

William Joseph MARKS

Born 16 March 1890, Clyst St Lawrence (St Thomas)
Gunner, 216145

Died 2 August 1917, aged 27
Royal Field Artillery, 'D' Battery, 150th Brigade

William was the second son of John and Eliza Marks and was born in Clyst St Lawrence where his father was an "agricultural labourer" (1891 census). They had five children, Sidney (1889-), Emily(1890-), **William**, Rosina (1893-), and John Marks (1895-). Their father became a gardener/groom by 1901 and they lived at Strete Raleigh in 1911 where he was a "Gardener domestic". At this time **William** was the only child living at home and was a "farm labourer". According to newspaper reports (below), John Marks took employment at Luscombe Castle, Dawlish subsequently.

William Joseph Marks married Elizabeth Jane Pile (Q4, 1881-) in St Mary's Church, Rockbeare on 24 April 1912 and a daughter Ruby N M Marks, was born and registered in September 1912 in St Thomas. (Ruby N M Marks married Ernest H Hayman in Sept 1933.)

Elizabeth Jane Pile was the eldest of nine children of Philip and Mary Ann Pile (1858-). Philip Pile (b. Otterton,1855-) was a "labourer" at Otterton(1891), a "waggoner on farm" at Otterton(1901), and a "farmer" at Palmers' Farm, Rockbeare in 1911. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was 30 and eight years his senior when she married **William Joseph Marks** in June 1912.

It is recorded that **William Joseph Marks** enlisted at Exeter, but no further detail is available of his service record.

The *Western Times* of 31 August, 1917 reported, under MARSH GREEN heading, "Much sympathy is extended to Mrs W. Marks, whose husband, Gunner William Marks., R.F.A., was killed in action on August 2nd. The deceased, who leaves a widow and one little girl, was greatly respected by all who knew him. He was competent and skilled in all kinds of agricultural work, and was also a sidesman of the church at Marsh Green. He had only been at the front about a month. He was the second son of Mr and Mrs J Marks, late gardener at Strete Raleigh."

Similarly, in the *Western Times* of 25 August,1917 it reports among Dawlish casualties "Gunner Marks, RGA., son of Mr Marks, gardener, Luscombe Castle."

From the Passchendaele Archive:

Gunner William Joseph Marks served in "D" Battery of the 150th Army Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. The Army Brigade participated in the Third Battle of Ypres. On the 20th of July 1917 it took up positions near the Dead End of the Yser Canal in Ypres. Its headquarters were based on the Ypres ramparts. From here the Batteries of the Brigade shelled German positions in wake of the offensive. On the 31st of July, the first day of the offensive, the Batteries of the Brigade limbered up and vacated their positions at the Dead End. They took up new positions near the hamlet of Wieltje, possibly along the Oxford Road. The HQ of the Brigade was located at the Cart Dugouts. At 08.30 a.m. the Brigade was in position and started supporting the British advance. Throughout the next couple of days there was much artillery activity on both sides. During the month of August the Potijze road, Bellewaerde and the area of Wieltje were regularly shelled by the German artillery. Gunner William Joseph Marks was killed in action near Wieltje on the 2nd of August 1917. Although artillery activity had been less frequent than on the previous days, it's highly possible that Gunner William Joseph Marks fell, due to German shelling. He was buried in Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery.

Dawlish World War One Project

Gunner W J Marks is shown in CWGC records as "Marks W J, Gunner, 216145 RFA 'D' Battery, 150th Brigade, died 2/8/1917 age 27. Husband of Elizabeth J Marks of Marsh Green, Rockbeare, Exeter."

Dawlish War memorial inscription: MARKS W GNR RGA

It may be assumed that his father asked for his name on Dawlish War Memorial, despite his widow living in Rockbeare.

W Marks is not recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour for Dawlish, nor on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Devon Heritage site info:

82992 Gunner Walter Robert Marks of 163 Brigade, the Royal Field Artillery. Son of Frederick and Alice Marks. Born in Walthamstow in 1898. Died 14 July 1916 aged 18.
(Believed to be in error - ed)

Last known address: Strete Raleigh, Whimble

Next of kin: Elizabeth Jane Marks, widow
UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1925
Marks, William Joseph, D/ 150 Brigade, RFA
Death Grant £3/1s/11d to Widow, Elizabeth Jane (15/12/17)
War Gratuity £3 " " " (10/11/19)

References:

<https://archives.passchendaele.be/en/soldier/1540>

Free BMD birth and marriage data

CWGC record

refs via subscription sites:

UK, Soldiers died in the Great War 1914-1919

"William Joseph Marks, residence Rock Bear, Devon, death- France & Flanders

UK, Service Medal and Award Rolls

216145 Gnr, Marks, William Joseph (dead 2/8/17) Victory Medal and British War Medal

Census data

Bond family tree (Ancestry)