



## SECOND LIEUTENANT HUGH GARETH THOMAS

### 8<sup>TH</sup> BATTALION, GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

**Hugh Gareth Thomas** was born on 13 December 1892 in Birkenhead, Cheshire to Annie (née Hughes) and Walter Jeremy Thomas who was a Bank Clerk. Hugh had an older sister, Eleanor and he was baptised at St Peter's Church, Liverpool on 13 April 1893.

Hugh was educated at Stramongate School, Kendal, Cumbria. By 1911 the family had moved to Quinta, Hatherley Road, Cheltenham and his father was the Bank Manager at the Cheltenham branch of the London City and Midland Bank. Hugh was a Solicitor's Articled Clerk to Mr H H Thompson of Messrs Rickerby & Co, 16 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham.

On the outbreak of war Hugh was one of the first to enlist as Private 2575 in the 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. The battalion was raised in Gloucester and was part of the South Midland Brigade, South Midland Division. On mobilisation they moved to the Isle of Wight then Swindon but very quickly moved on to Maldon in Essex, arriving by the end of August 1914.

By 1915 the battalion was undergoing further training in Chelmsford. On 13 March they received

orders "to prepare for Foreign Service". They entrained for Southampton on 28 March and embarked on board SS *Architect* arriving in Havre on the 29th.

Hugh was promoted to Lance Corporal and later discharged to commission as a Second Lieutenant in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment in September 1915. He was invalided home shortly afterwards and attached to another service battalion until January 1916 when he rejoined his own unit in France.

On 30 July the battalion was detailed to take part in an attack to capture the German intermediate line between Pozières and High Wood, starting at 6.10pm. The preliminary bombardment of the enemy lines was restricted to one minute only in order to cause confusion but as the Gloucesters advanced at zero hour they had only covered about 100 yards when they were caught in a terrific flanking machine-gun fire and had to fall back to their original line, losing nine officers and 113 other ranks killed and wounded. It was during this action that Hugh was killed; he was 23 years of age.

# SECOND LIEUTENANT HUGH GARETH THOMAS

The following report appeared in the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* on 12 August:

SEC .-LIEUT. H. G. THOMAS

*The sad intelligence was received by Mr. and Mrs. W. Jeremy Thomas on Monday morning of the death of their only son, Sec.-Lieut. Hugh Gareth Thomas, who was killed in action in France on July 30th. Born in Birkenhead in December 1892, Lieut. Thomas was thus only 23 years of age. He was educated at Stramongate School, Kendal, and articled to Mr. T. E. Rickerby, at Cheltenham, and was about to enter for his final examination when, impelled by a keen sense of patriotism, he joined the "first hundred thousand," and served for twelve months in the trenches as a private. It was in September of last year that he received his commission. He was then*

*transferred from the Territorials to a service battalion, and eventually to another service battalion, being attached for some time to the Brigade Headquarters Staff in France.*

Second Lieutenant Hugh Gareth Thomas was buried near Bazentin-le-Petit. However, his original burial place was lost and he is now commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 5A and 5B. He is remembered on the Christ Church Roll of Honour, Cheltenham War Memorial, St Mark's Church Roll of Honour and the Memorial to Solicitors and Articled Clerks in Holborn, London. He is also commemorated on his parents' grave in Cheltenham Cemetery.

---

## Sources and acknowledgements:

*Leaving all that was dear : Cheltenham and the Great War* by J Devereux & G Sacker

Ancestry

[www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

Forces War Records

[www.forces-war-records.co.uk](http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk)

British Newspaper Archive

[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

National Archives

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

[www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

The Long, Long Trail

[www.longlongtrail.co.uk](http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk)

Find My Past

[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)