

## Thomas William Cackett



There are no surviving service records for Private Thomas William Cackett. We know he enlisted in Hounslow but the exact date is unclear- possibly 29<sup>th</sup> May 1916. He joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion of The Queens (Royal West Surrey Regiment) which from June 1915, was under the command of 123rd Brigade, 41st Division. This division was mobilised for war in early May and landed at Le Havre. **Thomas was heading for The Somme, and now had less than six months to live.**



Pte. T. W. CACKETT

Courtesy Hounslow Library Service

Thomas was born in 1884 to George and Elizabeth Cackett. He was the youngest of their 13 children. The 1911 Census tells us that seven of his brothers and sisters had died. In 1891 his father George was a janitor and his family lived at 3 Albion Road, Isleworth. In 1901, the older children have left home but we see that 16 year old Thomas was now working as a factory hand at Pears Soap Factory in Isleworth. His father and older brother are both house painters and his mother appears to be a live-in domestic nurse. This smaller family now lived at Scotchmers Lane Heston but later moved to 234

On the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1908, Thomas, now 23, married Mary Ann Major at St Stephen's Church Hounslow and by 1911 Thomas, Mary and their 2 year old daughter Elsie were living at 24 Castle Road, Isleworth, very close to the Pears Factory where Thomas still worked. He was now a Soap Dryer – in the soap drying rooms with the ovens.

Research shows that Thomas was clearly a friendly chap - a real team-player. On Saturday June 26<sup>th</sup> 1915 the Middlesex Chronicle reports that Thomas, a member of the Pears Athletic Club, was in a recent bowls match at Ealing... 'to play off the return fixture with the District Railway AA'. (Sadly, his bowls team mate, Frederick Jackson would also die at the Somme in 1916). In other newspaper reports, Thomas 's name crops up again, this time playing competition draughts and double dominoes! Private Thomas Cackett was killed in action on 1st October 1916 in the Transloy Ridges area. It was a period of appalling weather conditions, freezing temperatures, flooded trenches, thick clinging mud and fierce German resistance.

Thomas's last mention in the Middlesex Chronicle was on Saturday July 21<sup>st</sup> 1917.

*"Another well-known Hounslow man has fallen in the war: Private T W Cackett, of the Royal West Surrey Regiment, which he joined in May 1916. He was reported "missing" in October of the same year, and the official intimation has only just arrived that he was killed in action. Pte Cackett .....leaves a widow and one child. He was 32 years of age, and before joining the Army had been employed for nearly 17 years at the firm A and F Pears Ltd".*

**Thomas is commemorated at Thiepval Memorial (Pier & Face 5D & 6D) and on the Pears Memorial**