



Driver Thomas Henry Christmas



Royal Engineers, 2nd / 3rd London Field Company, Chelsea

Died 28 June 1915

Age 38

Thomas Christmas was a driver in the Royal Engineers, a member of the 2nd/3rd London Field Company, Chelsea. Thomas died in France, was buried at Vieille-Chapelle New Military Cemetery, Lacouture, Pas de Calais, and is commemorated in St. Mary's and All Saints' churches, Putney.

It's not clear how Thomas died as there weren't any battles on dates close to his death, but he could have sustained fatal injuries in a much earlier battle.

Being a Royal Engineer, Thomas was very probably involved with the tunnelling companies, nicknamed "the Moles", which were specialist units of the Corps of Royal Engineers within the British Army, formed to dig attacking tunnels under enemy lines during the First World War. They designed and built the frontline fortifications, creating cover for the infantry and positions for the artillery. It was in the hands of the technically skilled RE's to develop responses to chemical and underground warfare.

Thomas was the son of Frank and Jane Christmas and older brother to Frederick. Thomas grew up in Putney and lived at 10 Gardeners Lane, a road which no longer exists but can be seen on the 1862 map of South-West London, as a section of today's Felsham Road. In the 1891 census, it states that Frank Christmas was a tailor, Thomas, 14, was a shop boy and Frederick, 13, was still at school.

In 1901 Thomas married Florence Elizabeth Terry and moved to 54 Felsham Road, also an address which no longer exists as it is replaced by 1960s flats, likely as a result of bomb damage in WWII. Thomas and Florence had four children: Winifred, Thomas, Fred and Nora, and at the time of Thomas's death they were aged 13, 12, 6 and 4, respectively. Prior to the war Thomas was a golf attendant at Ranelagh golf club at Barn Elms.

After Thomas's death, Florence and their family stayed in Putney for some years, before moving out and ending up in Raynes Park, where Florence died in 1964.

SERVICE NUMBER: 1651