

Pembury Baptist Church

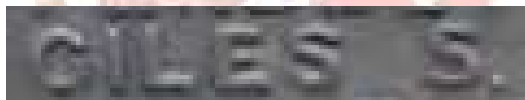


The impressive carved Kentish oak memorial plaque as shown in the photograph above is the work of a Mr. Corbett, and was erected in 1921 at the Pembury Baptist Chapel, Romford Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and was formerly the Pembury Free Church when it had originally opened for worship by non-conformists in 1835. At least forty nine Great War casualties are known to have come from the parish of Pembury near Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and the memorial plaque at the Pembury Baptist Chapel commemorates the nine members of the congregation of the non-conformist chapel who died during the Great War. Most of those who are commemorated at the Pembury Baptist Church are also commemorated on the Pembury, Kent, civic war memorial, and also on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Information which was obtained locally would tend to suggest that the memorial was dedicated at a service which was held in 1921, that was conducted by Clapham, London native Maurice Stanley Le Grice (1878-1948), who was Minister of the church between the years 1915 and 1921. We are indebted yet again to Susan F. for the photograph shown above; Susan is a regular and prolific provider of photographs from the West Kent area for inclusion on this website. Whilst thankfully only nine in total, for ease of viewing the transcriber has taken the liberty of commemorating the casualties below in alphabetical order, as opposed to how they are actually inscribed on the memorial plaque.



CHATFIELD, ARTHUR WARDEN. Corporal, G/13452.
7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).
Died Wednesday 6 November 1918. Aged 28.
Born Waldron, Lewis, Sussex. Enlisted Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
Resided Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
Son of Alfred Chatfield of The Chippings, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, and of the late Mary Jane Chatfield (née Suter).
Commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial, Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. Panel 3, and on the Pembury civic war memorial, also on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Arthur is also commemorated on his late mothers' headstone in the Pembury Non-conformist burial ground Grave Ref: S.282.D "In loving memory of our dear mother Mary Jane Chatfield who died January 29th 1911. At rest. Also of our dear brother Arthur Warden who was reported missing 23rd March 1918."
At the time of the 1901 census, the Chatfield family resided at 1, Sharps Cottages, Lamberhurst, Tonbridge, Kent. Head of the house was 48 year old Maresfield, Sussex native Alfred Chatfield, who was employed as an Agricultural Labourer. Arthur formerly served as Private, 421, 2/1st Kent Cyclist Battalion, he enlisted for 4 years in the Territorial Force on Friday 7 May 1909, at which time he stated that he was 18 years and 8 months old, and was an unemployed Chauffer residing at The Chippings, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The day after enlisting in the Territorial Force, Arthur was attested at Tonbridge, Kent for service in the Kent Cyclist Battalion. On Wednesday 8 November 1916 Arthur was appointed to a Lance Corporal in the 2/1st Kent Cyclist Battalion. He embarked and arrived in France on Saturday 16 December 1916, and was initially posted to the 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). On Friday 9 February 1917 Arthur was at Etaples, Pas de Calais when he was transferred to the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) and given the regimental number G/13452. Between Wednesday 21 March 1917 and Thursday 3 May 1917, Arthur served as an Acting Corporal having trained and qualified as a Machine Gunner, and on the latter date he was

then promoted to the rank of Corporal. On Wednesday 9 January 1918 Arthur was granted 14 days leave to the United Kingdom. Resulting from the action fought by the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) on Saturday 23 March 1918, it being the third day of the 1918 German Spring Offensive, at least 27 other ranks serving in Arthur's battalion died, in addition to the fatalities several others were wounded and/or captured and were initially posted as Missing In Action, included amongst those who had been taken prisoner was Arthur. Unfortunately it is unclear exactly when it was that Arthur died whilst he was a prisoner of war of the Germans, and as such his date of death as entered above is the same as that which is shown on his Commonwealth War Graves Commission commemoration details and is an estimated date of death. On Wednesday 7 January 1920, due to the lack of any form of supporting documentation appertaining to Arthur's exact date of death the Army Council made the decision that for official purposes, it was to be assumed that Arthur had died whilst he was a prisoner of war between Tuesday 6 August 1918 and Wednesday 6 November 1918. Notification of the decision by the Army Council was sent to Arthur's sister Miss Eva Mary Chatfield (1886 – 1973) of The Chippings, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent on Saturday 10 January 1920. Other correspondence regarding Arthur was sent to Thomas Startup who was an Engine Driver and Albert Palmer who was an Insurance Agent, c/o Messer's Elvy, Robb & Berry (Solicitors) of 49, Mount Pleasant, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. In November 1920 Arthur's medals were sent to his brother Percy Cyril Chatfield of "Lower Lodge," Blackhurst Lane, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, after he had signed a form of guarantee to hand them over to anybody having a prior claim to them. Like his late brother Arthur Chatfield, Southborough, Kent native Percy Cyril Chatfield (1893-1953) had also initially served in the Kent Cyclist Battalion and was later transferred to The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) during the Great War.



GILES, SIDNEY. Leading Stoker, K/1042.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. "Hogue."

Died Tuesday 22 September 1914. Aged 24.

Born Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent 11 December 1889.

Son of Charles Giles and Elizabeth Giles of 1, Grenestode Villas, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 4 as shown above, and on the Pembury civic war memorial, also on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

At the time of the 1901 census, the Giles family resided at Grenestode Villas, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Head of the house was 45 year old Charles Giles, who was a Carpenter and employer. Early in the Great War, the Royal Navy maintained a patrol of old Cressy class armoured cruisers which was called 'Cruiser Force C,' in an area of the North Sea known as the

Broad Fourteens. On Thursday 16 July 1914 the German submarine U-9 had become the first submarine in history to reload torpedoes whilst still submerged, and on Tuesday 22 September 1914, the same submarine under the command of 32 year old Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen who had commanded the U-9 since Saturday 1 August 1914, sighted H.M.S.Cressy, H.M.S.Aboukir and H.M.S.Hogue all steaming North-North-East at 10 knots without zigzagging, although the patrols were supposed to maintain a speed of 12 to 13 knots and zigzag, the old cruisers were unable to maintain that speed, and the zigzagging order was widely ignored mainly due to the fact that there had been no enemy submarines sighted in that area of the North Sea at that stage of the war. Otto Weddigen and his crew later the same day put into practice under wartime conditions what they had perfected in peacetime, and were able to reload torpedoes beneath the waves. Otto Weddigen maneuvered the U-9 to attack the three cruisers, and at approximately 0625 hours fired a single torpedo at H.M.S.Aboukir which struck her on her port side. H.M.S.Aboukir rapidly suffered heavy flooding and despite counter flooding developed a 20 degree list and lost engine power. It was soon clear that she was a lost cause and Captain Drummond ordered her to be abandoned although only one boat had survived the attack, as the result of which most crew had to jump into the sea. At first Captain Drummond thought that H.M.S.Aboukir had been mined and signaled the other two cruisers to close and assist with the rescue of his crew, but he soon realised that it was a torpedo attack and ordered the other cruisers away, but too late. As H.M.S.Aboukir rolled over and sank only half an hour after being attacked, Otto Weddigen fired two torpedoes at H.M.S. Hogue that hit her amidships and rapidly flooded her engine room. Captain Nicholson of H.M.S. Hogue had stopped his ship to lower boats to rescue the crew of H.M.S.Aboukir, thinking that as he was the other side of H.M.S.Aboukir from the enemy submarine he would be safe. Unfortunately the U-9 had managed to maneuver around H.M.S.Aboukir and attacked H.M.S.Hogue from a range of about only 300 yards, and it only took H.M.S.Hogue ten minutes to sink as the U-9 headed for H.M.S.Cressy, which was commanded by Captain Johnson. H.M.S.Cressy had also stopped to lower boats but she quickly got underway on sighting a submarine periscope. At about 0720 hours Otto Weddigen fired two torpedoes, one of which just missed, but the other hit H.M.S.Cressy on her starboard side. The damage to H.M.S.Cressy was not fatal but the U-9 then turned round and fired her last torpedo as a coup de grace, which hit H.M.S.Cressy sinking her within a quarter of an hour. Survivors of the disaster were picked up by several nearby merchant ships including the Dutch vessels Flora and Titan, and the British trawlers JGC and Corairder, before the Harwich force of light cruisers and destroyers arrived. Flora returned to Holland with 286 rescued crew who were quickly returned to Britain, even though the neutral Dutch should have interned them. In all 837 men were rescued but 1459 died, many of whom were reservists or cadets. On Thursday 18 March 1915 the German uboat U-29 was rammed and sunk by the 20,730 ton battleship H.M.S. Dreadnought in the Pentland Firth, Scotland, and all 32 submariners onboard perished, including Otto Weddigen who had been in command of the uboat since Tuesday 16 February 1915.

JOY, BENJAMIN HENRY. Lance Corporal, G/103.

"A" Company, 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment.

Died Monday 18 October 1915. Aged 23.

Born Brenchley, Kent. Enlisted Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Son of the late Henry Benjamin Joy and Martha Jane Joy of 5, Brecon Terrace, Church Road, Rotherfield, Sussex.

Commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Panel 69.

At the time of the 1901 census, the Joy family resided at Boggshole Farm, Brenchley, Kent. Head of the house was 32 year old Rusthall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent native Henry Benjamin Joy, who was employed as an Agricultural Labourer. Benjamin enlisted in the army for 3 years service on Monday 17 August 1914, at which time he stated that he was 22 years and 12 days old and employed as a Gardener. On the day of his enlistment, Benjamin was attested to serve in the Royal Sussex Regiment which he joined at Chichester, Sussex. Four days after joining the army, Benjamin was posted to serve in the 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment, which was the first Service Battalion of Lord Kitchener's New Army to be formed in the Royal Sussex Regiment, and it was in fact one of the very first such battalions in the whole of Lord Kitchener's Army. The battalion had commenced recruiting at Chichester, Sussex on Wednesday 12 August 1914, and from Chichester the battalion later moved to Sobroan Barracks at Colchester, Essex where it became part of 26th Brigade, 12th (Eastern) Division. In October 1914 the battalion moved again, to Shorncliffe, Kent, and in December to billets at Folkestone, Kent. In March 1915 the battalion moved to Ramillies Barracks, Aldershot, Hampshire. On Monday 31 May 1915 the 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment left Ramillies Barracks, Aldershot, and arrived at Folkestone later the same day where it sailed for France on the SS Victoria, and landed at the busy port of Boulogne-sur-Mer, Pas de Calais the following morning. From Boulogne-sur-Mer Benjamin and his comrades marched to Ostrohove Camp, and entrained at Pont de Briques for Arques the following day, and from there the battalion took over billets at the commune of Blendecques. Having survived the actions fought by the 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment during the Battle of Loos which was fought from Saturday 25 September 1915 to Friday 8 October 1915, Benjamin was killed in action during the actions which his battalion took part in at the Hohenzollern Redoubt between Wednesday 13 October 1915 and Tuesday 19 October 1915. It was noted by the transcriber whilst compiling these brief commemorations, that the history of the 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment by Owen Rutter contains the war diary of the battalion's movements from the date of its embarkation on Monday 31 May 1915 to Monday 16 June 1919 when the last remnants of the battalion left for England and this is followed by a table showing, year by year, the number of days spent in Rest areas, in billeting areas, and in the trenches from 1 June 1915 to 11 November 1918. Attention is drawn to the reader that a staggering 42% of Benjamin's battalion's active service on the Western Front was actually spent in the trenches. Total casualties suffered by Benjamin's battalion numbered 147 officers and approximately 3,500 other ranks, of which 57 officers and 1012 other ranks died.

LAWRENCE C. E.

LAWRENCE, CHARLES EDWARD. Stoker 1st Class, SS/110970.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. "Hawke."

Died Thursday 15 October 1914. Aged 21.

Born Tonbridge, Kent 8 April 1893.

Son of Frederick Lawrence and Mary Lawrence of Mill Cottage, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 5 as shown above, and on the Pembury civic war memorial, also on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

At the time of the 1901 census, the Lawrence family resided at Spring Grove Mill, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Head of the house was 41 year old Pembury, Kent, native Frederick Lawrence, who was employed as a Domestic Gardener. Without a doubt the loss of H.M.S. Hawke has been the easiest of all the ships lost to ascertain 'facts' by the transcriber, for inclusion on this or any other website. One of the sixty survivors of sinking of H.M.S. Hawke was peacetime Postman, Joseph Edward Cooke of Parracombe, Barnstaple, Devon, his grandson, Kenneth Cooke who like his grandfather is a former member of the Royal Navy, has been a long time friend of the transcriber, and helped in the past to explain nautical phrases, and provide Royal Navy information. About thirty years ago Ken furnished the transcriber with data appertaining to the loss of H.M.S. Hawke, including a copy of a newspaper interview that his grandfather gave after his return to Parracombe. The newspaper cutting is incredibly consistent with that of data accessed from books and the internet. Commanded by 40 year old Captain Hugh P.E.T. Williams, who was a recipient of a Royal Humane Society Medal. H.M.S. Hawke was an old armoured cruiser operating as part of the 10th Cruiser Squadron assigned to the Northern Patrol. She had originally been launched at Chatham, Kent, in 1891 and was one of the oldest ships still in service with the Royal Navy. At the time of her loss H.M.S. Hawke was being used as a training ship and had many young naval cadets on board. She had been re-commissioned in February 1913 with a nucleus crew, and had come up to her full complement at the commencement of the Great War. On 15 October 1914, sailing in company with H.M.S. Theseus, when the ships were approximately 60 miles off the coast of Aberdeen, H.M.S. Hawke turned to intercept a neutral Norwegian collier, shortly after which both ships were attacked by the faster German submarine U-9, which was commanded by Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen who had been tracking them for some time. When he commenced his attack, Otto Weddigen fired his first torpedo at H.M.S. Theseus, but fortunately it missed her. Quickly turning his attention to H.M.S. Hawke, Otto Weddigen then fired a torpedo which struck her amidships near the magazine. The initial detonation which shook the ship violently was followed by a second terrific explosion, which resulted in a large number of the crew of H.M.S. Hawke being killed. From when she was hit the ship sank within about five minutes, and as such it was only possible to launch one of the ships cutters, which was the mail dory that had been lowered before the torpedo explosion. Captain Williams,

26 officers and approximately 500 ratings were lost with the sinking of H.M.S. Hawke, but 4 officers and 60 men survived. Although only designed to carry 29 people, the sole ships cutter which had got away eventually contained 49 sailors, who were picked up about five hours later by a Norwegian steamer, all of whom were later transferred to a trawler and safely landed at Aberdeen. In addition to those who survived in the ships cutter, another 15 of the crew clinging to a raft were picked up by a passing ship, and landed at Grimsby. Joseph Cooke commented that after he had plunged into the icy waters of a heavy sea, he had swam for about three quarters of a mile before being picked up by the cutter, and whilst swimming he had passed the life raft at which time it had about 150 clinging to it, and that he was later informed that only 15 of their number had survived. Joseph also made mention that shortly after firing the torpedo which sunk H.M.S. Hawke, the German submarine briefly surfaced to see the effects of its discharge, disappearing again beneath the waters immediately. H.M.S. Theseus was under strict Admiralty orders not to attempt to pick up survivors, as on Tuesday 22 September 1914 there had been the disaster involving H.M.S. Cressy, H.M.S. Aboukir and H.M.S. Hogue which were all sunk by Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen with the U-9. The following is a brief account of the events of Wednesday 14 October 1914, by a crewman of the U-9, relevant to the sinking of H.M.S. Hawke. "I gazed at the little picture of the upper ocean. The distant three cruisers were some wide space apart, but were converging, and were steering for a point and that point was apparently in the vicinity where we lay. No wonder the Commander thought they must want a torpedo. We imagined they were bent on joining forces and steaming together, but it presently became apparent that they intended to exchange signals, drop a cutter in the water, and deliver mail or orders, and then go their respective ways. We steered at full speed for the point toward which they were heading, our periscope showing only for a few moments at a time. The Cruisers, big armoured fellows, came zigzagging. We picked one, which afterward turned out to be H.M.S. Hawke, and maneuvered for a shot. It was tricky work. She nearly ran us down. We had to dive deeper and let her pass over us; else we would have been rammed. Now we were in a position for a stern shot at an angle, but she turned. It was a fatal turning, for it gave us an opportunity to swing around for a clear bow shot at 400 metres. We dived beyond periscope depth, ran underwater for a short distance, and then came up for a look through our tall, mast-like eye. The Hawke had already disappeared. She sank in eight minutes. Only one boat was in the water. It was the mail dory that had been lowered before the torpedo explosion. At the rudder the boat officer hoisted a distress signal on the boat's staff. That little dory with half a dozen men aboard was all that was left of the proud warship."

MARTIN, EDWARD RONALD. Gunner, 235892.

X36th Trench Mortar Battery, Royal Field Artillery.

Died Thursday 26 September 1918. Aged 26.

Enlisted and resided Guildford, Surrey.

Son of George Martin of Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Husband of E. M. Martin of 17, Artillery Terrace, Guildford, Surrey.

Buried Canada Farm Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Grave Ref: IV. B. 8.

Mention should be made of the fact that depending on what data source and/or records are checked, results in Gunner Martin being shown with his first Christian name being EDWARD whilst on others it is shown as RONALD. At the time of the 1901 census, the relevant Martin family appears to have been residing at Hill View, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Head of the house was 57 year old Pembury native George Martin, who was an own account Corn Carrier. For several years including at the time of Edward/Ronald's death, his father George Martin traded in Pembury as a Carrier trading as G. Martin & Son, Carriers. The census entry above shows the then 8 year old with the Christian name RONALD, and his mother Helena as being a 53 year old native of Wadhurst, Sussex. Edward enlisted in the army 'For the Duration of the War' in June 1917, and was posted to France in April 1918. During an exchange of fire by artillery units, Edward was struck on the head by a piece of shrapnel and was killed. The cemetery where Edward is at rest contains 907 Great War casualties the vast majority being the soldiers who died at the farmhouse which was used as a dressing station during the 1917 Allied offensive on this front, from which the name of the cemetery is derived. With 301 casualties, the Royal Field Artillery has by far and away the largest number of casualties buried at Canada Farm Cemetery, and it probably safe to assume that the majority were like Edward, the victims of enemy artillery fire. Most of the burials at the cemetery are of the officers and other ranks who died at the dressing station between June and October 1917.

MORPHETT, WALTER. Corporal, G/5006.

2nd Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died Tuesday 22 October 1918. Aged 22.

Born Brenchley, Kent. Enlisted Tonbridge, Kent. Resided Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Eldest son of Walter Morphett and Edith Morphett (née Sinden) of Stone Court, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Buried Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq. Grave Ref: XIV. K. 12.

Also commemorated on the Pembury civic war memorial, and on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Walter was born at Brenchley, Kent on 9 November 1895. At the time of the 1901 census, the Morphett family resided at Church Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Head of the house was 31 year old Staplehurst, Kent native Walter Morphett, who was employed as a Cattle Stockman on a Farm. Educated at the

County School, Pembury, Walter enlisted in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) on Wednesday 16 December 1914. He served with the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) in the British Expeditionary Force from Wednesday 21 April 1915, and was wounded during the fighting at Hill 60 suffering a shrapnel wound to a shoulder, and was also gassed, which resulted in him being evacuated back from the western front to England for medical treatment. The bulk of Walter's treatment which he received in England including a period of convalescence was spent in Cheshire. Exactly a year after he had enlisted in the army, Walter proceeded to Mesopotamia and remained in that war theatre until he died of Malaria at Baghdad on Tuesday 22 October 1918, having contracted the disease whilst on active service.

PENN, CHARLES VICTOR. Private, 24007.
2nd Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment.
Died Sunday 30 September 1917. Aged 25.
Born and resided Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Enlisted Blackburn, Lancashire.
Son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Penn of Rose Cottages, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
Buried Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France.
Grave Ref: III. E. 137.
Also commemorated on the Pembury civic war memorial, and on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
Charles birth was registered in the Tonbridge, Kent Registration District during the first quarter of 1893. Having died of wounds, Charles has the sad distinction of being the sole other rank death suffered by the 2nd Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment on Sunday 30 September 1917.

PENTECOST, ALBERT. Private, G/12357.
7th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).
Died Thursday 13 July 1916.
Born Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent. Resided Leigh, Tonbridge, Kent.
Son of Mrs. Frances Pentecost (née Cheesman) of 309, Bexhill Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, and the late Charles Pentecost.
Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Pier and Face 11 C, also commemorated on the Pembury civic war memorial, and on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
At the time of the 1901 census, the Pentecost family resided at Slate Row, Lower Green, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Head of the house was 53 year old Frant, Sussex native Charles Pentecost, who was employed as an Agricultural Labourer. Albert was a brother of Thomas Pentecost who the casualty commemorated below.

PENTECOST, THOMAS. Lance Corporal, 1609.

"B" Company, 9th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 1st Australian Division.

Died Saturday 29 May 1915. Aged 27.

Born Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Enlisted Townsville, Queensland, Australia. Resided Kedron, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Son of Mrs. Frances Pentecost (née Cheesman) of 309, Bexhill Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, and the late Charles Pentecost.

Buried Shell Green Cemetery, Gallipoli, Turkey. Grave Ref: I. E. 23.

Commemorated on the Australian National War Memorial. Panel 57. Also commemorated on the Pembury civic war memorial, and on the Great War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peters Upper Church, Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

On the census entry shown at his brothers brief commemoration, the then 13 year old Thomas was employed as a Grocers Assistant, but prior to emigrating to Australia in 1910 he had been employed by the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company. Thomas enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on Monday 14 December 1914. When he enlisted Thomas stated that he was a Baptist, 25 years and 3 months old, and that he was employed as a Locomotive Fireman, residing at Stafford Road, Kedron, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, and at which time he named his father Charles Pentecost residing at Hastings Road, Pembury, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent as his next of kin. On Monday 8 February 1915, Thomas was attested at Enoggera Barracks, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, to serve in the 3rd Reinforcements of the 9th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F. The barracks where Thomas had attested in 1915 is still in use by the Australian army, and is now also known as 'Gallipoli Barracks' in honour of the members of the ANZAC forces who died at Gallipoli during the Great War, one of whom was Thomas who was killed in action at Gaba Tepe. On Saturday 13 February 1915, Thomas sailed from the port of Brisbane onboard the 5807 ton Australian troopship H.M.A.T. Seang Choon (A49), which had been requisitioned for naval use, and was owned in peacetime by the Lim Chin Tsong, Rangoon, Burma. Having joined his battalion at ANZAC on Sunday 21 March 1915. He was appointed to a Lance Corporal on Saturday 27 March 1915. Following his death, Thomas was initially buried near his battalion Head Quarters with his funeral being conducted by Chaplain F. Fahey. After leaving Pembury, Thomas's widowed mother resided at 19, Montford Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, prior to moving to live at 309, Bexhill Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex. Of historical military interest is that the Seang Choon which had taken Thomas to war, was torpedoed and sunk by the German uboat U-87 off the coast of Ireland on Tuesday 10 July 1917 with the loss of 19 lives. Commanding the U-87 when the Seang Choon was sunk was Kapitänleutnant, Rudolf 'Rudi' Schneider. On Saturday 13 October 1917 during a period of very stormy weather, he was lost overboard from the conning tower of U-87 in the North Sea. One of his crew managed to bring him back on board but it was already dead. He was subsequently buried at sea between the Shetland Isles and Norway.