



In Memory of  
**Regimental Sergeant Major  
FRANK GRIERSON BROWN**

**281**, 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Australian Infantry A.I.F.  
who died age 22  
on 05 August 1916

Son of William & Lily Brown,  
of Toowoomba, Queensland.

Remembered with honour  
VILLERS-BRETONNEUX MEMORIAL, FRANCE



REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR  
**FRANK GRIERSON BROWN**

26<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY BATTALION, A. I. F.  
SERVICE NUMBER: 281



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL P03452.007

There is a small plaque at the back of St. Luke's Anglican Church (Herries and Ruthven Streets) in Toowoomba that commemorates the two Brown brothers who lost their lives on the same day at Pozieres. The plaque states that they were the "only and dearly loved sons of Lily Emma and William Grierson Brown." The name "Grierson" was given to both sons, and was possibly the maiden name of a grandmother, a custom not uncommon in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The younger of the brothers was **Frank Grierson Brown**. He appears to have been a natural soldier and leader, and excelled in his army career from his early enlistment until his death at Pozieres. Frank was born in Toowoomba in 1894. He was a clerk by profession, almost 5'10" tall and weighed 144 pounds. He had a fair complexion, blue eyes and fair hair. Upon enlistment he gave his father William Grierson Brown of Toowong in Brisbane as NOK.

Frank's career is unusual in that he enlisted firstly in the Australian Naval and Military Expedition on 17 August 1914, that is, less than two weeks after the declaration of war. This expedition was raised immediately to proceed to New Guinea and take possession of the German installations there to remove a possible threat from German colonial forces and loyalists to Australia and other British activities in the South Pacific. Frank served over 200 days with this force, which accomplished its task by early 1915 in a nasty confrontation that cost several Australian casualties.

Returning to Toowoomba, Frank quickly joined the AIF to continue his service in the war effort. His attestation papers are dated 7 April 1915. He was then just over 21 years old. He was posted to the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and with his military experience rose rapidly through the ranks of NCOs. He was made corporal three weeks after enlistment, sergeant by 31 May, RSM by 23 August and warrant officer the following day. Frank was an "original" of the 26<sup>th</sup>, as his low service number indicates. The battalion was formed at Enoggera in the month that Frank enlisted. It became part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade, and contained mostly Queenslanders, with some Tasmanians; its sister battalion was the 25<sup>th</sup> also from Queensland. The Battalion embarked for the Middle East at Brisbane on the HMAT *Ascanius* on 29 June 1915. After a short time in Egypt the 26<sup>th</sup> proceeded to Gallipoli from Alexandria on 4 September. Frank survived the Gallipoli campaign, though not without a short stay in hospital with diarrhoea, and returned to Egypt after the evacuation in mid-December.

In early 1916 the AIF divisions were trained and reinforced for the Western Front. Frank left Alexandria for his third military campaign on 15 March 1916. The 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, as part of the AIF's 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, was sent to gain trench warfare experience, and then, to the Somme Valley for its role in the attack on Pozieres. After the seizure of the village by the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, the brigades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division attacked and held Pozieres Heights from 26 July until 7 August. The fighting was intense. During this time the 26<sup>th</sup> suffered 650 casualties. On one of the worst days, 5 August, Frank Brown was reported "wounded in action". His parents received a telegram to this effect, and then silence for some months. During this period of mourning and anxiety Mrs Brown wrote to the army, on 4 October,

*We were notified at the beginning of Sept, that our son Private William Robert Grierson Brown, 11<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion was killed in action on Aug 5<sup>th</sup> 1916, in France, also that our son Regimental Sergeant Major Frank Grierson Brown, Headquarters, 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion was wounded. Since that time we have had nothing further from the Military Authorities, & that is the reason I am writing to you to ask where our son Frank is wounded & in what Hospital he has been placed, also whether we are to know anything more about our son Willie.*

Toowoomba Grammar School Archives state that he started school on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1908 and left on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1910. The School Magazine dated November 1916 states, 'Frank Grierson Brown was first in the New Guinea expedition, then at Gallipoli and finally in France, where he was fatally wounded in September. Hardly a month before his only brother met a similar death.'

#### **External Links:**

[CWGC](#)

[Australian National Archives Military Records](#)

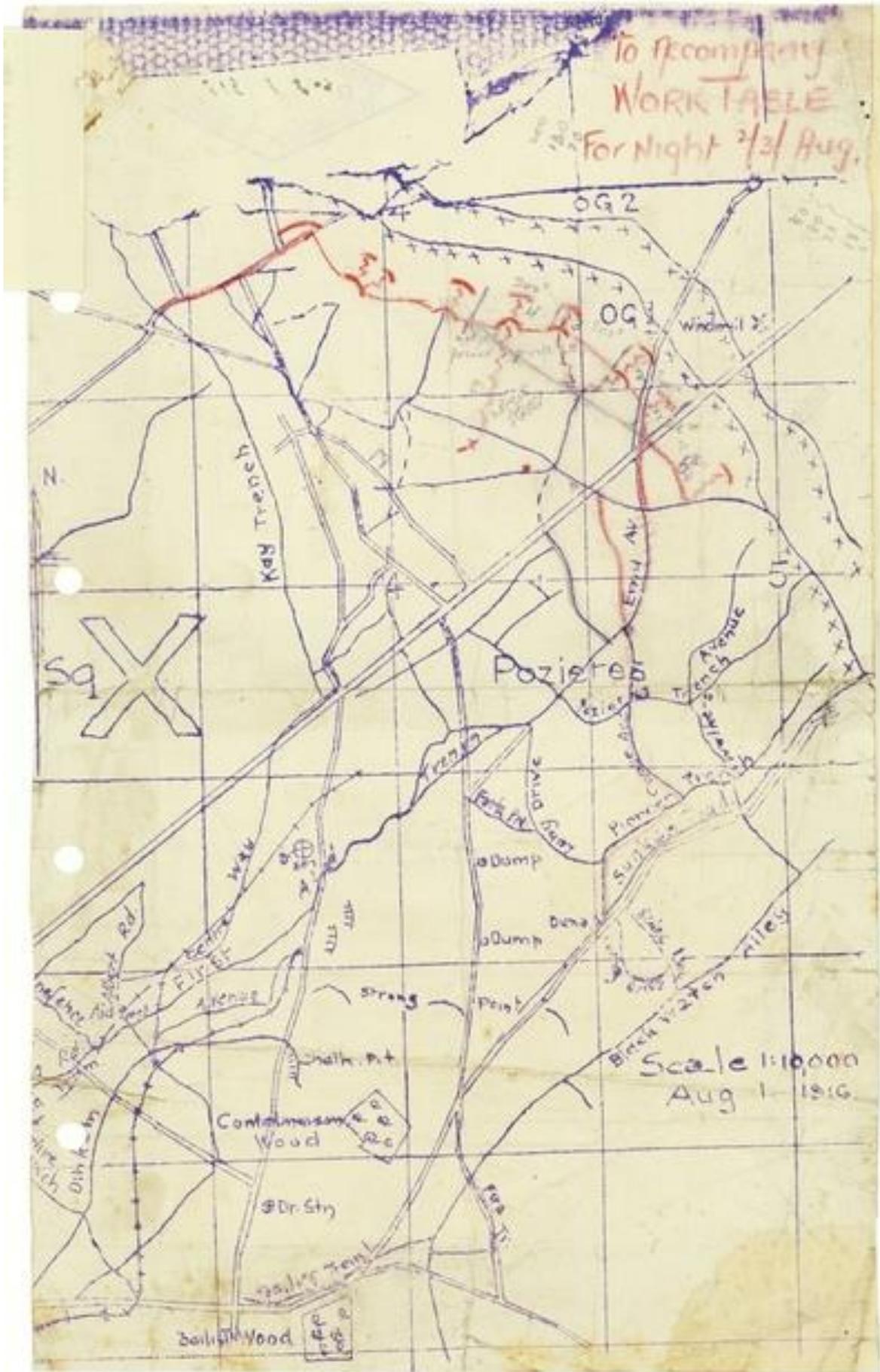
[Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing](#)

[Australian War Memorial Honour Roll](#)

[AWM4 unit war diaries Item No 23/43/13 26th BN August 1916](#)



*Toowoomba Grammar School Old Boys in Cairo 1915*



Map of Pozieres area for night of 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> August 1916 AWM