

**St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard,
Lydden, Kent, England
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



4773 PRIVATE

A. STOKES

19TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

14TH DECEMBER, 1916

Alfred STOKES

Alfred Stoakes was born at Lydden, Dover, Kent, England in 1888 to parents Charles & Ruth Stoakes (nee Cook). Alfred's parents had married on 25th October, 1884 at Lydden, Kent, England. Alfred Stoakes was baptised on 12th August, 1888 in the Parish Church of Lydden, Kent, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Alfred Stokes as a 2 year old, living with his family at Lydden Street, Kent. His parents were listed as Charles Stoakes (Agricultural Labourer, aged 29, born Lyminge, Kent) & Isabel R. Stoakes (aged 26, born Lydden, Kent). Alfred was one of four children listed on this Census (all born Lydden, Kent) – Ernest (aged 6), Alice R. (aged 4) then Alfred & Edith (aged 1). Also listed was Stephen Cook – brother-in-law of Charles Stoakes (Agricultural Labourer, aged 38, born Lydden, Kent).

A death was registered in the district of Dover, Kent, England in the March quarter, 1898 for Isabella Ruth Stokes.

The 1901 England Census recorded Alfred Stokes as a 12 year old (born Ludden, Kent) living with his family at Stonehall Cottage, Temple Ewell, Kent, England. His father was listed as Charles Stokes, a Widower, (Yardman on a Farm, age 39, born Lyminge, Kent). Also listed was Margaret Campbell (Housekeeper, aged 44, born Scotland) & Alfred's younger sister – Minnie Stokes (aged 5, born Lydden, Kent).

[The 1911 England Census recorded Alfred's father – Charles Stokes (Farm Bailiff, aged 49) & his sister – Minnie Stokes (aged 15) both living at Each Farm, Ash, near Canterbury, England in a 5 roomed dwelling.]

Alfred Stokes was a 26 year old, single, Labourer when he enlisted on 19th October, 1915 at Parkes, New South Wales with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4773 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr C. Stokes, Each End Farm, Ash, near Canterbury, England.

Private Alfred Stokes was posted to 12th Reinforcements of 19th Battalion. (no date recorded)

Private Alfred Stokes embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 13th April, 1916 with the 5th Infantry Brigade, 19th Infantry Battalion, 12th Reinforcements.

Private Alfred Stokes embarked from Alexandria on 29th May, 1916 on H.M.T. *Megantic* & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 7th June, 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 Alfred Stokes proceeded overseas to France on 9th September, 1916 from 5th Training Battalion in England. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 11th September, 1916. Private Stokes was marched out from 2nd A.D.B.D. on 24th September, 1916 & was taken on strength of 19th Battalion in France on 26th September, 1916 from 12th Reinforcements.

Private Alfred Stokes was sent sick to Hospital on 31st October, 1916. He was admitted to 38th Casualty Clearing Station in France on 4th November, 1916 then transferred to Ambulance Train on 5th November, 1916. Private Stokes was admitted to No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Rouen, France on 6th November, 1916. He was marked for transfer to England on 12th November, 1916 & embarked from Havre, France on 14th November, 1916 on Hospital Ship *Asturias*.

19th Battalion

The 19th Battalion was raised at Liverpool in New South Wales in March 1915 as part of the 5th Brigade. A large number of the 19th's original recruits had already served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in the operations to capture German New Guinea in 1914.....

After further training in Egypt, the 19th Battalion proceeded to France. It took part in its first major offensive around Pozieres between late July and the end of August 1916. After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division, which included the 5th Brigade, came south again in October. The 19th Battalion attacked near Flers

between 14 and 16 November, in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF.....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Alfred Stokes was admitted to 1st Southern General Hospital, Birmingham, England on 15th November, 1916 with Influenza – severe.

Private Alfred Stokes was reported to be seriously ill on 4th December, 1916.

Private Alfred Stokes died on 14th December, 1916 at 1st Southern General Hospital, Edgbaston, Birmingham, England from Tuberculous Meningitis and Cardiac Failure.

A death for Alfred Stokes, aged 28, was registered in the December quarter, 1916 in the district of Kings Norton, Worcestershire (Edgbaston was included in this district), England.

Private Alfred Stokes was buried on 19th December, 1916 in The Village Lydden Cemetery, near Dover, now referred to as St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Lydden, Kent, England – near north boundary and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Newspaper item – *Dover Express*, Kent, England – 22 December, 1916:

KENTISH NEWS

LYDDEN

FUNERAL – The funeral took place on Tuesday, at Lydden Churchyard, of Private Alfred Stokes, youngest son of Mr Charles Stokes, formerly of Lydden, who died at the age of 28 years. The burial service was conducted by the Rev. A. W. E. Dowse, Rector of Barfrestone. The mourners present were Mr Charles Stokes (father), Mrs Frederick Stokes (sister), Miss Cook (aunt), Mr and Mrs F. Stokes, of 9, Dour Place, River (uncle and aunt), Miss Stokes, Mr Hooker, of Sandwich, and Mr Ernest Cook (cousins), Mr and Mrs Dowle, and the Rev D. A. Townend, Vicar of River. Floral tributes were sent from the following:- His brother Ernest (on active service) and Aunt Sarah; his two sisters, Alice and Mimie; Aunt Emily and family; Mr and Mrs Dowle; and Grave Thompson. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr Cadman, of Dover.

The Officer in Charge Records, Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F., wrote to Mr Stokes, 10 Redvers Cottages, The Avenue, Kernsey, Near Dover, on 9th January, 1917 stating “*Information has been received from the 1st Southern General Hospital, Edgbaston, Birmingham that the body of the Late No. 4773 Pte Stokes A. 19th Battn A.I.F. was sent to your residence for interment. Could this office be advised, please, as to the Grave Site No. Cemetery, and date of Burial, for Records purposes in this office.*”

Private Alfred Stokes requested in his Will dated 9th September, 1916 while at Salisbury Plains, England that in the event of his death he requested the “*Commonwealth Government of Australia to pay all money due to me in respect of Military duties re- my account in the Parkes Branch of the Government Savings Bank of N.S.W. to my father, Mr Charles Stokes, Each Farm, Each End, Ash, Nr. Canterbury, England.*”

Private Alfred Stokes was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Stokes' father – Mr C. Stokes, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in April, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private A. Stokes – service number 4773, of 19th Battalion, Australian Infantry. No family details are listed.

Private A. Stokes is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 90.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

A. Stokes is remembered on the Cooke Park War Memorial, located in Cooke Park, corner Welcome & Short Streets, Parkes, NSW.



Cooke Park War Memorial, Parkes, NSW (Photos by Paul Thomas – War Memorials Register NSW)



Cooke Park War Memorial, Parkes, NSW

(45 pages of Private Alfred Stokes' 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) & National Archives

Newspaper Notices

FOR AUSTRALIA

TWO CASUALTY LISTS

The 257th and 258th casualty lists were issued last night....

NEW SOUTH WALES

DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte A. Stokes, England

(The Sun, Sydney, NSW – 27 December, 1916)

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)

Private A. Stokes does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Lydden, Kent, England

Private Alfred Stokes is the only Commonwealth War Grave in this Churchyard.



(Photo by Brad Evans – Find a Grave 2016)



(Photo courtesy of Graham Scrivener)

Photo of Private A. Stokes' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Lydden, Kent, England.



(Photos courtesy of Graham Scrivener)





(Photo courtesy of Kyle Tallett)