



William Henry Shaw

William Henry Shaw was born in Portsmouth in 1888. His father was Edmund John Shaw, a baker from Portsmouth; his mother was Emma H Shaw from Brighton.

The Family

In the 1911 Census, William H Shaw is recorded as boarding with the Icons family in Harleston. His occupation was police constable.

In Kelly's Directory 1914 for Northamptonshire, it is recorded that the police constable for Gretton was P.C. W.H.Shaw.

Military Service

William Henry Shaw served as a Guardsman in the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards (6264).

It is recorded that he was taken as a Prisoner of War. He died on 10th March 1915 at a POW Camp in Schneidemuhl, East Prussia (now Pila in Poland). The exact cause of death is unknown.

Guardsman Shaw is commemorated on the Gretton War Memorial and the Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery, Poland.

Three newspaper articles provide further information:-

Northampton Mercury 18th December 1914

Shaw. Pte. William Henry, Scots Guards

Inspector Dunn, of the Kettering Police, has received notification that Pte. Shaw has been taken prisoner of war and is confined in Germany. Prior to being called up on reserve, Pte. Shaw was a police constable at Kettering, and was previously stationed at Gretton and Great Billing.

Grantham Journal 13 February 1915

Missing And Injured Reservists

Reservist Shaw, Grenadier Guards, who was police constable at Gretton, and left on August 5th to rejoin his Regiment, and was missing, is a prisoner of war. He was in the retreat from Mons.



Reservist Beckenham, who was one time policeman at Gretton, got hurt in barbed wire entanglements during a bayonet charge at Armentiers, and blood poisoning resulting he was incapacitated. He has visited Gretton, and left on Wednesday.

Grantham Journal 24 April 1915

Policeman Succumbs In A German Concentration Camp

Police constable Shaw, of Gretton, according to intelligence which has come to hand, has succumbed in one of the concentration camps in Germany. He was a reservist in one of the Guards Regiments, and was called up at the commencement of hostilities, leaving Gretton on August 5th. Shortly afterwards he went to the front, fought at Mons, and was in the retreat. For months he had been a prisoner of war, and now the news of his death has caused much sorrow at Gretton and other parts of Northamptonshire, where he was well-known and respected. P.C. Shaw was a widower, having been bereft of his wife after a brief married life while he was stationed at Kettering.

The "Reservist Beckenham" referred to in the article may be George Charles Beckenham b. Wootton 1885. In the 1911 Census, a George Charles Beckenham is recorded at County Constabulary Police Station, Angel Street, Northampton. He is a police recruit.

He died aged 42 in 1927 in Northampton. Military Service record unknown at present.

After the First World War, the graves of Commonwealth servicemen who had died in Poland as prisoners of war were gathered together in this cemetery.

There are now 174 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. One of the burials is unidentified. Special memorials commemorate one casualty known to have been buried in Czersk Prisoners of War Cemetery, 29 known to have been buried at Szczypiorno Prisoners of War Cemetery and 18 known to have been buried at Pila (formerly Schneidemuhl) Prisoners of War Cemetery, all of whose graves could not be identified.

The majority of the 283 Second World War burials in the cemetery are those of airmen, many of whom died in bombing operations on Stettin (now Szczecin). Also buried here are those involved in the mass escape from Stalag Luft 3, Sagan (now Zagan), in March 1944, and others who died while prisoners of war during the German occupation, at Stalag VIIIC, Sagan, Stalag XXID at Poznan, Oflag XXIB (also known as Oflag 64) and Stalag XXIB, both at Schubin (now Szubin). There are also 19 war graves of other nationalities in the cemetery, most of them Polish.



The cemetery also contains the POZNAN MEMORIAL commemorating five RNAS armoured car ratings who died near Brezazany in July 1917 and whose graves were never located.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Society

Lest We Forget

William H Shaw
of the Scots Guards

d. 10th March 1915

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