Rifleman Charles Oliver Bates, 1894 - 25th April 1917 (Aged 23)

Early life
Charles Oliver Bates was born in Bromley, in the Poplar Borough of London, to Charles and Mary Bates. His father worked as a General Labourer at a gas works. He was the youngest of four children, and his elder siblings were Henry, Amy and Tom. In 1911, aged 17, Bates was working as a Clerk at a local coal office.

University of London
Bates worked as an Attendant at the University. He was able to take up his work for a short time before enlisting. He left his duties at the University, joining the 2/18th Battalion, London Regiment (London Irish Rifles) in October 1914, enlisting in Chelsea. His name is mentioned in the University's Pro Patria list, documenting his regimental details as of February 1915.

The Great War
The London Irish Rifles were given orders to be raised in London on 31st August 1914. Whilst still located in England, the battalion were stationed around London, moving to St. Albans in March 1915, to Bishop’s Stortford in May, and on to Sutton Veny in January 1916. On 23rd June 1916, the London Irish landed at Le Havre, France. The unit was taken to the front almost immediately, and saw their first front line action near Vimy Ridge at the beginning of July. The London Irish remained in France until November. Travelling aboard the s.s. Caledonia and landing at Salonika in Greek Macedonia, the battalion spent six difficult months there until June 1917. Although Turkish forces were entrenched far enough away to create a ‘no-man's-land’ in-between, the battalion had to endure a very severe winter, and the cold and strong winds could cause a chill, particularly when men were exposed to the open. Spending cold nights in tents, several men were lost through exposure and exhaustion. Bates died of wounds in Salonika, on 25th April 1917. He was buried at the Karasouli Military Cemetery in Greece, and is commemorated at Senate House. In August 1920, Bates was among the names of the 18th London Regiment that were posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.