



## Remembrance Day French Style

Armistice Day in France is a public holiday. This year it fell on a Friday and there is no special service on the following Sunday. The French do take it seriously but in a very French way. At precisely 11 o'clock in the morning on the 11th day of the 11th month, the nation pauses for a moment of silence – except at the service we attended the silence was at 11.30am. There were marquees set up outside the town hall and serving officers from the Police and Fire Brigades lined the square together with the *Anciens Camarades*, the equivalent of our British Legion. A member of the *Anciens Camarades*, dressed as an English serviceman, carried the Union Flag.

Before the service began, the Town Clerk wandered amongst the crowd, a bit like a cigarette girl with her tray, handing out *bleuets*, the French symbol of Remembrance and equivalent to the poppy. Blue cornflowers continued to grow in the devastated lands of the Western Front and were often the only touch of colour visible amidst the mud of the trenches.

Our service began with the minute's silence and then the large brass band played the *Marseillaise*. The Mayor and other community leaders laid wreaths on the memorial, wreaths composed of red, white and blue flowers and others of winter flowers. The President of the *Anciens Camarades* and then the local Mayor gave speeches followed by refreshments in French style. Throughout Paris there are memorial plaques dedicated to Resistance workers executed during the second world war, and to senior military officers. The *Mairies*, local town halls, place a bunch of flowers in the holders on the anniversary of their birthdays and on Armistice Day.

*Jeanette Matelot Green*



The Mairie, 14th Arrondissement, Paris (Montesson)



## Crosses Delivered To Date

### 2014

30 crosses

### 2015

102 crosses

### 2016

20 crosses

### Remaining

61 crosses

(of which 28 are allocated  
= 33 still free)

## Private A G Thomlinson

*This newsletter is printed and published by Thame Museum Trust and distributed free to all*

This paper is intended as a digest of news items about the Thame Remembers project to keep the people of Thame up to date with what is happening.

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The 4th Battalion of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry was part of the British army forming the rearguard action around Cassel in Northern France in support of the retreat to Dunkirk in 1940. Many of the soldiers were taken prisoner including three Thomlinson brothers from Thame. The boys, all from C Company made it to a prisoner of war camp in eastern Germany where unfortunately Pte Albert George Thomlinson is reported to have died. Albert's name is commemorated on the Dunkirk memorial because the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have no record of where he is buried –



**Brothers John, Albert and Gordon Thomlinson OBLI**

until now. Albert's family contacted the Thame Remembers project as they have recently discovered papers sent from the Kommandant of the prisoner of war camp in 1940 giving details of Albert's death and burial. We passed these on to the CWGC for them to investigate further and have recently heard from them with a report from an investigator who visited the prisoner of war camp and the local town. They were able to confirm that the brothers were amongst the first prisoners at Stalag VIII B at Lamsdorf in 1940 and that Albert died in the nearby town of Neisse. Quite why he was in Neisse (modern Nysa, Poland) is not certain; maybe he was sent there when he became ill or maybe he was part of a working party and took the opportunity to report to the doctors. Either way he is recorded as dying in the hospital there, probably of appendicitis, and being buried in the nearby military cemetery.

Unfortunately the town of Neisse was obliterated in the Russian advance in 1945 and all hospital and civic records destroyed.

The cemetery does survive, although in a poor state with very few grave markers. Furthermore the details of the location of the grave sent to the family and the records at Stalag VIII B do not agree, so, even though the CWGC investigator identified a probable area of the cemetery, the exact position of Albert's resting place cannot be determined.



**The Old German Cemetery, Nysa.**

**The burial is probably on the mounds in the rear of the picture.**

*Thame Remembers is a project of Thame, Oxfordshire to commemorate the centenary of World War One by researching those from Thame who fell in all conflicts worldwide, and remembering them by placing a Thame Cross on their grave or memorial wherever in the world that may be. If you feel that you can help please contact Dave on 01844 21 5178.*