

Harry Reed of the Orphanage, Victoria Street Ballarat.

Regimental No. 5100 Private Harry Reed MM, of 29th 5th, and 26th Battalions was born at Melbourne on 23rd May 1899 and transferred to the Orphanage from the Gordon Institute in Melbourne in 1909, along with his brother William Reed, born 1894.

Little is known about his family but it was thought that both his parents were dead. In 1914 he was employed by Mr Levison of Bullarook.

The Superintendent, Arthur Kenny, wrote to the Gordon on 7th October 1914: "boy doing well – working with a splendid farmer."

When he enlisted on 8th October 1917 he was working as a ploughman at the Orphanage. He probably helped prepare the ground for the Avenue of Honour. Arthur Kenny was his guardian and authorised his enlistment.

Harry, aged 18 (wrongly stating he was 19), nominated his older brother (241 Lance Corporal) William Reed as his next-of-kin but did not know his address.

Harry a member of 29th Battalion, 14th Reinforcements embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A38 'Ulysses' on 22nd December 1917. and fought in France where he was gassed on the night of 18th -19th July 1918 a month after a battle at Morlancourt for which he was awarded the Military Medal (MM) for "conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty" by holding off a strong enemy attack on wounded men in trenches until help arrived. The *record of Harry's action on the night is as follows:

29th Australian Infantry Battalion, 8th Infantry Brigade, 5th Australian Division.

***26.07.1918 Date of Recommendation MM. 29th Australian Infantry Battalion.**

5100 Private Harry Reed. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the sector opposite MORLANCOURT, South-west of ALBERT, on the night of 18th/19th July 1918. The enemy after a heavy bombardment of the whole sector, made a determined attempt to rush and retake a portion of the trench system captured by us a short time previously.

Attacking simultaneously on both flanks of the trench, and at the same time bombing down the sap. The enemy wounded all of the garrison of the post with the exception of Pte. Reed and another man. (5089 Private Oskar Olsen). These two gallantly fought the Germans, and notwithstanding the unequal contest held the post until assistance arrived.

Pte. Reed displayed conspicuous bravery, and the splendid work performed by him and his comrade prevented the enemy from gaining any advantage or obtaining an identification.

E. Tivey Brig-Gen. Commdg. 8th Inf. Bde. (Sgd). T Talbot Hobbs Maj-Gen, Commdg. 5th Aust. Div. 3567.

Privates Reed and Olsen were both awarded the Military Medal (MM) for their actions on the night of 18th/19th in the sector opposite Morlancourt. (In 3rd Supplement No. 31061 London Gazette 11.12.1918).

After he recovered he transferred to the 5th Battalion in November 1918 and remained with them until he returned to Australia aboard the 'Plassy' on 17th March 1919.

The citation was sent to the Orphanage on 29th March 1919 two days after he returned to Australia for discharge on 2nd July 1919.

Harry married in 1923 and had one son. It is also known that he fell on troubled times as he struggled with health issues after his return from the war.