



PRIVATE THOMAS EADES
SERVICE NO. 31474
14TH BATTALION, HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT
DIED 31ST JULY 1917 AGED 41

Thomas Eades was born in Elvetham, Hampshire in 1876. He was the son of Thomas and Mary Ann (nee Poulter) Eades¹. In 1891 the family, still living in Elvetham, consisted of Thomas senior, now a widower employed as a stable helper, Thomas himself, aged 14 and employed as an agricultural labourer, plus his younger sister, Charlotte, aged 13 and housekeeper to father, and three younger brothers, George, Stephen and Edwin². On 26 January 1898 Thomas signed his Attestation form for Short Service with the Army and joined the Army Service Corps in Aldershot. At this time he was given service no. 13758. However, by 30 January he went absent, apparently for not wanting to go anywhere but Aldershot, so technically deserted.³ By 1901 Thomas has found employment as a servant to the Coombs family in Knightsbridge, London⁴, but ten years later he is back in Elvetham boarding with the Russ family and working as a farm labourer⁵.

In October 1911 Thomas married Evelyn Gaines in Odiham and some time later the couple moved to Winchfield⁶. Thomas did not return to the Army until after conscription was introduced in 1916 and on 12 August of that year he enlisted and joined the 14th (Service Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. The couple had a daughter, Kathleen Joyce, who was born in 1917⁷.

In January 1916 the Military Service Act was passed. This brought in conscription for single men aged between 18 and 41 to bring the services up to strength by replacing the casualties since the start of the War. A second Act was passed in May extending conscription to married men, which then applied to Thomas. He joined the 14th (Service) Battalion (1st Portsmouth), which was under orders of 116th Brigade in the 39th Division. The Division had moved to the Western Front in March 1916.

¹ My thanks to Rosemary Wooldridge for sending me Thomas's family information

² 1891 census, Elvetham, Hampshire, ref. RG12/956 page 13

³ Ancestry.co.uk Military records

⁴ 1901 Census, Knightsbridge, London Class: RG13; Piece: 83; Folio: 160; Page: 51

⁵ 1911 Census, Elvetham, Hampshire Class: RG14; Piece: 6265; Schedule no.: 42

⁶ Rosemary Wooldridge - Thomas's family information

⁷ ibid





During the rest of 1916 and early 1917 the Battalion took part in fighting on the Ancre, the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, the Battle of the Ancre heights and the Battle of the Ancre again. The Battalion Journal for February 1917 lists Thomas as 'Sick', as 'Wounded in Action' in September 1917 and 'Missing, previously wounded' in the November 1917 Journal⁸. The Casualty Ledger supports some of this – 'Transferred to Base Details (unfit) on 14 March 1917.'

On the first day of the Battle Of Pilkem, the first phase of Third Ypres (Passchendaele), the War Diary reported that the Battalion had captured two Field Guns and one 4.5 How, 17 machine guns (counted) and over 200 prisoners. However, two officers had been killed, five officers had been wounded, one of whom died of those wounds. For other ranks, 17 had been killed, one died of wounds, 156 were wounded and 42 were missing⁹. Thomas was one of those casualties.

Thomas is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. He was awarded the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-19¹⁰.

⁸ Details kindly provided by Lt. Col. Colin Bulleid, the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920, www.ancestry.co.uk