

ALMOND, THOMAS 201200 Pte 'C' Coy 1/4th Battalion 164th Brigade 55th Division

THE LOYAL NORTH LANCASHIRE REGIMENT

Born Leyland Enlisted Preston Living Leyland

Killed in Action France / Flanders 18th November 1917

Ref: 'Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919', Part 50.

Chorley Guardian and Leyland Hundred Advertiser Sat. 15 December 1917

Mr Thomas Almond of 4 Heaton Street, Leyland has received official intimation of the death in action in France on 18th November 1917, of his son Pte T. Almond, Loyal North Lancs. Regiment.

He was 23 years of age and enlisted at the outbreak of war, previous to which he was employed at the Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Works. He attended Leyland St. John's Church. (Photo).

Note: The row of old hand-loom weaver's cottages on Heaton Street are now demolished.

Leyland St. Andrew's Parish Magazine January 1918

Thomas Almond was included in the men for whom a Memorial Service was held at St. Andrew's, Leyland Parish Church on 13th December 1917.

Thomas Almond's name appears on the following local memorials:-

War Memorial, Church Road, Leyland
Mural Plaque in St. Andrew's, Leyland

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

With no known grave, Thomas Almond is commemorated on the:-

THIÈPVAL MEMORIAL, SOMME, FRANCE

His name appears on Pier 11 Face A. No next-of-kin information.

The Thièpval Memorial is located a little south of the village of Thièpval, which is about 8 km north-east of Albert. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), it is considered one of the finest buildings of his distinguished career. The massive structure, standing 150 feet high, dominates the old battlefield and is a fitting tribute to the 72,085 men –

“THE MISSING OF THE SOMME”

Continued

Leyland St. Andrew's Baptismal Register

1894 – Bapt. 25th May Thomas, son of Thomas and Ellen Almond of Leyland.

The War History of the 1st/4th Battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment 1914-1918

In the run-up to the Battle of Cambrai, which started on the 20th November 1917, the 1/4th Battalion of the 'Loyals' were in the line some 2.5 km east of Lempire, 12 km south of Cambrai.

On the morning of 18th November, 'C' Company were in the front line at Gillemont Farm with 'D' Company on their right. 'B' Company was in support with 'A' Company in reserve.

To quote the official 'History' of the Battalion: 'At 5.30 a.m. the Bosche opened a hurricane bombardment on the Gillemont Farm sector with trench mortars etc., brought up the night before, and reduced the front trench to a shapeless mass of craters: out of twelve posts only two Sergeants and half-a-dozen men were left alive' (a 'post' usually consisted of an N.C.O. and six men).

From Appendix B of the 'History' – the 'Casualty Lists'.

A close perusal of the Casualty Lists, however, gives a different picture. In this list, compiled from Battalion records after the war, we find the total casualties were 71:- Killed in Action (KIA) 19; Died of Wounds (DOW) 1; Wounded (W) 31; Missing (MSG) 4; Prisoners of War (Returned) (POW) 16.

The above is comprised of 3 Officers and 68 other ranks: the officers were 2nd Lt J. A. Firth (KIA); 2nd Lt F. Shippobottom (DOW) and 2nd Lt R Hornby (W). Other ranks were not usually named in these accounts, but Sgts Hartley and Hogg who came out of the action with the 'half a dozen men', were both awarded the Military Medal.

All four Companies were involved in this action: Pte Almond was in 'C' Company and, as can be seen by a break down of the casualties by Company, 'C' Coy at Gillemont Farm sector bore the brunt of the attack:-

'A' Coy KIA 0; DOW 0; W 4; MSG 0; POW 0 = 4
'B' Coy KIA 5; DOW 0; W 4; MSG 0; POW 2 = 11
'C' Coy KIA 12; DOW 0; W 19; MSG 4; POW 12 = 47
'D' Coy KIA 1; DOW 0; W 3; MSG 0; POW 2 = 6

Total of the above is 68. To this must be added the 3 officers who are not listed by Company: giving a total of 71 casualties. The total Battalion casualties, therefore, for 18th November 1917 were :-

KIA 19 DOW 1 W 31 MSG 4 POW 16

The above description of the engagement in which Thomas Almond lost his life, is given as an example of how regimental or, in this case, battalion records, can be used. Availability of Regimental and Battalion histories can be a problem, but we have the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment history in Leyland Library and I have been fortunate to have had the loan of that of the 1st/4th Battalion.

Continued

Histories of other regiments can usually be obtained via the Library Service, but even here one can

experience difficulty as many of these books are now very rare. However, the Naval and Military Press are now reprinting many of these volumes that were often written in the years shortly after the end of the First World War and which now command quite high prices.

It can, however, be a rewarding exercise if one has a relative who died in the Great War, and can add much to one's family history.

Almond, Thomas.

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