



## **Thomas Tolan**

### **1890 – 1917**

Thomas was born at 88, Thornton Street, Westtown, Dewsbury on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1890 and baptised at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church on 7<sup>th</sup> December. His father was Andrew Tolan, a mason's labourer born in County Sligo, Ireland around 1862 and died in 1906. His mother was Johanna (nee O'Leary) born in Dewsbury in 1863 and died in 1941. They were married on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1888 at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church.

Their other children were; John, born in 1889 and died in 1911, Denis, born in 1892, James, born in 1894 and served in World War 1, Joseph, born in 1896 and died in 1898, Mary Alice, born in 1898, Patrick, born in 1900, Redmond Alban, born in 1902 and Elizabeth, born in 1904.

On the 1891 Census they lived with Johanna's family at 88, Thornton Street, in 1901 at 73, Thornton Street and in 1911 at 56, Back Tweedale Street, Westtown.

Thomas was a single man who was educated at St. Paulinus School and attended the church where he was a member of the Young Men's Catholic Society. He was first employed by Messrs Henry Hamer and Son, Ravensthorpe and prior to enlistment by Messrs Newsome, West and Company, Staincliffe. His obituary in the Dewsbury District News on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1917 described him as: "*a highly respected member of the Irish National Club at Dewsbury*".

He was one of ten members of the Dewsbury Irish National Club who enlisted in June 1915, serving as Private 5939 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Connaught Rangers. He died on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1917 from wounds sustained in action during the Mesopotamia Campaign. He is buried in Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery. Thomas was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery was begun in April 1917 and has been greatly enlarged since the end of the First World War by graves brought in from other burial grounds in Baghdad and northern Iraq, and from battlefields and cemeteries in Anatolia where Commonwealth prisoners of war were buried by the Turks. At present, 4,160 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War are commemorated by name in the cemetery, 273 Special Memorials represent men who were buried as prisoners of war in recorded graves which could not be found. Unidentified burials from this period number 2,729.

Thomas is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial in Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church and in Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1919.

In Memory of  
Private  
**T Tolan**

5939, 1st Bn., Connaught Rangers who died on 08 April 1917

Remembered with Honour  
**Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph taken by Hussam Saad  
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