



James Fursdon

James Fursdon was born in Gretton in 1882. His father, Thomas Fursdon was from Devon. His mother Christiana Ann Fursdon (nee Jones) was from Gretton. Christiana had previously been married to Joseph Inckle.

Family History

In 1891, the Fursdon family were living in The Nook, Gretton. Thomas Fursdon was employed as a General Labourer. James had a number of siblings including two brothers Walter (b. 1879) and William (b.1885).

By 1901, James was boarding with an Ada Bugglestone in Hunslet, Yorkshire. His occupation was given as "lampman".

By 1904, James had moved back to Northamptonshire and married Mary Louise Walker. The couple settled in Market Street, Kettering. A baby daughter was born in 1905 but unfortunately died, but in 1907 another daughter (Olive) was born.

In the 1911 Census, the family were still living in Market Street. James was employed as a Railway Porter by Midland Railway.

Military History

James Fursdon served as a Private (58114) in the Royal Army Medical Corps (142nd Field Ambulance Unit).

It is recorded that he was killed on 24th July 1916 on the Somme.

The Northampton Mercury of 18th August 1916 references Private Fursdon's death:-

Pte. James Fursdon R.A.M.C. the husband of Mrs Fursdon, 11 Market Street, Kettering was killed on July 24 by the bursting of a shell.

Private Fursdon is buried at the Bernafay Wood British Cemetery, Montauban although his grave is not marked. He is remembered on the Gretton War Memorial.

According to the subsequent Probate Records, Private Fursdon left £250 15s. to his wife, Mary Louise Fursdon.

Montauban village was taken by the 30th and 18th Divisions on 1 July 1916 and it remained in Commonwealth hands until the end of March 1918. It was retaken on 25 August 1918 by the 7th Buffs and the 11th Royal Fusiliers of the 18th Division.



The Bois De Bernafay is a pear-shaped wood close to the east end of Montauban village. It was taken on 3 and 4 July 1916 by the 9th (Scottish) Division. On 25 March 1918, in the retreat to the Ancre, the same Division was driven from the wood but recaptured it for a time. On 27 August 1918 it was finally regained by the 18th Division.

The cemetery was begun by a dressing station in August 1916 and used as a front-line cemetery until the following April. It contained at the Armistice 284 burials but was then increased when graves were brought in from Bernafay Wood North Cemetery and from the battlefields immediately east of the wood.

Bernafay Wood North Cemetery was opposite the North edge of the wood, a little East of the Longueval - Maricourt road. It was begun by an Advanced Dressing Station, and used from July to October 1916. It contained the graves of 80 soldiers from the United Kingdom and 1 German prisoner.

Bernafay Wood British Cemetery now contains 945 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 417 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 11 soldiers known or believed to be buried here. Other special memorials commemorate 12 soldiers buried in Bernafay Wood North Cemetery whose graves were destroyed by shell fire.

The cemetery was designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Society

Lest We Forget

James Fursdon
of the Royal Army Medical Corps

d. 24th July 1916

