

Ralph Brian Thomas
Serjeant 2nd. Battalion Scots Guards
Service number 2692782
Aged 33 (or 31, depending on the source)

Ralph was born at Hackney on 1st June 1911, the son of Mabel Thomas. Mabel had been born at Corfe Castle, the daughter of William Thomas a saddler. At the census of 1911 Mabel was working in Portman Square, London as a servant.

Ralph had a son, Sydney, born in February 1933, and who was brought up by his maternal grandparents.

Ralph married Dorothy (aka Doris) Vera Eves in the last quarter of 1933 at Westminster. They had a son in the second quarter of 1934.

In 1939 Ralph was living with his wife at 115 Glastonbury Road, Morden, and was a foreman leather worker, who then joined the 1st battalion Scots Guards, as a lance sergeant.

By the end of October 1943, the Allies were facing the German winter defensive position known as the Gustav Line, which stretched from the river Garigliano in the west to the Sangro in the east. Initial attempts to breach the western end of the line were unsuccessful and it was not until 17 January 1944 that the Garigliano was crossed, and Minturno taken two days later. The burials at Minturno War Cemetery are mainly those of the heavy casualties incurred in crossing the Garigliano in January 1944.

An excerpt from the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards diaries:-

"31st January

Sergeant Thomas of G Company was killed in the evening when out on a patrol. Another man trod on a S mine, which wounded three of them, but Sergeant Thomas jumped into a slit trench to escape, and set off either a booby trap or another mine."

Ralph died on 31st January 1944, aged 33. He is buried at Minturno War Cemetery, Italy. Plot reference IV, B, 22

The Western Gazette of Friday 7th April 1944 carried the following announcement:-

"On Active Service – Thomas – In January 1944, Sergt. Ralph Brian Thomas, Scots Guards, grandson of the late William Thomas and Mrs Thomas "Cambrai", Corfe Castle, killed in action in Italy, aged 31 years.

Probate – Thomas Ralph Brian otherwise Ralph of 115 Glastonbury Road Morden Surrey died 31 January 1944 on war service Administration Llandudno 29 June to Dorothy Vera Thomas, widow Effects £474 4s 3d

His medals were sold on Ebay in July 2020



Commemorated on the memorial at Corfe Castle