

# Sutton Veny War Graves

## World War 1



*Lest We Forget*



**431 PRIVATE**

**A. J. SKINNER**

**AUST. MACHINE GUN CORPS**

**15TH JUNE, 1919 AGE 34**

*CWGC Headstone for Pte A. J. Skinner is located in  
Grave Plot # 87. L. 7. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

## Alfred John SKINNER

Alfred John Skinner was born at Stoke Newington, London in 1880 to parents John and Eugene Emily Skinner (nee Corpe). His birth was registered in December quarter, 1880 in the district of Islington.

The 1881 England Census listed Alfred Skinner as a 5 month old living with his family at 93 Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, North London, England. His parents were listed as John Skinner (Carman, aged 23) & "Eugnea" Skinner (Laundress, aged 2).

The 1891 England Census listed Alfred Skinner as a 10 year old, Scholar living with his family at 73 Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, North London, England which was a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Skinner (Carman, aged 32) & Emily Skinner (aged 31). Also listed in the household was Alfred's younger sister – Emily Skinner (Scholar, aged 9).

The 1901 England Census listed Alfred Skinner as a 20 year old, Compositor's Apprentice (Printer) living with his family at 73 Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, North London, England which was a 3 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Skinner (Parcels Carman, aged 43) & Emily Skinner (aged 42). Also listed in the household was Alfred's younger sister – Florence Skinner (Baker's Assistant, aged 19).

The 1911 England Census listed Alfred Skinner as a 30 year old, Compositor (Printer) living with his family at 73 Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, North London, England which was a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Skinner (Carman, aged 53) & Emily Skinner (aged 51). John & Emily Skinner had been married for 31 years & had 3 children, with one deceased. Also listed in the household was Alfred's younger sister – Florence Skinner (Lady's Help, aged 28).

Alfred John Skinner, aged 32, Compositor, departed from the port of London, England for Australia on 6th June, 1913 aboard the *Orama*.

Alfred John Skinner was a 35 year old, single, Greengrocer (Roll of Honour information states that Alfred Skinner was a Compositor - Printer) from Menton Street, South Brisbane, Queensland when he enlisted at Brisbane, Queensland on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1916 with the 13<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company, 6<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 431 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Emily Skinner of 73 Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, North London, England.

Private Alfred John Skinner embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Port Lincoln (A17)* on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1916. He was transferred to *Ulysses (A38)* at Sierra Leone on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 & finally disembarked at Devonport, England on 28<sup>th</sup> December, 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 Skinner was marched in to Australian Details No. 6 – 7 Camp at Perham Downs, near Tidworth, Wiltshire on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 1916.

Private Skinner was transferred to 5<sup>th</sup> Divisional Machine Gun Company from 13<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Corps at Perham Downs on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1917.

Private Skinner was attached to 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion at Durrington, Wiltshire for Bombing Instruction from 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1917 to 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1917.

Private Skinner proceeded overseas to France via Southampton on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1917. He disembarked at Havre, France on the same day.

Private Skinner was written up on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 for "being in town without a pass contrary to BLO No. 26(6). Improperly dressed viz. without belt contrary to BLO Para 8." He was awarded 2 days Field Punishment No. 2 & forfeited 2 days' pay.

Private Skinner was wounded in action – gassed on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1918. He was taken to St. John's Ambulance then admitted to 20<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1918. He was then transferred to 6<sup>th</sup> C.D. on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1918 & on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1918 he was transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> AC Dep. at Havre where he was admitted on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1918. Private Skinner was discharged to Base Depot on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1918 & marched out to Machine Gun Battalion on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1918. He was marched in to Machine Gun B.D. at Camiers on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1918.

Private Skinner rejoined his Unit on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1918.

Private Skinner was on leave to UK from France from 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1918 & rejoined his Unit on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1918.

Private Skinner was marched out of France with Draft 41 on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1919. He was marched out from Australian Base Depot 2 at Havre for England on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1919 & marched in to No. 5 Group at Weymouth, England on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1919.

Private Alfred John Skinner was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1919 with Carbuncle Neck from Monte Video Hospital at Weymouth.

Private Alfred John Skinner died at 4.45 am on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1919 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny of Pleurisy.

A death for Alfred J. Skinner, aged 36, was registered in the June quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private Alfred John Skinner was buried on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1919 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 89 (CWGC has grave no. as 87). From the burial report of Pte Skinner - *Coffin was Elm with Brass Mounts – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the coffin draped with the Australian flag being borne to the graveside on a Gun Carriage preceded by a Firing Party from No. 50 Quota, Sutton Veny. Six of deceased's late comrades supported the Pall. The "Last Post" was sounded and volleys fired over the grave. A number of Australians attended the funeral as mourners and were present at the graveside ceremony. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom were represented at the funeral. Pte Alfred John Skinner's parents – Mr and Mrs John Skinner of 73 Fonthill Road, Finsbury Park, London, were in attendance at the funeral of their son.*

A letter contained in the Service Record file of Pte Alfred John Skinner from Printing Industry Employees' Union of Australia, dated 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1919 to Base Records Melbourne reads: "*According to a newspaper report one of our members No. 431 Alfred John Skinner, died in England 15/6/19. He was attached to the 25<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company. Will you please send me the confirmatory certificate of death when the official papers connected with the case are received by you? Thanking you in anticipation, I am, Yours faithfully W.C. Colborne, Secretary.*"

Private A. J. Skinner is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 177.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

The Australian Machine Gun Corps Memorial Plaque located at Anzac Square, Brisbane, Queensland does not have individual names.



**Australian Machine Gun Corps Memorial Plaque** (Photo from Queensland War Memorials)

Pte Alfred John Skinner was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Skinner's father in England – Mr J. Skinner (both sent October, 1922).

The CWGC lists Private Alfred John Skinner, 431, of 5th Battalion, Australian Machine Gun Corps, A.I.F., as the son of John and Eugene Emily Skinner of 73 Fonthill Rd, Finsbury Park, London, England.

(56 pages of Pte Alfred John Skinner'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**

### **CASUALTY LISTS**

#### **DIED, OTHER CAUSES**

Private Alfred John Skinner, England

(*Townsville Daily Bulletin*, Qld – Saturday 12 July, 1919)

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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*)

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Pte Alfred John Skinner does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Photo of Private A. J. Skinner's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*



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

