

THOMAS WESTON BUSS

1891 - 1917

5th Btn & 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)



Surname/Christian name: Buss, Thomas Weston

Rank/Service No: Second Lieutenant

Regiment/Unit: 5th and 6th Btn. The Buffs, (East Kent Regiment)



Regiment Badge

Date of Death: 9th April 1917

Age: 26

Type of Casualty: Killed in Action

Theatre of War: Western Front

Born/Year/Location: Born 27 January 1891 in Horsmonden, Kent.

Enlisted/Attestation: on 22/02/1914

Son of/Address: Son of Mr and Mrs Edwin Buss of Victoria, B.C. Canada

Prior Occupation: Lumber Millman

Buried/Commemorated/Memorial: ARRAS MEMORIAL

Personal and Family Information: Thomas Weston Buss, born 27th January 1891, was one of eight children of Edwin Buss and his wife Ann (Weston), six born at Elphicks Farm, Horsmonden, Kent, the two youngest were born in the Cranbrook district.

He was educated at Tonbridge School for Boys prior to emigrating with his parents to Canada.

Thomas's Siblings: Benjamin Buss, b.1886, Edwin Buss, b.1887, Mary Muriel Buss, b.1889, b.1891, Ann Isabel Buss, b.1892, Helen Elizabeth Buss, b.1895, Edith Frances Buss, b.1898, Henry Buss, b.1902.

Family History: The Buss family were farmers and around c1845 Thomas, his wife Mary (Watson), (**Thomas's Grt Grandparents**) and their son Benjamin came to Horsmonden from Merriment Farm, Hurst Green, East Sussex. They leased both Spelmonden and Elphicks Farms and Benjamin took on the running of Elphicks which was the family home.

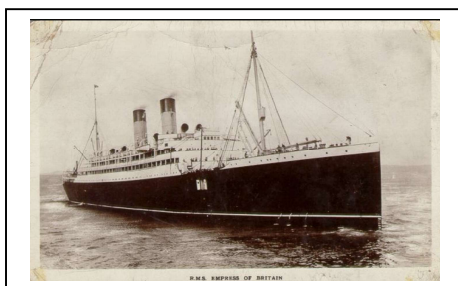
Thomas's Grandparents, Benjamin and Mary Buss (Cheeseman) had three sons, Thomas, b 1853, Benjamin b 1857 and Edwin b 1859. Edwin the youngest son was raised at Elphicks Farm and along with his two brothers, were baptised at St. Margaret's Church. Edwin mentioned is the father of 2nd Lieut. Thomas Weston Buss.

On 4th November 1885, Edwin married Ann Weston, farmer's daughter from Benenden, Kent. The family continued to live at Elphicks until 1900 moving to Goddards Farm in Cranbrook where they farmed for five years before moving to Springhill Farm in Penshurst, Kent in 1905. The family emigrated to Canada in 1907 except Thomas older brother Benjamin who stayed on to manage Elphicks Farm in Horsmonden with his uncle Benjamin.

The family tradition was to keep the Christian names Benjamin, Thomas and Edwin in the family

Emigration: In early August 1907, Thomas emigrated to Canada with his parents Edwin and Ann and siblings, apart from his elder brother Benjamin who had stayed in England to assist his Uncle Benjamin at Elphicks Farm, Horsmonden.

Departing from Liverpool to St. Johns on the "Empress of Britain" *, Thomas then aged 16, arrived at St. Johns, New Brunswick, Canada, on the 27th August 1907 moving on to Vancouver, B.C. (*see image below)



INSTRUCTIONS TO PURSERS. - Each passenger should be given a card indicating the number of sheet and line on sheet his name is to be found on.

Passage as by Railway or Ocean	Amount of Cash To be paid by Insurement Agent of Landing	NAME OF PASSENGER.	Age at Birth	Sex	Color of Hair	Color of Eyes	Profession, Occupation or Calling of Passenger.	Nation or Country of Birth.	Condition in which taken from which Passenger came	Number of the Deck or Cabin	Number of the Berth	Who are to be described
		2 nd class										
		Charles Sumner	30	M	Black	Blue	Teacher	England	London			Accepted No.
		Ann		F			Wife					
		Edith	29	F			Daughter	England	London			
		John	21	M			Student	England	London			
		Edith	17	F			Daughter	England	London			
		Ann	14	F			Daughter					
		Mary	18	F			Daughter					
		Thomas	16	M			Daughter					
		Ann	14	F			Daughter					
		Edith	12	F			Daughter					
		Edith	8	F			Daughter					
		Mary	4	F			Daughter					

Buss family Passenger list on Empress of Britain (image i)

Descendants * Thomas Buss's closest family will be the descendants of his siblings in Canada. Family names in Canada, apart from Buss, may include descendants from his sister's marriages, possibly in the Saanich area or Oak Bay B.C. and include: **George Mankubin Wood**, husband of **Mary Muriel Buss**, **Ann Isabel Buss married William Paterson** who died in 1917, her 2nd marriage to **Karl B Spurgin**. **Helen Elizabeth Buss married a John Mudie Milligan** and **Edith Frances Buss married Reginald Leake Gale**.

*(Please See footnote 3)

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Relevant Military Record/Service details:

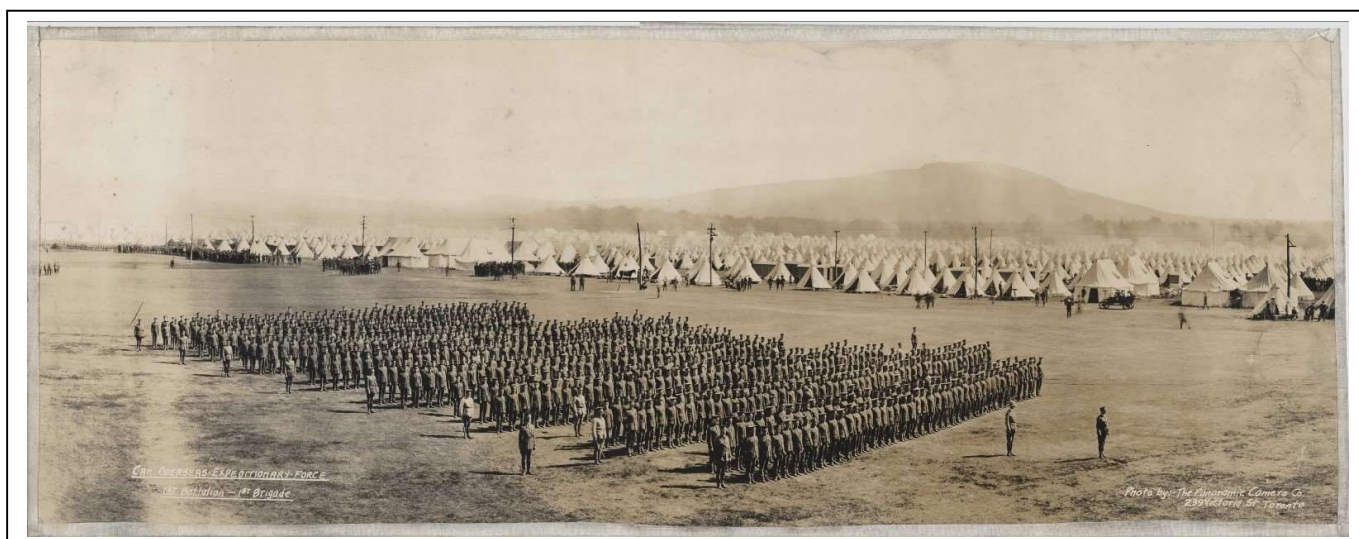
Thomas joined the 5th Canadian Garrison Artillery in 1911 and was placed in the reserves. He enlisted in 1914, and joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Valcartier, Quebec Province.

When Great Britain declared war with Germany at midnight on the 4t Aug. 1914, Canada was also officially at war.

London asked for 25,000 troops from Canada, and following a general call to arms, thousands of young Canadians enlisted and were sent to Valcartier Camp, Quebec, to be attested and trained.

Thomas was one of the young men who volunteered for overseas service as part of the 1st Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Thomas was attested at Valcartier on the 22nd September 1914. (image ii p5) His father Edwin was named as next of kin, whose current address was 799 Linkleas Ave., Victoria, B.C., and Thomas's occupation was a Lumber Millman, aged 23 years 9 months and unmarried.



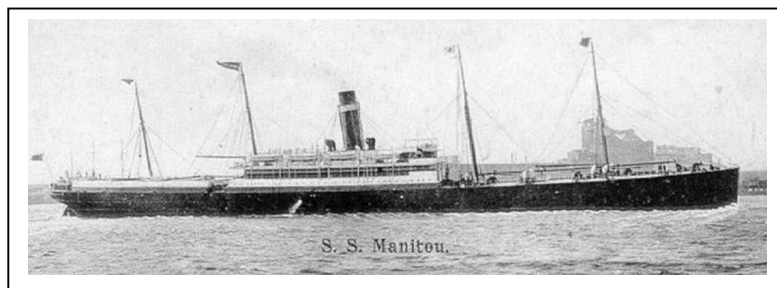
Valcartier Camp, Quebec was the primary training base for the First Canadian Contingent in 1914.

He had 3 years previous military experience with the 5th British Columbia Garrison Artillery Reserves prior to his attestation 22nd September 1914 – his medical examination carried out the same day (image iii p5).

Thomas was a tall young man at 5' 11", with a 39" fully expanded chest. His hair and complexion were described as fair and he had blue eyes. Distinguishing marks were an appendicitis scar and two scars on his right index finger. He was passed fit to serve. (image iv p5)

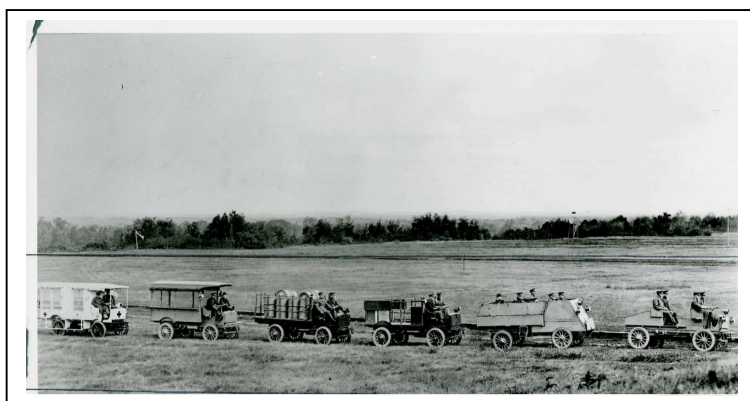
After a short training period at Valcartier Camp, the first contingent C.E.F. sailed for England, some 30,000 men, and landed at Plymouth in October 1914.

Cpl. Thomas Buss embarked on board the S.S. Manitou on the 3rd Oct 1914 for a two-week voyage sailing to Plymouth, then on to Salisbury Plain by rail



S.S. Manitou

At Salisbury, the Canadians trained for four months, most of it in terrible mud, as England had experienced one of the wettest winters in decades. Whilst the troops stood up well to the awful conditions, Canadian equipment and machinery didn't and much of it was discarded in favour of the British types. It was at Salisbury Plain that the Canadians learned basic soldiering in England after a hasty mobilization and a difficult, uncomfortable winter. Their real training would come at the Front.



Vehicles used by the First Contingent, some were very good but the supply of spare parts was uncertain and more English vehicles were being used.

Following their four months of training at Salisbury Plain, the 1st Bde Canadian Field Artillery (CFA) embarked for France and Flanders and were held in reserve at Vlamertinge, west of Ypres, until 23 April, 1915 when Thomas's promotion to Sergeant came into effect.

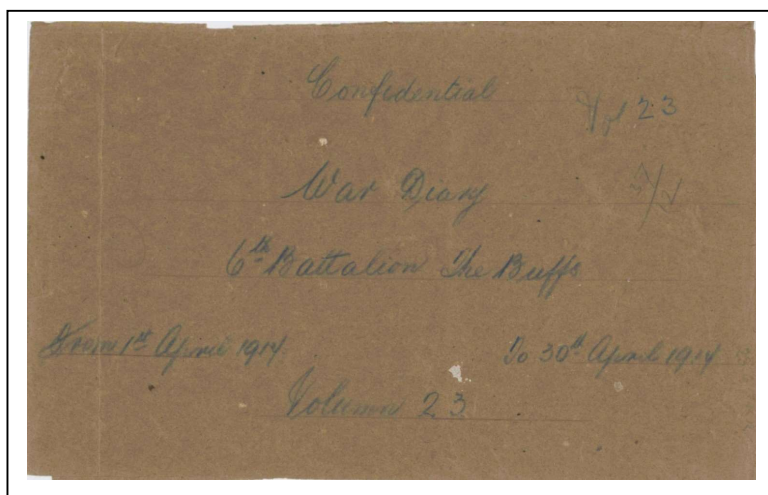
Having endured some of the heaviest fighting around Ypres, Thomas was granted 9 days leave at the end of March 1916.

Thomas was nominated for a commission and transferred to the 5th Battalion, East Kent Regiment which was the regiment his brother Capt. Benjamin Buss had served in. He was later attached to the 6th Battalion, The Buffs, East Kent Regiment.

In April 1917 the British and Canadian Forces planned an attack at Arras and Vimy Ridge north of the Somme sector, while the French attacked to the South. Preceded by a huge artillery barrage over five days, the joint assault by four Canadian and ten British divisions took place on Easter Monday, 9th April 1917.

On this day, sadly, 2nd Lieut. Thomas Buss lost his life.

War Diary entries



The following is a transcribed War Diary section covering the events leading up to the death of 2nd Lt. Thomas Weston Buss - 5th Bn. The Buffs, attached to 6th Bn. Buffs

ARRAS 9th April 1917:

Zero hour. The Battalion was all formed up in Reserve Trench, duplicate reserve, and BROAD WALK by 3.30am.

Zero hour, 5.30am: Our artillery and Machine Guns opened an intense fire on the German lines, and at the same time the Battalion left the trenches moving to the attack in artillery formation in support in support to the 6th Battalion, The Queen's.

The 6th Royal West Kent was in support on the left to the 7th Battalion East Surrey Regt. On the right was the 13th Battalion King's (Liverpool) Regt.

Battalion boundaries in crossing our front-line wire: - (ARRAS Tr. Map)
South, map ref. G.30.C.8., North, map ref. G.30.C.9.6.

The Battalion moved forward - C Company on the right, D Company on the left. A Company + 1.5 pl, B Company right support, B Company less 1.5 pl left support, and Battalion Headquarters.

After passing through the 6th Queen's, the first objective - the BLACK LINE - (HAVANT LANE), - road at map ref, H.31.a.6.7., was quickly taken without much loss.

A two hours bombardment of the enemy's second system - the BLUE LINE - forward, and the advance was resumed as the barrage lifted forward. More opposition was encountered than before, snipers and machine guns being active on both flanks. After some stiff hand to hand fighting, D Company were able to get round to the flank, and by rifle grenading concealed machine guns, pushed forward in shell holes, captured HOULETTE WORK, their objective on the BLUE LINE.

C Company on the right were troubled by salvos of machine gun fire operating from the right flank from the ruins near ESTAMINET CORNER - By means of Lewis Gun fire and rifle grenading these were however eventually silenced, and C Company was able to proceed. The BLUE LINE was then consolidated and Lewis Guns pushed forward and strong points dug.

2.18pm: The 35th Infantry passed through this Battalion's final objective

Casualties of the Battalion were: - Officers killed - 2nd/Lt. (acting Captain) R.G.A. MONEY, **2nd/Lt. T.W. BUSS**. Officers wounded - Capt. H.R. GORDON, 2nd/Lt. N. WILKS, 2nd/Lt. C.F. GOOD, 2nd/Lt. FIGGIS 2nd/Lt. THORNLEY, 2nd/Lt. W.H. SQUIRE, 2nd/Lt. T.A. BALDWIN."

FIELD STATE Reports: (Transcription of details from original Field Reports below)

The War Diary doesn't give the casualty figures for the "Other Ranks", only the Officer casualties are shown. The "Field State" reports below, for the 5th April 1917, show that there were 52 officers and 1017 Other Ranks making up the battalion strength.

The "Field State" record for the 12th April 1917 is missing, but the "Field State" record for the 19th April 1917 shows the battalion had lost 12 officers and 163 Other Ranks following the actions from 5.30 am. on the 9th April, described in the War Diary.

The last Field State report (not shown), dated 26th April, 1917, shows that there were still 40 officers but the battalion had been reinforced to 979 Other Ranks, an additional 125 men

Field State Reports

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Following details were published on a Tonbridge 'at War' website



2nd LIEUT. T.W. BUSS.
5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment) (T.F.).
DAY BOY 1906. AGED 25.
Killed in action at Battle of Arras, April 9th 1917.

BUSS , THOMAS WESTON

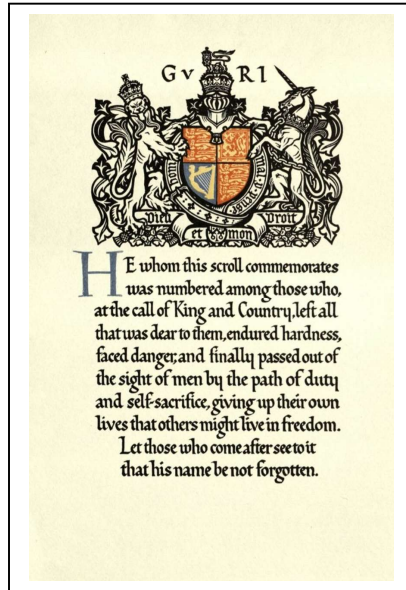
2ND LIEUT / 5TH BATTN. THE BUFFS (EAST KENT REGIMENT) (T.F.).

Died at 09 April 1917

BIOGRAPHY:

2ND LIEUT. THOMAS WESTON BUSS, 5TH BATTN. THE BUFFS (EAST KENT REGIMENT) (T.F.). KILLED IN ACTION IN THE BATTLES OF ARRAS, APRIL 9TH, 1917. AGED 25. At the School 1904-6 (Day Boy). 2nd Lieut. T. W. Buss was the third son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Buss, of Victoria, British Columbia, and was born at Horsmonden, Kent. His eldest brother, Benjamin Buss (D.B. 1900-2), a Captain in the 5th Buffs, was severely wounded in Mesopotamia, January 11th 1916, with the result that he lost an eye, and, though he subsequently served for nearly two years in India and Mesopotamia, he eventually died on November 4th 1918. after an operation necessitated by this wound. T. W. Buss entered the School in September 1904, and on leaving from the Modern Fifth in December 1906, went out to Canada. He came to England with the first Canadian Contingent, in October 1914, and going over to France in January 1915, served with a Battery of Canadian Field Artillery as Corporal and then as Sergeant for nearly two years. Helping to hold the short British line in the early stages of the War, he saw much service in the constant fighting in the neighbourhood of Ypres, and was commended by his superior officers for bravery in the field, and later served with his Battery for some two months on the Somme. Towards the end of 1916 he was posted to an Officer Cadet School, and was gazetted to the 5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment), December 19th 1916. He was killed in action on April 9th 1917, the first day of the great Arras offensive. One of his senior officers, writing to relatives in England, said: - "You will I expect have heard already the sad news that Lieutenant Tom Buss, the BuffEs, was killed in action on the 9th. I can hardly put in words how terribly we feel the loss of your nephew. I have only known him since the beginning of this year, and in that time we became very great friends. All the officers of the Battalion miss him terribly, and the only consolation we have is that the action was a brilliant success."

War Medals, Plaque and Scroll

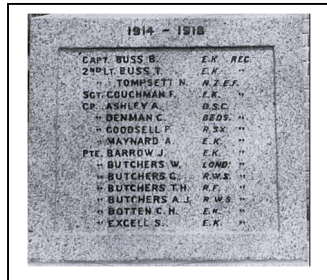


British War and

Star, British War and Victory Medals, Memorial Scroll and Memorial Plaque (Death Penny)

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Horsmonden War Memorial.



1922

Photo of respective part of WM

Present Day

Oak Memorial Plaque in Horsmonden's Memorial building.



2nd Lieut. Buss shown left block, row 3, no. 2

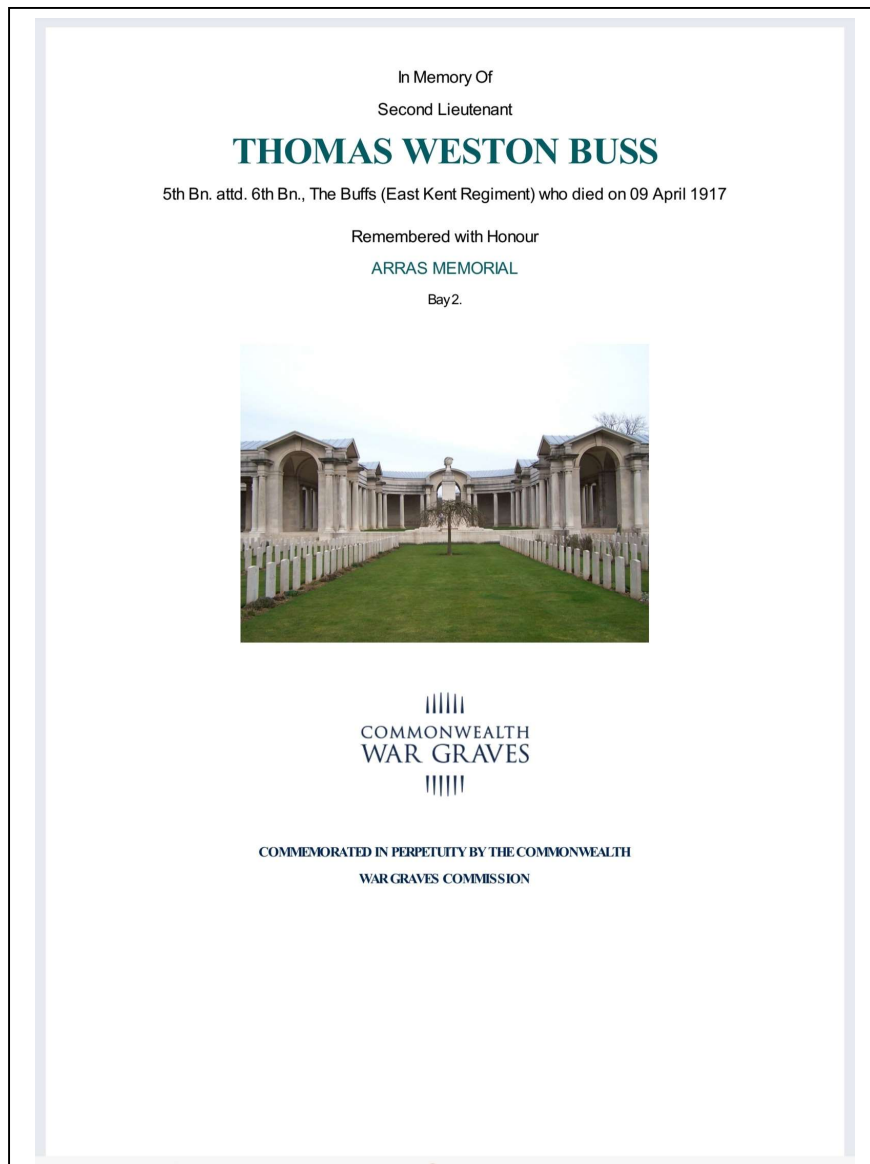
St Margaret's Church Memorial Scroll

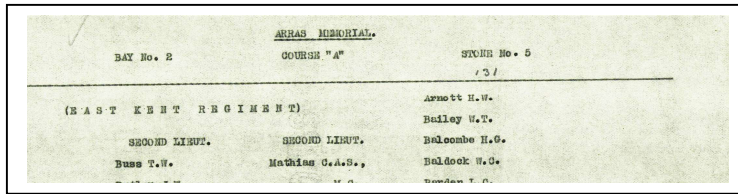


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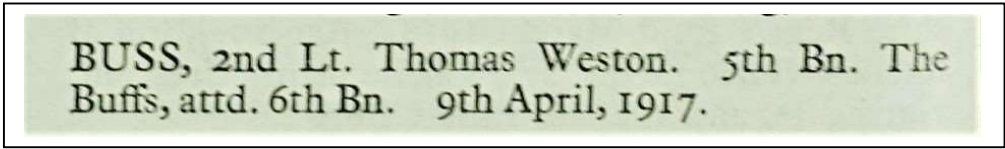
Commonwealth War Graves Commission Entry

CWGC CERTIFICATE



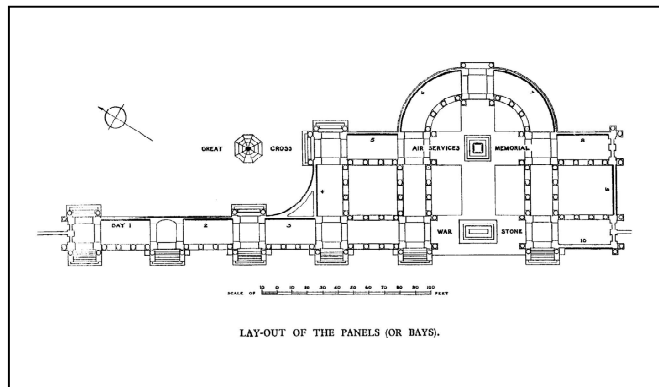


CWGC Arras Panel



CWGC Unit text

ARRAS MEMORIAL



Cemetery Plan

2nd Lieut. Buss is commemorated in Bay 2

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2nd Lieut. Thomas Buss



1891 – 1917

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Footnotes and Additional Information:

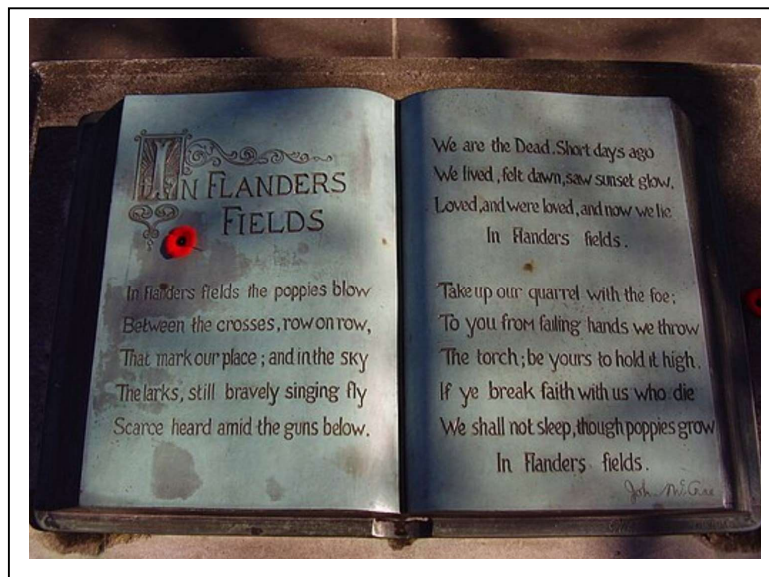
Footnote 1: Second Lieutenant Thomas's brother, Captain **Benjamin Buss**, also lost his life during the Great War and is commemorated on the Horsmonden War Memorial.

Footnote 2: Medical Description on Enlistment Paper: -

The document Certificate of medical examination (image iii) * shown on page 5 was signed by Major John McCrae the Canadian physician and Medical Officer with the Canadian Field Artillery and also the poet who wrote the famous poem 'In Flanders Fields'



Major John McCrae



'In Flanders Fields'

Footnote 3: We believe there are nephews and nieces living in Vancouver B.C. today in the names of Buss, Wood, Paterson, Spurgin, Milligan and Leake-Gale. We are continuing research in the hope that we will be able to learn more about 2nd Lieutenant Thomas Weston Buss and whether his war medals and additional documents can be located, also to inform the descendants of Thomas about our research findings.

Additional Family Information:

Thomas's Uncle Benjamin who farmed Elphicks died in 1925 and his obituary in the local newspaper is shown below.

The Late Mr. Benjamin Buss of Horsmonden

Through the sudden death of Mr. Benjamin Buss, Horsmonden has lost a well-known and familiar figure. Mr. Buss was the last of a family of agriculturalists and hop growers and was the second son of the late Mr. B. Buss of Spelmonden, who had in his turn succeeded to the business of the late Mr. Thomas Buss.

He was suddenly taken ill on Wednesday week and was removed to a nursing home where he died at 11.30 on the following night, at the age of 69.

The late Mr. Buss, who was a bachelor, was born at Elphicks, and at one time carried on business there, also at Lewes Heath, Park, and Hazel Street Farms, and was for many years connected with the firm of Messrs. Wild, Neame and Co., hop factors.

He was for some years assisted by his nephew, Capt. B. Buss (a fourth generation of the family) who died of wounds in the great war.

The funeral, the arrangements for which, were in the hands of Messrs. F. and T. Lambert, took place at St. Margaret's Church, Horsmonden.

Research and Compilation:

L Burgess and J Freeman

HORSMONDEN HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP