

**Hetton Cemetery,
Hetton-le-Hole, Tyne & Wear
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2340 PRIVATE

R. HOUGHTON

31TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

5TH AUGUST, 1916 Age 22

*In Memory Of
The Dear Son Of
Mr & Mrs A. Houghton
Of Australia*

Richard (Dick) HOUGHTON

Richard Houghton was born at Brandon Colliery, County of Durham, England in late 1893 to parents Andrew and Mary Lizzie Houghton (nee Hayton). His birth was registered in the March quarter, 1894 in the registration district of Durham, England.

The 1901 England Census recorded Richard Houghton as a 7 year old, living with his family at 28 Princess Street, Brandon, Durham, England. His parents were listed as Andrew Houghton (Coal Miner, aged 35, born Haswell, Durham) & Mary L. Houghton (aged 34, born Bishop Auckland). Richard was one of three children listed in this Census (all born at Brandon, Durham) – Elizabeth Houghton (aged 7), then Richard & William Houghton (age 4).

Richard Houghton attended Langley Moor Board School, Durham, England.

The 1911 England Census recorded Richard Houghton as a 17 year old Colliery Blacksmith, living with his family at 29 High Street, Langley Moor, near Durham in a 5 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Andrew Houghton (Coal Miner Hewer, aged 45) & Mary Lizzie Houghton (Wardrobe Dealer, aged 43). Andrew & Mary Lizzie Houghton had been married for 22 years & had 4 children, with 1 child having died. Also living with their parents were their 2 sons – Richard Houghton & William Houghton (Labourer above ground, aged 14) & their daughter & her family – Elizabeth Coates (aged 19) her husband Ralph Grozier Coates (Joiner, aged 22) & Elizabeth & Ralph's child – Harry Coates (aged 1 month). Also listed was Ada Polly Bainbridge (General Servant, aged 18).

According to information provided by his parents for the Roll of Honour, Richard came to Australia when he was 20 years old. Mrs Houghton & infant, Richard Houghton & William Houghton (& a William Hayten) were passengers on *Otranto* which had departed from the port of London, England & arrived at the port of Sydney, NSW, Australia on 19th June, 1913. Andrew Houghton, Miner, aged 46 was a passenger on the *Otway* which had departed from London, England on 3rd January, 1913 bound for Australia. Andrew Houghton had contracted to land at Sydney.

Richard Houghton was a 22 year old, single, Blacksmith from Wollongong, NSW when he enlisted on 28th August, 1915 with the 8th Infantry Brigade, 31st Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2340 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr A. Houghton, of Gray Street, Keiraville, Wollongong, NSW.

Private Richard Houghton was posted to Camp with "C" Company, 30th Battalion on 28th August, 1915. He was transferred to 4th Reinforcements of 31st Battalion on 21st February, 1916.

Private Richard Houghton embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Anchises (A68)* on 14th March, 1916 & disembarked at Suez on 15th April, 1916.

Private Richard Houghton was marched out from 8th Training Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir to join 31st Battalion on 19th April, 1916. He was taken on strength of 31st Battalion at Duntroon Plateau on 20th April, 1916.

Private Richard Houghton was taken to 14th Australian Field Ambulance at Railhead on 7th May, 1916 with a Septic Jaw. He was transferred to No. 2 Australian Casualty Clearing Station at Ferry Post with Influenza. Pte Houghton was discharged to his Unit on 18th May, 1916 & rejoined his Unit on the same day from Hospital.

Private Richard Houghton embarked from Alexandria on 16th June, 1916 on *Hororata* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 23rd June, 1916.

Private Richard Houghton was reported Missing in France on 19th July, 1916.

Private Richard Houghton was reported Wounded in Action in France on 20th July, 1916 (previously reported as Missing). He was admitted to 8th Stationary Hospital at Wimereux on 21st July, 1916 with gunshot wounds to Arm. Pte Houghton was transferred to Hospital Ship St. Denis at Boulogne, France for England on 23rd July, 1916.

31st Battalion

The 31st Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Enoggera, on the outskirts of Brisbane, in August 1915. Some of the battalion's companies, however, were also raised at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria. In early October,

these two elements were united at Broadmeadows, and the battalion sailed from Melbourne the following month.

The 8th Brigade joined the newly raised 5th Australian Division in Egypt, and proceeded to France, destined for the Western Front, in June 1916. The 31st Battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916, having only entered the front-line trenches 3 days previously. The attack was a disastrous introduction to battle for the 31st - it suffered 572 casualties, over half of its strength. Although it still spent periods in the front line, the 31st played no major offensive role for the rest of the year.

(Battalion Information from The Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 31st Battalion - France:

19th July – Bombardment on both sides during the day. Assault launched at 6 pm. Enemy's position captured & an attempt made to consolidate during the night (Additional Operation order – Appendix B).

20th July – Both flanks were broken & a general retirement to our original lines necessary. Casualties very heavy. Bn. withdrawn from front line & rebilleted in FLEURBAIX. Casualties amongst Officers 1 Killed 10 Wounded 6 Missing.

21st July – Despatches & detailed summary of operations covering period of attach 19th & 20th inst prepared & forwarded to G.O.C. 8th Inf. Bde.

<i>Casualty return</i>	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Missing</i>
<i>Officers</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Other ranks</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>410</i>	<i>80</i>

Estimated Germans killed in Bn Sector 500, captured 120.

Bn moved & billeted in BAC ST MAUR

(War Diary Information from The Australian War Memorial)

Private Richard Houghton was admitted to Military Hospital Sandgate with gunshot wound to right arm on 24th July, 1916. The Hospital Admissions form records - compound fracture of right Humerus (Severe).

Private Richard Houghton died at 4.10 pm on 5th August, 1916 at Bevan Hospital, Sandgate, England from Wounds received in action in France - Compound Fracture of right humerus.

A death for Richard Houghton, aged 22, was registered in the September quarter, 1916 in the district of Elham, Kent, England.

The remains of the late Private Richard Houghton were removed to his aunt's residence for interment – Mrs White, 59 Station Road, Hetton-le-Hole, Durham, England. Private Richard Houghton was buried on 10th August, 1916 in Hetton Cemetery, Hetton, Tyne & Wear, England – Plot number 222 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. Private Richard Houghton was buried privately & did not receive a Military Funeral.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Richard Houghton contains a letter from Bevan Military Hospital, Sandgate, Kent, (V.A.D. Commandant) – the letter was send from the Hospital for Private Houghton's mother, though no enquiry was received. The letter reads:

"I am very sorry to report the death of one of our Australian soldiers here – No. 2340, Pte Houghton, Richard, B Coy., 31st A.I.F., aged 22, Methodist, admitted 24/7/16.

Gunshot wound and compound fracture of right humurus, The cause of death was embolism – died 4. 10 pm 5/8/16. His mother lives at Gray Street, Keira Ville, Wollongong, N.S. Wales. His aunt is Mrs White, 59 Station Rd, Hetton-le-Hole, Durham, England. She was coming to see Pte Houghton, but has been stopped by wire. The Military have

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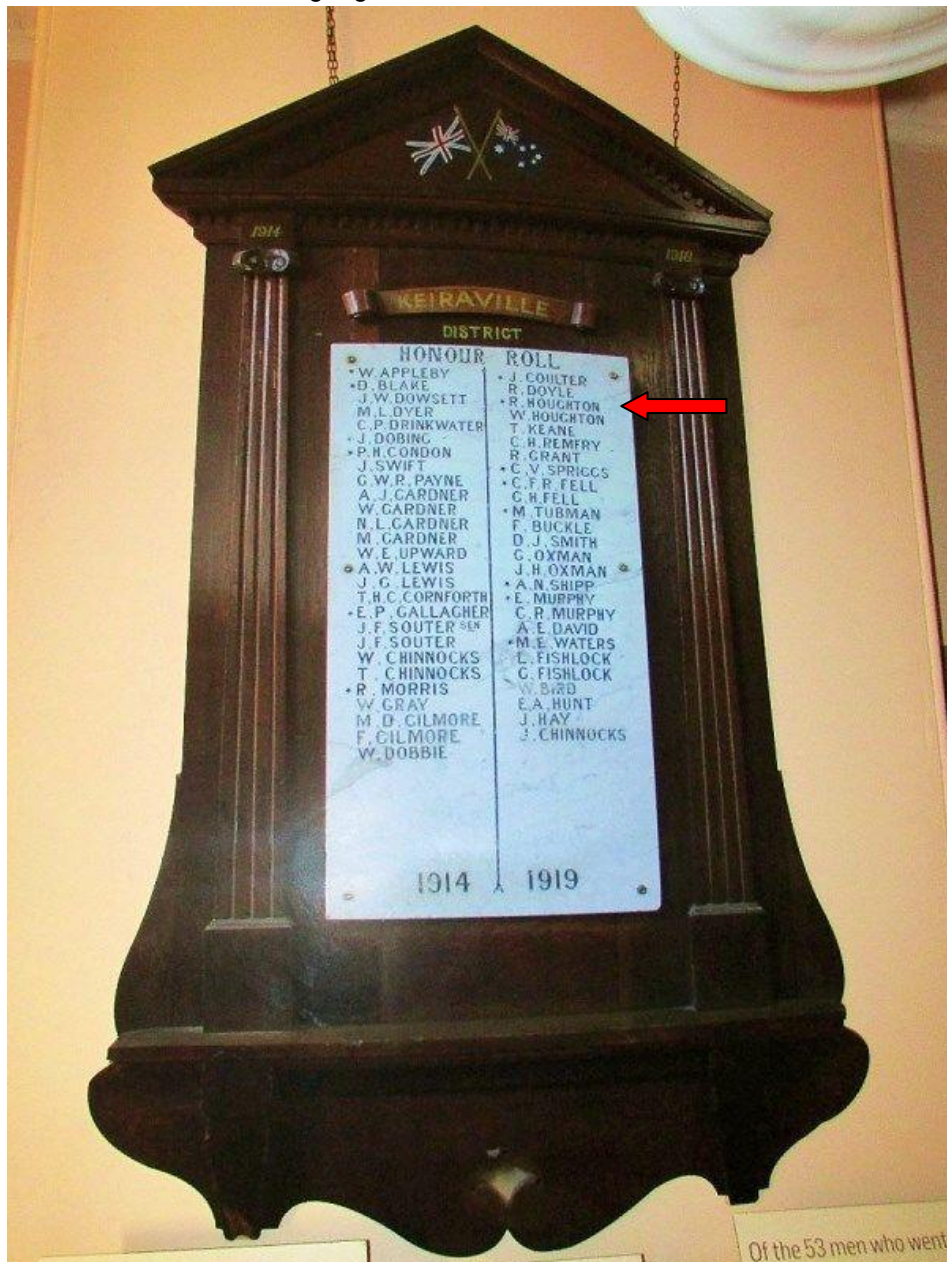
wired to his mother in N.S. Wales. We are so sorry the convoy on the 24th July were so very badly wounded. We took in fourteen Australians in a sick convoy to-day, but they were not so bad."

A War Pension was granted to Mary Lizzie Houghton, mother of the late Pte Richard Houghton in the sum on £ per fortnight from 25th January, 1918.

Private Richard Houghton was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Houghton's father – Mr Andrew Houghton, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent November, 1921 & Plaque sent July, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Richard Houghton – service number 2340, aged 22, of 31st Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Andrew and Mary Lizzie Houghton, of Gray St., Keiraville, Wollongong, New South Wales. Born at Brandon Colliery, Durham, England.

R. Houghton (and his brother W. Houghton) is remembered on the Keiraville District Honour Roll located in the Illawarra Museum, 11 Market Street, Wollongong, NSW.



Keiraville District Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Sandra Brown)

A similar Honour Roll is located in Keiraville Primary School, Gipps Rd, Keiraville. It was originally located in the Keiraville Mechanics' Institute.



Private R. Houghton is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 118.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(57 pages of Private Richard Houghton'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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives





Private Richard Houghton



Newspaper Notices

MOUNT KEIRA – KEIRAVILLE

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Australian Casualties

Mr and Mrs A. Houghton, of Keiraville, received a cable last Thursday to the following effect, "Burying Dick with honours, Deepest sympathy, Signed, White." On Friday they received an official cable from the authorities stating that their son, Pte R. Houghton, had been wounded. And on Tuesday came a third, which stated that their son had died of wounds in Beven Hospital on 6th August, the wound being a compound fracture of the right humerus. Mr Houghton, before enlisting, was librarian at the Mechanics' Institute and at a meeting of the committee held last night it was decided to recognise his services by purchasing an enlarged photo of the young soldier and hanging in the hall, and also to hold a memorial service. Pte R. Houghton is the eldest son of two that are fighting for King and Country.

(South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus, NSW – 18 August, 1916)

(Note "White" referred to in the above article was Mr Andrew Houghton's sister who lived in Durham, around 300 miles from where Pte R. Houghton was hospitalised. Mrs White was informed of her nephew's death as she was preparing to travel to the hospital to see him.)

KEIRAVILLE

PERSONAL – The Rev. F. Duesbury received the official news to convey to Mr and Mrs Houghton the sad death of their son (Dick), who died in Bevan Hospital, on 6th August, as the result of a compound fracture of the right humerus.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 18 August, 1916)

WAR CASUALTIES

KILLED

PRIVATE R. HOUGHTON

Private Richard Houghton, who has been killed in action, enlisted at Keiraville early this year. He was 22 years of age. His only brother is at present fighting in France.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 19 August, 1916)

KEIRAVILLE

MEMORIAM – The committee of the Mechanics' Institute held a meeting and decided to grant the use of the hall for a memorial service on behalf of the late Private Dick Houghton to be held on Sunday afternoon next at 3 o'clock. It was also decided to have an enlarged photo of the deceased hung in the hall. Rev. Frank Duesbury will conduct the service. The members of the Druids Lodge and the members of the Citizens' Forces will be present.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 25 August, 1916)

RETURN THANKS

Mr and Mrs A. HOUGHTON, of Keiraville, wish to return their sincere thanks to the committee and members of the Mechanics' Institute, and all kind friends for expressions of sympathy, letters, and cards, sent them in their recent sad bereavement in the loss of their son, Pte. R. Houghton, who died of wounds in Beven Hospital, France, on the 6th Aug.

(South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus, NSW – 25 August, 1916)

LATEST CASUALTIES

202nd LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

Died of Wounds

R. Houghton, Keiraville.

(The Land, Sydney, NSW – 8 September, 1916)

KEIRAVILLE

SOLDIER WOUNDED – Mr A. Houghton received a telegram on Tuesday to say that his son Willie had been wounded. He is in France and a brother to the late Dick Houghton, who was killed just a few weeks ago. Much sympathy is felt for Mr and Mrs Houghton during their hours of trial.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 8 September, 1916)

HOW OUR SOLDIERS ARE CARED FOR

The following beautiful letter, full of sympathy and solicitude, has been received by Mrs. Houghton, of Keiraville. It illustrates the fact that although our brave lads that have been wounded are far away from home, they are being tenderly cared for by noble women like the writer of this letter :—

Bevan Military Hospital,
Sandgate, Kent,

11/8/16.

Dear Mrs Houghton, I am a stranger to you, but your boy Richard was in our hospital, so I feel I must write to you to say how very grieved we all were at his death. He was admitted here from France on July 24th, suffering from a severe gun-shot wound in the right shoulder. If it had been in his arm the doctors could have saved his life by amputation but the slight examination showed them that no amputation was possible. The actual cause of his death was embolism, your doctor will explain what that means. But remember that is a quiet death, all the pain ceased and he only had intense weariness. He was able to repeat the 'Our Father' with the Clergyman, and pray for sleep, when God sent him the holy sleep, which He gives to His beloved. Your lad looked just like a boy asleep— absolutely at rest. I saw him put into the coffin, and I placed beautiful flowers round him. Mauve stock and white carnations and I put white flowers in the middle of the Union Jack on the coffin. The ladies who nursed him and the staff sister told me how brave and patient he was. I enclose some letters from some of our workers who knew him, because I felt that any little thing about him would be welcome. You are so far away. I wish we could have saved him for you, but there was no chance. All the poor fellows admitted here on July 4th were serious cases. We have had five of the Australians on our, 'danger list.' The few things your boy left here I have to send to Head Quarters, but they will be forwarded eventually to you. I am sure you will believe that everything that was possible was done for your lad and that he had every comfort that we could think of. The lads from the Colonies are our special care because they are so far from home. This is a large hospital of 280 beds. We have had many Australians here. Your boy was the only one who has died. With love and deep sympathy.— Believe me, your sincere friend,

CECILY DALE,
Commandant.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 6 October, 1916)

KEIRAVILLE

OUR SOLDIERS – Private W. Houghton, who was wounded in France, writes from the 3rd London General Hospital, to the effect that his wound is getting on fine, and expects to be wheeled about a little in a few days. He is well looked after by the nurses. He says there are wounded men in this hospital belonging to five different countries, including a good number of Australians.

Lieutenant W. Appleby also writes to say his wounds are getting on fine. The last time he was wounded was in the wrist. He was able to attend Dick Houghton's funeral and placed a beautiful wreath on his grave as a token of sympathy for the Australian soldiers. He expects to be back in action again before long.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 20 October, 1916)

SOLDIERS' LETTERS

Private Will Houghton, of Keiraville, writes:- I am still in convalescent camp and am getting on splendid. One wound is quite healed up, but the other one is giving me some trouble. I will have to limp for some time. I hardly think I shall get back to the firing line before Christmas. It was on the 5th of August when I was wounded. I shall never forget that day. It was awful. The Germans tried to take our position, which we had taken the night previous. They tried three counter attacks, but our machine guns and rifles simply mowed them down. They then opened up with their artillery, and, talk about shells, well, I often wonder how I got out of it alive. All that day they kept it up, but all the time they were getting it hot, and were giving themselves up as prisoners in batches of one and two dozen at a time. We could see them holding their hands up out of the shell holes before they showed their faces. Then they would come out and double over to our lines, with their own gunners firing at them. They were very pleased to be taken and gave us many souvenirs. I received a German cap, a cartridge, a bayonet handle, with only three inches of blade, and a clasp

knife, but I have only the clasp knife left. I lost the other things when I got wounded. This was the front line at Pozieres. The 5th division, containing the 31st Battalion, came and relieved our division. Poor Dick was hit when he was with this relieving division.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 1 December, 1916)

A WORD OF SYMPATHY

Per Favour of "The Mercury"

We, the undersigned, desire to express our sympathy with Mr and Mrs Houghton, of Keiraville, in the loss sustained by them by the death of the son Dick, who died whilst doing his duty for King and Country.

Also to Miss Harriett Coulton, of Gwynville, and sisters, whose brother John was shot by a sniper on or about 23rd September.

And they, who thus responded to the
call,

And bore the burden for their mother
earth,

Who complaining, gave their life
and all;

They shall not die in hearts that
knew their worth.

Privates W. Tubman and J. Dobing, late of Keiraville.

Lark's Hill Camp,

Salisbury Plains,

England, 16/10/16

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 12 December, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

HOUGHTON – In loving memory of our dear brother, Pte Dick Houghton, who died of wounds received in France, August 5th, 1916.

Ever remembered by his brother-in-law and sister, Ralph and Elizabeth Coates, Keiraville, Wollongong.

HOUGHTON – In loving memory of our dear son, Pte Dick Houghton, who died of wounds received in France, August 5th, 1916.

Thy Will be done.

In a soldier's grave he is lying;

It was in France he fell;

Words cannot tell the loss

Of the son we loved so well.

Ever remembered by his father, mother, and brother Will (on active service), of Keiraville, Wollongong.

(South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus, NSW – 3 August, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM

HOUGHTON – In fond memory of Pte Richard Houghton, of 31st Batt., son of Mr and Mrs A. Houghton, Keiraville, died of wound received in France, Aug. 5th, 1916.

Too far away for words of speech,
But not too far for thought to reach.

Inserted by sorrowing parents, brother, sister and brother-in-law.

(Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong, NSW – 2 August, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

HOUGHTON – In fond memory of Pte Richard Houghton, of 31st Battalion, son of Mr and Mrs A. Houghton, Keiraville, died of wound received at Armentieres, in France, August 5, 1916.

Too far away for words of speech,
But not too far for thought to reach.

Inserted by sorrowing parents, brother, sister and brother-in-law.

(South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus, NSW – 2 August, 1918)

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

HOUGHTON – In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Dick, who died in England of wounds received at Pozieres, August 5th, 1916.

Inserted by his loving father and mother, sister and brother-in-law, A. Houghton, Keiraville.

South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus, NSW – 12 August, 1921)

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)

Pte R. Houghton does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

In Memory Of The Dear Son Of Mr & Mrs A. Houghton Of Australia



Privates Richard (seated) & William Houghton

William Houghton, Miner, aged 18, enlisted with 13th Battalion, 12th Reinforcements on 28th August, 1915. He was given a service number on 3798. He embarked on HMAT *Suevic* from Sydney on 20th December, 1915. He was wounded in action on 6th August, 1916 with shrapnel wounds to thigh. Returned to Front. Hospitalised with Myocarditis & Cardiac insufficiency. Returned to Australia from England on 19th October, 1917. Medically discharged on 25th February, 1918. Entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal.



Photo of Pte R. Houghton's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Hetton-le-Hole Cemetery, Hetton, Tyne & Wear, England.



(Photo courtesy of Norman Cummings)

Hetton-le-Hole Cemetery, Hetton, Tyne & Wear, England

Hetton-le-Hole Cemetery, Hetton contains 35 Commonwealth War Graves – 12 relating to World War 1 & 23 from World War 2.

