

Second Lieutenant Thomas Archibald Truman

Regimental number: –

56th Divisional Train, Army Service Corps

born: 29 December 1880 - died: 14 September 1918

Second Lieutenant Thomas Archibald Truman was born on 29 December 1880 and baptised on 25 January 1881 at St Paul's Church in Wolborough, Devon.¹ He was the youngest child of Thomas and Catherine Truman. His father, Thomas Charles, a coal dealer, was born in about 1850 near Bow in North Devon,² the son of Charles Truman who, like his son, was coal dealer.³ His mother, Catherine, whose maiden name was also Truman, was born about 1852 near Newton Abbot, Devon,⁴ the daughter of William Truman, a saddler. Thomas and Catherine were married on 29 May 1873 in St Mary's Church in Wolborough. They had five children, four of whom survived to 1911: Henry Salter (born in 1874),⁵ Ethel Kate (born in 1875),⁶ Beatrice Maud (born in April 1877),⁷ Catherine May (born in November 1878 and who died in 1905,⁸ as the wife of Robert Henry J. Crook),⁹ and Thomas.

In 1881, the family was living at 34 East Street in Newton Abbot, where Thomas's father was a coal merchant.¹⁰ Thomas' older brother, Henry, was not with the family – he was living with his aunt, Louise Salter Arnold, in Epping, Essex.¹¹

In 1891, at the age of 10, Thomas was a boarder at the Independent College public school in Taunton.¹² His parents were living at "The Mount" in Newton Abbot, where Thomas's father was now a turf accountant.¹³ Ten years later, Thomas was a bank clerk and lodging with Joshua Bailey and his wife, Fanny, on Church Street in Westbury, Wiltshire.¹⁴ His parents were still in Newton Abbot living, at 17 Powderham Road with Thomas' two sisters, Ethel and Catherine. His father was a commission agent, working at home on his own account. Also living with them were his mother's niece, Emma Matilda Truman, and a granddaughter, Catherine Louise Truman.

On 5 January 1908, Thomas married Margaret Lee near Liskeard in Cornwall.¹⁵ Margaret was born in about 1881 in Liskeard,¹⁶ the daughter of Richard H. and Blanch D Lee.¹⁷ Her father was a draper. They had a son, Clifford Archibald, born in the spring of 1908.¹⁸ Sadly he died shortly thereafter.¹⁹ Two years later, Thomas and Margaret had a second son, Norman Archibald, born on 5 February 1910 and baptised at St Mary de Lode Church in Gloucester on 28 February. The next year, Thomas and Margaret were living at 92 Weston Road in Gloucester, where Thomas was a back cashier. In 1915, Thomas and Margaret probably had a daughter, Margaret C., born in Penzance.²⁰

Thomas enlisted and joined the Front in France.²¹ He was initially a Private, but received a commission on 27 October 1917. He served in the Army Service Corps. On 11 September 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with peritonitis.²² He survived for three years, but died on 14 September – just months before his 38th birthday. He was buried on 16 September in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 6, Plot 6, Row H) with the chaplain W. Fisher presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.²³ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.²⁴ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

Thomas' wife, who was then living at 12 Pendarvis Road in Penzance, Cornwall was notified of his death.²⁵ He left a will covering effects of £505, with probate to his wife.²⁶

Thomas was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁷

The years leading up to the Great War were marked by several losses for the Truman family. Thomas' sister, Beatrice Maud married Walter Wright in 1899 near Barnstaple, Devon and they had a daughter, Catherine Beatrice, born in about 1904. But, sadly, Walter died in 1904. Thomas' sister, Catherine, died in 1905, leaving a two-year old son. Thomas' brother, Henry Salter, married Emily Hicks Lavis in 1895 and, in 1911, was a turf accountant, living in Teignmouth, Devon. He died in 1914 at the age of 40.²⁸

Thomas' sister, Ethel, died in 1934²⁹ and then both his parents died in 1936, just three months apart.³⁰ Thomas' wife, Margaret, died in 1955³¹ and his sister, Beatrice, in 1973.³²

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¹ "Devon Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Archibald Truman, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/36

² "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 November 2015), entry for Thomas Truman, Registration district: Newton Abbot, ED, institution, or vessel: 15, Piece: 2165, Folio: 19, Page Number: 32

³ "Devon Marriages," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Truman, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/10

⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Catherine Truman, Registration district: Newton Abbot, Inferred County: Devon, Volume: 5b, Page: 115

⁵ "Devon Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Henry Salter Truman, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/35

⁶ "Devon Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Ethel Kate Truman, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/36

⁷ "Devon Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Beatrice Maud Truman, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/36

⁸ "Devon Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Catherine May Truman, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/36, "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Catherine May Truman, Registration district: Newton Abbot, Inferred County: Devon, Volume: 5b, Page: 284; "England & Wales deaths 1837-2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Catherine May Crook, District: Newton Abbot, County: Devon, Volume: 5B, Page: 86

⁹ Catherine and Robert had a son, Thomas Henry Archibald Crook, who was born in about 1903. "Devon Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Henry Archibald Crook, Archive: South West Heritage Trust, Archive reference: 2518A/PR/1/37

¹⁰ "1881 England Census," entry for Thomas Truman

¹¹ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 November 2015), entry for Henry Salter Truman, Registration district: Epping, ED, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 1738, Folio: 24, Page Number: 41

¹² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 January 2015), entry for George Pinches, Registration district: Taunton, ED, institution, or vessel: Independent College Taunton, Piece: 1878, Folio: 152, Page Number: 6

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- ¹³ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Truman, Registration district: Newton Abbot, ED, institution, or vessel: 15, Piece: 1700, Folio: 16, Page Number: 5
- ¹⁴ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Truman, Registration district: Westbury, Sub-registration district: Westbury, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 1940, Folio: 82, Page Number: 17, Household schedule number: 117
- ¹⁵ "Gloucestershire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754-1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Archibald Truman, Register Type: Parish Registers
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Margaret Lee, Registration district: Liskeard, Inferred County: Cornwall, Volume: 5c, Page: 57C
- ¹⁷ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Margaret Lee, Registration district: Liskeard, ED, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 1810, Folio: 127, Page Number: 26
- ¹⁸ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2015), entry for Clifford Archibald Truman, Registration district: Gloucester, Inferred County: Gloucestershire, Volume: 6a, Page: 329
- ¹⁹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2015), entry for Clifford Archibald Truman, Registration district: Gloucester, Inferred County: Gloucestershire, Volume: 6a, Page: 185
- ²⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Margaret Truman, Registration district: Penzance, Inferred County: Cornwall, Volume: 5c, Page: 378
- ²¹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Thomas Truman
- ²² "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 658
- ²³ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ²⁴ "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)
- ²⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," entry for Thomas Truman
- ²⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966." *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Thomas Truman
- ²⁷ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," entry for Thomas Truman
- ²⁸ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Henry S. Truman, Registration district: Newton Abbot, Inferred County: Devonshire, Volume: 5b, Page: 123
- ²⁹ "England & Wales deaths 1837-2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Ethel K. Truman, District: Barnstable, County: Devon, Volume: 5B, Page: 496
- ³⁰ "England & Wales, Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2015), entry for Thomas Truman, Registration district: Barnstable, Inferred County: Devon, Volume: 5b, Page: 519, "England & Wales, Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2015), entry for Catherine Truman, Registration district: Barnstable, Inferred County: Devon, Volume: 5b, Page: 421
- ³¹ "England & Wales, Death Index, 1916-2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 December 2015), entry for Margaret Truman, Registration district: Penzance, Inferred County: Cornwall, Volume: 7a, Page: 77
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