

pozieres australian memorial

overview

The village of Pozières was one of the German strongholds targeted for attack by Allied troops on 1st July 1916. Reinforced with bunkers and machine gun posts, it was the highest place on the Somme 1916 battlefield and therefore of great strategic importance.

Like so many other objectives, Pozières did not fall to the allies on 1st July 1916, but became instead a bloodbath over the following weeks, with the British army failing to capture the village despite four major attacks.

On 23rd July 1916, the 1st Australian division – many of whose troops had only recently fought in Gallipoli – launched a ferocious attack on the village. By the evening the Germans had been defeated.

For the next four days the division held its ground in the face of a constant artillery bombardment focused on the village from the German guns. The German bombardment continued in its intensity reaching a peak on 26th July. The remnants of the division were relieved by 2nd Australian Division on 27th July.

The casualties of 1st Division numbered almost 5,300 in those few days. The survivors were said to be dazed and haggard when they were relieved from the village.

