

# **Durrington**

## **Roll of Honour**



*Lest we Forget*

### **World War I**



**306691 PRIVATE**

**J. TOOMER**

**ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT**

**27th AUGUST, 1916**

## James TOOMER

Henry James Toomer was born at Durrington, Wiltshire, in 1881 to parents Charles & Mary Ann Toomer (nee Harrold). His birth was registered in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire in the June quarter of 1881.

The 1881 Census records H. James Toomer as a 5 week old living with his parents at Durrington, Wiltshire. His parents were recorded as Charles Toomer (Groom, aged 51, born Durrington) & Ann Toomer (aged 35, born Coulstone, Wilts). James was the youngest of 6 children (all born at Durrington) recorded on this Census – Adolphus (Ploughboy, aged 14), William (Ploughboy, aged 11), Sarah (aged 8), George (aged 6), Eliza (aged 3) then H. James.

The 1891 Census records Henry J. Toomer as a 10 year old living with his parents at Durrington. His parents were recorded as Charles Toomer (Formerly Agricultural Labourer (retired), aged 61) & Mary Toomer (aged 48). James was one of 4 children (all born at Durrington) recorded on this Census – George (aged 16), the James, Alice (aged 8) & Hannah (aged 1).

The 1901 Census records Henry J. Toomer as a 20 year old Agricultural Labourer living with his parents at Durrington. His parents were recorded as Charles Toomer (Agricultural Labourer, aged 71) & Mary Toomer (aged 59). James was one of their 3 children recorded on this Census – George (Carpenter's Labourer, aged 26), then James & Hannah (aged 11). Also listed was a boarder - Walter Sheppard, a 17 year old Agricultural Labourer.

The 1911 Census records James Toomer as a 30 year old, single, Carter on a farm. He is listed with his father – Charles Toomer (Married, aged 82) in a 4 roomed dwelling at Durrington.

James Toomer originally attested on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1915. He was mobilized on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1916 & posted with the 3/8<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshire Regiment on 21st March, 1916. He was given the rank of Private & a service number of 4993 which was renumbered in 1917 to 306691. At the time of enlisting, James Toomer lived at 4 Windsor Terrace, Durrington. He was aged 34, single & a Labourer. His religion was Church of England. His next-of-kin was listed as a friend - Mrs F. Andrews of 4 Windsor Terrace, Durrington.

Pte James Toomer was part of British Expeditionary Force in France from 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1916.

Private Toomer's records show that he was last attached to 1/8<sup>th</sup> Territorial Battalion of Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Pte James Toomer was listed as missing then killed in action on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1916. He had served 37 days in France.

Pte James Toomer is buried in Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-La Boisselle, France, in Grave/Plot IV. D. 47. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission & as such, he has a CWGC headstone. The CWGC does not have any further information on James Toomer.

Pte James Toomer was entitled to the British War & Victory Medals. His Medal Index Card does not show when he had entered a Theatre of War.

## Pozières British Cemetery, Ovillers-La-Boisselle, France

Pozières is a village some 6 klms north-east of Albert and the Cemetery, which is enclosed by the Pozières Memorial (which commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom and 300 South African Forced who have no known grave), is a little south-west of the village on the north side of the main road from Albert to Pozières.

The village of Pozières was attacked on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1916 by the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian and 48<sup>th</sup> (South Midland) Divisions and was taken on the following day. It was lost on 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> March, 1918, during the great German advance & recaptured by the 17<sup>th</sup> Division on the following 24<sup>th</sup> August.

Plot II of Pozières British Cemetery contains the original burials of 1916, 1917 and 1918, carried out by fighting unit and field ambulances. The remaining Plots were made after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the battlefields immediately surrounding the cemetery; the majority of those soldiers had died in the Autumn of 1916, but a few represent the fighting in August, 1918.

There are now 2,760 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 1,382 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 23 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. There is also one German soldier buried here.



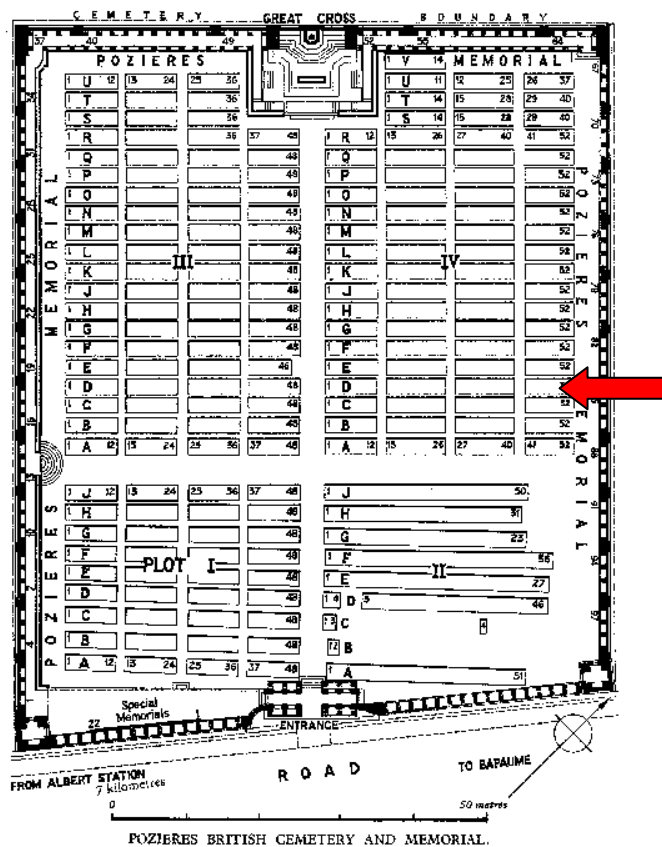
*(Photograph courtesy of [In Memory](#) by Pierre Vandervelden)*



*(Photo from CWGC)*



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



James Toomer is also remembered on Durrington War Memorial, Wiltshire.



*(Photo by Ian King 2010)*

J. Toomer is remembered as a Casualty of WW1 in the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for Durrington.