

Charles Frederick GRIFFIN

Born: 1897, Brading

Parents: Alfred John Griffin and Elizabeth Harriet Warne

Last known address: Pallance Lane, Northwood

Last known occupation: Farm worker

Service number: 331475 **Regiment:** 1/8th Battalion Hampshire Regiment
[I.W. Rifles]

Service history summary:

- enlisted: not known
- rank: Rifleman
- decorations: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Died: 19th April 1917

Age: 19 yrs

Buried: [Gaza War Cemetery](#)

Family: born in Brading in 1897, Charles was the youngest child of Alfred John Griffin and Elizabeth Harriet Griffin, who were married at St John's Church, Newport in 1885.

Brothers: James (1879), Thomas (1891) and Frank (1895)

Sister: Alice Maud (1887)

Northwood/Gurnard connection: in 1901 the family were living at Sticelett Cottages, Rolls Hill and Alfred was described as a cowman. In 1911 Charles, now aged 13 years, was a schoolboy, living with his family in Pallance Lane, Northwood, where father Alfred was a farm labourer, brothers James and Frank also worked on the farm and Thomas was a tin smith.

War record: in 1912 Charles' brother, Frank, joined the Territorials (Volunteer Force) and enlisted for service at the outbreak of World War I but was declared medically unfit in August 1914. He married Dorothea Franziska Fluder in 1917. As farming could be considered an exempt occupation, the following announcement appeared in the *Isle of Wight County Press*, Saturday June 3rd, 1916, under the section 'Island Military Tribunals'

On Tuesday Mr Charles Dabell J.P. presided at this Tribunal at which 51 cases were dealt with.....

Mr J.S. Mullett supported the application of his son Mr R.S. Mullett, Chawton Manor, Northwood, for the exemption of Charles F. Griffin, 18 years, single, milker and assistant milk roundsman, Harold B. Cook, 20, single, cowman, and George S. Cook, 24, single cowman and general agricultural labourer, stating that they had been reduced to seven regular men. The munition works absorbed all

available labour, male and female. One month's exemption was granted to Griffin and conditional exemption to the other two.

James was also conditionally working as a cowman for Mr Pritchett of Northwood and was exempted from military service. He married Clara Jupe in 1917. It is not known when Charles enlisted following his one month's exemption from service, which would have ended in July 1916. By then the Hampshire Regiment (1st Battalion) was defending the Suez Canal and Sinai Desert but it is entirely probable that Charles would have been there when the Isle of Wight Rifles marched across the Sinai Desert, leaving Moacsar in full battledress and marching for 12 days, covering 145 miles in extreme heat.

The first battle of Gaza began on the 26th March and should have been successful when allied forces completely surrounded the town but, due to miscommunications with headquarters, the advantage was lost so that at the commencement of second battle of Gaza (16/17th April 1917) the enemy forces were ready for the fight. Consequently, of the 800 Isle of Wight Rifles who went into battle that day, only 90 men and two officers survived the day. A large number of wounded men were taken prisoner by the Turkish army but retrospectively Charles was recorded as being killed in action on the 19th.

One glimpse of Charles Griffin's life before the war is gleaned from the *Isle of Wight County Press* of Saturday April 20th 1918

In loving memory of my dear sweetheart, C.F. Griffin, Hants Regiment, missing at Gaza on April 19th, 1917 – from his sorrowing sweetheart Freda. Forever in my thoughts.