

Private Thomas Toomey[©]

Regimental number: 11675

"A" Company, 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

born: 13 January 1894–died: 31 August 1916

Private Thomas Toomey was one of 704,803 soldiers from the British Isles who died in or because of the First World War.¹

Thomas was born on 13 January 1894 in Birdwood, Churcham,² a hamlet about 2 km west of the village of Churcham and part of the civil parish of Churcham, in the Westbury-on-Severn and Gloucester districts of Gloucestershire.³ He was the son of Thomas Toomey (1849–1903)⁴ and Sarah Ann (née Coopey) Toomey (1853–1904).⁵ Both had been born in the area: Thomas in Churcham and Sarah in Bulley. They married on 15 January 1882, at the parish church. Thomas was employed as a labourer. Sarah did not list an occupation at the time of her marriage.⁶

Sarah brought to the marriage her two daughters: Mary (1876–1927)⁷ and Ellen (1878–1952).⁸ She and Thomas had 10 more children: Sarah Ann (1882–1964),⁹ followed by William Benjamin (1884–1940),¹⁰ Charles (1885–1926),¹¹ Emily (1887–1960),¹² Alice May (1888–1975),¹³ Henry Thomas (1890–1891),¹⁴ Edith (1891–1966),¹⁵ then Thomas, Elsie Elizabeth (1896–1984),¹⁶ and Dorothy (1897–1979).¹⁷

When Thomas was born, his parents and siblings were living in a cottage on Birdwood Common, Birdwood.¹⁸ In 1901, when he was 7 years old, the family was still residing in Birdwood. His father was employed as a road labourer; his mother was busy with domestic chores and caring for Edith, Thomas, Elsie and Dorothy. His 17-year-old brother William, a farm labourer, was living at home.¹⁹ Most likely for economic reasons, the older children had left. Three were servants: Ellen at Whitehall Court, in London,²⁰ Sarah Ann in the Haines household in Gloucester,²¹ and 15-year-old Charles in the Perry household in Bulley.²² 12-year-old Alice was living in a nearby cottage with half-sister Mary and her husband, John Phillips.²³ Mary and John, a baker, had married on 4 June 1900.²⁴

Thomas's father died in 1903; his mother in 1904. With the assistance of his older siblings, 10-year-old Thomas survived. In 1911, he was an apprentice house painter, living with his brother William, also a house painter, and sisters Edith and Dorothy in a four-room house on Huntley Road, Churcham. Edith kept house and Dorothy attended school.²⁵ His brother Charles, a house painter, and sister Elsie, a student, were living next door in a six-room house with Mary and her husband John, still working as a baker.²⁶

By 1911, more of Thomas's sisters had married and others were working as domestic servants. Ellen had married Albert Harry West in 1904 and was living in London.²⁷ Sarah Ann had wed Charles Albert Bloxham, an iron worker, in 1906 and was residing at 7 Bellgrove Terrace, Brook Street, Gloucester.²⁸ Emily was a domestic servant for the Osborne family at 8 St. Mary's Square, Gloucester. She wed Harry Gorin, a mason, in 1913.²⁹ Alice May was a cook for the Dale household at Daisy Bank House, Leckhampton Hill, Gloucester.³⁰

When war was declared on 4 August 1914, 20-year-old Thomas was living with William and employed by Mr. Burton Barnes, decorator, Worcester Street, Gloucester. He enlisted in the 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, in Gloucester, probably in late September 1914.³¹



Private Thomas Toomey

Gloucester Journal
16 September 1916, p.7

The Gloucestershire Regiment was an infantry regiment of the British Army, formed in 1881 with the amalgamation of the 28th (North Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot and the 61st (South Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot. At the outbreak of the war, the regiment had six battalions (two regular, one reserve and three territorials). During the war, it raised an additional 18 battalions.³²

The 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, was raised at Bristol in September 1914 and became part of the 57th Brigade, 19th Western Division. It recruited mainly in Gloucestershire. Thomas was perhaps even the first to join from Churcham.³³ From October 1914 to July 1915, he trained with the battalion, first at Perham Down and then at Tidworth, Wiltshire, about 103 km from Churcham. The battalion was divided into four companies (A, B, C and D). Thomas was assigned to "A" company. In mid-July, the battalion's 30 officers and 945 soldiers of other ranks (ORs), including Private Thomas Toomey, received orders to mobilize and proceed to Southampton. Three officers and 107 ORs sailed to Le Havre, France, arriving on 18 July 1915 to join the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). The remaining 27 officers and 838 ORs left Southampton on 19 July and landed in Boulogne-sur-Mer. The two sections reunited at Nort-Leulinghem, about 14 km northwest of Saint-Omer, Pas-de-Calais, Hauts-de-France region, on 20 July.³⁴

For the next nine months, the battalion was stationed at various locations in the region. At Caudescure near Merville during late July and August 1915, it received intensive practical instructions in the use of trench-mortars, machine-gun firing, bayonet fighting, sniping, bomb-throwing and the many details of trench life, such as construction and maintenance of trench defences, wiring, sanitation and discipline.³⁵ On 4 August 1915, the men had their first baths since arriving. The battalion was assigned the defence of the frontline trenches near Richebourg-l'Avoué on 28 August. Casualties were incurred. For example, on 30 August, a private in "A" company was wounded by a bullet through the head.³⁶

During these months, Thomas experienced day-to-day shelling, sniper fire, endless noise, horrid stench, and skirmishes, followed by rest periods behind the lines. In trenches near Festubert on 2 October, "A" company spent the night burying the dead from the Welsh Regiment, killed in action on 25 September. For three hours on 14 October near Vieille-Chapelle, the enemy fired shells every three minutes on the battalion's trenches, creating enormous holes, damaging the parapets and cutting off communication lines to "A" and "B" companies. Some men were buried by the debris. Inclement weather contributed to the "men having a very wretched time."³⁷ Rain, cold temperatures and snow created unbearable conditions. The trenches were filled with either mud and water or snow, slush and ice as late as April 1916. The allotment of two blankets for each soldier probably provided a little comfort. The battalion's nightly reconnaissance patrols, gathering information about the enemy's movements, continued in spite of the conditions.³⁸

On 20 April 1916, the battalion was relieved of its defensive trench warfare assignment and spent May and June in training at Vignacourt, Saint-Riquier, Rainneville and Franvillers, France, to prepare for an offensive scheduled for 1 July 1916. On 22 June, Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Carton de Wiart (4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards), who had previously lost an eye and a hand in battle, took over command of the Thomas's battalion.³⁹

On 1 July 1916 at 7:30 a.m., the battalion, as part of the Corps Reserve, was in the intermediate line, north of Albert, for the first phase of the Battle of La Boisselle, also known as the Battle of Albert (1–13 July 1916). This was the first of 12 battles during the period from 1 July 1916 to 18 November 1916 that became known as the Battle of the Somme.⁴⁰ For nearly two years, La Boisselle, a hamlet just south of the main road between Albert and Bapaume, had been controlled by the enemy. From this village stronghold, the enemy dominated two valleys that crossed the frontlines: the Mash and Sausage valleys. BEF troops trying to advance up either valley were at the mercy of the enemy's machine guns.⁴¹

Before the attack, the BEF artillery bombarded the enemy trenches for five days. At 7:28 a.m., the 179th Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers, detonated the Lochnagar mine under the German army's trenches just south of La Boisselle. It was a massive explosion creating a huge crater. However, enemy intelligence had discovered the plan and the damage to the enemy's forces was minimized.⁴²

Unbeknownst to the BEF, at La Boisselle the enemy had constructed vast dug-outs and shelters, often as much as 9 m down; they could withstand hits from the heaviest British shells. When the bombardment ceased, the enemy troops rushed up to the surface, mounted their machine guns and mowed down the attacking BEF troops from the 34th and 8th divisions.⁴³

Given the demise of these two divisions, the 19th Division was assigned the task of capturing La Boisselle. The 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (along with other battalions) moved up during the night of 2 July, attacking the enemy in the early hours of 3 July. The battalion encountered strong opposition and the battle might have been lost except for the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel A. Carton de Wiart. He took command of three other battalions whose officers were either dead or wounded, stemmed the panic, gave directions and stood on a parapet in full view of the enemy throwing Mills bombs (grenades). He was awarded the Victoria Cross and credited the men of the 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, for the success of the operation.⁴⁴ On 5 July, the battalion was relieved and moved first to Albert and then Millencourt to rebuild. Its casualties were high: 6 officers killed, 14 wounded and 282 ORs either killed, wounded or missing.⁴⁵

Once the battalion was up to strength, it was involved in two more BEF operations in July, both near Bazentin-le-Petit, northeast of Albert. On 22 July, it attacked an enemy switch line. The venture failed, leaving 1 officer dead, 5 wounded, 8 missing and 186 ORs either dead, wounded or missing. Lieutenant Colonel A. Carton de Wiart was shot through the throat. On 30 July, the battalion attacked the enemy's intermediate line. "A" and "B" companies, stationed in the frontline trenches, encountered heavy machine-gun and sniper fire when they went over the top at 6:30 p.m. (zero hour). By 9:30 p.m., 3 officers were dead, 3 wounded and 3 missing and 160 ORs were either dead, wounded or missing. The battalion's new Commanding Officer, Lord Alexander G.B. Thynne, was shot in the chest. Relieved on 31 July, the battalion retired to Bécourt Wood.⁴⁶

Somehow, Thomas survived. At the beginning of August, the 8th Battalion withdrew from the Somme battlefields and moved to the Spanbroekmolen–Wytschaete (now Wijtschate) sector, near Dranouter, Belgium. On 8 August, the battalion took over the frontline trenches between Wytschaete and Messines. Rotation in and out of the trenches commenced. The men repaired the trenches, made them higher, built new dugouts and rebuilt the parapets. Besides repairing the defences, patrols were constantly out examining the enemy's wire and trenches.⁴⁷

On 19 August, the battalion was once more in the frontline trenches. On 21 August, the BEF bombarded the enemy's reserve and support trenches. The enemy retaliated at 4 p.m. with minewafers and trench mortars. Although the enemy "caused little damage," Thomas received a severe head wound.⁴⁸ He was taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCCS) at Bailleul, France, about 15 km from Wytschaete. A casualty clearing station was a medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who could not be adequately treated were stabilized before being transported to a military hospital.⁴⁹

Most likely Thomas was the injured soldier admitted on 21 August and one of 93 patients at CCCS on 30 August. He was one of four men who died on Thursday, 31 August 1916.⁵⁰ His death was recorded by the No. 1 CCCS chaplain.⁵¹

Thomas's death was reported in the *Gloucestershire Chronicle* and the *Gloucestershire Journal* on 16 September. His brother William had just been informed that his other brother Charles, 13th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, had been injured on 2 September by shrapnel and was now in hospital in England with injuries to his shoulder, arm, thigh and leg.⁵²

Private Thomas Toomey was buried at Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Grave/Memorial Reference II. F. 187).⁵³ Bailleul is in France, close to the Belgian border. It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several casualty clearing stations, including No. 1 CCCS, were quartered there. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918; they occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when soldiers' remains were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.

Thomas was posthumously awarded the 1914–1915 Star (for service in a theatre of war against the central powers between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918).⁵⁴ As next of kin, William received a memorial plaque and a parchment scroll. On 29 November 1916, all Thomas's sisters received a share of his army savings of £5 17s 12d. On 20 June 1919, his sister Elsie and brother William shared the war gratuity of £8 10s.⁵⁵

The Toomey family's world continued without Thomas. There were happier times. His sister **Edith** married Percival Harry Warren on 15 December 1918.⁵⁶ His brother **Charles** recovered from his injuries, fought with the 9th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, in Salonika (Thessaloniki), Greece and returned home in 1919.⁵⁷ His brother-in-law Harry Gorin, Royal Engineers, also survived the war.⁵⁸

In 1921, most of his siblings were still living in Gloucestershire. **Charles, William** and **Dorothy** continued to occupy the house in Birdwood Common, on Huntley Road. Both men were house painters for Mr. Burton Barnes, Decorator. Dorothy did domestic chores.⁵⁹ **Emily**, her husband Harry Gorin and their family were also living in Birdwood Common. Harry was employed as a mason by Oliver Barnes Builder.⁶⁰ **Edith** and her husband Percival Warren were residing at the Village, Huntley, Gloucestershire. Percival was a haulier.⁶¹ Thomas's sisters **Elsie** and **Mary**, her husband John Phillips and their daughter were living in Churcham. John was a baker for Mr. J Green Baker & Grocer; **Elsie** had worked for the Gloucester Cooperative Society but was currently unemployed.⁶² **Sarah Ann**, her husband Charles Bloxham and their children resided in Dursley, Gloucestershire. Charles was an iron turner at R. A. Fister & Company Agricultural Engineers.⁶³ **Ellen**, her husband Alfred Harry West and their family were residing farthest away, at 33 Welbourne Road, Tottenham, Middlesex. Alfred worked for the post office.⁶⁴

Private Thomas Toomey's sacrifice was not forgotten. He is remembered on the *Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum's* website.⁶⁵

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¹ "Some British Army Statistics of the Great War," *The Long, Long Trail; Researching Soldiers of the British Army in the Great War 1914–1919* (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/some-british-army-statistics-of-the-great-war>: accessed 26 July 2024)

² "Copy of an Entry of Birth," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 11 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, When and where born: 13 January 1894, Birdwood Churcham RSD, Name and surname of father: Thomas Toomey, Name and maiden surname of mother: Sarah Coopey, Rank or profession of father: general labourer, GRO Reference: 1894, M Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 247

³ "Birdwood," *Kelly's Directory of Gloucestershire 1897*, p. 109, *University of Leicester Special Collections Online* (<https://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/48499/rec/1>: accessed 10 March 2024); Kathleen Morgan, Brian S Smith, 'Churcham: Introduction', *A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 10*, (London: Westbury and Whitstone Hundreds, 1972), *British History Online* (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol10/pp11-17>: accessed 26 July 2024]

⁴ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Event type: Baptism, Baptism date: 19 August 1849, Baptism place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, Father: Benjamin Toomey, Mother: Esther Toomey; "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Burials, 1813–1988," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Birth date: abt 1851, Burial date: 23 Jul 1903, Burial place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Churcham

⁵ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Coopey, GRO Reference: 1853, M Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 193, Mother's maiden surname: Etherage; "GRO Indexes, Deaths," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Toomey, GRO Reference: 1904, M Quarter in Gloucester, Volume: 06A Page: 217, Age: 50

⁶ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Marriage and Banns, 1754–1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 5 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Event type: Marriage, Marriage date: 15 January 1882, Marriage place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Churcham, Father: Benjamin Toomey, Spouse: Sarah Coopey

⁷ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2023), entry for Mary Coopey, Event Type: Baptism, Baptism date: 19 March 1876, Baptism place: Bulley, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Bulley, Mother: Sarah Coopey; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 7 March 2024), entry for Mary Phillips, Birth date: abt 1875, Registration date: Oct 1927, Registration quarter: Oct-Nov-Dec, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Inferred county: Gloucestershire, Volume: 6a, Page: 321

⁸ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2023), entry for Ellen Coopey, Event Type: Baptism, Baptism date: 19 March 1876, Baptism place: Bulley, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Bulley, Mother: Sarah Coopey; "Copy of an Entry of Death" *General Register Office* (https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 11 March 2024), entry for Ellen otherwise Helen West, When and where died: 15 February 1952, 38 Oak Avenue, U.D, Age: 74, Rank or profession: Widow of Alfred Harry West, Painter G.P.O, Cause of death: myocardial degeneration, Signature, description and residence of informant: J. W. West, son, present at the death, GRO Reference: 1952, M Quarter in Edmonton, Volume: 5e, Page: 296

⁹ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 7 March 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Toomey, GRO Reference: 1885, S Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 253, Mother's

maiden surname: Coopey; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Bloxham, Death age: 81, Birth date: abt 1883, Registration date: Jan 1964, Registration quarter: Jan-Feb-Mar, Registration district: Gloucester City, Inferred county: Gloucestershire, Volume: 7b, Page: 499

¹⁰ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for William Benjamin Toomey, GRO Reference: 1884, M Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 242, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "GRO Indexes, Deaths," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for William Benjamin Toomey, GRO Reference: 1940, M Quarter in Forest of Dean, Volume: 06A, Page: 988, Age: 56; "William Benjamin Toomey," *Gloucester Journal*, 02 March 1940, p. 2, *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 4 March 2024)

¹¹ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Charles Toomey, GRO Reference: 1885, S Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 255, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "GRO Indexes, Deaths," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Charles Toomey, GRO Reference: 1926, S Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 218, Age: 40

¹² "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Emily Toomey, GRO Reference: 1887, M Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 255, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index 1915–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2024), entry for Emily Gorin, Death age: 73, Birth date: abt 1887, Registration date: Jul 1960, Registration quarter: Jul-Aug-Sep, Registration district: Forrest of Dean, Inferred county: Gloucestershire, Volume: 7b, Page: 338

¹³ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Alice May Toomey, GRO Reference: 1888, D Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 247, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "Gloucestershire, Church of England Burials, 1813–1988," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2024), entry for Alice May Toomey, Age: 85, Birth date: abt 1890, Burial date: 17 April 1975, Burial place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, Parish as it appears: Churcham

¹⁴ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Henry Thomas Toomey, GRO Reference: 1890, J Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 254, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "GRO Indexes, Deaths," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Henry Thomas Toomey, GRO Reference: 1891, J Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A Page: 173, Age: 1

¹⁵ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Edith Toomey, GRO Reference: 1891, D Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 259, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 7 March 2024), entry for Edith Palmer, Death age: 77, Birth date: abt 1891, Registration date: Jul 1966, Registration quarter: Jul-Aug-Sep, Registration district: Forest of Dean, Inferred County: Gloucestershire, Volume: 7b, Page: 338. Note: Edith, a widow, married Frederick Palmer in 1942.

¹⁶ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Elsie Elizabeth Toomey, GRO Reference: 1896, M Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 231, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Burials, 1813–1988," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 March 2024), entry for Elsie Elizabeth Toomey, Age: 88, Birth date: abt 1896, Burial date: 19 March 1984, Burial place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, England

¹⁷ "GRO Indexes, Births," *General Register Office*

(https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/indexes_search.asp: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for

Dorothy Toomey, GRO Reference: 1897, S Quarter in Westbury on Severn, Volume: 06A, Page: 252, Mother's maiden surname: Coopey; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 4 March 2024), entry for Dorothy Toomey, Death age: 82, Birth date: 15 June 1897, Registration date: Jul 1979, Registration quarter: Jul-Aug-Sep, Registration district: Forest of Dean, Inferred County: Gloucestershire, Volume: 22, Page: 1583

¹⁸ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 2007, Folio: 103, Page: 10

¹⁹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Sub-registration district: Newham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Household schedule number: 54, Piece: 2418, Folio: 62, Page: 10

²⁰ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 March 2024), entry for Ellen Toomey, Registration district: Strand, Sub-registration district: St. Martin in the Field, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 270, Piece: 241, Folio: 95, Page: 54

²¹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 March 2024), entry for Annie S [sic] Toomey, Registration district: Gloucester, Sub-registration district: St Nicholas, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 8, Household schedule number: 56, Piece: 2425, Folio: 157, Page: 10

²² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 March 2024), entry for Charles Toomey, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Sub-registration district: Newham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 49, Piece: 2418, Folio: 53, Page: 7

²³ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 March 2024), entry for Mary Phillips, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Sub-registration district: Newham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 11, Household schedule number: 53, Piece: 2418, Folio: 62, Page: 9

²⁴ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Marriage and Banns, 1754–1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 5 March 2024), entry for Mary Coopey, Event type: Marriage, Marriage date: 4 June 1900, Marriage place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Churcham, Spouse: John Phillips

²⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 19 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Registration district number: 323, Sub-registration district: Newnham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 15217

²⁶ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 19 March 2024), entry for Charles Toomey, Registration district number: 323, Sub-registration district: Newnham, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 15217

²⁷ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2008," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.com: accessed 5 March 2024), entry for Helen [sic] Toomey, Marriage quarter: 2, Marriage year: 1904, District: Strand, County: London, Country: England, Volume: 1B, Page number: 1162, Spouse: Albert Harry West; "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 19 March 2024), entry for Ellen West, Registration district number: 9, Sub-registration district: South St. Pancras, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 23, Piece: 706

²⁸ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Marriage and Banns, 1754–1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 15 March 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Toomey, Event type: Marriage, Marriage date: 4 June 1906, Marriage place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Churcham, Spouse: Charles Albert Bloxham; "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 19 March 2024), entry for Sarah Bloxham, Registration district number: 325, Sub-registration district: Gloucester Southern, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 19, Piece: 15313

²⁹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 19 March 2024), entry for Emily Toomey, Registration district number: 325, Sub-registration district: Gloucester Northern, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 02, Piece: 15282; "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Marriage and Banns, 1754–1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 15 March 2024), entry for Emily Toomey, Event type: Marriage, Marriage date: 12 May 1913, Marriage place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, England, Parish as it appears: Churcham, Spouse: Harry Gorin

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- ³⁰ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 19 March 2024), entry for Alice May Toomey, Registration district number: 333, Sub-registration district: Charlton Kings, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 15526
- ³¹ “Death of Pte Toomey,” *Gloucester Journal*, 16 September 1916, p. 7, *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 14 March 2024); “Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 March 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Service number: 11675; “War Gratuity Calculator,” (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator>: accessed February 2017). Note: Because Thomas’s service record did not survive the 1940 fire at the Army Records Office in Walworth, London, his military career was pieced together using a number of sources. The newspaper article stated that Thomas was the first person from Churcham to enlist in the 8th Battalion, was at the Front for 14 months and was injured on 21 August 1916.
- ³² “Gloucestershire Regiment,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloucestershire_Regiment: accessed 28 March 2024)
- ³³ “Death of Pte Toomey,” op. cit.
- ³⁴ “8th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment (1914–1919),” *Gloucestershire Genealogy* (<https://www.glosgen.co.uk/records/glosreg.htm>: accessed 19 March 2024); “8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment during the Great War,” *The Wartimes Memories Project* ([https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion.php?pid=6182#:~:text=8th%20\(Service\)%20Battalion%2C%20Gloucestershire,to%20Tidworth%20for%20final%20training](https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion.php?pid=6182#:~:text=8th%20(Service)%20Battalion%2C%20Gloucestershire,to%20Tidworth%20for%20final%20training): accessed 18 March 2024); “8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, War Diaries, 1915 July–1919 Mar,” *National Archives, Kew* (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7353054>: accessed 19 March 2024), Reference: WO95/2085/1. Note: Unless otherwise identified, all information about the 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire’s movements during this time period comes from this source.
- ³⁵ Everard Wyrall, *History of the 19th Division 1914–1918*, (London: Edward Arnold & Co. 1932), *Google Books* (https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_History_of_the_19th_Division_1914_19/Zn0yAQAIAAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=History+of+the+19th+Division&printsec=frontcover: accessed 20 July 2024), p. 5
- ³⁶ “8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, War Diaries, 1915 July–1919 Mar,” op. cit., entries for 4, 28 and 30 August 1915. Note: Every bath taken by the men of the battalion was recorded.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, entry for 2 November 1915
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, entries for 2, 14 October 1915, 17 November 1915, 6 January, 24 March and 8 April 1916
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, entry for 22 June 1916; E.D. R. Harrison, “An Absolute Non-Ducker: Carton De Wiart in the Great War,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, vol. 91, no 366 (Summer 2013), pp. 98–107, *JSTOR* (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44231970>: accessed 30 April 2024)
- ⁴⁰ Tony Ball, “The Northumberland Fusiliers and the Somme, 1916: A Case Study in Unit Deployment, Tactical Order and Casualties,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Vol. 85, No. 344 (Winter 2007), p. 310, *JSTOR* (<https://www.jstor.org>: accessed 20 July 2024)
- ⁴¹ Everard Wyrall, op. cit., p. 35
- ⁴² *Lochnagar Crator Foundation* (<https://www.lochnagarcrater.org>: accessed 22 January 2024)
- ⁴³ Everard Wyrall, op. cit., pp. 35–38
- ⁴⁴ E. D. R. Harrison, op. cit., p. 107
- ⁴⁵ “8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, War Diaries, 1915 July–1919 Mar,” op. cit., entry for 5 July 1916
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, entries for 22, 24, 30, and 31 July 1916. Note: Lieutenant Colonel A. Carton de Wiart survived to fight in WW2. Lieutenant Colonel Lord Alexander G. B. Thynne survived the injury of 30 July 1916 but was killed in action on 14 September 1918.
- ⁴⁷ Everard Wyrall, op. cit., p. 58; “56 Infantry Brigade: Headquarters, War Diaries, 1916 Aug 1–1916 Dec 31,” *National Archives, Kew* (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C14084746>: accessed 23 July 2023) Reference: WO 95/2075/3, attached after entry for 31 August 1916, Work Report for Week Ending 16 August 1916
- ⁴⁸ “8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, War Diaries, 1915 July–1919 Mar,” op. cit., entry for 21 August 1916; “Death of Pte Toomey,” op. cit.

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- ⁴⁹ "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 July 2024)
- ⁵⁰ "No.1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/redirect?app=fonandcol&id=2005082&lang=eng>: accessed 5 May 2024), entries for 21, 30 and 31 August 1916
- ⁵¹ "Search Name Index," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (<https://www.bifhsgo.ca>: accessed 6 May 2024), entry for Pte T Toomey. Note: The chaplain recorded Thomas's name as: "J" rather than "T" and his death date as 1 September 1916 rather than 31 August 1916, which is the date recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
- ⁵² "Death of Pte Toomey," *Gloucester Chronicle*, 16 September 1915, p. 5, *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 14 March 2024); "UK, British Army World War 1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 May 2024), entry for Charles Toomey, Regiment name: Gloucestershire Regiment, Service number: 18693
- ⁵³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/201928/thomas-toomey>: accessed 6 May 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Service number: 11675
- ⁵⁴ "British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 14 January 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Regimental number: 11675
- ⁵⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 8 May 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Regimental number: 11675
- ⁵⁶ "Gloucestershire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Edith Toomey, Marriage date: 25 December 1918, Marriage place: Churcham, Gloucestershire, Parish as it appears: Churcham, Father: Thomas Toomey, Spouse: Percival Harry Warren. Note: Edith, a widow, married again in 1942. "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Edith Warren, Registration date: Apr 1942, Registration quarter: Apr-May-Jun, Registration district: Gloucestershire rural, Inferred county: Gloucestershire, Spouse: Frederick Palmer, Volume number: 6a, Page number: 1109
- ⁵⁷ "Death of Pte Toomey," op. cit.; "UK, British Army World War 1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 6 May 2024), entry for Charles Toomey, Regiment name: Gloucestershire Regiment, Service number: 18693
- ⁵⁸ "UK, British Army World War 1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 May 2024), entry for Harry Gorin, Regimental number: 216704
- ⁵⁹ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2024), entries for William, Charles, and Dorothy Toomey, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Registration district number: 323, Sub-district: Newnham, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 9, County: Gloucestershire, Piece: 11963, Schedule number: 45
- ⁶⁰ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Emily Gorin, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Registration district number: 323, Sub-district: Newnham, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 9, County: Gloucestershire, Piece: 11963, Schedule number: 46
- ⁶¹ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Edith Warren, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Registration district number: 323, Sub-district: Newnham, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 7, County: Gloucestershire, Piece: 11961, Schedule number: 34
- ⁶² "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Mary Phillips, Registration district: Westbury on Severn, Registration district number: 323, Sub-district: Newnham, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 9, County: Gloucestershire, Piece: 11963, Schedule number: 61
- ⁶³ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Sarah Ann Bloxham, Registration district: Dursley, Registration district number: 322, Sub-district: Dursley,

Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 1, County: Gloucestershire, Piece: 11953, Schedule number: 248

⁶⁴ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 May 2024), entry for Ellen West, Registration district: Edmonton, Registration district number: 132, Sub-district: East Tottenham, Sub-district number: 4, Enumeration district number: 34, County: Middlesex, Piece: 06853, Schedule number: 135

⁶⁵ *Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum* (<https://soldiers.soldiersofglos.com/show-10-items/matching-toomey/>: accessed 6 June 2024), entry for Thomas Toomey, Service number: 11675