

Pte T. Marshall – The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Thomas Marshall was born in Leigh in 1874, the son of John and Mary Marshall. He married Mary Dean of 180 Thornhill Road, Tolworth in 1899 and they later lived in Alley Fields, which was near the southern end of Chapel Lane, Westcott. The 1911 census shows that Thomas was a labourer working on the roads.

Tom Marshall enlisted in Dorking, was drafted into the infantry and joined the 6th Bn The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey Regiment), which was raised at Guildford as one of the ‘Service’ battalions created for the huge numbers who responded to Lord Kitchener’s ‘Your Country Needs You’ appeal for volunteers. The Queen’s Regiment raised 31 battalions during the Great War; 23 of these saw active service.



The 6th Queen’s trained at Purfleet and Aldershot, before moving to France, as part of the 37th Brigade, 12th (Eastern) Division. The battalion disembarked at Boulogne on 1st June 1915 and concentrated at St Omer before taking over a section of the front line at Ploegsteert Wood on 23rd June. Three months later they took part in the Battle of Loos sustaining heavy losses. The ensuing months were spent in training and frontline duties before the Battle of the Somme; they were engaged on the third day of the opening assault and later at Pozieres. On 9th April 1917 they took part in the capture of Observation Ridge on the first day of the Battle of Arras.

We do not know exactly what happened to Thomas Marshall. He was wounded in one of these actions and brought back to England. He died of his wounds on 2nd May 1917 in Woolwich Military Hospital and is buried in Greenwich Cemetery, which holds 556 graves of service personnel from the First World War. Thomas Marshall was 44 and left a widow and seven children. He was the brother of Henry Marshall who is also remembered on our memorial.

After the war the Government issued a bronze plaque to the next of kin of all servicemen and women who lost their lives in the First World War. The 4.5 inch diameter plaque became known as ‘The Dead Man’s Penny’. It bears the name of the deceased and the inscription “*He died for Freedom and Honour*”. The plaque was accompanied by a scroll and a letter from the King which read: “*I join my grateful people in sending you this memorial*”

of a brave life given for others in the Great War". The Westcott Local History Group is privileged to hold the plaque awarded to Thomas Marshall's family.