St. Edith's Churchyard,

Baverstock, Wiltshire, England

War Graves

Lest We Forget

World War 1

4261   PRIVATE

P. FORSTER

30TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

17TH FEBRUARY, 1917   Age 25*

Percy FORSTER

Percival Forster, a twin with Frank Forster, was born at 1 West View, Saltney, near Chester, England in 1882.

Percival Forster attended school at St. Mary's Handbridge, Chester, England.

Percival Forster stated he was a 25 year old,* single, Cook from G. P. O. Sydney, NSW when he enlisted on 14th February, 1916, with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4261 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his twin brother – Frank Forster, of Saltney, Chester, England. Percival Forster state don his Attestation Papers that he had previously served for 5 years with Cheshire Volunteers.

(According to information gathered for the Roll of Honour, completed by Percy's twin brother Frank, Percy was aged 34 years at the time of his death.)

Information contained from the Roll of Honour, completed by Percy's twin brother Frank, states that Percy was chiefly connected with the town of Wellington, North Island, New Zealand. He was a Sailor and Adventurer & had previously been a Manager of a Boot Store in Manchester, England. Percy Forster had arrived in Australia when he was 28 years old & had previously served with the Earl of Chester's Volunteer Rifle Brigade. Other information provided – Percy had "*done much inland travelling in Mexico and South America and was always in danger of snakes or gunpowder, severely mauled on one occasion by Ireland Tribe, result finger missing & daintiest part of thigh & rump sliced off. Through father dying, he changed his course to Australia instead of ____. Worked on transports carrying A.I.F. troops to Egypt & Dardanelles.*"

Private Percy Forster was posted to "D" Company, Depot Battalion at Casula, Sydney, NSW on 14th February, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to Reserve Company of 30th Battalion on 11th May, 1916. Private Forster was transferred to 10th Reinforcements of 30th Battalion on 7th August, 1916 then transferred on 8th August, 1916 to 11th Reinforcements of 30th Battalion at Kiama, NSW.

Private Percy Forster embarked from Sydney on SS *Port Nicholson* on 8th November, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Brigade, 30th Infantry Battalion, 11th Reinforcements & disembarked at Devonport, England on 10th January, 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 Percy Forster was approved by a Medical Board at Hurdcott, Wiltshire to be fit for active service on 12th January, 1917.

Private Percy Forster was written up for a Crime in London - Absent without Leave from midnight 26th January to 8 p.m. 27th January, 1917. He was awarded 5 days Field Punishment No. 2 & was in custody awaiting trial. He forfeited a total of 11 days' pay.

Private Percy Forster was sent sick to No. 10 Camp Hospital at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 12th February, 1917 from "B" Company, 8th Training Battalion, Hurdcott, Wiltshire. He was admitted to Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire on 12th February, 1917 with Pneumonia.

Private Percy Forster died at 6.30 a.m. on 17th February, 1917 from Pneumonia at Military Hospital, Fovant, Wiltshire.

A death for Percy Foster, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire.

Private Percy Forster was buried in the churchyard of St. Edith's at Baverstock, Wiltshire, England on 20th February, 1917 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone.
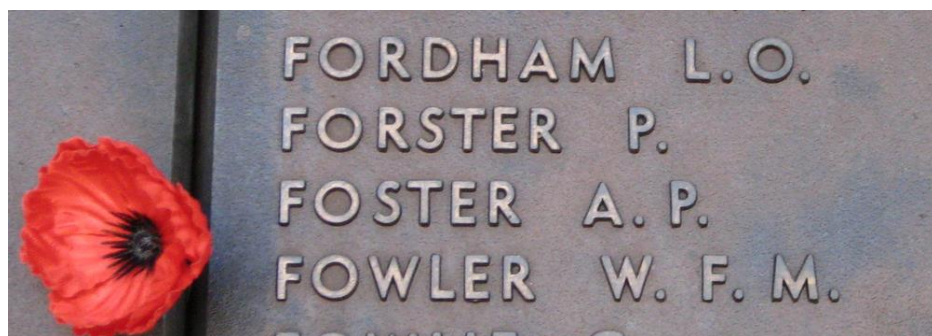
From the burial report of Private Percy Forster - *Coffin was oak wood. Died at Fovant Military Hospital suffering from Pneumonia. Buried with full Military Honours at 11.45 a.m. 20.2.1917, all his personal belongings were forwarded to the A.I.F. Kit Store London by the Officer in Charge of Military Hospital Fovant.*

Relative in England – BROTHER – Mr Frank Forster 9 West View, Saltney, Chester, England.

Private Percy Forster 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 Private Forster's brother – Mr Frank Forster in England (Both sent July, 1922)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Percy Forster – service number 4261, as being 25 years old & served with 30th Battalion Australian Infantry. No other family information is listed.

Private P. Forster is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 117.
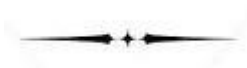

(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)

Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(50 pages of Private Percy Forster'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 NOTICES

FALLEN HEROES

AUSTRALIAN LOSSES

The 277th list of Australian casualties was issued yesterday morning….

DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte P. FORSTER, England

(*The Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, NSW – 9 March, 1917)

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. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock. 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)

Private P. Forster does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock, Wiltshire, England

St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock contains 32 World War 1 War Graves – 3 London Regiment Graves in the south-west corner & 29 Australian War Graves.

St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock *(Photo courtesy of Helen Roberts)*

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Photo of Private P. Forster's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone at St. Edith's Churchyard, Baverstock, Wiltshire, England.

(Photo courtesy of Andrew Stacey 2012)