

Thomas Coleman (28 Feb 1895- 31 July 1917)

Thomas was the seventh child of David William and Mary Elizabeth Coleman (nee Bockmaster) who married on 7 February 1880. David was born in Isleworth and Mary in Hounslow. Thomas' father had various occupations including labourer and night watchman. At the time of Thomas' birth in February 1895 the family were living in Old Spring Gardens in Old Brentford. David Coleman died in 1904 at the age of 44, leaving Mary a widow. She worked as a charwoman both before and after his death. Thomas was 9 years old when his father died.



6 Haliburton Road, Isleworth

David and Mary had 8 children so Thomas had 2 brothers and 5 sisters, all born in the Isleworth, Brentford and Hounslow area. They were Alice Mary (born 1880), Elizabeth Mary (born 1881), William David (born 1883), Anne Helen (born 1885), Amelia (born 1888), John (born 1891) and Alice Mary (born 1899).

In 1901 the Colemans were sharing a house at 8 Queen's Terrace, Isleworth with another family called Morgan. In 1911 Thomas' widowed mother Mary was living at 6 Haliburton Road, Isleworth with her married daughter Elizabeth (now Alder), her sons John (aged 20) and Thomas (aged 16) as well as two grandsons, Harry Coleman aged 9 and Albert Alder aged 7. At that time, Thomas was working as a Greengrocer's boy.

Thomas enlisted in Kingston upon Thames and became a Private in The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) (20236). In July 1917 his regiment was part of the 5th Army near Ypres, on the Western Front. After several weeks of intensive artillery bombardment by both sides, the Third Battle of Ypres (aka the Battle of Passchendaele) started on 31 July 1917. The first phase was the Battle of Pilckem Ridge from 31 July – 2 August. The battalion war diary describes the troops resting as much as possible on 30 July and then moving up into their assembly positions that evening. The offensive started on schedule at 3.50am on 31 July. This was the first battle in which the Germans used mustard gas. The casualties on the three days of the battle numbered 31,850 and an advance of 2,700m was achieved. On 31 July the troops endured the worst rain seen in the area for 30 years so the battlefield turned into a thick mass of mud.



Third Battle of Ypres- 1 August 1917

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Thomas was killed in action on the first day of the Battle of Pilckem Ridge (31 July 1917). He was aged 22. He is remembered on the China Wall, Perth Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. Thomas' mother Mary was the sole beneficiary on his death.