

**St. Tysilios Church Cemetery,
Menai Bridge, Isle of Anglesey, Wales**

War Grave



Lest We Forget

World War 1



615 CORPORAL

A. W. CONNINGTON

AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORP

25TH OCTOBER, 1918 Age 23

The Dearly Beloved Son
Of Mr & Mrs W. J. Connington
Of Goulburn, N.S.W.

Alexander William CONNINGTON

Alexander William Connington was born at Balmain, Sydney, New South Wales in 1895 to parents William James and Mary Connington (nee Parker).

Alexander William Connington attended North Goulburn Public School & Goulburn District Secondary School, NSW.

Alexander William Connington had been apprenticed with N.S.W. Railways where he worked for 5 years.

Alexander William Connington was a 21 year old, single, Fitter & Turner from 56 Stafford Street, Stanmore, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted at Show Ground Camp, Sydney on 19th September, 1916. His service number was 615 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr W. J. Connington, of Chantrey Street, Goulburn, NSW. Before enlisting, Alexander Connington was a member of the Australian Citizen Force where he last held the rank of Sergeant. Alexander Connington stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served for 2 years with Senior Cadets; 1 month with 2nd Infantry, A.I.F. (under age); 1 ½ years with 43rd Infantry, A.I.F. & 6 months with 36th Infantry, A.I.F. & was still serving with 36th Infantry.

Private Alexander Connington was posted to 2nd Australian Flying Squadron at Laverton on 22nd September, 1916.

Private/Air Mechanic (2 entries are recorded for the First World War Embarkation Roll on the Australian War Memorial website) Alexander William Connington embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Ulysses (A38)* on 25th October, 1916 as part of 2nd Australian Flying Squadron "A" Flight & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 28th December, 1916.

Private Alexander Connington, attached to 69th Australian Squadron, R.F.C. (Royal Flying Corps), was on command to Scottish School of Fitters for a course of instruction at Edinburgh from 9th January, 1917. He rejoined his Unit at Carlton on 7th February, 1917 from Scottish School of Fitters.

Private Alexander Connington was sent sick to Hospital on 14th February, 1917. He was admitted to Isolation Hospital at Bagthorpe, Nottingham with Cerebro Spinal Fever & discharged on 19th May, 1917.

2nd Air Mechanic Alexander Connington was marched into No. 69 Squadron, A.F.C. (Australian Flying Corps) at Sth Carlton from Hospital at Bagthorpe, Nottingham on 26th May, 1917.

2nd Air Mechanic Alexander Connington was on command at School of Instruction, School of Armament, R.F.C. Perivale, West Walling on 17th July, 1917 & re-joined No. 69 Squadron, A.F.C. (Australian Flying Corps) on 31st July, 1917 from School of Armament from Course of Instruction: Synchronised Gears.

2nd Air Mechanic Alexander Connington proceeded overseas to France on 21st August, 1917. He disembarked for B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) by air in France on 10th September, 1917

2nd Air Mechanic Alexander Connington was posted a new designation on 18th January, 1918 – 3rd Squadron, A.F.C.

2nd Air Mechanic Alexander Connington was on leave to Paris from 16th March, 1918 & rejoined from leave on 23rd March, 1918,

2nd Air Mechanic Alexander Connington was promoted to Corporal on 1st May, 1918 vice 560 Corporal F. Linsley promoted.

Corporal Alexander Connington sent sick to Hospital in France on 2nd May, 1918. He was taken to 61st Casualty Clearing Station with influenza then transferred to No. 7 Ambulance Train on 3rd May, 1918. Corporal Connington was admitted to 1st Canadian General Hospital at Etaples, France with Trench Fever on 4th May, 1918. He was discharged to 6th Convalescent Depot at Etaples on 8th May, 1918 & discharged to Base Depot on 17th May, 1918.

Corporal Alexander Connington was remustered Corporal Mechanic on 17th May, 1918 (A.I.F. order No. 1735).

Corporal Mechanic Alexander Connington was marched in to No. 1 Air Depot on 20th May, 1918. He was posted to 3rd Squadron A.F.C. on 25th May, 1918 & rejoined 3rd Squadron from being sick on 28th May, 1918.

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Corporal Mechanic Alexander Connington was paid in France on 7th June, 1918.

Corporal Mechanic Alexander Connington proceeded to England for training as A.F.C. Flying Officer (Pilot) (no date recorded).

Corporal Mechanic Alexander Connington was posted to Home Establishment on 12th October, 1918 & disembarked at Folkestone, England on 13th October, 1918 on duty from France & to report to O.C. Aviation, London.

Corporal Mechanic Alexander William Connington was admitted to Central Military Hospital, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England on 15th October, 1918 suffering from Pneumonia - severe. Corporal Mechanic Alexander Connington had been transferred from C.A.A. at Halton.

Corporal Alexander William Connington died at 6.15 pm on 25th October, 1918 at Central Military Hospital, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England from Pneumonia. Corporal Alexander William Connington died exactly 2 years to the day from embarking from Melbourne for the War.

A death for Alexander W. Connington, aged 23, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England.

The body of Corporal Alexander William Connington was sent to Menai Bridge for burial - to Miss M. Connington (Cousin) Gwyn-Fryn, Menai Bridge, Anglesey, Wales.

Corporal Alexander William Connington was buried on 30th October, 1918 in St. Tysilio Churchyard, Llandysilio, Menai, Isle of Anglesey, Wales – in north-west part and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Corporal Connington - *Coffin was Elm with brass mounts. The deceased soldier was buried privately by his relatives in Wales. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral. Names of relatives & friends present at the Funeral – Aunt – Mrs Connington, Cousin – Miss Connington, Mr & Mrs Brewster, Mr Williams, Mr & Mrs Parry, R. E. Thomason, Sapper W. H. Hughes, E. Davies, J. S. Jones, Mrs R. Williams, Mr J. Rice and one Australian.*

Alexander William Connington, of 69th Australian Flying Corps, requested in his Will dated 12th June, 1917 that he bequeathed all his real estate to his Mother – Mrs M. Connington of Chantry St. Goulburn, NSW.

Mr W. J. Connington wrote to Base Records on 3rd December, 1922 enquiring *“if the headstone concerning which you advised me over two years ago is likely to be placed on my son’s grave in the near future, as my relations on Menai Bridge, North Wales, who keeps the grave in order, often mentions the fact to me that nothing in that respect has yet been done. A New Zealander, Lieut. Gunnaway, is buried in an adjoining grave & an elaborate stone erected over him by his relations while my boy’s grave has nothing on it except the wooden cross. Of course if I had known that it would have taken so long I should have acted in the same way as Lieut. Gunnaway’s friends did. Please excuse me for intruding on your valuable time, & I hope you do not take this as a complaint, but rather in the spirit in which it is intended.”*

A reply was sent from Base Records on 13th December, 1922 advising Mr W. J. Connington that *“a permanent headstone similar to those being erected in the battle areas will, at the earliest opportunity be placed over the grave of your son the late No. 615 Corporal A. W. Connington, Australian Flying Corps. Owing to the magnitude of the task considerable delay is inevitable in many cases, but the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission is proceeding as rapidly as possible. The inscription submitted by you together with your son’s regimental description will be engraved on the permanent headstone and you will be notified when action has been taken.”*

Corporal Alexander William Connington was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Corporal Connington’s father – Mr W. J. Connington, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Corporal Alexander William Connington – service number 615, aged 23, of 3rd Squadron, Australian Flying Corps. He was the son of William James and Mary Connington, of Chantry St., Goulburn, New South Wales. Born at Sydney.

Corporal A. W. Connington is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 187.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. W. Connington is remembered on the Rocky Hill War Memorial Tower and Honour Roll, located at Memorial Road, Goulburn, NSW.



Rocky Hill War Memorial Tower, Goulburn

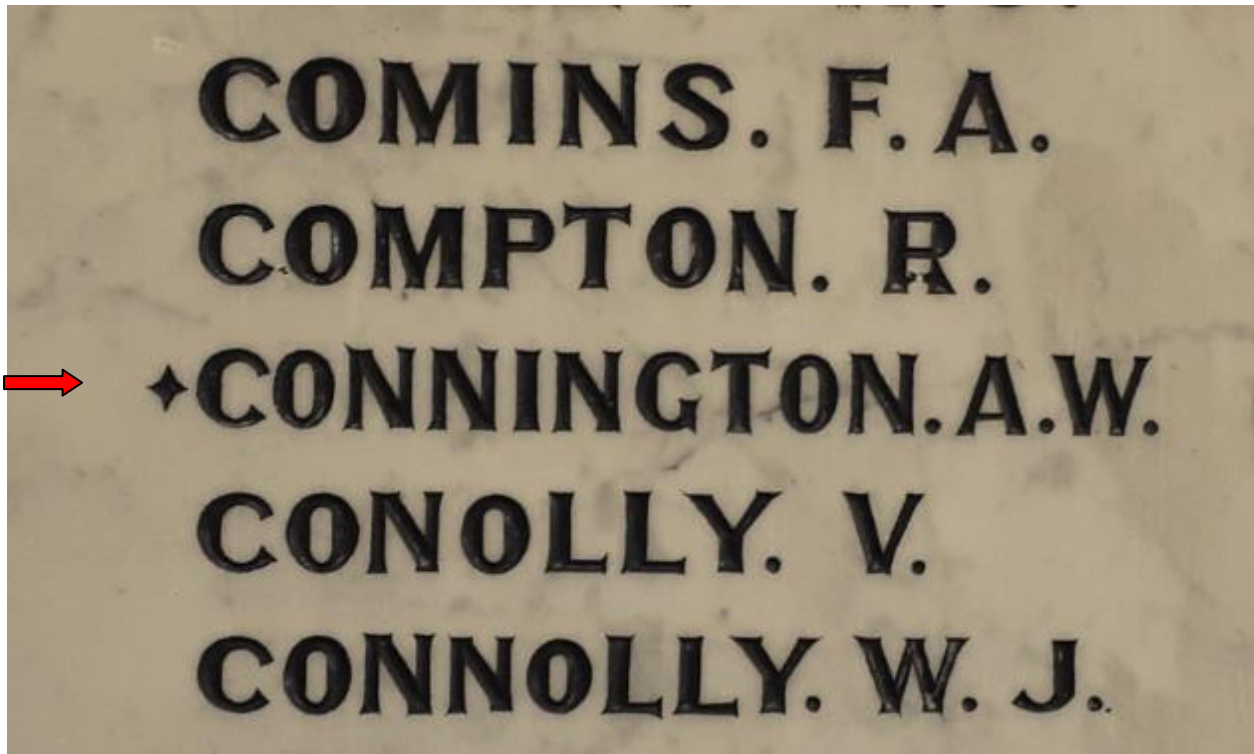


Rocky Hill War Memorial Tower, Goulburn *(Photos by Kevin Sedgwick)*

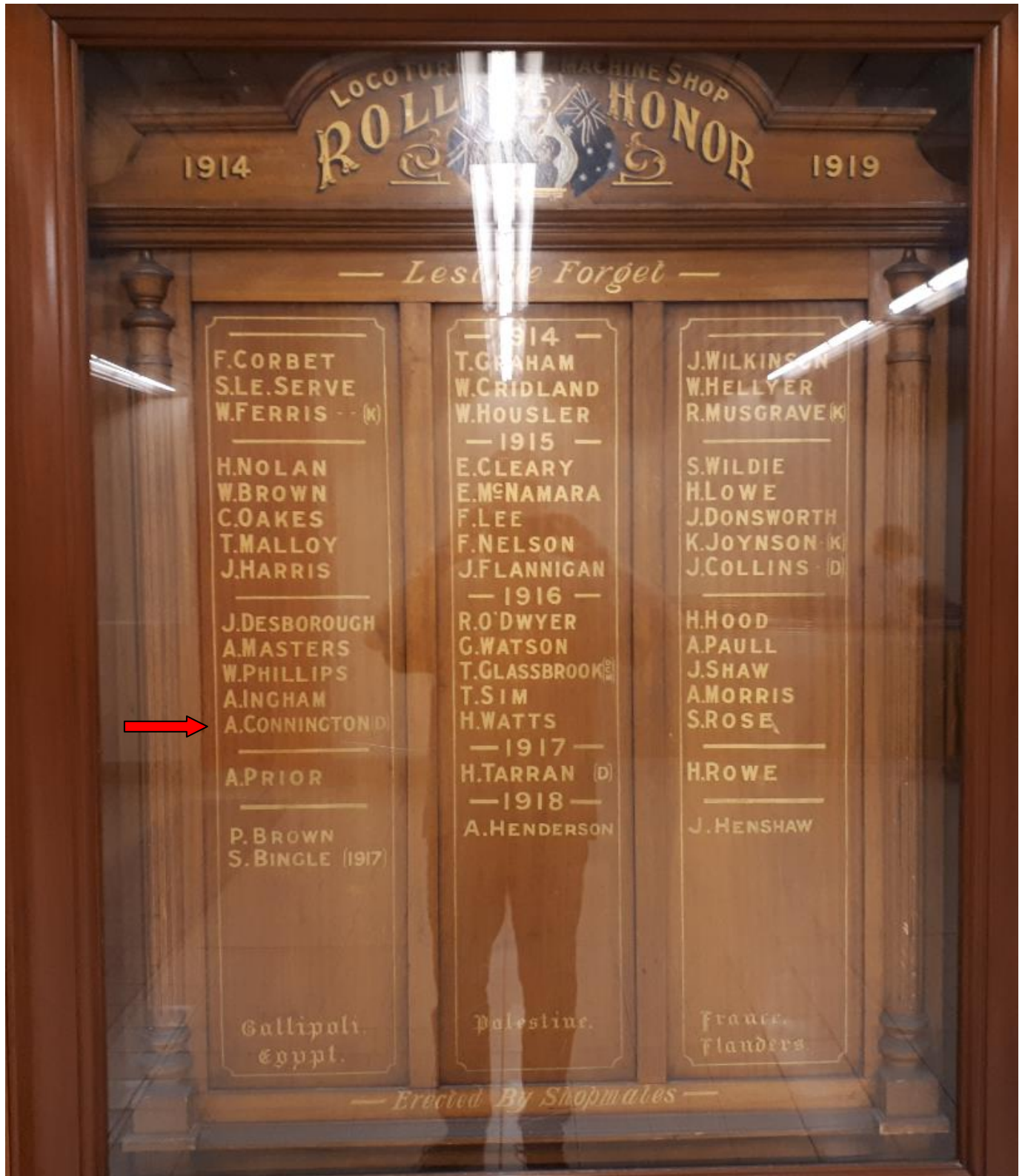




Rocky Hill War Memorial Tower Roll of Honour, Goulburn (Photos by Kevin Sedgwick)



A. Connington is remembered on the Railway Remembrance Wall, Central Station. Loco Turning and Machine Shop, Roll of Honour 1914-1919. The Roll of Honour Board is located near the stairs to Platform 23.



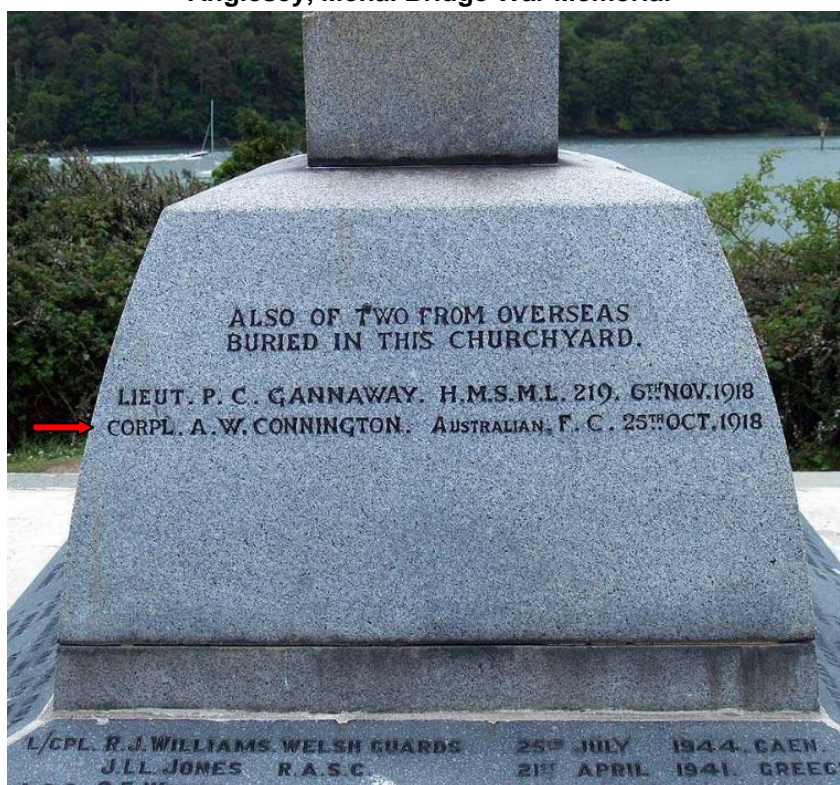
Railway Remembrance Roll of Honour Board

(Photo by Kevin Sedgwick)

A. W. Connington is also named on the Anglesey, Menai Bridge War Memorial as being one of two from Overseas buried in the Churchyard.



Anglesey, Menai Bridge War Memorial



(65 pages of Corporal Alexander William Connington's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

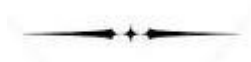
Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P07483.001

Corporal Alexander William Connington



Newspaper Notices

MACHINE GUN FATALITY

CORONER'S INQUIRY

FINDING OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH

The City Coroner yesterday held an Inquiry into the cause of death of Henry Joseph Walker, 18, who was killed at the Maroubra Bay camp by a machine gun last Saturday. Mr C. W. Robson appeared for Alexander William Connington and Lieutenant-Colonel C.F. Coleman for the military authorities.

Dr. Norman Howard Mummery, regimental medical officer at the Maroubra Bay camp, stated that Walker was wounded in several places. One bullet had passed through his heart. He died within 10 minutes of receiving the injuries.

Frank Robert Ollif, storeman and photographer, stated that he was at the Maroubra camp last Saturday for the purpose of taking photographs.

Sylvester Patrick O'Donnell, member of the Citizen Forces, said deceased was in a tent lying down when the gun went off. The gun had not been fired at the Maroubra camp. Witness did not know why the ball cartridges were supplied as there were blank cartridges for the gun.

Aubrey John Sarsfield McShane stated that he was a sergeant in 43rd Infantry Machine Gun section of the Citizen Forces. He brought out the tripod from the store tent, and Connington followed with the gun and the ammunition-box. The belt was put in the gun to make the photograph more realistic. There were 250 rounds in the cartridge belt and five were fired. The gun could not go off of its own volition. The catch had to be raised, and a double button pressed. Once the gun was started the whole 250 cartridges were exploded. If the safety catch was hooked up and pressure brought on the double button, the gun would go off. As soon as the gun fired Connington must have released the safety catch and stopped the gun.

Lee John Fitzpatrick, clerk, and lieutenant in the 43rd Infantry Citizen Forces, said that Connington thoroughly understood the gun. McShane was also a competent man.

Alexander William Connington stated that he and Sergeant McShane had arranged to have their photographs taken singly. Witness placed the gun on the tripod in position. He took the belt containing 250 cartridges out of the ammunition box, and inserted it in the gun. McShane was called away just as everything was ready. Witness went to get down by the gun into firing position. When he was all but down the gun traversed, and it began firing. That was caused through his being thrown to one side, and both his hands being on the traversing handles. To start the gun the safety catch had to be lifted, and the double button pressed. Some of his fingers must have got under the safety catch when he had not quite got into position. The traversing clamp was not tightened, and that allowed the gun to traverse. He did not know that the clamp was loose. As soon as he heard the gun go off he let go the machine, and it stopped immediately. He knew now that he had no authority to take the gun the way he did. Witness had been 12 months in the machine gun section.

The City Coroner (Mr H. S. Hawkins), in returning a verdict of accidental death, said it was unfortunate that the boy had lost his life in this way, but he was satisfied that it was purely by accident. He added that, in his opinion, there should be a regulation regarding loaded cartridges - when they were to be used, and when not to be.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 29 October, 1914)

Goulburn and the War

DIED OF ILLNESS

Mr W. J. Connington, senior warder at the Goulburn Gaol, has received official advice that his eldest son, Corpl. Alexander William Connington, late of the Royal Australian Flying Corps, died of pneumonia on October 25. Deceased was a native of Goulburn, where he resided all his life until leaving for the front. He was 23 years of age, and was trained at Laverton Camp, Melbourne. He sailed for the front on October 25, 1916. He served for 12 months in England in various schools of instruction, and flew to France about 12 months ago. He was in hospital with trench fever. Some time back he was chosen to go to England to a flight lieutenant's school of instruction. Prior to enlistment he was employed in the Railway Department as an engineer. A brother of deceased, Gunner Victor Connington, is at present in France. Deep sympathy is expressed for Mr and Mrs Connington in the loss of their son, who was a very popular young fellow.

(Goulburn Evening Penny Post, NSW – 5 November, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

CONNINGTON – On active service abroad, Corporal Alex. W. Connington, eldest son of Mr and Mrs W. J. Connington, of Goulburn, 3rd Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, died of pneumonia, October 25, 1918.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 9 November, 1918)

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. 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)

Corporal A. W. Connington does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The Dearly Beloved Son Of Mr & Mrs W. J. Connington Of Goulburn, N.S.W.

St. Tysilio Churchyard, Llandysilio, Menai, Anglesey, Wales

St. Tysilio Churchyard, Llandysilio, Anglesey, Wales contains 8 Commonwealth War Graves – 7 relate to World War 1. There is only 1 Australian buried in this Churchyard.



St. Tysilio Churchyard, Llandysilio (Photo from CWGC)



St. Tysilio Churchyard, Llandysilio

Photo of Corporal A. W. Connington's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Tysilio Churchyard, Menai Bridge, Isle of Anglesey, Wales.





(Photo courtesy of Sally Franklin)