

## LANCE BOMBARDIER THOMAS WILLIAMS

622421, B Battery, 298th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Died aged 30 on 3 November 1918

Buried with honour at *Premont British Cemetery, Cambrai, France*; I E 22

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Premont British Cemetery, Cambrai*



*Royal Field Artillery*

**THOMAS WILLIAMS** was born in 1888, the eldest son of Thomas Williams, a Shoemaker, and Sarah (formerly Garland). Thomas (senior) was born in Tewkesbury and Sarah came from Worcester. In 1891, the family of five daughters and two sons lived at 4 Mayalls Court, Church Street. Sarah died in 1897 (probably in child-birth) and by 1901 Thomas junior had been adopted by Charles and Emma Healey of Walls Court. At that time the rest of the family, including three children born since 1891, were living with their father and grandmother (who died in 1905). In 1902 Thomas (senior) re-married, to Sarah Ann Herbert. Thomas (junior) was a pupil at the Abbey School after which, according to the 1911 Census, he was a Postman for the GPO and living with his father and stepmother in Mayalls Court.

Sometime between 1911 and 1915 Thomas and his younger brother Ernest, for reasons unknown, moved to Port Talbot in South Wales. They both volunteered for military service, enlisting in Port Talbot on the same date, 10 April 1915. Initially they were allocated to the same unit, the local Territorial Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery – a classic case of brothers joining up together. Thomas remained with the Royal Horse Artillery until his death in November 1918 but Ernest was transferred soon after enlistment to an infantry battalion, the 6th (Service) Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment.

The Royal Horse Artillery provided light,

mobile guns giving firepower in support of the cavalry; it was the senior arm of the artillery. Thomas joined the Glamorganshire Battery, Territorial Royal Horse Artillery, whose Headquarters was in Port Talbot. The Territorial Royal Horse Artillery was originally intended to provide firepower for the Mounted (Yeomanry) Divisions of the Territorial Force. The battery was duplicated in 1915 forming the 1/1st and 2/1st Glamorganshire Batteries.

Thomas was posted to the 2nd/1st Glamorganshire Battery although at some stage he was transferred to the 298th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, which moved to France and remained there for the rest of the war. In November 1918 the 298th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, was part of Fourth Army Artillery; at this time the Fourth Army was pursuing the retreating German Army towards the French/Belgian Border.

**Lance Bombardier Thomas Williams** died on 3 November 1918, little more than a week before the Armistice. According to the *Tewkesbury Record*, he died as a result of the influenza epidemic that was sweeping the world at that time. He was buried in *Premont British Cemetery*, near Cambrai in France.

Thomas Williams's younger brother, **Private Ernest Williams** [†] of the Dorsetshire Regiment, had been killed in action on 13 December 1915 and is buried in *Birr Cross Roads Cemetery*, near Ypres.