

CORPORAL ARTHUR THACKER

41112, 18th (Service) Battalion (2nd South East Lancashire), Lancashire Fusiliers

Died aged 26 on 22 October 1917

Remembered with honour on *Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium*; Panel 54-60 & 163A

Commemorated in Tewkesbury as a Volunteer in the Abbey



Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium



1914-15 Star Medal



The Lancashire Fusiliers

ARTHUR THACKER was born in Tewkesbury in 1891 to Frank William Thacker and Annie Sophia (formerly Dutton). Frank came from Newark-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire and Annie had been born in Forthampton. In 1891 the family was living in Folly Gardens, and Frank was working as a Merchant's Clerk. In addition to Arthur, they had three daughters all born locally. By 1899 the family had moved to South Road, Erdington, Warwickshire, with the addition of three more sons and a daughter. Frank was working as a Clerk at a Cycle Works. By 1911 the family had increased further with another son and daughter and was living at 1 Beakes Road, Smethwick, Birmingham. Arthur was working as an Accountant and Frank was a Commercial Traveller in the cycle trade.

Arthur enlisted at Harborne in Warwickshire; nevertheless, he was listed on the Abbey Memorial of Volunteers. He initially served as a Driver in the Army Service Corps. He was posted to France on 23 March 1915 and qualified for the '1914-15 Star' campaign medal.

At some stage, Arthur transferred to the 18th Lancashire Fusiliers, most likely in 1916 after the battalion moved to France. The battalion had been locally raised in Bury, Lancashire, on 13 January 1915 as a Bantam Battalion, with men who were under regulation size but otherwise fit for service. Many of them were miners. On 25 June 1915 the battalion joined the 104th Infantry Brigade in the 35th Division and was formally adopted by the War Office on 27 August 1915. On 29 January 1916 the battalion landed at Le Havre in France. In early 1917 it ceased to be a

Bantam battalion as the nature of the recruits changed.

Eighteen months later, the *Register* reported: *'We regret to learn that Mr. and Mrs. Thacker of 1 Brakes Road, Bearwood, Birmingham, formerly of Tewkesbury, have received news that their eldest son, Corporal Arthur Thacker ... was killed in action on the 22nd October. Corporal Thacker ... was 26 years of age. His officer wrote that "he was instantaneously killed soon after going into action; he was a splendid soldier, and all would miss him greatly, as he was liked so much".'*

Corporal Arthur Thacker was killed in action on 22 October 1917 just before the final phase of the *Third Battle of Ypres*, namely the *Second Battle of Passchendaele*. Responsibility for this final, and ultimately successful, thrust towards the ruined village of Passchendaele had been entrusted to the Canadian Corps. The 18th Lancashire Fusiliers were involved in minor operations between 20 and 22 October to maintain pressure on the Germans while the Canadian Corps prepared for their assault. Arthur was killed during an attack in the area of Houlthurst Wood in the Ypres Salient on 22 October, an action in which the battalion lost three Officers and 27 Other Ranks killed, with eight Officers and 174 Other Ranks wounded. Corporal Arthur Thacker's body was not identified or recovered from the battlefield and he is remembered on the Memorial to the Missing at *Tyne Cot Cemetery*.

Arthur's younger brother, **Private Frederick Thacker** [†] of the 2nd/8th Battalion, the Worcestershire Regiment, died on 2 June 1918.