

# Mells, Somerset

## War Memorial



*Lest We Forget*

### World War 1



**7191 SAPPER**

**F. PHILLIPS**

**AUSTRALIAN ENGINEERS**

**13TH DECEMBER, 1916 Age 45**

*Deeply Mourned*

*By His Sorrowing Wife*

*And Children*

## Frank PHILLIPS

Frank Phillips was born at Osmington, near Weymouth, Dorset, England in 1872 to parents Henry & Emma Phillips (nee Burridge).

The 1871 England Census recorded Frank Phillips as a 2 month old baby (born Osmington, Dorset) living with his family at Upton, Osmington, Dorset, England. His parents were listed as Henry Phillips (Agricultural Labourer, aged 26, born Broadwindsor, Dorset) & Emma Phillips (Agricultural Servant, aged 24, born Mosterton, Dorset). Frank was the youngest of four children listed on this Census – Angelina Phillips (aged 4, born Mosterton, Dorset), Henry A. Phillips (aged 3, born Mosterton, Dorset), Mary H. Phillips (aged 12 months born Osmington, Dorset). Also listed was a boarder – George Burridge (Emma's brother?) (Agricultural Labourer, aged 17, born Mosterton, Dorset).

The 1881 England Census recorded Frank Phillips as a 10 year old Scholar, living with his family at Misterton, Somerset, England. His parents were listed as Henry Phillips (General Labourer, aged 35) & Emma Phillips (aged 34). Frank was one of seven children listed on this Census – Henry A. Phillips (General Labourer, aged 13), Mary H. Phillips (Scholar, aged 11) then Frank, George Phillips (Scholar, aged 8, born Milton Abbas, Dorset), David Phillips (Scholar, aged 6, born Wales), Maria Phillips (aged 4, born Wales) & Anne Phillips (aged 12 months, born Broadwindsor, Dorset).

The 1891 England Census recorded Frank Phillips as a 20 year old, Stone Quarryman living with his family at The Island, Mells, Somerset, England. His parents were listed as Henry Phillips (Agricultural Labourer, aged 45) & Emma Phillips (aged 44). Frank was one of eight children listed on this Census – Henry A. Phillips (Labourer – Asphalt Works, aged 23), then Frank, George Phillips (Strade Maker (?), aged 17), Maria Phillips (Domestic Servant, aged 14), Anne Phillips (Scholar, aged 11), Emma E. Phillips (Scholar, aged 9, born Crewkerne, Somerset), Catherine (Scholar, aged 6, born Mells, Somerset) & David Phillips (Toolmaker's striker, aged 15).

Frank Phillips married Florence Eliza Lee on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1898 at Greenwich, England.

According to information supplied by his wife for the Roll of Honour - Frank Phillips came to Australia when he was 40 years old. A "Frank Phillips", Labourer, his wife & 5 children (F. A. Phillips, Florrie Phillips, Wm. H. Phillips, Kattie Phillips & Joseph Phillips) were listed as passengers on Orontes which departed from London, England on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1911 bound for Freemantle, Australia.

A death for Emma Phillips, mother of Frank Phillips, aged 69, was registered in the September quarter 1916 in the district of Frome, Somerset, England.

The 1916 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Perth, subdivision of East Perth, Western Australia recorded Frank Phillips, Assistant Boilermaker & his wife Florence Eliza Phillips, living at 13 Smedley's Terrace, East Perth, Western Australia.

The 1917 & 1919 Australian Electoral Roll for the division of Perth, subdivision of East Perth, Western Australia recorded Frank Phillips, Assistant Boilermaker living at 13 Smedley's Terrace, East Perth, Western Australia. His wife Florence Eliza Phillips was listed as 27 Claisebrook Road. Florence Phillip's address on the 1919 Electoral Roll was 23 Claisebrook Road.

Frank Phillips was a 45 year old, married, Boilermaker's Assistant from 13 Smeddle Terrace, East Perth, Western Australia when he enlisted on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1916 with the 4<sup>th</sup> Field Company Engineers, 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements of the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 7191 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs Florence Eliza Phillips, of 13 Smeddle Terrace, East Perth, Western Australia. Frank Phillips stated on his Attestation Papers that he had served for 8 years with Royal Engineers & 6 years with Reserve Engineers. In information provided by his wife for the Roll of Honour, Mrs Phillips stated that her husband had served with 10<sup>th</sup> Coy Royal Engineers in England and had served in South African War, holding two medals, the Kings and Queens.

Private Frank Phillips was posted to 48<sup>th</sup> Depot Battalion on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1916. He was transferred to Engineers Reinforcements on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1916 as Sapper. Sapper Phillips was transferred to Engineers Reinforcements, 3<sup>rd</sup> Military Division on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1916.

Sapper Frank Phillips embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Star of Victoria (A16)* on 31st March, 1916. He disembarked & joined the Miscellaneous Reinforcements at Tel-el-Kebir on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1916.

Sapper Frank Phillips embarked from Alexandria on *Ionian* on 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1916 to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1916.

Sapper Frank Phillips proceeded to join 4<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Australian Engineers from Etaples, France on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916. He was taken on strength of 4<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Australian Engineers in the field in France on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1916 from 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements.

Sapper Frank Phillips was wounded in action in France on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1916.

Sapper Frank Phillips died of wounds received in action (gunshot wounds to head) on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 1916 at the 38<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station.

### **Australian Engineers in the First World War**

Engineers, also known as sappers, were essential to the running of the war. Without them, other branches of the Allied Forces would have found it difficult to cross the muddy and shell-ravaged ground of the Western Front. Their responsibilities included constructing the lines of defence, temporary bridges, tunnels and trenches, observation posts, roads, railways, communication lines, buildings of all kinds, showers and bathing facilities, and other material and mechanical solutions to the problems associated with fighting in all theatres.

*(Australian Engineers information from the Australian War Memorial)*

#### War Diary - 4<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Australian Engineers

*6:12:16 – Tunnelling and digging in at C.22055. On 6<sup>th</sup> 4 men killed and 5 men and 1 Officer wounded.*

*(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Sapper Frank Phillips was buried in Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L'Abbe Cemetery, Somme, France – Plot number VI. F. 6. . Sapper Frank Phillips shares a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone with Private W. R. Sedgman, 1310, 59<sup>th</sup> Battalion who died on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1916.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Sapper Frank Phillips contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the relatives in England to obtain the details of his whereabouts. The Officer Commanding, 38<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station wrote to the Red Cross regarding Sapper F. Phillips stating *“I regret to inform you that he died in this Unit on the 13.12.16 from a gunshot wound of head. He was practically unconscious the whole time. He died quite peacefully. He is buried in the local cemetery (Military) at Heilly, Somme, the Chaplain to the Unit officiated at the graveside. He effects were sent c/o D.A.C. Base (effects branch) B.E.F. France.”*

Another reply was from Sapper W. A. Winberg, 4<sup>th</sup> Field Coy. Engineers, No. 1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny who wrote: *“ I knew Phillips he was one of our Drivers and was actually killed in Camp. The camp was at Montauban on the Somme near the quarry siding. He was seriously wounded by the bursting of a shell and died of his wounds at Heilly clearing station. His body was buried in a little cemetery near the clearing station, I made a cross and his company with some mates went out at night and fixed it over his grave.”*

Sapper Frank Phillips was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Sapper Phillips' widow - Mrs F. E. Phillips, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent August, 1922).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Sapper Frank Phillips – service number 7191, aged 45, of 4<sup>th</sup> Field Coy., Australian Engineers. He was the son of Henry Phillips and the late Emma Phillips; husband of Florence E. Phillips, of 141 Manchester Rd., Millwall, London, England. Native of Mells, Frome, Somerset, England.

Sapper F. Phillips is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 24.



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

F. Phillips is remembered on the Western Australian Government Railways and Tramways Roll of Honour – Locomotive Branch.

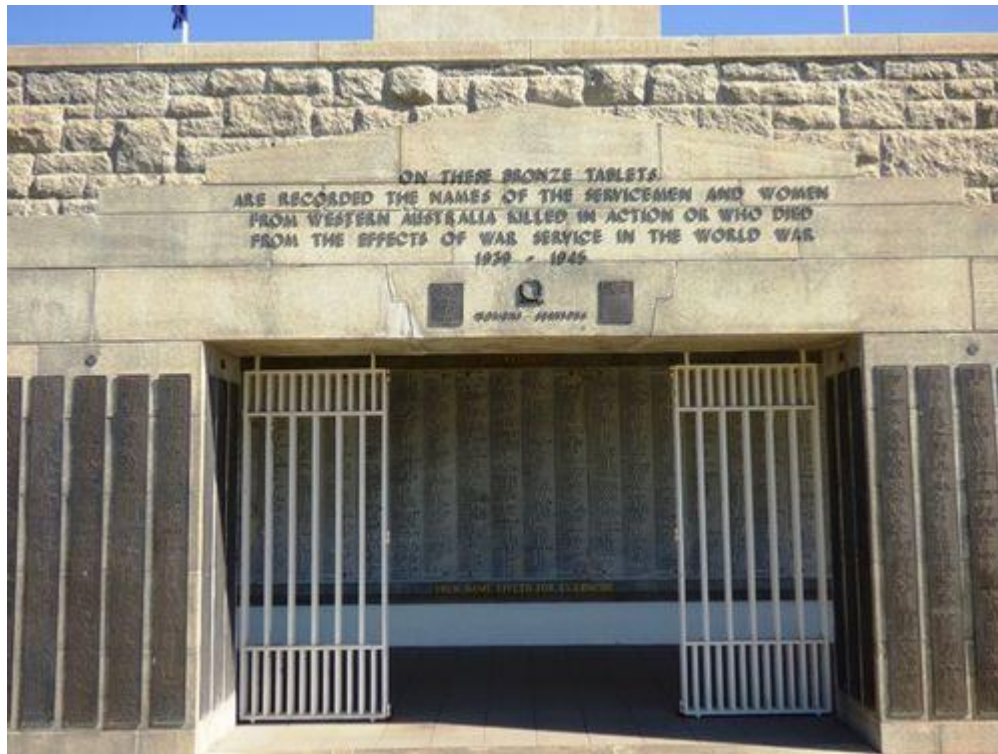
F. Phillips is remembered on the Western Australia State War Memorial which is located at the top of Kings Park and Botanic Garden escarpment, ANZAC Bluff, Fraser Avenue, Perth, Western Australia. The memorial was developed around an 18 metre tall obelisk as the principal feature, which is almost a replica of the Australian Imperial Force Memorials erected in France and Belgium.

The heavy concrete foundations are supplemented by heavy brick walls which enclose an inner chamber or crypt. The walls surrounding the crypt are covered with The Roll of Honour; marble tablets which list under their units the names of more than 7,000 members of the services killed in action or as a result of World War One.



**Western Australia State War Memorial Cenotaph, Kings Park**

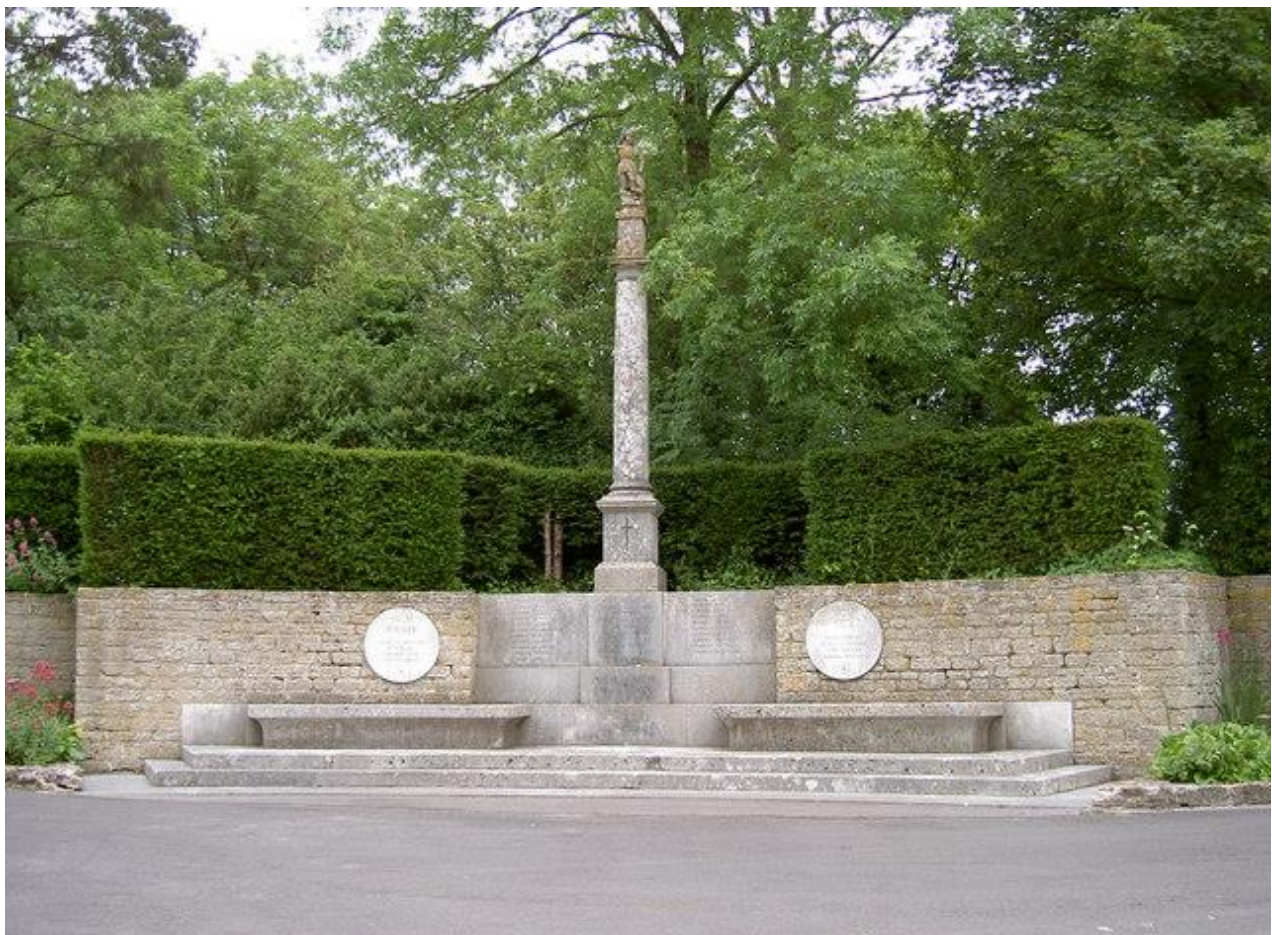




**The Crypt with the Roll of Honour Names**

*(Photos from Monument Australia – Kent Watson/Sandra Tattersall/Graeme Saunders)*

Frank Phillips is remembered on the Mells War Memorial, which is located at Selwood & Fairview Streets, Mells, Somerset.



**Mells War Memorial** *(Photos by Neil Owen)*

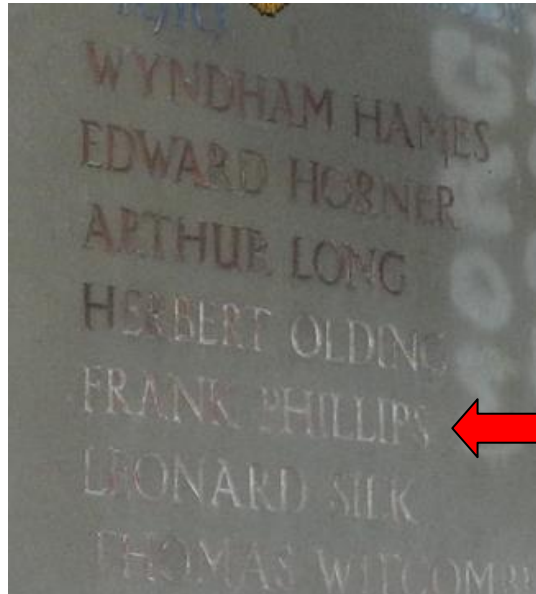




Frank Phillips is remembered on the War Memorial Plaque located inside the Church of St. Andrew, Mells, Somerset, England.



**Church of St. Andrew War Memorial Plaque** (Photo by Michael Day)



(53 pages of Sapper Frank Phillips' Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives*



**Connected to Sapper Frank Phillips:**

His eldest son – Private Frank Albert Phillips, 2705, 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion. Killed in action 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1918. Remembered on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial as he has no known grave.



SAPPER FRANK PHILLIPS (father).  
(Died of wounds. Wife resides in Claisebrook-road, East Perth.)

## **Newspaper Notices**

### **WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

#### **THE ROLL OF HONOUR**

##### **259<sup>th</sup> AND 260<sup>th</sup> CASUALTY LISTS**

###### **WOUNDED**

Sapper F. Phillips (East Perth)

*(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – 3 January, 1917)*

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#### **THE ROLL OF HONOR**

###### **DEATHS**

Sapper F. E. Phillips (Perth), of wounds.

*(Sunday Times, Perth, W.A. – 7 January, 1917)*

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#### **IN MEMORIAM**

##### **Anzac Heroes**

PHILLIPS – In loving memory of my dear husband, Sapper Frank Phillips, late of the 4<sup>th</sup> Field Engineers, who died of wounds at the 38<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station, December 13, 1916; also Frank, dearly loved eldest son of the above, late of the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion, killed in action at Villers Bretonneux, April, 25 1918.

Both dearly loved and deeply mourned.

Inserted by his sorrowing wife and mother.

*(The West Australian, Perth, W.A. – 13 December, 1918)*

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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. 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)*

Sapper F. Phillips does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*Deeply Mourned By His Sorrowing Wife And Children*



## Heilly Station Cemetery, Somme, France

Mericourt-l'Abbe is a village approximately 19 kilometres north-east of Amiens and 10 kilometres south-west of Albert. Heilly Station Cemetery is about 2 kilometres south-west of Mericourt-l'Abbe, on the south side of the road to Corbie.

The 36th Casualty Clearing Station was at Heilly from April 1916. It was joined in May by the 38th, and in July by the 2/2nd London, but these hospitals had all moved on by early June 1917.

The cemetery was begun in May 1916 and was used by the three medical units until April 1917. From March to May 1918, it was used by Australian units, and in the early autumn for further hospital burials when the 20th Casualty Clearing Station was there briefly in August and September 1918. The last burial was made in May 1919.

There are now 2,890 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. Only 12 of the burials are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 21 casualties whose graves in the cemetery could not be exactly located. The cemetery also contains 83 German graves.

The burials in this cemetery were carried out under extreme pressure and many of the graves are either too close together to be marked individually, or they contain multiple burials. Some headstones carry as many as three sets of casualty details, and in these cases, regimental badges have had to be omitted. Instead, these badges, 117 in all, have been carved on a cloister wall on the north side of the cemetery.

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*

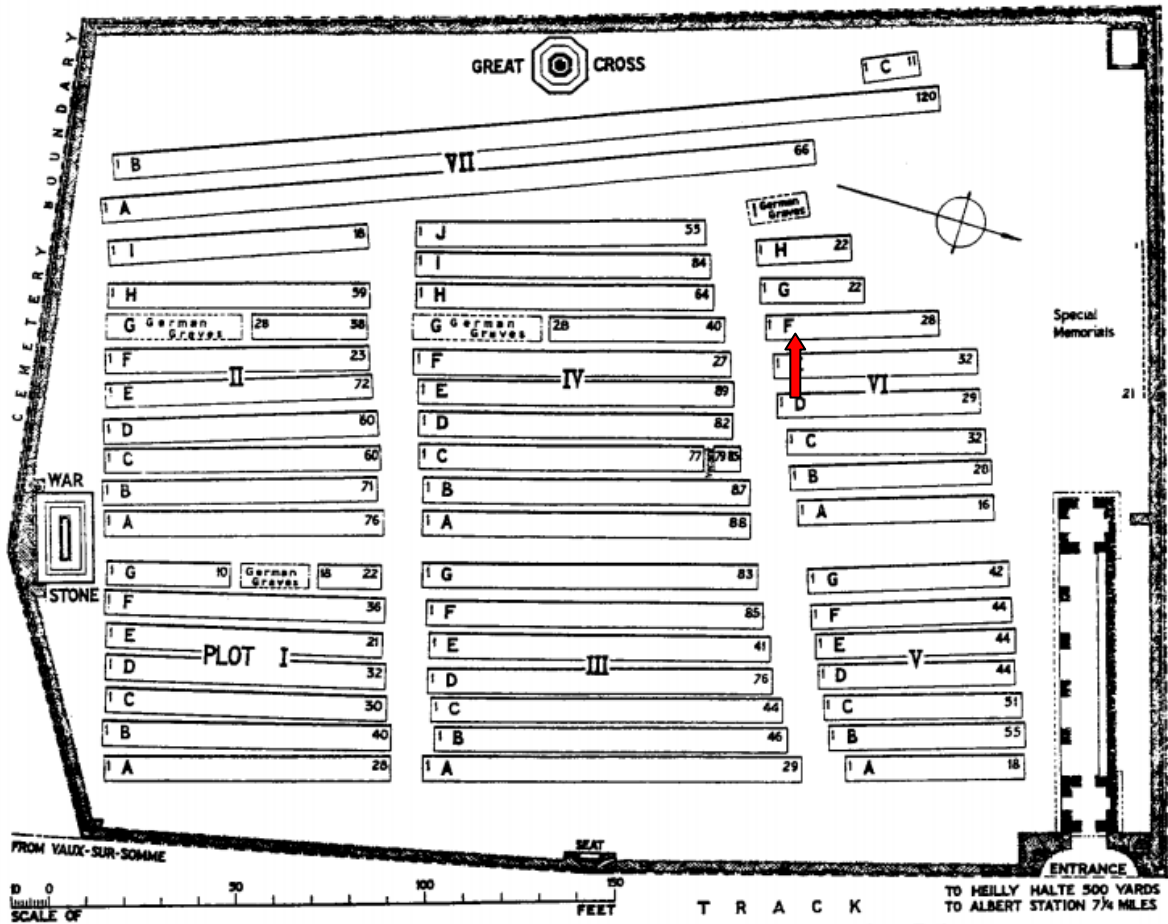






Photo of Sapper F. Phillips' Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Heilly Station Cemetery, Somme, France.





HEILLY STATION CEMETERY, MERICOURT - L' ABBE