

**Private Thomas Paul Ross<sup>©</sup>**  
**Regimental number: 138206**  
**11th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)**

**born: 17 April 1899–died: 6 October 1918**

The inscription that Private Thomas Paul Ross' father had included on his gravestone was:

PEACE PERFECT PEACE<sup>1</sup>

One can only hope that the family also found peace, having lost at least two sons to the Great War.

Thomas was born on 17 April 1899, the youngest son of Paul and Colina (known sometimes as Caroline) (née Ross) Ross of Dornoch, Sutherlandshire, in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Paul (born in about 1861 in Rosehall, Sutherlandshire)<sup>3</sup> and Colina (born on 9 December 1855 in Kincardine, Ross and Cromarty)<sup>4</sup> had married on 31 May 1887 in Inverness, Scotland.<sup>5</sup>

In 1891, the couple and their first three children were living in Rogart, Sutherlandshire, where Paul was a ploughman.<sup>6</sup> By 1901, they had six children:

- David (born in about 1889)
- Colin D. (born in about 1890)
- Gracie (born in about 1891)
- Georgina E. (born in about 1893)
- William H. (born in about 1896)
- Thomas Paul<sup>7</sup>

In 1911, the family was living in Dornoch, but only three children were still at home.<sup>8</sup>

Thomas enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in about February 1917<sup>9</sup> in Nairn, Scotland. He would turn 18 years of age the following April. He appears to have first joined the Gordon Highlanders (regimental number 19834), but later served with the Machine Gun Corps.<sup>10</sup> The 11th Machine Gun Battalion was formed in December 1915 and saw action in the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and the Battle of Ypres in 1917, when Thomas was probably with the battalion. In February 1918, the battalion amalgamated with other machine gun companies to form the 4th Machine Gun Battalion.<sup>11</sup>

In October 1918, just over five weeks before the end of the war, Thomas was fatally wounded by a bomb. He was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station<sup>12</sup> on 5 October with wounds to his left leg, both hands and right thigh and foot.<sup>13</sup>

Thomas died the following day and was buried in the British Military Cemetery in Duisans (Plot 7, Row B, Grave 27) on 7 October, with the Canadian chaplain W. Fisher presiding.<sup>14</sup> Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Étrun, near Arras, France. The first burials in the cemetery took place in March 1917.<sup>15</sup> No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months. As a result of the serious and urgent nature of the cases, the death rate was high in October—a total of 83 deaths occurred during the month.<sup>16</sup>

As his next of kin, his mother was notified of his death by the chaplain.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>18</sup>

Thomas' eldest brother **David** also enlisted in the military. In 1911, he was a lance corporal serving in India with the 1st Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders.<sup>19</sup> In October 1914, his battalion landed in Marseille for service on the Western Front<sup>20</sup> and David's time with the British Expeditionary Force began on 12 October 1914.<sup>21</sup> He was a corporal (regimental number 146) when he died on 9 May 1915<sup>22</sup> in the Battle of Aubers in northern France. His death is commemorated on Le Touret Memorial.<sup>23</sup> This battle was disastrous for the British forces—they suffered ten times more casualties than the German forces and did not gain any ground.<sup>24</sup> David received three medals: the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).<sup>25</sup> It was perhaps his brother's death that encouraged Thomas to enlist as soon as he was of age.

It is not clear whether Thomas' brother **Colin** served in the Great War, but he probably died in Dornoch in 1926.<sup>26</sup> **Georgina**, Thomas' sister, probably died in Dornoch in 1970 and is buried in Proncynain Cemetery.<sup>27</sup> Nothing more is known about the lives of Thomas' other two siblings, **Gracie** or **William**.

Both Thomas' parents died in Dornoch—his father in 1939<sup>28</sup> and his mother in 1949.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for Thomas Paul Ross

<sup>2</sup> "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 27 March 2021) entry for Ross, Thomas Paul, Reference: 047/25, Registration district: Dornoch (Sutherland)

<sup>3</sup> "1891 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 June 2021), entry for Paul Ross, Enumeration district: 2, Household schedule number: 35, Line: 1, Roll: CSSCT1891\_15

<sup>4</sup> "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 29 April 2021), entry for Colina Ross, FHL Film Number: 6035516

<sup>5</sup> "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople*, entry for Ross, Thomas Paul

<sup>6</sup> "1891 Scotland Census," *Ancestry*, entry for Paul Ross

<sup>7</sup> "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for Thomas P Ross, Enumeration district: 4, Household schedule number: 5, Line: 2, Roll: CSSCT1901\_13

<sup>8</sup> "1911 Scotland Census," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 March 2021), entry for Ross, Colina, Census 047/2/1

<sup>9</sup> Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for Thomas Paul Ross

<sup>10</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for Tom Paul Ross

<sup>11</sup> "11th Battalion Machine Gun Corps," *The War Time Memories Project* (<https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/>: accessed 28 March 2021)

<sup>12</sup> A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were

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stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital. "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty\\_Clearing\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station): accessed 2 May 2020)

<sup>13</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for Ross, R [sic]

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 7 October 2015)

<sup>16</sup> "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/>: accessed 17 June 2015)

<sup>17</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa*, entry for Ross, R [sic]

<sup>18</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 28 March 2021), entry for Thomas P Ross

<sup>19</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 5 January 2021), entry for David Ross, Registration district: Bolton, Registration district number: 641, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: India, Piece: 34990

<sup>20</sup> "Seaforth Highlanders," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaforth\\_Highlanders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seaforth_Highlanders): accessed 28 March 2021)

<sup>21</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for David Ross

<sup>22</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for David Ross

<sup>23</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 27 March 2021), entry for David Ross

<sup>24</sup> "Seaforth Highlanders," *Wikipedia*

<sup>25</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 26 November 2021), entry for David Ross

<sup>26</sup> "Index of Statutory Register (deaths)," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 27 March 2021) entry for Ross, Colin Daniel, Reference: 047/ 11, Registration district: Dornoch (Sutherland)

<sup>27</sup> *FindaGrave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/>: accessed 27 March 2021), entry for Georgina Ross

<sup>28</sup> "Index of Statutory Register (deaths)," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 27 March 2021) entry for Ross, Paul, Reference: 047/ 29, Registration district: Dornoch (Sutherland)

<sup>29</sup> "Index of Statutory Register (deaths)," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 27 March 2021) entry for Ross, Colina, Reference: 047/ 23, Registration district: Dornoch (Sutherland)