

## Fred Medland 1890-1919

Private Fred Medland (30335) of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Devonshire Regiment transferred to the 444<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Company the Labour Corps (245574)  
He was a butcher working on a farm, born in Brentor on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1890.  
He died of his wounds on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1919, aged 29,  
and was buried in Brentor United Methodist Cemetery.  
He was the son of William and Mary Ann (Spearman) Medland.

Born on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1890, the first Census record of Fred Medland was in 1891 when he was 7 months old. He was the eldest son of William Medland and his wife Mary Ann. William was an Agricultural Labourer aged 25 and his wife was 24. They were living in Burnville Cottage in Brentor.

By 1901 the family address was listed simply as the Village, Brentor. William, who had been born in Lewtrenchard, was 34 and a Carter on a farm. Mary Ann, born in Tavistock was also 34. They now had four children, all born in Brentor. Fred was 10, Annie 8, Ellen 6 and Florence M was 2. In 1911, of the children, only Fred and Florence remained at home. William, whose birthplace was now given as Woodfordham in Devon was 43 and a Platelayer. Mary Ann was 44. They had been married 23 years and four of the five children born, were alive in 1911. Fred, at 20, was a butcher. Florence (12) was still at school.

Although there were many Medlands living in Brentor in the late 19th century, Fred was not related to the majority of Medlands, who came from Bratton Clovelly and Inwardleigh. Fred's branch came from Lewtrenchard and Thrushelton. His great great grandfather, William Medland, an agricultural labourer, had been born in about 1800, in Thrushelton, as had his wife Ann in 1805. They went on to live in Flyers Hill in Lewtrenchard. They had at least eight children, John (b1831), Maria (1832), **William** (1833), Jane (1837), James (1842), Thomas (1845), Christopher (1847) and George (1851). The family is shown in Flyers Hill in the 1841 and 1851 Census.

By 1861 William had died and Ann, 55, was described as a farmer of 15 acres living with her son, George aged 10. In 1851 their son William had been working on the Kennard farm in Bratton Clovelly and in 1861 on Henry Jeffery's farm in Tavistock, as a carter. In 1871 William was back in Lewtrenchard with his wife Penelope (born in Thrushelton in 1835) and their children William (b1865), John P (1867) and James (1869). They were living in Flyers Hill, next to his mother Ann, who was farming 10 acres.

In 1881 they were living in Woodmanswell, Lamerton. William was farming 30 acres. Living at home were James (11), Elizabeth (8) and Eber (3). John (14) was working for the Eggins (Higgins?) family in Bridestow, whilst William (16) was impossible to find! In 1891 when William was settled in Brentor with his wife Mary Ann and their baby, Fred, his parents William and Penhalipy (Perhaps the enumerator's attempt at Penelope!) continued to live in Woodmanswell with their sons, James (21) a farm labourer and Heber (13) a scholar.

By 1901 they had moved to Witson Cottage next to Witson Farm by Stowford Hill. They were both 66 and their youngest son, Heber, was a mason's labourer aged 23. It is likely that William and Penelope had died by 1911, as Heber was living and working with his uncle, George and wife Emeline, at Rowden Farm, Mount Tavy in Tavistock at the time of the census. It was from here that Heber left to join the army on 23 January 1917. He was 39 years and 9 months and unmarried when he was accepted for the Army Veterinary Corps. His service overlapping with that of his nephew, Fred, 13 years his junior for only a matter of months

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Fred enlisted for the army under the Lord Derby scheme on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1915, but wasn't called up until 26<sup>th</sup> January 1917. This may have been because his medical category was low, or for some other reason. He was sent to the 3/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment, which was in billets at Bournemouth. Only a fortnight later, after contracting a chill, following a drenching during a rainstorm, on guard duty on the Bournemouth cliffs, he was admitted to Boscombe Military Hospital suffering from pneumonia. He retained a bad cough, was hoarse and his weight dropped from 134 lb to 128 lb. During his three month stay in hospital he was tested several times for TB, but the results were always negative.

He was no longer fit enough to serve as an infantryman and was transferred to the 444<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Company, the Labour Corps, at Exeter where he would have been cultivating ground, possibly even in the barrack grounds, to grow extra food. It appears that even that was too strenuous because the diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis on 20 August 1917 was judged to be a result of ordinary military services exposure and permanent, requiring sanatorium treatment. On 29 September 1917 he was discharged from service in Nottingham after 1 year and 296 days service on the grounds that he was no longer physically fit for war service. At the time of his discharge he was described as aged 27, 5ft 6in tall, with a dark complexion, blue eyes and dark brown hair. He had a scar beneath his right kneecap and a tattoo on his right arm. His character awarded in accordance with King's Regulations was described as Good.

He was granted a pension of 22 shillings a week, reviewable after 52 weeks. His Pension Records dated 1917 are available (245574). Sadly, he never recovered his health and died 'of his wounds' (illness caused by military service) on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1919. He was buried in Brentor United Methodist Cemetery. He had been living in Pools Court Brentor and left £116, which was administered by his platelayer father, William.

