

Alfred Skeen



Private Alfred Skeen
17th Battalion, AIF
Service Number: 5416

Born: 25 October 1894, Penrith, NSW

Died: 31 August 1918, Mont St Quentin, France

Alfred Skeen was born in Penrith on 25 October 1894, the youngest son and child of Thomas and Mary Ann (nee Wilson) Skeen. The family had moved around the western districts of NSW before settling in Penrith around the time of Alfred's birth. Skeen's father worked on the railways and the family lived at Jamisontown and Kingswood. After attending Penrith Superior Public School, Skeen worked as a coal miner at the Oakey Park colliery at Lithgow.

At the time of his enlistment, Skeen's mother had died, and his father was living near Hartley. Skeen enlisted at Lithgow on 5 January 1916 and trained at the Lithgow Depot Company until his transfer to Bathurst Depot Company on 18 January 1916. On 9 March 1916, Skeen was initially allocated to the 13th Reinforcements, 17th Battalion. After several months of training, Skeen embarked on *HMAT Wiltshire* on 22 August 1916 bound for England. While on board the transport ship, Skeen was hospitalised with mumps. He disembarked on 13 October at Plymouth and on 4 November 1916, Skeen marched into the 5th Training Battalion at Rollestone, England. He embarked for France on 13 December and joined his unit on 18 December. From 17 April until 25 April 1917, Skeen was hospitalised in France with an unknown illness. He suffered gunshot wounds to his right arm on 3 May and was treated at the 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Station before being transferred to the Military Hospital at Tooting in England. Aside from his wounds, he had trench fever and an illness caused by lice infestation in the trenches.

On 25 June 1917, Skeen was discharged from hospital and was sent on leave until 9 July. On 27 September, Skeen transferred to the Overseas Training Depot and he rejoined his unit on 27 October. Skeen was killed instantly by machine gun fire during the battle of St Quentin on 31 August 1918 and was buried close to a trench just west of Mont St Quentin. In 1920, Skeen's father, who was by then living at 'Lambridge', Castlereagh Road, Penrith, was informed that his son's remains had been exhumed and reinterred in Peronne Communal Cemetery.

Memorial Details:

- Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, France
- Honour Roll, St Stephen the Martyr Anglican Church

- Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith
 - Honour Roll, War Memorial, Lithgow
- Sources:**
- National Archives of Australia: SKEEN A
 - Australian War Memorial First World War Nominal Roll
 - Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour
 - Penrith City Library biography files
- Trove**
- *Nepean Times* 21 September 1918, Pg 2, Col 3