



Bombardier George Thomas Hawkins (88364) was born on 5th Jan 1882.

He was the first born child of parents Richard and Emily (Phillips) who lived on the High Oak Road in Ware, Hertfordshire. George was christened in February that year. By 1891 the family had grown with Margaret (7), Frederick (5) and Florence (2). George was now 9 years old, and at school. The 1901 Census shows that Victor (3) and Percy (1) have joined the family (their last child, Elsie is born in 1903) and George has now left home. He is 19 and boarding in Bishop Stortford where he works as a Maltmaker.

The dawn of the new century must have felt good for a while. At some point, the Hawkins family moved to Isleworth, probably for employment opportunities as George would have been attracted to Isleworth's brewing industry. The family home was 20 Grainger Road. George now 25, met and married Catherine Eliza Stokes at St John's Church on 31st August 1907. Their wedding certificate shows that George had been living at 21 Nottingham Rd, and Catherine at 22 London Rd before their marriage. At some point, the couple set up their home at 43 Castle Road. By 1911 George is indeed working as a Malster's Labourer, George's first daughter Ivy Catherine is 2 years old and the family are supplementing their income by taking in lodgers. George's Army Service records tell us that George and Catherine had two more children George Thomas (b.1911), and John Hawkins (b.1914).

George had served with the 3rd Herts Volunteers for three years before joining the Royal Garrison Artillery 156th Heavy Battery Unit. He enlisted in Hounslow 29th May 1916. George would have been part of a team of men and horses that would pull huge 60 pounder guns, so powerful they could fire high explosive shells over great distances and could destroy enemy artillery and infrastructure. Of course, the Germans had these guns too.

George arrived in France on 3rd October 1916 and his Battery team fought at the Battles of Albert, La Boisselle, Pozieres and Arras. He would also have been at the Battle of Messines Ridge in June 1917 where they took many casualties. After this, his team were 'pulled out' to rest for a week! Details of the manoeuvres of the 156th HB in 1918 are difficult to find, but in March the German General Ludendorff decided to launch a Spring Offensive (Operation Michael) hoping to win the war before the Americans came over in strength. **Thus the Battle of St Quentin was launched. This was George's last battle. He was 'killed in action' on the first day of the battle - 21st March 1918. He was 36. George is buried at the Red Cross Corner Cemetery in Beugny in France. When it fell to German hands in March 1918, row K was added to accommodate all the deaths of 21st March. George's grave reference is I.K.5. George was also remembered on the church memorial at St John's in Isleworth.**

George's daughter, Ivy, and his son John, can be found on the 1939 Register living with their mother Catherine at the family home in Castle Road. Ivy became a Court Dressmaker.



**There is some corner of a foreign field
that is forever England** (Rupert Brook The Soldier)