

# Sutton Veny War Graves



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



**3773 PRIVATE**

**A. J. FORDHAM**

**56TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**24TH FEBRUARY, 1918 Age 34**

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte A. J. Fordham is located in  
Grave Plot # 325. D. 15. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

## Alfred James FORDHAM

Alfred James Fordham was born in 1883 in Mucking Ford, Essex, England to parents James Alfred & Mary Ann Fordham (nee Reeves). His birth was registered in the June quarter of 1883 in the district of Orsett, Essex.

Mary Ann Fordham was widowed in 1885 with a death for James Fordham, aged 36, registered in the district of Orsett, Essex in the June quarter 1885. Mary Ann Fordham remarried in 1890 to Alfred Skinner.

The 1891 England Census listed Alfred Fordham as an 8 year old living with his mother & stepfather at Merrire Lotes Building Estate at Mucking, Essex. His stepfather & mother were listed as Alfred Skinner (aged 31, General Labourer) & Mary Ann Skinner (aged 34, born Mucking, Essex). Alfred was the only son of 4 children listed on this Census – Norah M. Fordham (aged 13), Alice M. Fordham (aged 11) then Alfred & Mabel Fordham (aged 5). All four children were listed as being born at Grays, Essex.

The 1901 England Census listed Alfred Fordham (born Grays, Essex) as an 18 year old General Labourer living with his mother & stepfather at 1 Lower Crescent, Mucking Essex. His stepfather & mother were listed as Alfred Skinner (aged 40, General Labourer) & Mary Ann Skinner (aged 45). Three children were also listed (Alfred's step sisters & brother) – May Skinner (aged 10), Ellen Skinner (aged 8) & Harry Skinner (aged 7). Also listed was Edward Noakes a 22 year old Lodger who worked as a General Labourer.

Information proved by Nora Warren, sister of Alfred James Fordham, for the Roll of Honour states that Alfred Fordham came to Australia when he was 25 & he was a "Fireman on Board a Ship".

A. Fordham (aged 26, born Grays) was listed as crew – Trimmer aboard the *Ophir* which departed London & arrived in Sydney on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1910. A. Fordham (aged 26, born Grays) was listed as crew – Fireman aboard the *Ophir* which departed London & arrived in Sydney on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1910.

A. Fordham (aged 28, born Grays) was listed as crew – Donkeyman aboard the *Ophir* which departed London & arrived in Sydney on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1911. A. Fordham (aged 28, born Grays) was listed as crew – Greaser aboard the *Orama* which departed London & arrived in Sydney on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1911.

A death for Alfred's mother – Mary A. Skinner was registered in the December quarter 1916 in the district of Orsett, Essex.

Alfred James Fordham was a 34 year old, single, Labourer from Newcastle, NSW when he enlisted at Darlinghurst, Sydney, NSW on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 with the 56<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 10<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 3773 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his sister – Mrs Nora Warren of 3 Washington Road, London, England. Alfred Fordham stated on his Attestation Papers that he had previously served with Royal Marine Light Infantry & was discharged due to an accident.

Pte Alfred James Fordham embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Euripides (A14)* on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1917 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

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.

Private Alfred James Fordham was marched in to 14<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire from Australia on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

Pte Fordham was sent sick to Group Clearing Hospital at Codford on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1918 with possible TB.

Private Alfred James Fordham was admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1918 – illness "N.Y.D." (Not yet determined).

Private Alfred James Fordham died at 12.30 a.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Tuberculosis Generalised.

A death for Alfred J. Fordham, aged 34, was registered in the March quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Alfred James Fordham was buried on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 325. From the burial report of Pte Fordham - *Coffin was "good wooden". The relatives of the deceased soldier attended the funeral.*

Pte Alfred James Fordham requested in his Will, dated 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1917, that all of his Estate to be given to his friend – Mrs Mary Tougher of 134 Bourke Street, Sydney, Mrs Tougher was also named Executrix of his Will.

Private A. J. Fordham is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 162.



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

Pte Alfred James Fordham was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Fordham's sister – Mrs Nora Warren in England (both sent October, 1922).

The CWGC lists Private Alfred James Fordham, 3773, of 56th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of James Alfred and Mary Ann Fordham. Born at Mucking Ford, Essex, England.

(52 pages of Pte Alfred James Fordham'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

### LATEST CASUALTIES

#### DIED OF ILLNESS

A. J. Fordham, England

(*The Land*, Sydney, NSW – Friday 22 March, 1918)

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#### 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*)

Pte Alfred James Fordham does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



Photo of Pte A. J. Fordham's Headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*



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