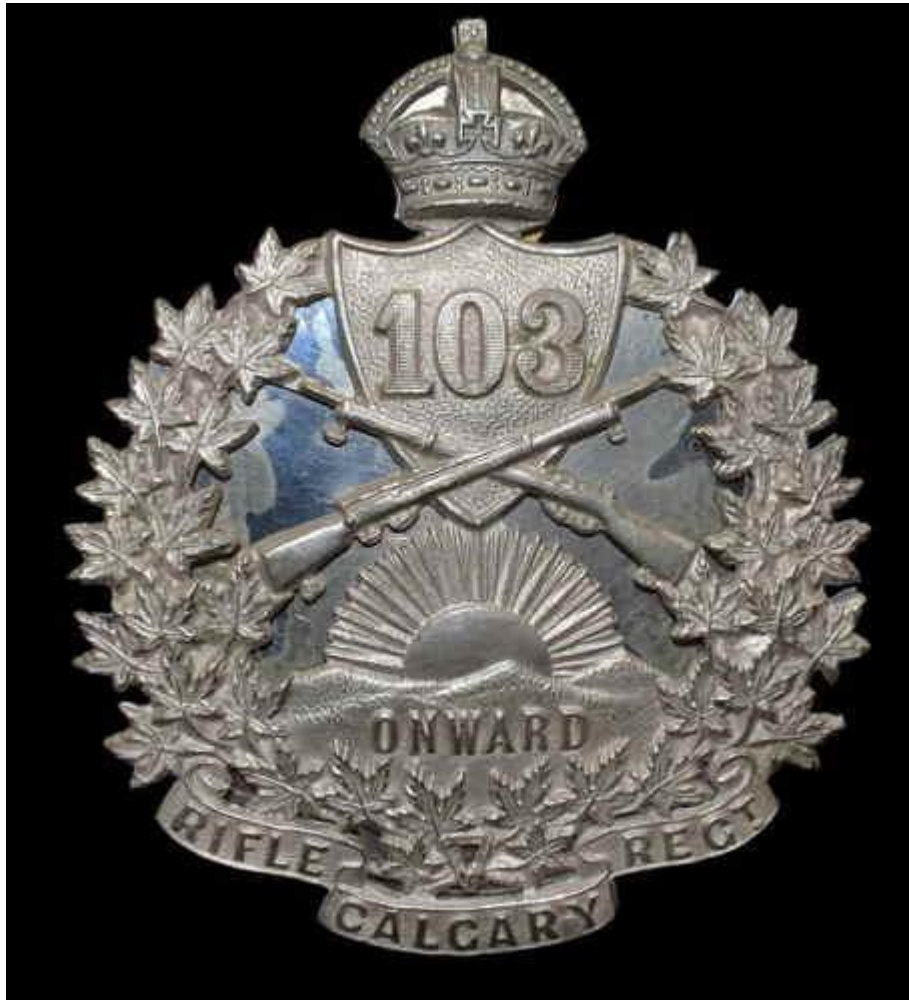


**Grange U3A Family and Social History  
Group Project on the Grange WW1 War Memorial**

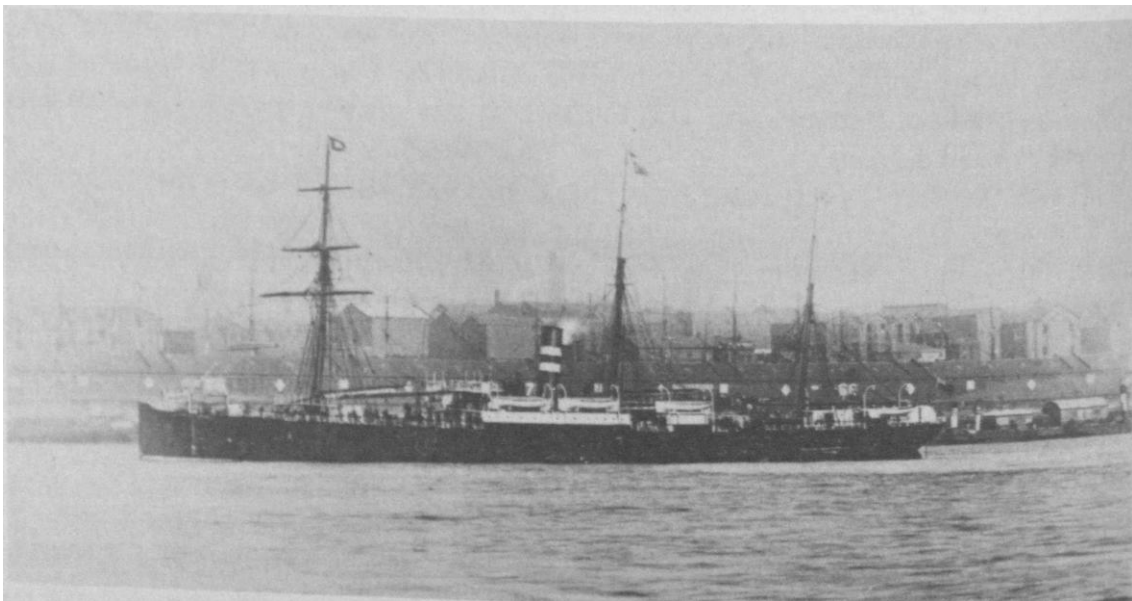


***A short biography in commemoration of  
Thomas Burrow 1893 - 1915***

## ***A short biography in commemoration of Thomas Burrow 1893 – 1915***

Thomas Burrow was born at Grange Fell, Grange over Sands on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1893. He was the youngest of nine children of James and Agnes Burrow of Hill Farm, Cartmel.

By 1911 Thomas was a draper's apprentice, probably in Grange. He then decided to leave England from Liverpool in 1913, when he emigrated to Canada aboard the SS Lake Manitoba, arriving at Quebec on the 27<sup>th</sup> April having used British Bonus assisted passage scheme. He described his trade as "Draper".



**SS Lake Manitoba**

Thomas had become a "Dry Goods Clerk" living in Alberta. He enlisted with his local militia, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Calgary Rifles in 1913. After the outbreak of war volunteered for service over sea.

Thomas then joined Canadian Over-seas Expeditionary Force at Valcartier Camp, Quebec, on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1914. He passed his medical where his physical details were listed as being 21 years, 5 months old, 5 ft 7 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tall with clean light complexion, blue eyes and light hair. His only distinguishing marks were three old vaccination marks on his right arm.

Thomas then spent a period of training at Camp Valcartier where he was trained under the command of Lieutenant –Colonel R. L .Boyle. Boyle was a very able organiser who created an efficient and well disciplined battalion.

In the October of 1914, Thomas' 10<sup>th</sup> battalion set sail for England to become part of Canada's first fighting division in Europe. The "First Contingent" served as an individual division under British command.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion was assigned to an old but large Allan Line ship with the staff of the No.1 Canadian General Hospital.

The uneventful journey over took eleven days until the ship arrived at Plymouth.

In England the battalion was sent to Salisbury Plain for many months of training. They endured the most appalling weather during which hundreds of men suffered from the dreaded spotted fever and pneumonia. Only those who were there can imagine how awful the everyday conditions were that these men had to endure.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> 1914 \* the 10<sup>th</sup> along with other units of the Division were inspected by Field Marshal Earl Roberts. Roberts took the salute of the march past. *"After the march past the Division was formed into a hollow square, around the saluting base, to be addressed by him. The victor of Kandahar displayed considerable emotion as he walked forward and faced the closely packed ranks of Canada's stalwarts. These quietly confident, muscular and finely trained volunteers, who had come three thousand miles to uphold Freedom and the Empire, impressed him deeply. They satisfied his professional eye and gave promise of great hitting power."*

On February 4<sup>th</sup> 1915 the Division was inspected by the King and Lord Kitchener on their final "Royal Review". Three days later on the 7<sup>th</sup> February the battalions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade left Salisbury Plain for Plymouth?

The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion entrained on the 10<sup>th</sup> February and boarded the transport the same day. The journey was expected to be a short one so the ships were packed with men. The 10<sup>th</sup> were fully equipped and could barely turn round such was the shortage of space. The journey turned out to be a nightmare as bad weather in the form of mountainous seas and high winds tossed the ships around as soon as they left the estuary. The ships wallowed in the Bay of Biscay for three days before the 10<sup>th</sup> disembarked on the 15<sup>th</sup> February. The men

suffered greatly from seasickness and the cramped and confined quarters on board. The march from the port to the billets was a severe trial for all.

The following day the battalion was marched to the entraining point from whence they were taken to within striking distance of the front line. Thomas would have had to endure all of these distressing and soul destroying events.

The battalion arrived at Hazebruck in Flanders at 7.00am on the 17<sup>th</sup> February. They tumbled out of the freight wagons for breakfast and a rest. Sadly, their dreams were not to be and they set out to march to Borre where they had two days of rest. They continued their march to the Ploegsteert area and arrived at their billets in Romarin on the afternoon of 20<sup>th</sup> February. This place was where they would receive their training in real trench warfare.

The Battalion quickly learnt about the reality of front line tactics and survival. The icy cold mud, evil odour and constant unfightable menace of shells and mortar bombs effectively crushed any idea about the romance and glamour of war.

Despite the inevitable strafing of the trenches the Battalion suffered no casualties until the 25<sup>th</sup> February when one man was killed and two were wounded. Two more casualties occurred before the 10<sup>th</sup> was relieved to move to the Armentieres Sector.

The Battalion arrived in Fleur Bais, a small village south of Armentieres where the men had nothing worse than the monotonies of trench duty. However, this seemingly "peaceful scenario" had "*the-never-to-be-avoided casualties*" background menace. It was during this period that the Battalion War Diary recorded "*Monday March 22 1915, Location: In trenches, 8.30pm Relieved. Died of wounds 20447 PTE, BURROW, THOMAS.*"

This briefest of mentions (*which is unusual in diaries*) of Thomas' demise can be supplemented by the information in "De Ruvigny's- Roll of Honour" entry which states: "*He came to England with the First Canadian contingent, was severely wounded at 3.00pm on the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1915, in action at Neuve Chapelle, and died the following evening; unm. He was buried at Merivale\*\* (sic) Cemetery, France. \*\* Merville Cemetery.*"



### **Merville Cemetery**

Thomas had been taken to No 6 Casualty Clearing Station at Merville , where he had died of his wounds. Perhaps he had been unlucky to be hit by a mortar, shell or machine gun bullet.

*Author: David Clapp*