
Thomas William BETTS (1894-c. 1954)

Thomas William Betts' connection to South Lopham is by birth and residency.

Two of Thomas's brothers also fought in the Great War; Arthur Thomas sadly was killed but thankfully Samuel Richard survived.

Thomas William BETTS, son of Thomas BETTS (c. 1859-c. 1904) and Hannah Wright DOWNING (1858-c. 1932), was born on 29 May 1894 in South Lopham, Norfolk. He was baptised on 8 September 1895 in South Lopham - parents Thomas (labourer) and Hannah.

Thomas appeared in the 1901 Census at Rectory Road in South Lopham - 6, scholar, living with parents Thomas (42, threshing engine driver) and Hannah (42), and siblings Margaret M (14), Elsie Jane (13), Arthur Thomas (11, scholar), Bessie Hannah (9, scholar), Samuel Richard (8, scholar), Henry Albert (3) and Kate Thirza (1).¹

On 2 Apr 1911, (the 1911 Census), he was living at Low Common in South Lopham - 16, engine driver, living with mother Hannah (widow, 52, parish relief), siblings Henry Albert (13, scholar) and Kate Thirza (11, scholar), and boarder Samuel Downing (60, gardener).²

Very little has been found about Thomas's military service. He was named in the Absent Voters list for South Lopham, "M2/051046 Pte., 60th Aux. St. Co. R.E.". From the service number, the Campaign Medal List shows him as in the Royal Army Service Corps, an acting corporal. (The difference between R.E. and R.A.S.C. is inexplicable, maybe human error?) It also gives his discharge date as 2 April 1920, under Para. 392 (XXVIII) K.R's, demobilisation.

In the 1921 Census (19 Jun 1921) he appeared at 41 Woodbridge Road in Ipswich, Suffolk - 27, engine driver for army transport, a visitor in the household of Sidney Garnham (34, builder and carpenter) and his family.³

Thomas married **Beatrice E MARTIN** circa 1928.

He was recorded on the 1939 Register living at 195 Altmore Avenue in East Ham, Essex - b. 29.05.1894, lorry driver, living with wife Beatrice E (b. 13.06.1897, unpaid domestic duties), Elizabeth L MARTIN (b. 14.10.1904, embroidress) and Charles E PIPER (b. 11.07.1898, heavy motor driver).⁴

He died circa 1954 - aged 60 years.⁵

Spouse:

Beatrice E MARTIN was born on 13 June 1897. She died circa 1964.

Sources

1. *1901 Census*. RG13 Piece 1866 Folio 21 Page 5 Schedule 35. Cit. Date: 31 March 1901.
2. *1911 Census*. RG14 PN11746 RD239 SD2 ED19 SN87A. Cit. Date: 2 April 1911.
3. *1921 Census*. RG15 Piece 09444 Schedule 60 RD 213 RS 2 ED 21. Cit. Date: 19 June 1921.
4. *1939 Registration*. RG101/1014G/012/11 Letter Code: CAQI. Cit. Date: 30 September 1939.
5. *CR Death*. 1954 Q4 W"ollwich London Vol 5D Page 807. Cit. Date: Q4 1954.