

In Memory of

Private

# Thomas Skelhorn

199174, 85th Bn., Canadian Infantry who died on 20 June 1917 Age 30

Son of Harry and Elizabeth Skelhorn, of Altrincham, Cheshire, England.

Remembered with Honour

Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## **Private Thomas Skelhorn**

### **85<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Infantry (Nova Scotia Regiment)**

Died: 20<sup>th</sup> June 1917                      Age: 30

How Died: Died of Wounds

Country of burial: France

Cemetery or Memorial: Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais

Town Memorial: Altrincham

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#### **Extra Information:**

Born during the March quarter 1887 in the Altrincham R.D. - ref: 8a/177, the third son of John Henry & Elizabeth Skelhorn (nee Newbigging).

1891 Census - 40 Police Street, Altrincham. Son - aged: 4 - Scholar - born: Altrincham. Head of household - Harry Skelhorn - Married - aged: 35 - occ: Stoker at Gas Works - born: Millington, Cheshire. Also - Elizabeth Skelhorn - Wife - aged: 36 - born: Scotland. Plus 6 siblings, including his eldest brother - Archie B who was also killed in WWI.

1901 Census - 40 Police Street, Altrincham. Son - aged: 14 - occ: Pork Butcher's Errand Boy - born: Altrincham. Head of household - Harry Skelhorn - Married - aged: 48 - occ: Bricklayer's Labourer - born: Altrincham, Cheshire. Also - Elizabeth Skelhorn - Wife - aged: 47 - born: Scotland. Plus 7 siblings, including his brothers - Archie & Samuel who were also killed in WWI. His maternal uncle is listed as is a visitor.

Attended the St. Margaret's C. of E. School. Member of the Altrincham PSA.

Sailed from Liverpool on the S.S. Lake Manitoba to Quebec, Canada on the 2nd April 1912. He was aged 24 and occ: Labourer.

He was residing at Sioux Lookout at the time of his enlistment. His Canadian attestation form, signed on the 25th March 1916, at Fort William, Ontario, states that he was 27 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches in height, had a 34½ to 38 inch chest (fully expanded). His complexion was - brown, his eyes - grey and

his hair - brown. The papers also state that he was a Pipefitter's Helper by trade and that he had previously served for 5 years in the 3rd Cheshire Volunteers.

Religion - C of E. He was unmarried and his mother - Mrs. Elizabeth Skelhorn, 40 Police Street, Altrincham, Cheshire, was listed as his next of kin.

The 85th Canadian Infantry Battalion was mobilized in Halifax and recruited in Nova Scotia. It embarked at Halifax on 13 October 1916 aboard OLYMPIC, disembarking in England on 19 October 1916. Its strength was 34 officers and 1001 other ranks. The battalion arrived in France on the 11th February 1917, becoming part of the 4th Canadian Division, 12th Canadian Infantry Brigade. It was later reinforced by the 17th Canadian Reserve Battalion.

Involved in what became known as the "Affairs south of the Souchez River" 3rd - 25th June 1917. Wounded in the head in action on 17th June 1917 and died of his wounds 3 days later in a Field Hospital (probably the No.6 C.C.S. (Casualty Clearing Station) on the 20th. Extracts from the Battalion's War Diaries - See:-

<http://cefresearch.ca/matrix/War%20Diaries/transcribed/bn085/bn085y1917-1919.pdf>

Fine & warm. Enemy artillery active in morning. At 4.30 a.m. enemy bombing party attacked one of our posts but was driven off by our party with rifle grenades. Intermittent shelling all day. Working parties tonight same as previous nights. Carried stokes ammunition and also had night and day parties working on changing course of the Souchez River. Enemy artillery unusually quiet during night. Our artillery used gas shells during night and Machine Guns were active.

M.I. - "The supreme sacrifice, his life. God's will be done".

His death was reported in the 29/06/1917 edition of the Altrincham Guardian that stated he was 19 years of age ???

He had three brothers also serving. Private Samuel was in the Cheshire Rgt and was KIA on 21/11/1916. Private Matthew Skelhorn, also in the Cheshire Rgt was a POW. Private Archie Skelhorn was with the Canadians in a training camp, though he was also KIA on the 17/11/1917.

Mrs Mostyn who lived at 40 Police St, Altrincham. Archie Skelhorn was her eldest brother. Her husband was serving in the South Lancashire Rgt. Her two other brothers - Private Samuel Skelhorn, Cheshire Rgt and Private Sam Skelhorn, Canadians had also been killed. Her youngest brother - Private Matthew Skelhorn was a POW. Her brother in Law - Private John Houghton was also serving at the front. See local newspaper report 18/12/1917.

Listed in the Guardian Year Book - Roll of Honour for 1918.

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**Memorials found on:**

St. Margaret's Church, Dunham Massey

Altrincham & District Roll of Honour

Trinity Presbyterian Church



**Thomas' Grave in the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension,  
France**

**94th OVERSEAS BATTALION**  
**ORIGINAL ATTESTATION PAPER.**

No. *199174*  
 Folio.

CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

**QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.**  
(ANSWERS.)

1. What is your surname? ..... *SKELHORN SKELHORN*
- 1a. What are your Christian names? ..... *Thomas THOMAS*
- 1b. What is your present address? ..... *Mount Lookout*
2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born? ..... *Altingham Cheshire Eng*
3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? ..... *Elizabeth Skelhorn*
4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? ..... *40 Police St Altingham Cheshire*
- 4a. What is the relationship of your next-of-kin? ..... *Mother*
5. What is the date of your birth? ..... *16th Decr 1888*
6. What is your Trade or Calling? ..... *Pipefitter's Helper*
7. Are you married? ..... *No*
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated and inoculated? ..... *Yes*
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? ..... *No*
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? ..... *3rd Cheshire Volunteers 5 Years*  
If so, state particulars of former Service.
11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? ..... *Yes*
12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the } *Yes*  
 CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? }

**DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.**

*Thomas Skelhorn* do solemnly declare that the above are answers made by me to the above questions and that they are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements by me now made, and I hereby engage and agree to serve in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force, and to be attached to any arm of the service therein, for the term of one year, or during the war now existing between Great Britain and Germany should that war last longer than one year, and for six months after the termination of that war provided His Majesty should so long require my services, or until legally discharged.

*Thomas Skelhorn* (Signature of Recruit)  
 Date *25<sup>th</sup> March* 1916. *R. Macdonald* (Signature of Witness)

**OATH TO BE TAKEN BY MAN ON ATTESTATION.**

I *Thomas Skelhorn* do make Oath, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown and Dignity, against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of all the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

*Thomas Skelhorn* (Signature of Recruit)  
 Date *25<sup>th</sup> March* 1916. *R. Macdonald* (Signature of Witness)

**CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE.**

The Recruit above-named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.  
 The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me, at *Fort William Ont* this *25<sup>th</sup>* day of *March* 1916.

*Reginald A Macdonald* (Signature of Justice)

Description of Thomas Melhorn on Enlistment.

Apparent Age <u>27</u> years ..... months. <small>(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)</small>	Distinctive marks, and marks indicating congenital peculiarities or previous disease.  <small>(Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has served before, he will, unless the man acknowledges to any previous service, attach a slip to that effect, for the information of the Approving Officers.)</small>
Height ..... <u>5</u> ft. <u>8</u> ins.	
Chest measure <small>result</small> (Girth when fully expanded) ..... <u>38</u> ins. (Range of expansion) ..... <u>34</u> ins.	
Complexion ..... <u>Rosy</u>	
Eyes ..... <u>Grey</u>	
Hair ..... <u>Brown</u>	
(Church of England) ..... <u>yes</u>	
Presbyterian .....	
Methodist .....	
Baptist or Congregationalist .....	
Roman Catholic .....	
Jewish .....	
Other denominations ..... <small>(Denomination to be stated.)</small>	

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I have examined the above-named Recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

He can see at the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs, and he declares that he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.

Date Mar 25<sup>th</sup> 1916

Place Howe Sound W. McKay Medical Officer.

\*Insert here "fit" or "unfit."

NOTE.—Should the Medical Officer consider the Recruit unfit, he will fill in the foregoing Certificate only in the case of those who have been attested, and will briefly state below the cause of unfitness:—

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CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING UNIT.

Thomas Melhorn having been finally approved and inspected by me this day, and his Name, Age, Date of Attestation, and every prescribed particular having been recorded, I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.

W. McKay Major (Signature of Officer)  
Lieut. Col.

Date MAR 28 1916 1916 O.C. 94th Overseas Battalion

Thomas' Canadian Attestation Papers