



In 1891 the Bridgewater family were living on the Upperton Road, Tillington, in what must have been a large house because already William and Fanny had six children and were also accommodating two lodgers. By 1901 the family had grown by another four children, including Thomas George. He was born in early 1897 and christened at All Hallows' Church on March 28th of that year.



Tillington School

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Tillington</i>						
in the County of <i>Sussex</i>			in the Year <i>1896 &amp; 1897</i>			
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
Christian.	Surname.					
<i>1897</i> <i>March</i> <i>28th</i> <i>No. 168</i>	<i>Thomas</i>	<i>William</i>	<i>Bridge-</i>	<i>Upperton</i>	<i>Sussex</i>	<i>Edward White</i>
	<i>Fanny</i>	<i>Fanny</i>	<i>water</i>			

Baptism entry in All Hallows' Church Records

Thomas was enrolled at Tillington Village School at the early age of 3 years and 11 months on October 22nd 1900. His school record shows that he was born on January 3rd 1897 and his admission number was 742. He walked down the Upperton Road every morning for ten years on his way to school but this was to end on December 23rd 1910, when he left school, just eleven days before his fourteenth birthday.

Thomas was not destined for a life on the farm and for a few years he became a house painter. However, in late November 1914, no doubt with some excitement, he enlisted in the Royal Sussex Regiment. He was posted to a Territorial Unit of this Regiment and from his original service number, 2988, it was most likely D Company of the 4th Battalion. In September 1916 after training and time in the Reserve Battalion, Thomas was posted to 13th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment and became Private Thomas Bridgewater G/17765.

The Regiment had been in France since March 5th 1916 and therefore it is likely that Pte Bridgewater joined them as one of many reinforcements in September of that year. The Battalion War Diary records:

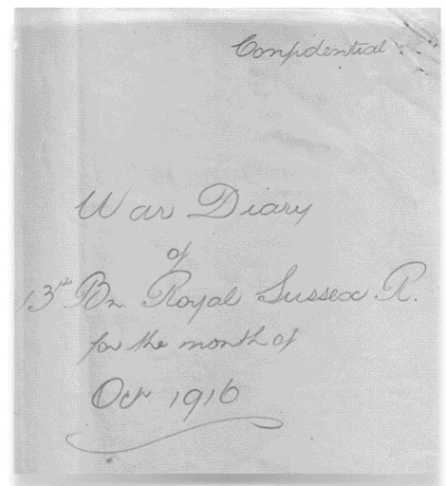
13th Sept - a draft of 79 other ranks reported for duty and were taken on the strength.

20th Sept - a draft of 201... 22nd Sept - draft of 201 detailed for working parties.

23rd - draft joined the battalion fighting on Redan Ridge

On October 10th 1916 the Battalion was resting close to Mailly Maillet where the baths had been allocated to them. Between the 17th and 19th the Battalion was preparing to attack 'Stuff Trench' but the weather was appalling and the attack itself was delayed until 12.06 pm on the 21st. 'In the main not much opposition was encountered except on the right flank....but after 40 minutes determined bombing this was overcome and the whole of 'Stuff Trench' and the communication trench were in our hands. For the rest of the day the captured position was heavily shelled but no counter attack was launched by the enemy.'

Our casualties were not unduly heavy; 3 officers wounded, other ranks killed 25, wounded 71, missing 30.



Name.	BRIDGEWATER	Rank.	Pte	Regt. No.	2988
Serial.	153	Page.			214465
Service.	Thomas G.				
Remarks.					
Thence of War first served in					
Date of entry service					

Medal Card showing medal entitlement



British War Medal

Victory Medal

Private Thomas Bridgewater was killed on the 21st October 1916, aged 19 years, in the attack on Stuff Trench, which was part of the Battle of Ancre Heights which in turn was part of the Battle of the Somme, a battle which symbolised the horrors of warfare. He lies with other members of the Battalion in Grandcourt Cemetery, some 10 kilometres north of the town of Albert in Picardy.



Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!  
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,  
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.

III The Dead - Rupert Brooke