

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Private William Edgar Holmes VC (588)
2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards

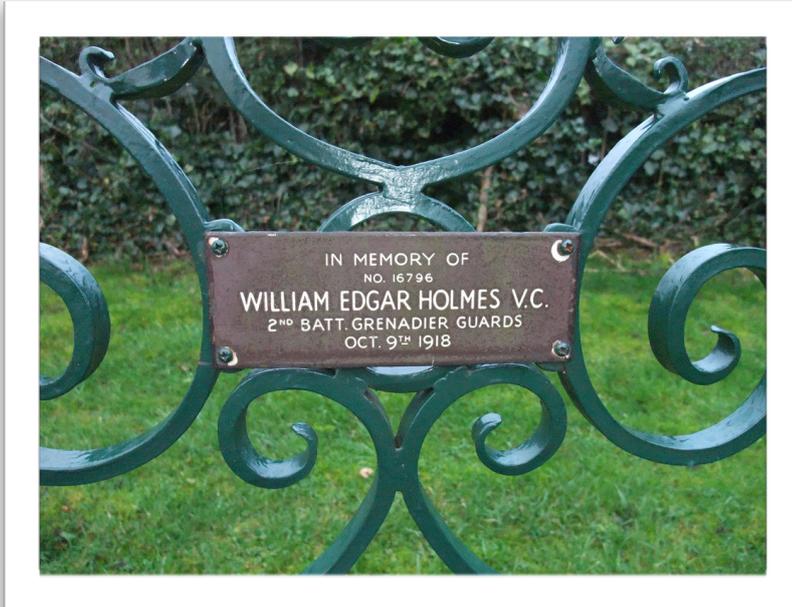
William Edgar Holmes was born on 26 June 1895 at Wood Stanway, Gloucestershire. He was the second son of Edward and Elizabeth Holmes (née Stanley), was educated at Church Stanway and became a groom on the Stanway Estate, working alongside his father who was a tree-feller.

He joined the Gloucester Regiment as a Private in July 1915 and was later transferred to the 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards. He was in the Retreat from Mons as well as the Battle of Ypres and he suffered from frostbite so badly that two of his toes had to be amputated. He returned to France in 1915 where he was twice wounded

before the action at Cattenieres where he was killed in action on 9 October 1918. He was 23.

Private William Edgar Holmes was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions. He was gazetted on 26 December 1918 and the citation reads: "*For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Cattenieres on the 9th Oct., 1918. Pte. Holmes carried in two men under the most intense fire, and, while he was attending to a third case, he was severely wounded. In spite of this, he continued to carry wounded, and was shortly afterwards again wounded, with fatal results. By his self-sacrifice and disregard of danger he was the means of saving the lives of several of his comrades.*"

Private William Edgar Holmes VC (588)
2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards



His Commanding Officer wrote: *"He died doing his duty most gallantly. He was carrying in a wounded man under machine gun fire, and was killed instantly by a bullet but not before he had already been wounded about a minute before. It really was a most extremely gallant act to go on carrying when he was already wounded; unfortunately he only got another 20 yards. I cannot say how sorry I am not only for his own sake, but also because the company loses such a gallant man, who always both in and out of the line showed such a good example."*

Two of his platoon also wrote to his parents: *"In your loss it will be a great comfort to you to know*

that Edgar died the bravest of deaths whilst trying to save a wounded comrade. His loss to us will be very great, as we have been close comrades for the last four years. He was always the life and soul of our platoon. We really cannot express the depths of our sympathy for you in your great bereavement, but we hope you will be able to seek consolation in the fact that he died a hero's death."

Private Holmes is buried at Carnieres Communal Cemetery, Plot IB3, and he is commemorated at Didbrook Church, Gloucestershire. His VC is on display at the Grenadier Guards Regimental Headquarters at Wellington Barracks.