, M.M., 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, the Military Medal which His Majesty The King has been graciously pleased to award to that gallant soldier for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty while serving with the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force.

The specific deed for which this distinction was bestowed is as follows:-

- *"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the operations carried out on the 8th and 9th August, 1918, East of Villers-Bretonneux. This N.C.O. was in charge of a Lewis Gun Team which was taken in advance of the final objective by Tanks, and then took up a position to cover the consolidation of our line. While selecting the best tactical position for his gun, he showed an utter disregard for his personal safety, and was untiring in his efforts to put enemy machine guns out of action. At one time when the crew was subject to very heavy shell and machine gun fire he freely exposed himself in moving to a new position of safety. By his coolness and initiative he supplied his Commanding Officer with very valuable information concerning the formation of ground in front, and enemy movement, by this means a local counter-attack was crushed."*

I am also to ask you to accept his deep personal sympathy in the loss which, not only to you, but the Australian Army has sustained by the death of Lance Corporal Polkinghorne whose magnificent conduct on the field of battle was helped to earn for our Australian soldiers a fame which will endure as long as memory lasts.

I shall be much obliged if you will let me know whether it comes safely to hand by signing and returning the attached receipt form."

Base Records advised Mr W. Polkinghorne on 1st July, 1919 that his son had been awarded the Military Medal & it had been noted in the *London & Australian Gazettes* – *"His Majesty The King has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Military Medal for bravery in the field to the undermentioned soldier – No. 676 Private (temporary Corporal) S. Polkinghorne."* (Sixth Supplement No. 31142 to the *London Gazette* 21st January, 1919 – *Australian Gazette* No. 61 dated 23rd May, 1919).

The CWGC lists Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne, 676, of 32nd Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of William and Eliza Jane Polkinghorne, of Victoria St., Warragul, Victoria.

(103 pages of Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives.



Newspaper Reports

AT THE FRONT

OUR BOYS IN EGYPT

INTERESTING LETTER FROM PRIVATE S. POLKINGHORNE

Dear Mother, - As I was in Cairo on Sunday, I did not have time to write that day. Roy and I had leave for the day, and I can tell you we enjoyed our day, too. It was the first leave we had for three months. We went straight out to look Albert up when we arrived in Cairo, and when we were almost there, who should we meet but Albert and his brother Charlie, who was up to Cairo on leave too.

My word we were pleased to meet them. Albert is looking splendid; also Charlie. Well, we had dinner at the Y.M.C.A. in Cairo, then we went to the Pyramids, which are about ten miles out. We took a tram to go there. We crossed over the Nile on the way; also passed the place where Moses was born in the bull-rushes.

We saw the Sphinx, which is a marvellous piece of work. We would have had our photos taken there, but we did not have time to wait our turn, there were so many there. Well, the largest Pyramid we saw is 480 feet high. It covers 13 acres of land, and was built 3,700 years B.C. They will stand there for ever I believe. You can go, to the top from the outside or from the inside. We went up 240 feet inside, into what is called the King's chamber, it is 18 feet high by 14 by 10; the stone which makes the roof of that weighs 19 tons.

The Queen's chamber is almost as large as the King's, but the whole thing, top stone and sides, are cut out of the one stone. There is not a join in it. The Pyramids are a wonderful piece of work, done by slaves, who only got onions, dry bread and water to eat. It beats anything I have seen. We also saw the old slave market. The blood stains are still on the wall where the executions were carried out.

The Nile is a lovely wide stream, with immense bridges across it. The irrigation plots along the Nile are looking splendid. The lucerne looks lovely, and the barley is just coming into ear. It was the first time we had seen the agricultural parts of this country. It gives one a different impression of Egypt after the sand. There are a lot more Foster chaps here now, we have great old times together. I met W. Kew, of Warragul, here last night; he is one of Warragul's best rifle shots, and he told me that young Freckleton, of Buln, is in his company, so I am going to look him up.

I hear there is a mail due today, so hope to hear from home; we have not had a mail for about ten days. We were doing fatigue all last week, but are at our drill again this week. It is nice hard ground to drill on here. We have two picture shows here, several canteens, a Y.M.C.A., and everything to make us comfortable. The weather is getting warm here now. We don't go to drill until 3 o'clock in the afternoon; it is always turning cooler then. They will not allow long letters, so I must ring off, or this will not go. I hope this finds you quite well, as I am at present; also Alex and Roy. With love to all -Yours etc

SAM POLKINGHORNE

(West Gippsland Gazette, Warragul, Vic – Tuesday 2 May, 1916)

PRIVATE POLKINGHORNE

We regret to record the death in England of Private POLKINGHORNE M.M., the only son of Mr and Mrs Polkinghorne of Warrigal. Private Polkinghorne has been three and a half years, in the service, of his country when at last he was over-taken by the scourge of influenza. The sad news was received last week by his sorrowing parents and sincere sympathy has been felt and expressed on all sides of the bereaved family. Warrigal has paid a heavy toll in only sons, no less than five or six families suffering this severe loss. What a

blessing it is to be able to realise, however, that these sons are not really "lost" to us but have merely changed their physical bodies for others more ethereal, but none the less real and living....

(*West Gippsland Gazette*, Warragul, Vic – Tuesday 11 March, 1919)

DEATH

On Active Service

POLKINGHORNE, M.M. - On the 22nd February, at First Australian Hospital, of pneumonia, after three years and four months active service, Corporal Samuel, much loved only son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Polkinghorne, Warragul, and loving brother of Mary (Mrs. M. Johnson), Louie (nurse) and Ella, aged 28 years.

Our Hero

No mother or father by your side
To kiss you a last farewell;
No sister to clasp you in her arms
When death was dawning night

- Inserted by his sorrowing parents and sisters.

(*West Gippsland Gazette*, Warragul, Vic – Tuesday 11 March, 1919)

CORP. POLKINGHORNE, M.M.

HIS BRAVE DEED

Mr W. Polkinghorne, of Warragul, father of Corporal Polkinghorne, M.M., who died in England, has just received the military medal awarded to his son for conspicuous bravery.....

(*West Gippsland Gazette*, Warragul, Vic – Tuesday 1 July, 1919)

IN MEMORIAM

On Active Service

POLKINGHORNE - In loving memory of our esteemed friend, Sam (No. 670, Lewis Machine Gun Section), who died in England on 22nd February, 1919, after 3 years and 3 months' active service.

He has sailed on his last commission.
On that beautiful ship called "Rest,"
And his head is safely pillowed
On his great Commander's breast.
One of the best.

-(Inserted by his loving friends Mr. and Mrs. N. Reeves, and family; also his devoted comrade. Driver R. J. Thomas, late 2nd D.A.C., A.I.F., Foster.)

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Vic – Monday 23 February, 1920)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

A letter was sent from Base Records to Mr W. Polkinghorne, dated 8th October, 1920, concerning his choice of the Star of David emblem for his late son's Headstone in churchyard at Sutton Veny. Mr Polkinghorne was advised that the Star of David was typical of the Jewish faith & that The Cross was symbolic of the Christian faith. Mr Polkinghorne replied stated that he wished for The Cross to be placed on his son's headstone.

Lance Corporal Samuel Polkinghorne does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

In Loving Memory Of Our Only Son



War Graves at Sutton Veny (Photos from CWGC)



Photo of Lance Corporal S. Polkinghorne's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)