

Private Thomas Sharpe

Regimental number: 41797

1st/6th (Perthshire) Battalion, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)

born: 20 September 1896 - died: 11 September 1918

Private Thomas Sharpe was born on 20 September 1896 at 6.50 a.m. on Portland Street in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, Scotland.¹ He was the son of Thomas and his wife, the former Jane Hamilton Lillie. Both his parents were born in Glasgow – Thomas in about 1853 and Jane in 1864.² Thomas and Jane married on 15 July 1887 in Coatbridge and probably had five children – John (born in about 1890),³ Margaret (born in about 1892),⁴ Jane (born in about 1894),⁵ Thomas and David (born in about 1899).⁶ Thomas and Jane lost two of their three sons – Thomas and David – in the Great War.

In 1901, the family was living at 34D Portland Street in Coatbridge, where Thomas' father was a blacksmith tube bender.⁷ A decade later the family was living at 25B Kippen Street in Airdrie and Thomas' father was still working in iron tube manufacturing.⁸ Thomas, his son, was a labourer.

Thomas enlisted in Airdrie, Lanarkshire.⁹ He served initially in the Cameron Highlanders (Regimental number S/41151). He later transferred to the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), where he was a Private in the 1st/6th (Perthshire) Battalion.

In September 1918, the Battalion was stationed in a location known as Wakefield Camp.¹⁰ The days preceding Thomas' death were "generally quiet." However on 11 September, Thomas was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to his left leg, forearm and head.¹¹ He died the same day and was buried the following day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 60, Plot 5, Row H) with the chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. His mother, who was still living in Airdrie, was notified of his death. His father received the monies owing to him from the army following his death.¹²

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹³ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁴ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

Thomas was awarded a Military Medal, which was given to Other Ranks for gallantry and devotion to duty when under fire in battle on land.¹⁵ He was also awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁶

Thomas' younger brother, David, also served and lost his life in the Great War. He enlisted as a Private in the 5th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders (Regimental number: S/18625).¹⁷ He died sometime between 21 March and 2 April 1918¹⁸ in the second Battle of the Somme,¹⁹ which was part of the response to the German spring offensive.²⁰ He is honoured on the Pozieres Memorial (Panel 73), which is located north-east of the town of Albert in northern France. The memorial commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom and 300 of the South African Forces

who have no known grave and who died on the Somme between March and August 1918. Like his brother, he was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.²¹

Thomas and David's father, Thomas, probably died in 1923.²²

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¹ "Statutory Registers – Birth," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe, District: COATBRIDGE OR OLD MONKLAND, City/County/MR: LANARK, GROS Data: 652/02 1113

² "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 March 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe, ED: 18, Household schedule number: 189, LINE: 20, Roll: CSSCT1901_347

³ "Census Returns - 1911," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe, District: AIRDRIE OR NEW MONKLAND, City/County/MR: LANARK, GROS Data: 651/00 019/00 012

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "1901 Scotland Census," entry for Thomas Sharpe

⁶ "Census Returns - 1911," entry for Thomas Sharpe

⁷ "1901 Scotland Census," entry for Thomas Sharpe

⁸ "Census Returns - 1911," entry for Thomas Sharpe

⁹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe

¹⁰ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), Regiment or Unit: Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), Sub Unit: 6th (Perthshire) Battalion (Territorial), Division: 51st Division, Diary Dates: 1915 May 1 - 1916 Dec 31, Piece Description: Piece 2876/1-4: 153 Infantry Brigade: 6 Battalion Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) (1915 May - 1919 Feb), Piece Number: 2876

¹¹ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 651

¹² "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe

¹³ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

¹⁴ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2015)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe

¹⁷ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for David Sharpe

¹⁸ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for David Sharpe

¹⁹ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Sharpe, David, No: S/18625

²⁰ "Second Battle of the Somme (1918)," *Wikipedia*

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_the_Somme_\(1918\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_the_Somme_(1918)); accessed 29 October 2015)

²¹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for David Sharpe

²² "UK, Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for David Sharpe; "Statutory Registers – Deaths," *ScotlandsPeople*

(<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 29 October 2015), entry for Thomas Sharpe, District: AIRDRIE OR NEW MONKLAND, City/County/MR: LANARK, GROS Data: 651/00 0184