

# Sutton Veny War Graves

## World War 1



*Lest We Forget*



1159 SERJEANT

**S. G. WIDDOWS**

**23RD BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**16TH FEBRUARY, 1919**

*CWGC Headstone for Serjt. S. G. Widdows is located in  
Grave Plot # 72. K. 1. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

## Samuel George WIDDOWS

Samuel George Widdows was born near Accrington, Lancashire around May, 1893. (Possible birth - registered in the June quarter, 1893 in the registration district of West Derby, Lancashire, England).

The 1901 England Census listed George Widdows as the 7 year old adopted son of George & Alice Ann Barnes. George Barnes (Labourer, aged 39) & his wife Alice Ann (Cotton \_\_\_\_\_, aged 40) also lived with their 2 daughters – Mary Ellen (aged 17) & Elizabeth Ann (aged 4) at No. 4 Arnold Street, Accrington, Lancashire, England.

The 1911 England Census listed Samuel G. Widdows as a 17 year old Miner (below ground – Drawer), born at Accrington, living as a Boarder with the Ingham family at 25 Hood Street, Accrington, Lancashire, England. The head of the household was John T. Ingham (Iron Founder Labourer, aged 45) & his wife Dinah Ingham (aged 43). The Inghams had been married for 19 years & had 3 children – John Ingham (Labourer – Calico Printer, aged 18), Fred Ingham (aged 7) & William Ingham (aged 3). Also listed as a Boarder was Ellen Ann Fielding (Weaver – Cotton Manufacturing, aged 32, married).

Mr S. Widdows, aged 20, Miner, was a passenger on *Hawkes Bay* which departed from London, England on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1913 bound for Melbourne, Australia. The *Hawkes Bay* was recorded at Sydney, Australia on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1913.

Samuel George Widdows was a 21 year old, single, Miner from Wonthaggi, Victoria (C/- Mrs Davidson, Hagelthorn Street, Wonthaggi) when he enlisted at Wonthaggi, Victoria on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1915 with the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion “C” Company of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 661 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his friend – William Ormerad of 35 Church Lane, Altham, Lancashire, England.

Samuel George Widdows has a second Attestation Paper with the enlistment date of 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1915 and a service number of 1159.

Private Samuel George Widdows embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Euripides* (A14) on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1915. His Service Record file does not show a place or date that he disembarked.

Pte Widdows proceeded to join M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) at Gallipoli on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1915.

Pte Widdows was sent sick to 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance at Anzac on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1915 & rejoined his Unit on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 1915.

In a letter to Mr Les Lake under the date of 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1915 Pte Widdows wrote “*We have been in the thick of it for 13 weeks now and we are becoming old soldiers, although our burial ground is getting bigger every day. I have had two or three narrow squeaks and I hope to have no closer shaves than those I have had during the last month. While in an officer’s dugout one night a bomb burst through the roof and killed the sergeant-major and wounded the sergeant, and your humble escaped with a bruised hand, which has now healed up. I can tell you I said my prayers earnestly that night and have done so ever since.....*” (Extract from Sentinel March, 1916 – courtesy of Wonthaggi Historical Society).

Pte Widdows disembarked at Alexandria on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1916 aboard *Minnewaska* from Mudros.

Pte Widdows was sent to 6<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance at Tel-el-Kebir on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1916 with Bronchitis & discharged to duty on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1916. He rejoined his Unit in Canal Zone on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1916.

Private Samuel George Widdows was promoted to Sergeant on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1916 vice Sgt. Rossiter promoted.

Sgt. Widdows proceeded to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) from Alexandria on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1916 aboard *Lake Michigan*. He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1916.

Sergeant Widdows was charged £1-10-6 as the cost of replacing a Greatcoat.

Sergeant Widdows was wounded in action in France on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1916. Sgt. Widdows had taken part in a raid on enemy trenches on night of 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June, 1916. He was taken to 6<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance with shell wounds then

transferred to No. 2 Casualty Clearing Station on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1916. Sgt. Widdows was transferred to No. 31 Ambulance Train with Gunshot wound to left Arm & then admitted to 13<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Boulogne on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1916 with gunshot wounds to left arm, thigh & right shoulder. Sgt. Widdows was invalided to England on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916 on Hospital Ship *Jan Breydel*. He was admitted to Northampton War Hospital at Duston on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916. Sgt. Widdows was transferred to Woodcote Park Convalescent Hospital, Harefield, Middlesex on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1916. Sgt. Widdows was discharged from Woodcote Park on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1916 for furlo.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1916 Sgt. Widdows was placed on Supernumerary list having been away from his Battalion for over 3 months – having been evacuated out wounded on 219<sup>th</sup> June, 1916.

Sgt. Widdows was on furlo from 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1916 to 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1916.

Sgt. Widdows was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs from furlo on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1916. He was medically classified as B1 A (fit for light duty only).

Sgt. Widdows proceeded overseas to France from Perham Downs via Southampton on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1917. He was marched in to 2<sup>nd</sup> A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1917.

Sgt. Widdows was marched out to his Unit from Havre on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in the field on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1917 from being wounded and absorbed (vice 3928 Smith to Hospital).

Sgt. Widdows was sent to 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1917 with Folliculitis. He was transferred to 4<sup>th</sup> Stationary Hospital at Arques on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1917. Sgt. Widdows was discharged to duty on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

Sgt. Widdows was marched in to 2<sup>nd</sup> A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Havre, France from Hospital on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1917. He was marched out to his Unit on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1917 & rejoined his Unit in Belgium on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1917.

Sgt. Widdows was on leave to Paris on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1917 & rejoined from leave on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1917.

A letter in the Service Record file of Sgt. Samuel George Widdows from Miss Mysie Amiss, c/- J. Kitchen & Sons Pty Ltd, 10-12 Queen Street, Melbourne, dated 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1917 states that she is "*communicating with the above man as a "lonely soldier", I should be glad if you would kindly let me know the name of the person he has left as his next of kin, as I understand he has no relation in Australia. I wish to have this information, so that I may hear if he should happen to be wounded at any time.*" Miss Mysie Amiss was added as a contact for Sgt. Widdows & received regular information by mail as to his woundings etc. She also requested photos of Sgt. Widdows' headstone, after his death.

Sgt. Widdows was wounded in action (2<sup>nd</sup> occasion) on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1918. He was taken to 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance after being gassed then transferred on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1918 to 29<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station. Sgt. Widdows was transferred to Ambulance Train 20 on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1918 & admitted to 22<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital at Camiers, France on same day. Sgt. Widdows was transferred to 72<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital at Trouville on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1918 with inf. stomach. Sgt. Widdows was transferred to Australian Convalescent Depot at Havre on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1918 & discharged 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1918.

Sgt. Widdows was marched in to A.I.B.D. (Australian Infantry Base Depot) on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1918. He was marched out to join his Unit on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1918 & rejoined his Battalion in France on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1918.

Sgt. Widdows was wounded in action (3<sup>rd</sup> occasion) on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1918. He was taken to 15<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance with a gunshot wound to knee then transferred to 53<sup>rd</sup> Casualty Clearing Station. From there he was transferred to Ambulance Train & admitted to 12<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Rouen, France on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1918. Sgt. Widdows was invalided to England on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 1918. He was admitted to Central Military Hospital at Weymouth on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1918 with a contused knee. Sgt. Widdows was discharged to No. 2 Command Depot at Westham Camp, Weymouth on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1918.

Sgt. Widdows was written up for being absent without leave from 15.00 hours on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1916 to 23.00 hrs on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1918. He was reprimanded as punishment by Major Simpson & forfeited 2 days' pay.

Sgt. Widdows was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1918.

Sgt. Widdows was marched out to Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1918.

Sgt. Widdows was admitted to Australian Dermatological Hospital at Bulford, Wiltshire on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1918 with VD. He was transferred to Parkhouse on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1918 & discharged to No. 1 Command Depot at Sutton Veny on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1919.

Sgt. Widdows was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1919 with Influenza & reported later that day as seriously ill with Broncho Pneumonia.

Sergeant Samuel George Widdows died at 5.35 pm on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1919 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny of Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for George S. Widdows, aged 25, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Sergeant Samuel George Widdows was buried on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1919 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 72. From the burial report of Sgt. Widdows - *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. 1 Australian Command Depot. Six Australians supported the Pall. A wreath from deceased's Friends Mr & Mrs Wm. Ormerod was placed on the grave after the "Last Post" had been sounded. Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in U. K. were represented at the funeral. Also in attendance at the funeral were Mr & Mrs Wm. Ormerod (Friend) of 35 Church Lane, Altham, Accrington, Lancs.*

Sgt. Samuel George Widdows requested in his Will dated 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1917 that £5 is to be given to his friend Miss Mollie Green of 62 Barkworth Road, South Bermondsey, London; £5 to his friend Mrs L. Herberts of No. 5 Clayton St, Clayton Le Moors near Accrington, Lancashire & the remaining part of his property & money to his friend Mr William Ormerod of 35 Church Lane, Altham near Accrington, Lancashire, England. A later Will dated 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1917 states that Samuel George Widdows bequeathed his personal estate to William Ormerod, Mine Manager of 35 Church Lane, Altham near Accrington, Lancashire, England.

Base Records wrote to Mr F. Page of Cook's Hill, Newcastle in 1920, enquiring if the parents of the late Sgt S. G. Widdows were still living & if so their address. Otherwise the name & address of his eldest brother and sister was asked for. The information, it was explained, was required in order that the instructions under the "Deceased Soldiers' Estates Act 1918" may be properly complied with when awarding the War Medals issued on the account of the late soldier's service. Mr Page replied stating that he could not give any information regarding Sgt Widdows as his little daughter sent money for tobacco for the soldiers & Sgt Widdows was one to receive a packet & then wrote thanking his daughter & asked her to answer his letter as he was very lonely. The daughter & her parents wrote regularly to Sgt Widdows & they took it that Sgt Widdows had no relations.

Sgt Samuel George Widdows was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also to be sent to Sgt. Widdows' nearest next-of-kin. The War Medals & mementoes were sent to the London Office for them to trace the blood relations of Sgt. Widdows. Records show that the Memorial Scroll & Plaque were sent to Mr W. Ormerod in England (both sent November, 1922).

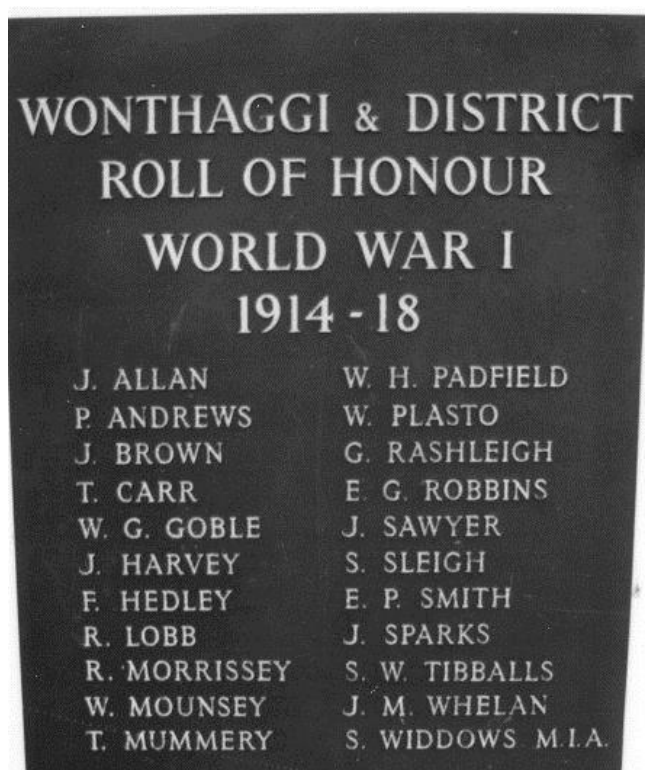
The CWGC lists Sergeant Samuel George Widdows, 1159 of 23rd Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. No family details are listed.

Serjeant S. G. Widdows is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 100.



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

S. Widdows is remembered on the Wonthaggi War Memorial located in Soldiers Reserve, McBride Avenue, Wonthaggi, Victoria.



**Wonthaggi War Memorial**

*(Photos from (L) Monument Australia – Kent Watson & (R) Victorian War Heritage Inventory)*

(93 pages of Serjeant Samuel George Widdows' 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**

### **AUSTRALIANS IN WAR**

#### **186<sup>th</sup> CASUALTY LIST**

##### **WOUNDED**

S. G. Widdows, England

*(Hamilton Spectator, Victoria – Friday 21 July, 1916)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **VICTORIAN LIST**

##### **WOUNDED**

Sgt. S. G. Widdows, England

*(Weekly Times, Victoria – Saturday 11 May, 1918)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

#### **On Active Service**

WIDDOWS — A tribute to the memory of Sergeant S. G. Widdows (23rd Battn.), who died from broncho-pneumonia at Sutton Veny Military Hospital, England, on the 16th February, 1919, \_\_\_\_\_ service. (M.A., Malvern.)

*(The Argus, Melbourne, Victoria – Monday 16 February, 1920)*

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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)*

Serjeant Samuel George Widdows does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



Photo of Serjeant S. G. Widdow'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)

