

Private William Merrills 14385 11th Sherwood Forresters died on 1st July 1916. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

He was the son of George and Annie Merrills of 62 Darrell Road, Retford, Notts.

The 1911 census shows he was 14, born in Ordsall and employed as an errand boy.

In July 1916 his mother received a letter from Pte A W Morris saying that "I am sorry to have to inform you of the death of your son. We charged the German front line, and when almost about three parts of the way we lay down for a wind. I had a look round and I saw Bill get struck on the head by a "whiz bang" which sent his steel helmet about 50 yards away. I crawled up to him and spoke, but I got no answer. He never moved again. It was very sad. It was a great shock to me. I thought of you and the kids. It was terrible. Then we got the order to charge, and off I went. When we got to the German front line there were 6 of us, a corporal and a Major left. It was hell on earth. They, the Germans, were even firing on our wounded as they were getting back to our lines. I don't know how I escaped it. I think I am very lucky, as I only got hit in the foot with a bit of shrapnel. It was not much of a wound, but just enough to get me back to England"