

SUTTON VENY CAMP MURDER

AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER PAYS EXTREME PENALTY

For murdering a fellow soldier at Sutton Veny Camp, Private Vernon Asser was, in November last, sentenced at the Wilts Assizes to be hanged, and his appeal to the High Court and petition to the Home Secretary having been refused, he paid the penalty of Tuesday morning in Shepton Mallet Prison, where he was last confined.

It will be remembered that Asser and Private Durkin occupied the same camp hut. In the next hut was a man named Milne. Durkin was found, at 10.30 pm, on the information of Asser, shot through the head in bed. Milne state that on three occasions between 9.30 and 11 o'clock Asser came into his hut but went to some Lewis gun ammunition which was kept there, and said that he was taking away empty magazines. After the crime two unused magazines, each containing 48 cartridges were found in Asser's hut. No-one else had visited the hut, and it was shown by expert evidence that the deceased could not have committed suicide.

The sentence on Tuesday was carried out privately by Ellis, the executioner, and the notice subsequently posted on the prison gates that the death sentence had been fulfilled was signed by the Under-Sheriff for Wilts, the Prison Governor, Chaplain and doctor.

The inquest was held later, before Mr D. Mackay (deputy coroner) and was purely formal. The evidence of the Governor was of sentence passed on the prisoner, and that it was properly carried out, the doctor adding that death was instantaneous.

The verdict was that death resulted from hanging, according to law. The body was buried in the precincts of the prison.

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