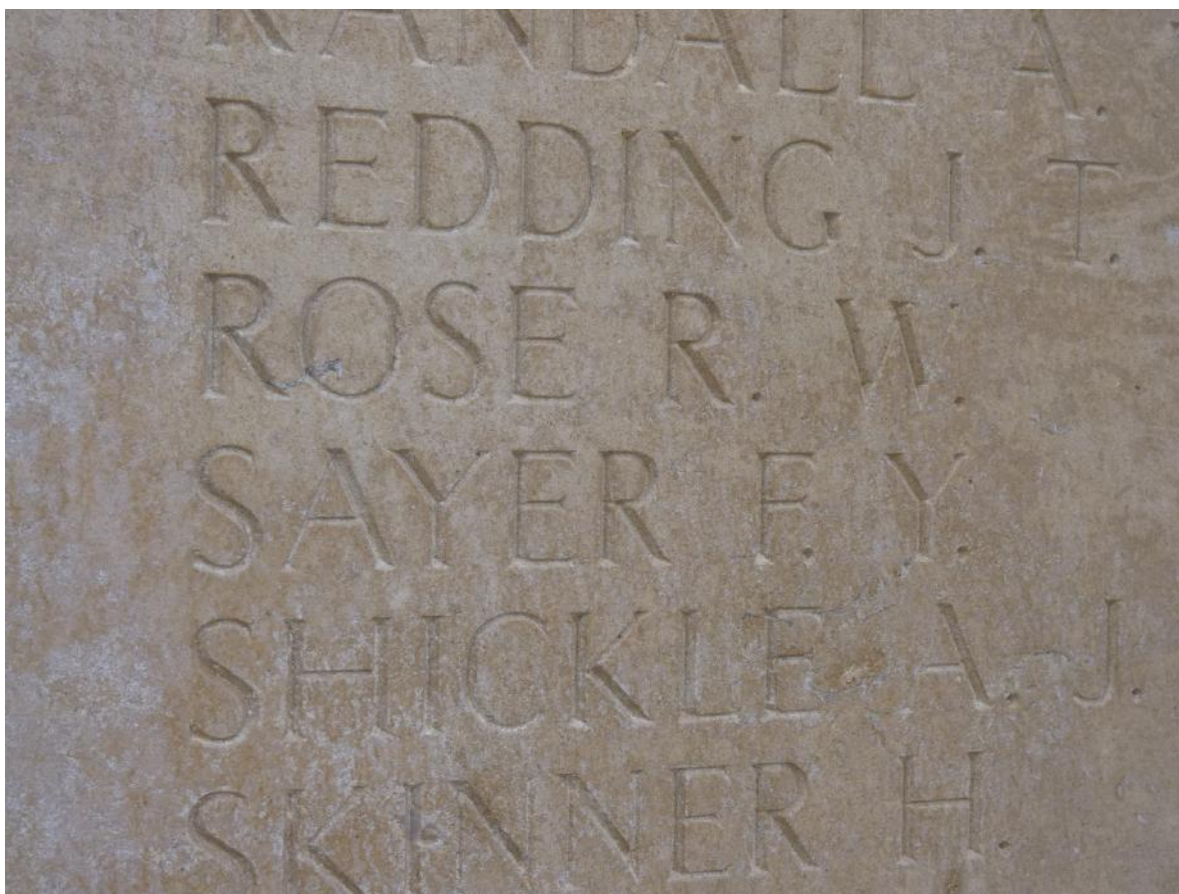


## FRANCIS YATES SAYER (1907-10)

<b>Date of Birth</b>	8 September 1898
<b>School Information</b>	Brother of <b>Walter Edward Sayer (1907-11)</b> and <b>John Last Sayer (1908-11)</b>
<b>Career Information</b>	None
<b>Date Of Death</b>	27 March 1918
<b>Cause of Death</b>	Killed in action
<b>Location</b>	Albert, France
<b>Cemetery</b>	Pozieres Memorial, France Plot – Panel 25
<b>Rank</b>	Private
<b>Branch of Service</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Suffolk Regiment

In October 2014 there was an OF visit to his memorial







# Pozières British Cemetery and Memorial



**CWGC**  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The village of Pozières and the surrounding farmland were fiercely contested during the Allied offensive on the Somme which began on 1 July 1916. Initially an objective for the first day, the ground was taken by Commonwealth forces three weeks later. Pozières British Cemetery is the final resting place of nearly 2,800 Commonwealth soldiers, most of whom fell in 1916. In Part 5, to the right of the entrance, are the graves of those originally buried here for fighting units and field ambulances. This site was greatly expanded after the end of the war when graves were brought here from several smaller burial grounds nearby. Nearly half of those buried here remain unidentified, but among them are more than 1,800 who served as regiments of the United Kingdom, more than 700 men of the Australian Imperial Force, and over 200 who fought with Canadian units.



through the last winter of 1916 - 7, before moving several kilometres to the east where German forces withdrew to the well-fortified Hindenburg Line in the spring of 1917.

## The German Offensive, 1918

On 21 March 1918, the Germans launched an offensive named Operation Michael against Allied forces on the Somme. By 23 March, the ground had been lost and the town of Albert was captured. Nearly 8,000 men earned on the Pozières Memorial were killed in the first four days of the offensive, when Commonwealth soldiers struggled to resist massed German forces, including specially equipped and trained assault units known as stormtroopers. Within two weeks the Germans had advanced around 65 kilometres. They were eventually halted at Villers-Bretonneux by British and Australian troops on 4 and 5 April 1918. On 8 August, Allied victory in the Battle of Amiens began a advance which would recapture this area on 24 August, and would only cease with the Armistice which ended the fighting on the Western Front.

Pozières was lost in March 1918 during the German Spring Offensive, and recaptured by the Allies in August. Around the cemetery stands the Pozières Memorial, which commemorates those who fought on the Somme in 1918. It bears the names of their fellow comrades who have no known graves, including more than 180 men of the forces of South Africa, and over 14,300 who served with British regiments, most of whom fell in March and April 1918. Both the cemetery and the memorial were designed by William Harrison Woodhouse.

Pozières was a crucial German stronghold. During the Somme offensive, artillery bombardments devastated the surrounding fields and destroyed the village. The area where this cemetery now stands was known as 'Tramway Crossing' or 'Red Cross Corner', and in the first weeks of July 1916 Commonwealth forces advanced slowly across this ground, fighting through well-prepared German defences. On 22 and 24 July men of the 1st Australian Division and the 48th (South Midland) Division assaulted the area behind the cemetery and the village of Pozières itself, capturing this part of the German line at heavy cost.

The Germans fought hard to hold the area around the village, engaging Commonwealth forces with artillery fire and mounting counter-attacks using flamethrowers and barbed wire. Many of these had to be held during these engagements. To the north-west of Pozières stood Massey Farm, a local factory owner's mansion which the Germans had fortified. Commonwealth forces suffered many thousands of casualties attacking this position before it was taken on 26 September. From fighting continued through September and October, particularly to the east of here around Oxley and Contalmaison. The Allied offensive ended in November 1916, and Commonwealth forces held this ground.

Part of the 1st Australian Division seen on their way to the Somme area, 17 April 1918. They would go on to take the town of Pozières, July 1916.

The Germans drove the British back during the German Spring Offensive, 1918. They would only cease with the Armistice which ended the fighting on the Western Front.

## Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commission is responsible for the maintenance of almost 1,700,000 members of the Commonwealth forces who gave their lives in the two world wars. The graves and memorials of these men and women, who came from all parts of the Commonwealth and who were of many faiths and of many ages, are found around the globe in 153 countries. For more information about the Commission, our work and how to search our records online visit [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org). Enquiries are also welcome at our offices: CWGC Head Office Tel: +44 (0) 1438 537200 Email: [casualtyenquiries@cwgc.org](mailto:casualtyenquiries@cwgc.org) CWGC France Office: Tel: +33 (0) 3 21 21 77 00 Email: [france.areas@cwgc.org](mailto:france.areas@cwgc.org)

For more information about the location and hours of these commemorated sites, scan the QR code (right).



