



William Thomas Morton (320460) was born in late 1895 and was baptised on 3rd Nov in Beddington Surrey. His father Edward was born in Lincolnshire and was recorded as a 'market gardener' on the baptism record. Six years later, William's father was working as a Farm Bailiff, possibly responsible for collecting rent and having the authority to evict defaulting tenants! The 1901 census records the family living in Graham Road, Mitcham. William's mother originally came from Brentford. Little William had Edward (Junior), Violet, and Ivy to play with as he grew up. All the children were born in Surrey. Edward (Senior)'s sister Alice, was also living at the same address. She was 18 and a dressmaker, so she would have been an asset to the family. Later in 1911, the Morton family can be found at 3 Devonshire Square Bromley in Kent. Father Edward is still working as a Bailiff, Violet is now a hardworking Laundress (hand washing, boiling, mangling, and drying) and William is a Butcher's Assistant. Older son Edward, now 18, can be found working as an Ordinary Seaman at Sheerness Kent. Edward left the Navy in 1913 and can be found on the 1939 Register working as a Police Officer. Edward and Ellen, William's parents, can be found on the Electoral Registers living at 18 Nottingham Rd Isleworth in 1918/19, near St John's Church.

William enlisted in the army at Cambridge. This would suggest that his family were still living in Kent at the start of World War 1. William joined the 15th (Suffolk Yeomanry) Battalion Territorial Force. This regiment has a complex history and fought at Gallipoli, in Palestine and on the Western Front. There are no service records for William, so we do not know whether he took part in any or all these conflicts. We do know however, that his Battalion (as part of the 74th Yeoman Div.) docked at Marseilles in May 1918, and then entrained to the Western Front at Rue, near Abbeville. Gas defence training then took place. Forces War Records report that William died at one of the battles in the 'Final Advance in Artois and Flanders'. The Battle of Courtrai began at 5.35am on 14th October. This excerpt from the regimental war diaries from 14th October records "*...enemy was found in strength all along the front. 2/Lt Crowther and his runner were killed during night, being buried by a shell. 15.10.18. Daylight patrols found enemy still occupying posts in front, as he was suspected of withdrawing. Enemy retired slowly during the night...pill boxes empty. The Bn. moved on to gain trench forthwith. 16.10.18. On reaching the canal Haute Deule, strong opposition was met and Bn. withdrew....orders received to continue advance and push on over canal. Casualties on 16th 4 killed and 7 wounded.*" Sadly William was almost certainly one of these four men.

William died 25 days before the Armistice. He was 23 years old. He is buried in Rue David Military Cemetery Fleurbaix (Grave Ref II.G.49) and is remembered at St John's Church.

"Ever in our thoughts Mam & Dad"

