

George Ernest Emmerson

George Emmerson was a beloved son of Thomas and Emma who, it appears, met and fell in love around 1881, when Thomas found lodgings at No 4 James Place, Tower Hamlets, where Emma's mother was the landlady! Thomas was then 23 years old – the same age as his future son, George, would be when he died in World War 1. The couple married in September 1888 at St John's Church, Isleworth. Grandfather Matthew Emmerson and father Thomas were sailmakers.



Thomas and Emma had five children. Little Emma Elizabeth died at one year, but the other children survived to adulthood. The 1911 census tells us that the family were now living at 34 Brook Road, Brentford. Thomas junior was a store keeper for a Lighterman (a worker who operates a flat bottom barge), future soldier George was a labourer for a barge builder, and Matthew (11) their youngest, was still at school. Interestingly, their daughter Maria Jane (16) was living with a family at 40 Castle Road, Isleworth and is listed as 'niece'.

There are no army service records for George. His battalion, the 2nd Btn, Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Regiment, were in Calcutta when war began. The regiment returned to England and then went to Gallipoli where they were involved in nine months of terrible warfare. After an evacuation to Egypt they travelled to Marseilles and by July 1916 they were in action again at the Battles of the Somme. George may have joined this regiment at the beginning of the war, or later, as his regimental number is prefixed with a 'G'1116 (General Service) meaning: *wartime enlistment only*.

Further research tells us that George '**died of wounds**' on 5th March 1917 at 2/2 London Casualty Clearing Station (known to the troops as Grove Town). It was based at Meaulte. This CCS was established in September 1916 to deal with casualties from the Somme. It is worth considering that George might have died from wounds inflicted months earlier, possibly at the Somme Battle of Transloy Ridge (October 1916) but it would be unusual for a soldier to be nursed at a Clearing Station for over four months without being transferred to a Base Hospital on the coast or transferred back home. Alternatively, the Battalion's war diary for 22nd Feb 1917 reports that enemy artillery was very active in the Sailly Sector from 3-6pm on that day, and that three men were wounded. It seems more likely that George was one of the three unlucky soldiers wounded on that fateful day. Seriously injured soldiers and infection posed a real challenge to the staff at the CCS's and as a result many military cemeteries today stand where these casualty stations once operated.



George's place of rest is at Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte.

