



THOMSON, James

Private, G/48138 4th. Battalion,

ROYAL FUSILIERS 9th Brigade, 3rd Division

Who was killed in action on Thursday, 28th March 1918. Aged 27

James was the son of James Thomson, of Butler's Farm. This farm straddled the Parish Boundary between Peldon and Abberton and James is included on the War Memorial tablet on the wall of the Church at Peldon. The Thomsons originally came from Scotland and left after the War, when the farm was ultimately flooded when Abberton reservoir was created. James younger brother, David married Hilda Hayhoe in Saint Andrew's, Abberton 10th November 1937. At the time, he had taken over the farm as their father had died. David ultimately died from Weil's disease.

The 4th battalion were at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight in August 1914 just before war broke out. They were part of 9th Brigade, 3rd Division. James enlisted at Warley near Brentwood. His medal entitlement does not show the date of entry into France but it can be inferred that it was probably 1916 at the earliest.

James death coincides with the 1st Battle of Arras on the 28th March, when during the Kaiserschlacht the 9th brigade including the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers were used to try and block the German advance.

The following are extracts from the Battalion's War Diary for this period :-

"1918 25th March Small bombing attack on one of our front line posts was driven off by "W" Company. One enemy killed and one captured (severely wounded)

26th Our front and support lines were shelled intermittently :- 2/Lieutenant W. H. Penrose killed.

27th Relieved by the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers - Relief complete by midnight - "Y" and "Z" Companies moved back into Green Line. "Y" Company on the right; "W" in support to Green Line 500 yards behind it and "X" Company moved back to Northumberland Lines with Head Quarters. 2/Lieutenant G. T. Nicholes wounded.

28th About 3 a.m. the Battalion was shelled out of Bilets, about 8.30 a.m. "X" Company ordered up in support to Green Line - About 9 a. m. Head Quarters was ordered up to support of Green Line and Head Quarters was established in trench near Arras - Bapaume Road. About 9.00 a. m. "Z" Company under command of Captain A. J. Lord M. C. moved forward from Green Line to support of 1st system and came under command of 1st N. Fusiliers. At 9.40 "X" Company was ordered forward into Green Line to occupy position vacated by "Z" Company. By the time "Z" Company reached the support line of 1st system, the enemy was attacking it heavily, the Brigades on both flanks of the 9th Brigade had given way - Captain A. J. Lord M. C. formed a left defensive flank for the 9th Brigade - the remainder of 1st N. Fusiliers, 13th Kings and our "Z" Company held this line until about 5 p. m. When the line was no longer tenable they successfully withdrew through the Green Line and reorganized. The Green Line and NEUVILLE VITASSE SWITCH now became the front line. Before withdrawal through the Green Line one platoon of "W" had been ordered up on the right flank of Battalion and a second platoon on the left of Battalion. About 7 p. m. the enemy began to enter NEUVILLE VITASSE - 76th Brigade had apparently withdrawn on our left flank leaving it unprotected. The remaining two platoons of "W" Company were then ordered up on the left flank to try and fill the gap between our Battalion

and 76th Brigade These two platoons were too late, because the enemy had already entered the village - "Z" Company although having already had a hard fight with 1st N. Fusiliers and 13th King's and having covered the withdrawl of the remaining positions of these two Battalions, was ordered to form a defensive flank west of NEUVILLE VITASSE between our Battalion and 76th Infantry Brigade - this Company formed the flank in a line of shell holes and closed the gap made on our left by the withdrawl to the Green Line of the 76th Brigade.

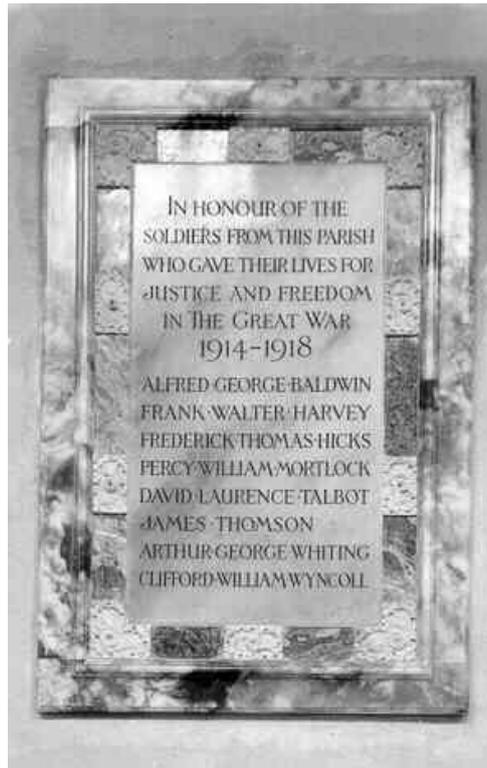
2/Lieutenant L. W. LAMBERT missing believed killed, Lieutenant J. E. FRENCH M. C. wounded Lieutenant A. S. STEPHENS, 2/Lieutenants W. ECKLEY, N. O. SIDDELEY and H. W. BAKER wounded."

The other ranks casualties are not mentioned but must have been heavy. One of those lost was James, whose body was never found.



Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
↙ THOMSON	R Fus	Pte	98/48138
James.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORIAN	TP/104 B13	1556	M.A. 28. 3. 18
BARRIAN	do	do	
Star			
theatre of War first served in			
date of entry therein			

Commemorative Information



The Memorial in Peldon Church



Memorial: ARRAS MEMORIAL, Pas de Calais, France

Grave Reference/ Panel Number: Bay 3

Location: The Arras Memorial is in the Faubourg-d'Amiens Cemetery, which is in the Boulevard du General de Gaulle in the western part of the town of Arras. The cemetery is near the Citadel, approximately 2 kilometres due west of the railway station. The Memorial commemorates almost 35,000 casualties of the British, New Zealand and South African Forces who died between Spring 1916 and 7th August 1918, with the exception of casualties of the Battle of Cambrai in 1917, and who have no known grave. The design, by Sir Edwin Lutyens, consists of a cloister, 25 feet high and 380 feet long, built up on Doric columns and faces west. In the broader part of the site the colonnade returns to form a recessed and open court, terminated by an apse. The names of the casualties are carved on stone panels fixed to the cloister walls.

Historical Information: The Memorial commemorates almost 35,000 casualties of the British, New Zealand and South African Forces who died between Spring 1916 and 7th August 1918, excluding casualties of the Battle of Cambrai in 1917, and who have no known grave. The design, by Sir Edwin Lutyens, consists of a cloister built upon Doric columns and faces west. In the broader part of the site the colonnade returns to form a recessed and open court, terminated by an apse in front of which is the Arras Flying Services Memorial. The names of the casualties are carved on stone panels which are fixed to the cloister walls

References The excerpts from the War Diaries have kindly been provided by the Royal Fusiliers Museum & Archives at H. M. Tower of London.

last updated 27/10/2007



These pages are dedicated to the memory of the Fallen from the Wars of the 19th & 20th Centuries from the Parish of St Mary's PELDON.