

## PRIVATE THOMAS PARROTT

4406, 1st/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Died aged 28 on 23 July 1916

Remembered with honour on *Thiepval Memorial, France*; Pier and Face 5A and 5B

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross, in the Abbey  
and on the Congregational Church Memorial in the Methodist Church



*Thiepval Memorial to the Missing*



*Gloucestershire Regiment*

**THOMAS PARROTT** was born in Tewkesbury in 1888 to Thomas Parrott, a carpenter, and Anna Maria (formerly King). Thomas (senior) was born at Todenham, Moreton-in-Marsh, whilst Anna came from Gawcott, Buckinghamshire; he had arrived in Tewkesbury by 1881 and married Anna in her home village in 1884. In 1891 they were living in Tewkesbury at 3 Union Place with their three children, including son Thomas. By 1901 they had moved to No.5 Cotteswold Place (now Cotteswold Gardens). Thomas (senior) may have worked for Collins & Godfrey, a leading local building firm, who had built these houses for their skilled workers. In 1911 Thomas (junior) was working as a grocer's assistant. The family were Congregationalists and Thomas is commemorated on the Church Memorial.

According to his service number Thomas enlisted in June 1915 in Llandrindod Wells in Wales as a 'Territorial' in the Gloucestershire Regiment. He joined the 1st/5th Battalion, part of the 48th (South Midland) Division, which had originally landed at Boulogne on 30 March 1915. As he did not qualify for the '1914-15 Star', it is assumed that he was not posted to France until 1916. The battalion was not involved at the start of the joint Anglo-French Somme offensive in July, now known as the *Battles of the Somme* (1 July-18 November 1916). However, the 48th Division took part in the fourth phase of the campaign, the *Battle of Pozières Ridge* (23 July-3 September 1916), when they supported the Australian Corps in its attempts, eventually successful but at a high cost, to capture and hold the key village, located on a ridge of high ground. The Division's role

was to carry out a night attack to capture trenches to the west whilst the Australians attacked from the south. The battalion launched its attack at 12.35am on 23 July when, according to the War Diary: *'The attack was quickly discovered by enemy who were holding all trenches strongly. Heavy barrage of artillery and machine gun fire were opened and in spite of being reinforced the objectives were not reached'*. The battalion retired to bivouacs on 24 July, the Regimental historian, Wyrall, praising *'their gallant efforts'* that cost them 12 killed, 113 wounded and 23 missing.

**Private Thomas Parrott** was killed in action on 23 July 1916, according to official records. However, there is some uncertainty about the date and circumstances of his death. Other accounts suggest that he was reported as missing on 22 July 1916 despite the fact that his death was confirmed by a comrade who survived and who stated that Thomas had been *'struck whilst lying in a shell hole'*. Moreover, the battalion did not leave their trenches on 22 July and the War Diary does not mention any missing men, only two men killed and five wounded as a result of shelling. On 5 August, the *Register* also reported that he had been *'wounded in the leg'*. Whichever account is correct, Thomas's body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the *Thiepval Memorial*.

Thomas's younger brother, **Ernest Parrott**, was a pre-war Territorial soldier and served in the 1st/5th Battalion, probably at the same time. He transferred to the Wiltshire Regiment as a Sergeant. Ernest was wounded in 1917 and discharged in October 1918 due to sickness.