

**Southern Cemetery,
Manchester, Lancashire
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



234 PRIVATE

S. F. MERWIN

AUST. ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

21ST JUNE, 1915 Age 29

Stephen Francis MERWIN

Stephen Francis Merwin was born at Wanganui, New Zealand around 1886.

Stephen Francis Merwin was a 29 year old, single, Miner from Queenstown, Tasmania when he enlisted at Pontville, Tasmania on 20th August, 1914 with the 3rd Field Ambulance, "C" Section – Tent Subdivision of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 234 & his religion was "nil". His next of kin was listed as his sister – Mrs David Shipley, of Townsville, Queensland. Stephen Merwin stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served 14 months with the S.A.L.H.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin embarked from Hobart on HMAT *Katuna* (A13) on 20th October, 1914.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin proceeded to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) at Gallipoli on 2nd March, 1915.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin was transferred to No. 1 Stationary Hospital at Lemnos on 26th March, 1915 suffering from Broncho Pneumonia then transferred to No. 15 General Hospital at Alexandria on 17th April, 1915 suffering from Empyema & (Broncho Pneumonia).

According to the Casualty Form – Active Service Driver Stephen Francis Merwin was admitted to Hospital Ship Nevasa on 15th May, 1915 with a gunshot wound to hip.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin was admitted to No. 2 Western Hospital, Manchester on 29th May, 1915.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin died on 21st June, 1915 at No. 2 Western Hospital, Manchester, Lancashire, England. The Field Service form states cause of death as "Died from wounds received in action" while Report of Death of a Soldier form & a Lettergram to the Military Commandant, Brisbane have the cause of death as "Empyema & Pneumonia previously reported wounded." A letter was sent from Base Records in December, 1915 to Mrs D. Shepley, Townsville, Queensland advising that "*your brother No. 234 Pte S. F. Merwin, who is reported as having died of wounds received in action at Gallipoli, on 21st June, 1915, was buried in the Southern Cemetery, Manchester, England, the grave number being 726 Plot Q.*"

A death for Stephen F. Merwin, aged 29, was registered in the June quarter, 1915 in the district of Chorlton, Lancashire, England.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin was buried on 24th June, 1918 in Southern Cemetery, Manchester, Lancashire, England – Plot number 399.

A letter was sent to Mrs D. Shapley, c/- Mrs Stagg, "Les Roy" Hermit Park, Townsville, Queensland, dated 29th May which reads:

"With reference to the report of the regrettable loss of your brother, the late No. 234, Driver S. F. Merwin, 3rd Field Ambulance, I am now in receipt of advice from Australian Imperial Force Headquarters, London, dated 21st February, 1919, as follows:-

- "*In the Southern Cemetery at Manchester there were buried in common graves nine deceased members of the Australian Imperial Force. The remains of these have now been exhumed from the common graves and in each case have been re-interred in separate single graves in virgin soil in a site specially set aside as an Australian plot. The work was successfully carried out last week under the supervision of a senior Non-commissioned Officer from these Headquarters, and the new graves have since been marked by the provision of the standard oak cross enamelled white with black lettering. Photographs of the new graves will be taken at an early date and sent to you for transmission to the next-of-kin.*"

Your son is now buried in Grave No. 215, Section Q."

Two photographs of the grave of the late Driver Stephen Francis Merwin were sent to his sister – Mrs D. Shepley c/- Mrs Stagg, "Les Roy" Hermit Park, Townsville, Queensland in September, 1919. Mary Elizabeth Shepley replied stating she had received the photographs but earlier correspondence regarding the death of her brother had gone unanswered.

The Public Trustee in Hobart, Tasmania was contacted by Base Records in March, 1923 as the Public Trustee had administered the estate of the late No. 234 Driver S. F. Merwin, 3rd Field Ambulance & Base Records were requesting information regarding the blood relations. A sister – Mrs David Shepley, had been nominated as next-of-kin but communications to her last known address (c/o Post Office, Townsville, Queensland) had been returned unclaimed in 1922 & 1923. Base Records were enquiring if Driver Merwin's parents were still alive & their present address, if not the name & address of the eldest surviving brother otherwise the name and address of the eldest sister. Base Records also contacted the District Finance Officer to ascertain who had claimed the War Gratuity in respect of the services of Driver Merwin. Base Records were advised that no claim had been made & their file contained the same address for Mrs Shipley.

Driver Stephen Francis Merwin was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Pte Merwin's closest next-of-kin but several attempts to communicate with Mrs Shepley, sister of Driver Merwin had gone unanswered so the War Medals, Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were sent to "Untraceables".

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private S. F. Merwin – service number 234, aged 29, of 3rd Field Amb., Australian Army Medical Corps. No family details are listed.

S. F. Merwin is named on the Queenstown Honour Roll located at Queenstown R.S.L., Cutten & McNamara Streets, Queenstown, Tasmania. Another copy is located at the Galley Museum, Imperial Hotel, Driffield & Sticht Streets, Queenstown, Tasmania.



Queenstown Roll of Honour (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

Private S. F. Merwin is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 183.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(67 pages of Pte Stephen Francis Merwin'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



Newspaper Notices

TASMANIA'S ROLL OF HONOUR

Previously Reported Wounded

Pte S. F. Merwin, 3rd Field Ambulance, Townsville. In Hospital, Manchester.

(North-Eastern Advertiser, Scottsdale, Tasmania – 29 June, 1915)

CASUALTIES

TASMANIA

DIED IN HOSPITAL

Pte S. F. Merwin, 3rd Field AMb., Townsville (Q.), died Manchester Hospital of empyema and pneumonia.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 1 July, 1915)

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 S. F. Merwin does not have a personal inscription on his headstone as there was no current address for his next-of-kin.

Southern Cemetery, Manchester, Lancashire, England

During the First World War, Manchester contained between thirty and forty war hospitals, including the 2nd Western General Hospital and the Nell Lane Military Hospital for prisoners of war. Many of those buried in the cemeteries and churchyards of the city died in these hospitals. During the Second World War, there was a Royal Air Force Station at Heaton Park, Manchester.

Manchester Southern Cemetery contains burials of both wars, the majority of them scattered. There are also separate plots for First and Second World War burials, but in neither case are the graves marked individually; instead, each plot has a Screen Wall bearing the names of those buried there. Each plot has a Cross of Sacrifice. In all, 803 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War, including 1 unidentified, and 475 from the Second World War, including 3 unidentified, are now commemorated in the cemetery; there is also 1 non-war service grave.

The Screen Wall in the Second World War plot also bears the names of 177 servicemen and women whose remains were cremated. Further memorials in this plot commemorate 17 Polish servicemen buried there, and a number of casualties of both wars buried in other cemeteries and churchyards in the Manchester area whose graves could no longer be maintained.

Casualties buried in the following cemeteries and churchyards are now alternatively commemorated on Screen Wall Memorials in Manchester Southern Cemetery:

Ashton-under-Lyne (St Michael) Churchyard Extension
Birch-in-Rusholme (St James) Churchyard
Bury (Brunswick) United Methodist Cemetery
Cheetham Hill (St Luke) Churchyard
Eccles (St Mary) Churchyard
Eccleston (St Thomas) Churchyard Extension
Edgeworth Congregational Chapelyard
Hey (or Lees) (St. John the Baptist) Churchyard Extension
Manchester General Cemetery
Newton Heath (All Saints) Church Cemetery
Openshaw (St Barnabas) Churchyard
Swinton Unitarian Chapelyard.

(Information & photos from CWGC)

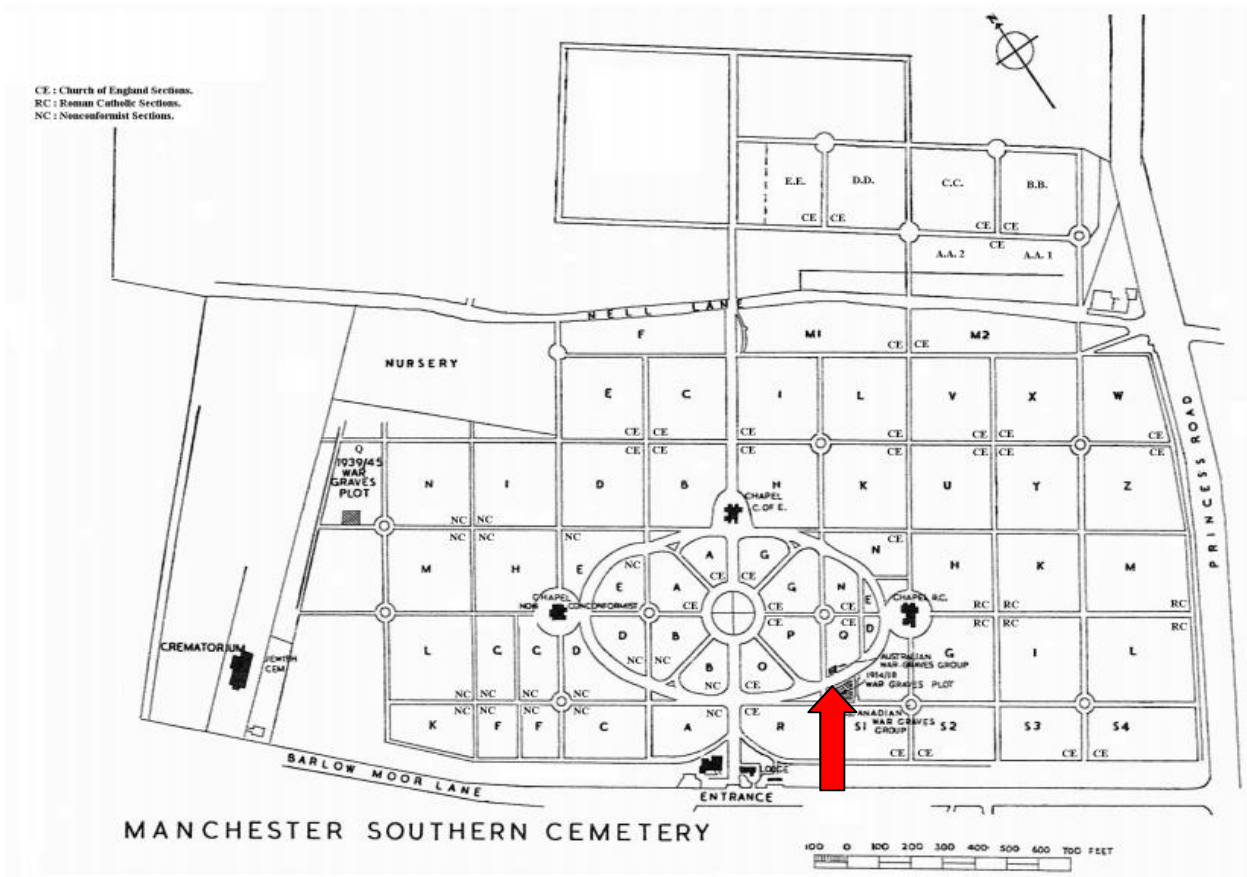


Southern Cemetery, Manchester – showing the 14 Australian War Graves from WW1

Photo of Pte S. F. Merwin's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Southern Cemetery, Manchester, Lancashire, England.



(Photo courtesy of Mike Berrell)



Southern Cemetery, Manchester (Australian War Graves Group marked with arrow)

