



PRIVATE CHARLES BRYER

SERVIVE NO. 241921

2ND / 5TH BATTALION, GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

DIED 11TH AUGUST 1918

Charles Bryer was born in Popham, Hampshire on 24 November 1891¹. He was the eldest son of Charles, a gamekeeper, and Agnes Bryer and in 1901 the family, which included his four sisters and two brothers, was living at Popham Barracks². In 1900 Charles was a pupil at Popham and Woodmancote National/Church of England School³. Sadly, Agnes, Charles's mother died in 1909 and his father, Charles, married Kate Bygrave. By the time of the 1911 census all the older children, including Charles, had left home, only the youngest two still living in Popham Barracks.⁴ Charles, aged 19, had moved to Bighton Wood, Alresford and was employed as a gamekeeper. When Charles moved to Odiham is unknown, but he enlisted at Hartley Wintney in early 1916 and was posted to the 2nd/5th (Territorial) Battalion the Gloucestershire Regiment. His younger brother, Arthur Tom, had been living in Basingstoke at the start of the war. He entered a the France and Flanders theatre of war on 15 August 1914 and died of wounds very shortly afterwards on 6 September 1914.⁵

Charles was initially allocated service number 5225, but when, in 1917, the Territorial forces were renumbered, this became 241921. From these numbers it appears that Charles originally joining date was during April 1916.⁶ On 24th May 1916 the Battalion was mobilised for war and moved to the Western Front theatre of war as part of the 61st (2nd South Midland) Division. An attack on Fromelles against the German defences there had been planned for 19 July, but the untried 2nd/5th Gloucesters and 5th Australians were unsuccessful in the aim of creating a major diversion to the Battle of the Somme, but a cost of thousands of casualties. A similar unsuccessful attack on Fromelles had been attempted in 1915.⁷

¹ Popham and Woodmancote National/Church of England School Admission Register, Findmypast

² 1901 Census, Popham, Hampshire, Class: RG13; Piece: 1111; Folio: 31; Page: 15

³ Popham and Woodmancote National/Church of England School Admission Register, Findmypast

⁴ 1911 Census, Popham, Class: RG14; Piece: 6302; Schedule Number: 91 and information from Patsy Bryer, a descendant of Charles.

⁵ Ancestry.com military records

⁶ Army Service Numbers 1881-1918 website

⁷ Source – The Long, Long Trail



The division remained on the Western Front throughout 1917 and 1918 until the end of the war. Until August 11th 1918, the presumed date of his death at the age of 26, Charles, would have been involved in all the actions of the division. He was one of the many not found or identified and thus was commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing. He was awarded the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-19⁸. After his death a payment of £30.19s.3d was made to his father, Charles Bryer.⁹

⁸ British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920, www.ancestry.co.uk

⁹ Military records www.ancestry.co.uk

