

THOMAS MARMADUKE CRAVEN RENNARD



8th November 1917

1896-1917 Age 21

Private Royal Army Medical Corps, 4th Stationary Hospital.

Thomas Rennard was born in Guiseley in July 1896. His father Marmaduke was the Registrar of Births and Deaths in Guiseley, as well as the official in charge of Poor Law relief, clerk to the school board, and latterly clerk to the new Urban District Council. Before him his father, another Marmaduke, held several of these local government posts which were on the way to becoming a family monopoly.

Thomas's mother Mary Craven was daughter of a farmer who lived on the edge of Guiseley. Thomas and his twin sister Catherine were the couple's only children. They lived on Springfield Terrace in Guiseley.

Thomas went to Bradford Grammar School for a single year, 1914-1915, when he was eighteen. He was in the Matriculation Form which prepared boys for the new universities and the lower branches of the civil service. Thomas seems to have combined both after he left in July 1915 for when he was called up he gave his occupation as Law student and town clerk, obviously employed by his father. Thomas had not joined the O.T.C. at Bradford Grammar, and in the early stages of the First World War he can not have imagined that he would be required to serve. His medical inspection, carried out when he was conscripted in March 1916, reveals that he was only 5 feet in height and had suffered from a hernia. The Army did not yet need such men, but he was re-examined in November of the same year and was mobilized in the following January. Thomas was sent to the Royal Army Medical Corps training depot, Blackpool. Although he was not suitable for combat duties, he was passed as category B ii, 'fit for service abroad on the Lines of Communication'. He was sent to No.4 Stationary Hospital near St. Omer in northern France.



Although this was well away from the front, and there was little danger of the bombing raids which plagued hospitals near Ypres, Thomas Rennard still faced danger. In early November he complained of a sore on his lower lip which caused the left side of his face to swell up. He developed a fever and was admitted to No.7 Canadian Stationary Hospital as a stretcher case. The lesion had become what was described as a 'foul sloughing sore on left side lower lip extending to teeth' diagnosed as a 'Noma'. He had a high temperature and a racing pulse and became delirious. Thomas died at 10.25 a.m. on the morning of 8th November. A post mortem showed that he was infected with Streptococci, possibly contracted from a patient in the hospital, and he died of Septicaemia. He was buried in Longuenesse Souvenir Cemetery near St. Omer in France, and he is also remembered on the family grave in St. Oswald's Churchyard in Guiseley.



Acknowledgements:

Thomas Rennard's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. His year at B.G.S. is recorded in the 1915 Annual Report. Which school he attended before this is not known as he is not on the War Memorial of Yeadon and Guiseley Secondary School (<<https://www.aireboroughhistoricalsociety.co.uk/yeaton/yeaton-guiseley-secondary-school-memorial-1919.aspx#prettyPhoto>>), which was founded in 1910. His Service Record survives, available on Ancestry, and it includes his Post Mortem report. For Noma, I consulted <<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/noma>>, <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/noma>>, both on 18-10-1917. My thanks are owed to Dr. Michael Sharpe for his professional advice.

For the family grave, <<http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=60526&h=483679&ssrc=pt&tid=62493736&pid=120011173544&usePUB=true>>.

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