

NO. 139526, Pte. WILLIAM THOMPSON, DCM, MM.

William Thompson was born in Long Melford, Suffolk in about 1895, a son of Charles and Gilly Thompson.

William enlisted into The Suffolk Regiment in Sudbury, and given the service No. 3/844# and entered the theatre of war in France on 11th September 1914. He later joined the 3rd Battalion, Machine Gun Corps with the service No. 139526. The 3rd Battalion M.G.C. was formed on 6th March 1918 from the machine gunners of the 8th, 9th and 76th Brigades (The 2nd Suffolk's, were part of the 8th Brigade, and later on part of the 76th Brigade).

During The Battle of St. Quentin, 21st-23rd March 1918, the 3rd Division, of which the 3rd Battalion M.G.C. was part, were situated North of the Sensee River Valley, between Arras and Cambrai. There was no serious action on this part of the front, apart from some bombardment and several enemy raids took place.

William was killed in action on the first day of the Battle of St. Quentin, aged 23. He has no known grave, and is remembered on the Arras Memorial, Bay 10.

He was entitled to The 1914 Star, British War and Victory medals

The following article appeared in the Suffolk Free Press, dated 10th April 1918.

“A HERO’S DEATH

News reached Mr. Thompson in Long Melford, on Monday, when he was staying with his married daughter, Mrs. Gardiner, Spout Farm, that his son, Pte. W. Thompson D.C.M., M.M, Machine Gun Corps, has been killed in action on 21st March. Pte. W. Thompson lived with his sister in Little Cornard before the war and was a general favourite in the Parish. He had served over three years at the front and had won distinction, having his by bravery secured a Distinguished Conduct Medal and Military Medals.

Last summer his photograph was hung up in the Church as a source of inspiration to courage and patriotism to the children of the Parish.

The deepest sympathy is felt for Mr. And Mrs. Gardiner, who are much respected, and for Mr Thompson, the father.”

He was awarded his Military Medal for “splendid conduct in carrying wounded from the field in face of heavy enemy fire”.

William also had a brother, No. 5438, Pte. Tom Thompson, ‘C’ coy. 1st Batt. Suffolk Regiment, who was killed in action on 3rd October 1915, aged 38, and is remembered on the Loos Memorial, Pas De Calais, France, panel 37/38.

Both men are also remembered on the War Memorial in Long Melford.