

# Sutton Veny War Graves

## World War 1



*Lest We Forget*



2746 LANCE CPL.

**G. WEBBER M M.**

45TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

10TH NOVEMBER, 1918 AGE 29

*In Loving Memory Of George*

*The Beloved Husband Of*

*Annie Webber*

*CWGC Headstone for Lance Cpl. G. Webber is located in  
Grave Plot # 23. I. 2. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

## George WEBBER

George Webber was born at Okehampton, Devonport, England in 1890 to parents William Henry & Lucy Webber (nee Pike). His birth was registered as George Pryn P. Webber in the June quarter, 1890 in the registration district of Okehampton, Devon, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded George Pryn Painter Webber as a 1 year old living with his family at East Street, Okehampton, Devon, England. The head of the house was listed as James Pike (Labourer General, aged 55) & his wife Ann Pike (aged 54). George's parents were listed as William Henry Webber (Plumber Gas Fitter, aged 27, born London) & Lucy Webber (aged 24, born South Molton, Devon). Lucy was the daughter of James & Ann Pike & William Henry Webber was their son-in-law. Also listed in the household were George's brothers – William James Pike Webber (aged 3) & James Jamieston Webber (aged 5 weeks). All 3 brothers had been born at Okehampton, Devon.

The 1901 England Census recorded George Webber as an 11 year old visitor at 45 Victory Street East, Stoke, Devonport, England. The head of the house was Sidney J. Hender (General Labourer, aged 33) & Lucy Hender (aged 34) who was George's mother who had remarried. Also listed in the household were 3 children – Ann Hender (aged 6), Lucy Hender (aged 4) & Sidney Hender (aged 1).

The UK Royal Navy registers of Seaman's Services lists George Pryn Painter Webber's date of birth as 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1889 at Okehampton, Devon. His occupation was listed as a Blacksmith's \_\_\_\_\_. George Webber joined the Royal Navy on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1909 for a period of 12 years.

The 1911 England Census recorded George P. P. Webber as a 22 year old, single Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class in the Royal Navy.

George Webber served on the following ships: *Vivid II* as Stoker II (22 July, 1909 – 7 February, 1910); *Argyll* as Stoker II (8 February, 1910 – 5 August, 1910); *Argyll* – as Stoker I (6 August 1910 – 30 August 1911); *Vivid* as Stoker I (31 August 1911); *Argyll* as Stoker I (22 September 1911 – 4 March 1912); *Vivid II* as Stoker I (5 March 1912 – 12 August 1912); *Cornwallis* as Stoker I (13 August 1912 – 10 October 1912) & *Victory* as Stoker (11 October 1912 to 9 December 1912). Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> Class George Webber was invalided to Haslar Hospital with a Rectal Abscess & placed on a Pension from 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1912.

George Webber stated he was a 28 year old, single, Labourer from 69 Hayberry St, North Sydney when he enlisted at R.A.S. Showground, Sydney on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1916 with the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 2746 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Lucy Hender of 28 Renown Street, Keyham, Devonport, England.

Private George Webber embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte George Webber was marched in to 12<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion, Camp 3 at Codford, Wiltshire on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1916.

Pte Webber was admitted to King George Hospital, London on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 & discharged from Hospital to Codford on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1917.

Pte Webber proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone from 12<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion, Codford on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1917. He joined 4<sup>th</sup> A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1917.

Pte Webber proceeded from Havre to join his Unit on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1917 & was taken on strength in the field with 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1917.

Pte Webber was appointed to Lance Corporal on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

Lance Corporal George Webber was awarded the Military Medal for Bravery "*For conspicuous bravery and endurance at Zonnebeke on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1917 during heavy enemy barrage and counter attack. He went out into No Mans Land several times and bandaged and carried wounded men back to our lines, thus saving many of his comrades. His coolness and courage was most marked and was an example to all.*" (London Gazette – 28 January, 1918 & Commonwealth of Australia Gazette – 27 June, 1918)



**Military Medal showing both sides**

Lance Corporal Webber was wounded in action with a gun shot wound to left arm on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1917. He was taken to 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Field Ambulance then transferred & admitted to 11<sup>th</sup> Stationary Hospital at Rouen on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1917. L/Cpl. Webber was invalided to England on Hospital Ship Panama on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1917. He was admitted to War Hospital at Stratford-on-Avon on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1917 with a gunshot wound to left arm (slight) & discharged to furlo on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1917.

L/Cpl. Webber was on furlo from 21<sup>st</sup> November to 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

L/Cpl. Webber was marched in from Admin. Headquarters from furlo to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1917. He was medically classified as B1 A2 (fit for overseas training camp in three to four weeks).

L/Cpl. Webber was written up for an Offence at Sutton Veny. He was Absent without Leave from 6.30 pm on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1918 until 9 am on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1918. He was awarded 10 days Field Punishment No. 2 & forfeited 4 days' pay. The 10 days F.P. was cancelled by authority of Lt. Col. R. Beardsmore.

L/Cpl. Webber was marched in to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1918.

George Webber, aged 31, married Mary Annie Gledhill, aged 25, on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1918 at St. Mark's Church, Dewsbury. William Webber (deceased) was listed as the father of George Webber & James Gledhill (Art Master) was listed as the father of Mary Annie Gledhill. George's address at the time of his marriage was Devonport & Mary Annie's address was listed as Birkdale Rd, Dewsbury.

L/Cpl. Webber was written up for an offence at Sandhill - being Absent without Leave from midnight on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1918 to 1 pm on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1918. The offence was reviewed under KR 507 and cancelled. He forfeited 1 days' pay for the absence.

L/Cpl. Webber proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone from Overseas Training Brigade on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1918. He was marched in from England at Havre, France on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1918 & was marched out to join his Unit on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1918.

L/Cpl. Webber rejoined his Unit in the field on 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1918.

L/Cpl. Webber was wounded in action (2<sup>nd</sup> occasion) on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1918. He was taken to 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance with shrapnel wound to chest & syno. knee. L/Cpl. Webber was transferred to 9<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Rouen on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1918 then invalided to England on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1918 on Hospital Ship *Aberdonian*.

L/Cpl. Webber was admitted to South African Military Hospital at Richmond on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1918 with a gunshot wound to chest & "inf. Jt. knee It". He was transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield on 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1918 & discharged to furlo on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1918.

L/Cpl. Webber was on furlo from 14<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1918 & was then to report to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny.

L/Cpl. Webber was reported Absent without Leave by Admin. Headquarters in London on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1918. He was written up for being Absent without Leave from 10.30 am on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1918 until 10.15 am on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1918. The offence was admonished by Major C. H. Howard & he forfeited 4 days' pay.

L/Cpl. Webber was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1918. He was medical classified as B1 A4 (fit for overseas training camp when passed dentally fit).

L/Cpl. Webber was taken on strength as Permanent Cadre at No. 1 Command Depot from 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion to complete Establishment on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1918.

Lance Corporal George Webber was admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1918 with fractured femur – left & right resulting from an accident.

Lance Corporal George Webber died at 05.00hrs on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny.

An Inquest was held on the body of George Webber at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1918. Depositions were also taken from the following witnesses:

*WILLIAM LEE – 45, Vicarage Street, Warminster, Motor Driver Mechanic. On Saturday last at about 9.45 pm I was driving a Motor Omnibus running from Warminster to Sutton Veny. I was driving up the slope in front of the main Hospital gate, and was in second gear going about three miles per hour. I noticed a soldier put up his hand for me to stop, but being full I did not stop. I did not say anything to him. I then felt a jolt at the back, and the bell rang. I at once stopped, and someone told me I had run over a man. On getting down I found the man had been taken away. A bystander said there was a man riding on the front step, and he jumped off and another man tried to take his place whilst the bus was in motion. I have continually told men not to ride on the step, and I have been threatened by the men if I did not let them get on. I have also asked the Military men to prevent men from riding on the step, but they do nothing about it. I have had men ride on the bonnet of the bus as they will not get off. There were five men on the front seat with me which is supposed to hold two, and I could not see the man on the step. It was very dark at the time.*  
(Sgd) William Lee.

*DOROTHY ROWE - 45, Vicarage Street, Warminster. I was conductress of the bus driven by previous witness. I felt the jolt of the bus but saw no one fall. I at once pulled the bell and the driver immediately stopped, there were then five or six men on the back step, and the inside of the bus was full. One of the men on the step shouted "Stop the bus". I got out at once, and I heard someone say "We've run over a man". It is impossible to stop the overcrowding of the bus, as the men will rush on. I have asked them to be careful and not to push.*

(Sgd) Dorothy Rowe

*JOHN McDONALD, Driver, 1<sup>st</sup> Battery, Australian Field Artillery, Sutton Veny Camp. On Saturday evening I was sitting on the front seat of the bus returning to Sutton Veny Camp between 9.30 & 10 pm. There was a man standing on the step, he got on as we left Warminster. As we were going up the hill outside the Hospital the man on the step jumped off, another man (Deceased) standing at the side of the road ran after the bus and tried to jump on the step. He missed his foot on the step and fell. I looked over the side and then I felt the jolt, I knew it had gone over him. He seemed to be clear of the wheels. The bus was going very slowly, and stopped at once. The driver could not see. The man came up from behind.*  
(Sgd) John McDonald

*ALFRED WILLIAM PITT, Private, 8<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, A.M.C. Group Clearing Hospital, Sutton Veny. I was a passenger from Warminster on Saturday night/the bus in question. I was standing on the step at the back, the bus was so full I could not get inside. There were three men hanging on behind me. I could see a man standing on the front footboard all the way out. When we were mid-way between the Hospital and the camp he jumped off. A man on the side of the road ran up to take his place and had to dodge the man who had jumped off. He tried to jump on the*

*bus and missed the step and fell. He was halfway under the bus when I saw him fall I called out "Stop the bus" but the back wheel went over him. The bus stopped within twelve yards. I jumped off and ran down to him. There were a few gathered round him. I looked after him until the stretcher came. I helped him on to the stretcher with three others and he was then carried off to the hospital. The man had only about three hundred yards to go to his camp.*

*(Sgd) A. W. Pitt*

*CHARLES EDWARD FENN – Captain R.A.M.C. Military Hospital Sutton Veny. Deceased was admitted to hospital on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. at about 9.45 pm. I saw him in receiving room and admitted him to hospital. When I examined him he was suffering from fracture of both thighs, and a long wound about 6 inches long, on either side of the right leg, near the knee, but the fracture was not compound. There was also a fracture of the pelvis. He died from shock at 5 am the following morning. He was conscious on admission, but made no coherent statement about the accident. The injuries were consistent with his being run over by a bus.*

*(Sgd) Charles E. Penn Capt. R.A.M.C.*

*JOHN FITTON – Sapper 2<sup>nd</sup> A.T.C. Sutton Veny Camp. I have seen the body of deceased. His name was George Webber, he was acting Sergeant Cook at No. 3 Cookhouse, Sutton Veny Camp.*

*(Sgd) J. Fitton*

*GORDON CARMICHAEL CAMERON, Asst. Adjutant, No. 1 Command Depot, A.I.F., Sutton Veny. On Saturday morning, 10<sup>th</sup> inst. at about 10 o'clock I received a telephone message from Sutton Veny Military Hospital that an accident had befallen No. 2746, L/C Webber, 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, A.I.F. and that he had died as the result of the accident.*

*(Sgd) Cameron, Lieut. Asst. Adjutant, No. 1 Command.*

VERDICT – That the said George Webber came to his death from fractured thighs and pelvis, due to accidentally falling under the wheel of a motor bus at Sutton Veny, on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1918 and that no blame attaches to the driver of the bus, and that the said George Webber was a male person aged about 30 years and a Lance Corporal A.I.F.

A death for George Webber, aged 30, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Lance Corporal George Webber was buried at 11 am on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 23. From the burial report of Lance Cpl. Webber - *Coffin was polished Elm with Brass furnishings – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the body being conveyed to the graveside on a Gun Carriage. Firing Party and Pall bearers were taken from deceased's late Company. A number of deceased's late Comrades followed the remains to the graveside Wreaths from Wife and Nursing staff of Netley Hospital were placed on the grave after the "Last Post" had been sounded. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral. Also in attendance at the funeral were – (Wife) Annie Webber of 7 Birkdale Rd, Dewsbury, Yorks; (Brother-in-law) J. B. Gledhill (RN) of 7 Birkdale Rd, Dewsbury, Yorks; (Brother) J. J. Webber of 28 Renown St, Devonport; (Brother) S. J. Hender of 28 Renown St, Devonport.*

George Webber requested in his Will dated 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1918 that all his real & personal Estate be left to his wife – Mary Annie Webber of 7 St. Mark Terrace Birkdale Rd, Dewsbury, Yorkshire. George Webber's previous Will, dated 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1917 had his mother – Mrs Lucy Hender of 28 Renown St, Keyham, Devonport, England as the beneficiary.

Lance Corporal George Webber was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to L/Cpl. Webber's widow – Mrs M. A. Webber in England (both sent November, 1922).

The CWGC lists Lance Corporal George Webber, 2746, of 45th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of Mrs L. Hender; husband of Annie Hopkinson (formerly Webber) of 3 Richmond Street, Cross Bank, Batley, Yorks, England. Born at Devonport, England. Awarded MM.



Lance Cpl. G. Webber is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 140.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(76 pages of Lance Corporal George Webber'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**

### **450<sup>th</sup> CASUALTY LIST**

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

##### **DIED OF ILLNESS**

Pte Geo. Webber, M.M., England

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – Saturday 7 December, 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 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)*

Lance Corporal George Webber does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*In Loving Memory Of George The Beloved Husband Of Annie Webber*



**War Graves at Sutton Veny** (Photos from CWGC)





Photo of Lance Cpl. G. Webber's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*