

**Fort Pitt Military Cemetery,
Rochester, Kent
War Graves**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2170 PRIVATE

G. FORD

52ND BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

22ND JUNE, 1917 Age 23

*The Lord Gave
And The Lord Hath Taken Away*

George FORD

George Ford was born at Bundaberg, Queensland in March, 1894 to parents John & Mary Ann Ford.

John Ford, father of George Ford, died in 1900.

George Ford attended Murray's Creek School, Queensland.

Mary Ann Ford, mother of George Ford, died in January, 1915.

George Ford was a 22 year old, single, Stockman from Murray's Creek when he enlisted on 3rd April, 1916 with the 52nd Infantry Battalion, 4th Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2170 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his brother – Mr Walter Ford, of Murray's Creek, via Bundaberg, North Coast Line, Queensland.

Private George Ford was posted to 11th Depot Battalion on 5th April, 1915. He was transferred to 4th Reinforcements, 52nd Battalion on 10th May, 1916.

Private George Ford embarked from Brisbane on HMAT *Boorara (A42)* on 16th August, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 13th October, 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.

Private George Ford was marched in to No. 3 Command Depot in England on 14th October, 1916.

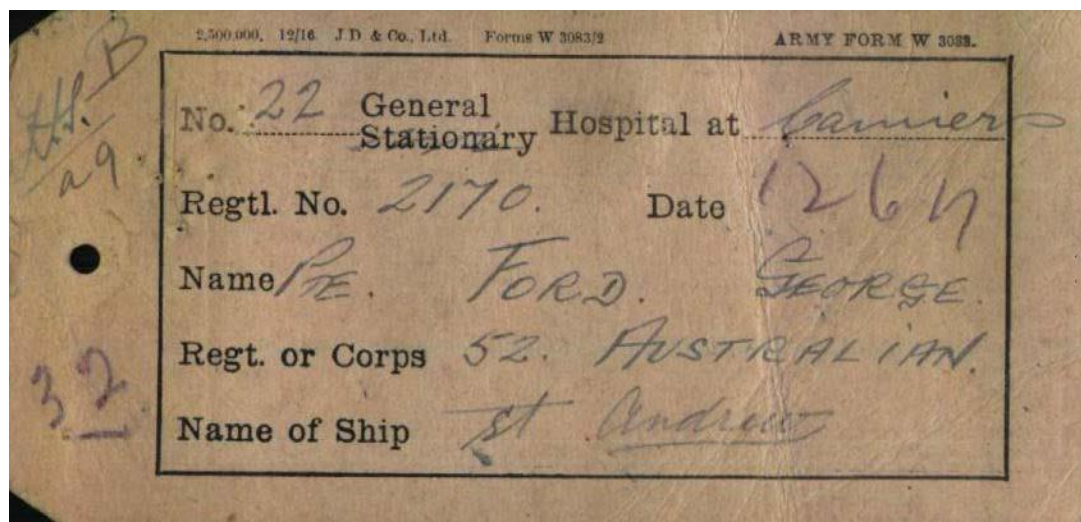
Private George Ford was admitted to Hospital on 23rd October, 1916 & discharged to No. 3 Command Depot on 5th November, 1916. He was marched out to 13th Training Battalion on 21st November, 1916.

Private George Ford proceeded overseas to France on SS *Arundel*, via Folkestone on 12th December, 1916.

Private George Ford was marched in to 4th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 16th December, 1916.

Private George Ford was taken on strength with 52nd Battalion from 4th Australian Divisional Base Depot at Etaples, France on 23rd December, 1916.

Private George Ford was wounded in action on 7th June, 1917. He was admitted to 53rd Casualty Clearing Station on 8th June, 1917 then transferred to 120 Ambulance Train. Pte Ford was admitted to 22nd General Hospital at Camiers, France on 9th June, 1917. Pte Ford embarked for England on Hospital Ship "*St Andrew*" on 12th June, 1917.



2,500,000, 12/16 J.D. & Co., Ltd. Forms W 3083/2 ARMY FORM W 3088.

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H.P.B.
29.

No.	22	General Stationary Hospital at	Camiers
Regtl. No.	2170.	Date	126/17
Name	Pte. FORD.		GEORGE.
Regt. or Corps	52.		AUSTRALIAN.
Name of Ship	St Andrew		

Hospital tag for Private George Ford

23 1-3/12 6/17 CE

Lying.	Sitting.	Able to Walk.
Diagnosis	G.S.W. left Buttock	
With	Simple	Fracture of
Compound	Slight.	
Notes	- Severe:	
Sgd. T. Packard		

(The parts not applicable should be struck out)

52nd Battalion

The 52nd Battalion was raised at Tel el Kebir in Egypt on 1 March 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Approximately half of its recruits were veterans from the 12th Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 12th, the 52nd was originally a mix of men from South and Western Australia and Tasmania. From March 1916, the battalion's reinforcement groups mainly comprised men from Queensland. The 52nd became part of the 13th Brigade of the 4th Australian Division.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and attacked at Noreuil on 2 April. Later that year, the focus of AIF operations moved to the Ypres sector in Belgium. There the battalion was involved in the battle of Messines between 7 and 12 June.

(Information from the Australian War Memorial)

War Diary – 52nd Battalion – 7th June, 1917:

On 7/6/17 the Battalion moved forward on to the Brigade assembly line and was waiting in shell holes ready to proceed to the Jumping off Trench, when the order for New Zealanders came round. We were in touch with the 49th Battalion on our Right.

At 1-40 pm the Battalion moved forward, crossing the MESSINES – WYTSCHATE ROAD at the two points we were supposed to and formed up on the tape from 0.27 Central to 0.27.d.0.0 (which had been laid out by the Intelligence Officer Lieut YORK), in two waves of 4 lines each, A. & B. first wave, A on the Right, C. & D. the 2nd wave; C on the Right.

The Battalion was in touch with the 49th Battalion on our Right, but the 5th Lincolns failed to put in an appearance on the Left and patrols could find no word or sign of them. On account of the Left Flank being in the air, the attached Brigade Machine Gun Section had instructions to form a Strong Post protecting that flank at about 0.27.b.8.3.

At Zero the Battalion moved forward, the Right being in touch with the 49th, "D" Company after the start was swung to the left and came up on the left of "B" Company partly filling the gap caused by non appearance of the Lincoln's.

The 49th Battalion and "A" Company lost touch during the advance, but as soon as the objective was reached this gap was filled by "C" Company.

"A" & "C" Companies reached their first objective, "D" & "B" companies went through and put posts in the 2nd objective. The line as held by the Battalion as follows:- From 0.29.a.9.2 to 0.28.b.0.4. (3 Posts occupied the trench) from 0.28.c.00.65. 3 posts ran to the road at 0.22.d.30, thence along the rear of the road to 0.22.d.05..55. and in a series of posts which bent back to ODOUR TRENCH at 0.22.c.55.50, along ODOUR TRENCH to 0.22.c.45.75. A patrol worked along to the left and found an English Battalion behind ODONTO TRENCH, but no one in it for 400-500 yards to our left arrangements were made with this English Regiment to form a defensive flank to their right, thus linking the front line up.

"A" & "C" Companies had supports dug in from 0.28.93 to behind the enemy wire at 0.26.a.8.3 to 0.28.a.8.5. and forward through the wire to 0.28.b.00.65.

Two Companies of Borders were found just behind our front line and these were put in one at 0.28.a. Central along the 40 Contour Line, and the other behind the junction of the 52nd and 49th Battalions. A Platoon of English were collected near the Railway at 0.22.a.2.4., and sent out to VAN HOVE FARM to occupy it, a tank co-operating with them, thus protecting our left flank from the enemy. Two tanks were sent down to 0.22.a.8.3. to strengthen the valley there and support the posts in front.

Soon after 8-0 pm our artillery commenced firing short heavies on the left sector around JOYE FARM, and 18 pounders with some howitzers on the right sector.

At 9-0 pm the O.C. Left sector got in touch with the headquarters of the LINCLONS and arranged that as soon as their companies came forward a Company would be sent on to occupy from 0.28.b00.65 to 0.22.a.9.3., and relieve our men of this sector 2/Lt BILSON organising the posts for them and connecting their flank up.

The shelling of artillery had become so severe that on the centre and left sector the posts were withdrawn to ODIOUS and ODOUR trenches, about 9-15 pm, on the right the posts were withdrawn to the Support Line, and all troops except sentries were kept absolutely down under cover, all work ceasing.

At 11-0 pm the enemy counterattacked along our Front but failed to reach our trenches or get within bombing distance owing to our machine gun and rifle fire. The rest of the night was spent in consolidating.

(Information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private George Ford was admitted to Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham, Kent, England on 13th June, 1917 with "penetrating wound to hip left & buttock".

Private George Ford died at 4.40 pm on 22nd June, 1917 at Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham, Kent, England from wounds received in action in France – Gunshot wound to buttock & Haemorrhage.

A death for George Ford, aged 23, was registered in the June quarter, 1917 in the district of Medway, Kent, England.

Private George Ford was buried on 27th June, 1917 in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England – Plot number 1465 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Ford - *Coffin was very good polished English Elm, Brass Plate & 8 Brass Handles. Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the firing party consisted of 1 Officer, 2 N.C.Os and 12 men, 6 Bearers and Dum and Fife Band, 20 men of the 5th Bn. Middlesex Regt. were in attendance. The body was conveyed to the Cemetery on a gun carriage and the coffin being draped with the Union Jack, at the conclusion of the Burial service, 3 volleys were fired by the firing party and the last post sounded by six Buglers.*

I ascertained from the Medical Officer who was attending the deceased the following statement viz:- at 10-30 PM 21-5-17 Pte George Ford had a severe Haemorrhage from his wound and same was stopped temporarily, the next afternoon 22-6-17, he was operated on and a large vessel was found to be bleeding, this was tied but about half an hour after the operation he gradually became unconscious and passed away peacefully without giving any message.

No Relatives or friends were present at the funeral.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private George Ford contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in Australia to obtain the fullest details possible of the wounds, death & burial of Pte Ford. A reply was sent from S. McCarthy, the Assistant Matron at Fort Pitt Military Hospital, Chatham which reads: *"Pte Ford was transferred from the Drill Hall (which is a ward of Fort Pitt) 15.6.17 to Ward 24 with a deep wound "Gunshot" of Buttocks. Had a somewhat severe Haemorrhage from wound the night of the 21st 6.17 has to be taken to the Theatre on the 22nd 6.17 and died in the theatre from Haemorrhage and shock. He was always bright, an exceptionally nice boy, most grateful for all that was done for him and appeared to be quite happy. He was buried in Chatham Military Cemetery. The sister-in-charge wrote at once to his people in Australia."*

Base Records contacted Mr Walter Ford, of Murray's Creek via Bundaberg, Queensland on 1st March, 1921 enquiring if there were any nearer blood relatives than himself due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Mr Walter Ford replied on 9th April, 1921 stating that both his parents were deceased & that he was the eldest brother of the late Pte George Ford.

Pte George Ford was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Ford's eldest brother – Mr Walter Ford, as the closest next-of-kin (Both parents deceased). (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Ford – service number 2170, aged 23, of 52nd Battalion Australian Infantry. Native of Bundaberg, Queensland. Son of John and Mary Ann Ford.

G. Ford is remembered on the Bundaberg War Memorial, located at Bourbong & Barolin Streets, Bundaberg, Queensland.



Bundaberg War Memorial (Photos from *Monument Australia* – Fred Brunings)



Private G. Ford is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 155.



Roll of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(70 pages of Pte George Ford'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 George Ford

Newspaper Notices

COUNTRY VOLUNTEERS

BUNDABERG

Since January 1 of this year 536 volunteers presented themselves for examination at the Bundaberg recruiting office.... The following were accepted during the past ten days:- ...George Ford (Murray's Creek)..

(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 7 March, 1916)

MURRAY'S CREEK

On Thursday evening last, a send-off, in the form of a dance, was tendered to Private George Ford, one of the boys who have offered their services to fight for King and Country. Dancing was indulged in till midnight, the music being supplied by Messrs J. McGhee and P. Kelly. During the evening Mr Webster presented Private Ford with a pocket wallet suitably inscribed. Mr Brumby responded on behalf of Private Ford, and dancing was resumed.

(The Bundaberg Mail and Burnett Advertiser, Queensland – 24 May, 1916)

ROLL OF HONOUR

FORD – In loving memory of Private G. Ford, who died of wound in England, 22nd June, 1917.

Dear is the place where our loved one is laid;

Dear is the memory that never will fade;

Fond is the hope that again we shall meet,

Kneeling together at Jesus' feet.

Inserted by his loving sister and brother-in-law, Annie and Willie McGhee.

(The Bundaberg Mail, Queensland – 25 June, 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. 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 G. Ford does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

The Lord Gave And The Lord Hath Taken Away

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent contains 289 identified Commonwealth War Graves.

During both wars there were naval and military establishments in the neighbourhood of Rochester, and some fishing and shipping at the port.

Fort Pitt Military Cemetery contains a plot of 266 First World War graves. The 25 Second World War graves (two of them unidentified) are north of the plot. All save two of them are together in a group.

(Information & photos from CWGC)



Photo of Pte G. Ford's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, Rochester, Kent, England.



(Photo courtesy of Kyle Tallett)