

GUNNER THOMAS WILLIAM PRATTLEY

Royal Horse and Field Artillery D/103rd, D183rd Brigade, 4th Reserve Brigade, 54th Battery. Regimental No: 155741



Thomas William Prattley was the son of Francis George and Hannah Prattley (nee Emmitt). He was born on 11th December 1893. Hannah and Francis married at St Gregory's, Kirkdale in 1891 and further details of the family can be seen in the article about Thomas's brother, Albert, who gave his life in the service of his country.

Thomas, known as Will, enlisted, for the duration of the war, on 7th July 1915. He was 22 years 7 months old, and 5ft 8ins tall. His papers show he served with the British Expeditionary Force, leaving on 12th September 1915 and that he came back to England arriving at Le Havre on 9th August 1916.

On 21st August 1916 he transferred to the rank of Gunner with the Royal Artillery, maintaining his former rate of pay of 3s per day. He mustered with the Royal Field Artillery on 28th of that month remaining in the UK in a reserve brigade. During this period he was possibly stationed in Scotland,(Craiglockhart, near Edinburgh)) as a 'Regimental Conduct Sheet' reflects that on two occasions, whilst on active service, he was absent without leave for a short time and forfeited pay and was assigned extra fatigues.

On 6th September 1917 he was again posted to France, where he served in the field for 63 days before moving to Italy on 8th November 1917. Whilst on active service Thomas suffered gunshot wounds to the left knee, left arm, eye and right foot and transferred to hospital in Marseilles, France on 7th July 1918 from '24 Casualty Clearing Station', Italy. His papers show that on 17th June 1918, unfortunately, it was necessary to amputate Thomas's leg at the thigh.

On the 28th July 1918, Thomas was moved again, this time back to England where he received treatment at Netley Hospital, which was near Southampton. During the First World War a large Red Cross, hutted, hospital was built at the back of this site, which expanded Netley Hospital to accommodate around 2,500 beds. Many of the staff were Red Cross volunteers, as most of the regular staff were overseas. Some 50,000 patients were treated at Netley during the war.

Thomas was moved, yet again, and admitted to 2nd Northern Hospital in Leeds in April 1919, where further treatment included amputation of the left knee joint.

The 2nd Northern General Hospital was situated at Beckett's Park Hospital in Leeds. During the First World War it was converted to a military hospital. It was officially called the 2nd Northern General Hospital but was more commonly referred to as Beckett's Park Hospital. There were 60 Officer beds, 2039 Other Ranks beds and the hospital treated 57,200 soldiers between 1914 and 1918.

Thomas was fitted with an artificial limb at hospital in Roehampton. The 'Queen Mary Convalescent Auxiliary Hospital Roehampton', London' was founded in 1915, it was named after Queen Mary who was its patron. It was established at the stately home 'Roehampton House' as a place of rehabilitation for sailors, soldiers and airmen who had lost limbs during war service.

Thomas was finally discharged on 24th July 1919, having served 4 years and 8 days with colours, of which 329 days were abroad in France and Italy.

Sadly Thomas died following a road accident on 11th November 1959.