

## PRIVATE FREDERICK LEWIS JOHN SAUNDERS (1894-1916)

Frederick Saunders was born in the second quarter of 1894 the youngest son and sixth child of Arthur and Lydia Saunders of Sandford. His father Arthur, an agricultural labourer, died that same year at the age of forty. In 1891 the family were living at Furzeland Farm, farmed at that time by William Conibear and his son Daniel. His mother Lydia remarried in June 1908 to George Sampson an agricultural labourer and in 1911 they were living in Yeoford with one year old daughter Elsie. George's son Henry, a farm carter, now a widower, also lived with them and Lydia's eldest daughter Florence was visiting. The house had five rooms and also living there were three boarders, two of whom were timber haulers and the third a farm carter.

In 1911, at the age of seventeen, Frederick was working, and living in, at the Railway Hotel Yeoford, run by William and Jane Ware. This Hotel was of appreciable size for a village as it had eleven rooms. He was employed as an ostler looking after visitors horses.

By the time Frederick enlisted, his next of kin, his mother Lydia, was living in The Village, Newton St Cyres


At some time between 1911 and 1914, very probably 1913, Frederick Saunders emigrated to Canada. After the outbreak of war in August 1914 he enlisted immediately with the Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regiment) and was on one of the first troopships back to England arriving in October 1914. He was then in training on Salisbury Plain until his Regiment left for France in February 1915. According to the Newton St Cyres War Memorial plaque in the Church he was a member of the Winnipeg Rifles.

In September 1916 during the Somme Offensive he was severely shaken by a shell explosion and sent to hospital where he died of spinal meningitis on the eleventh of September. His Commanding Officer said of him "He was a most gallant lad, one of the brightest in the Battery. I shall miss him very much."

Private Frederick Lewis John Saunders is buried in the Puchevillers British Cemetery (19km north east of Amiens). This was a cemetery used by two casualty clearing stations during the Battle of the Somme. He is remembered on the plaque and in the memorial window of Newton St Cyres Church.

These words inserted by his family in the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette must have been heartfelt by so many at that time -----

**Died in Hospital**



**P**TE. F. SAUNDERS, of Newton St. Cyres, was in Canada when war broke out, but his love for the Mother Country was such that he enlisted at once and came over in October, 1914, with the first Canadian contingent. It was in February of last year that he first went to France, where he recently died in hospital of spinal meningitis consequent on being severely shaken by a shell explosion. "He was a most gallant lad," writes his Commanding Officer. "one of the brightest in the battery, and I miss him very much."

No one he loved was by his side

To hear his last faint sighs

Or whisper just one loving word

Before he closed his eyes