

WILLIAM REED

William Reed was the fourth son of Charles and Eliza Ann Reed and at the time he joined up the family were farming Champles.

Charles was born in 1862 in Oakford and his wife Eliza Ann was from Witheridge. There were several branches of the Reed family in Oakford and their life seems to have centred on Gloyns Farm. Charles' mother Mary married John Reed some time between 1861 and 1871, and her three sons Albert, Charles and Walter were described as sons-in-law [probably step sons] in the 1871 census, all having the surname Reed. John was 15 years younger than Mary and in 1861 was still unmarried and living with an uncle.

It would appear that John and Mary took over Gloyns, where they were farming 40 acres in 1881, to be followed by Charles and Eliza Ann by 1901. In 1891 our William was two years old and on the census day was in the Devon & Exeter Hospital for the Sick Poor. He must have been pretty ill to have been taken to the hospital, but he survived and by 1911 the family had moved from Gloyns to Champles, where they stayed and in 1925 bought the freehold when the estate was sold at auction.

William enlisted in December 1914 and achieved the rank of Corporal in the Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion and served as a bomber - a dangerous occupation. A bomber was a soldier who had a waistcoat full of hand grenades. He would be in the front of the line of soldiers attacking the German trenches: it was his job to throw the grenades over into the German trench to clear it of the men and then his fellow Tommies would rush in and finish off any Germans still alive. He must have been an incredibly brave man.

He had been at the Front since the beginning of the war and came home on leave in April 1916. He was involved in the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916 and was posted as missing. He was declared "officially presumed dead" in May 1917 (27 years old).

You can see the commemorative certificate produced by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission by using this link:

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/1550639/REED,%20WILLIAM>

and following the instructions on the page