



THORNE SOLDIER'S SACRIFICE IS RECOGNISED AFTER 93 YEARS

A Thorne soldier has finally been recognised by the official body which commemorates those who died in the two world wars 93 years after his death. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records the names of over 1.7 million service men and women who died in the two world wars in its 'Debt of Honour' and maintains their graves or memorials. However, a Thorne soldier, Thomas Ernest Butler, has just been added to the 'Debt of Honour', 93 years after his death in 1918.

Tom Butler was one of 12 children born to John Butler (a rope maker) and his wife Rebecca of Thorne. He served an apprenticeship at Dunston's shipyard in Thorne, before working as a rope man at Glasshoughton Colliery. Tom joined the York and Lancaster Regiment at the outbreak of war in 1914 and served in Gallipoli, Egypt, France and Belgium, rising to the rank of Corporal and winning the Military Medal for gallant deeds at the front. He was invalided out of the army in March 1918 with blindness in one eye. He died in July 1918 and was buried in St. Nicholas Churchyard extension at Thorne.

Local councillor, Tony Brookes, who was researching the men commemorated on Thorne War Memorial, was surprised to find that Tom Butler was not on the CWGC 'Debt of Honour'. Barbara Melling, granddaughter one of Tom's sisters, provided Tom's death certificate which attributed his death to 'Gas on Active Service' and 'Pneumonia'. Tony put the case to the CWGC and it accepted that his death had resulted from his war service. Tom's details are now on the CWGC's website and recorded in the United Kingdom Book of Remembrance. It is likely that CWGC will provide a headstone for Tom in the churchyard where he was buried.

Barbara Melling said 'Now Tom is in the 'Debt of Honour' I know that he won't ever be forgotten. I am very happy, but also sad that it has taken 93 years for him to get the recognition he deserves'.

Tom's brother, Albert, also joined the York and Lancaster Regiment and was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme (1st July 1916); he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. A third brother, Joe, was killed in an accident as a crew member on a hospital ship in Cromarty Firth, two days after Albert died.

Tony Brookes added 'I am delighted that Tom has finally been recognised at such an appropriate time – the run up to Remembrance Day, which is also the 90th anniversary of Thorne War Memorial. There is at least one other WWI Thorne soldier, Albert Venus, who the CWGC has not recognised, so I will now be pushing his case'

