

## Farnhill Volunteers and the WW1 Poets – 3

### No known grave – The Private by E.A. Thomas

Of the seven Farnhill Volunteers who died on active service during WW1, three – Ambrose Bower, George Inskip, and Joseph Smith – have no known grave, though their names are recorded on memorials maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

George Inskip is commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, near to where he was killed on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1917.



The poem “The Private”, by E.A. Thomas, tells the story of a ploughman, killed in battle, who has no known grave. Just as in his life when nobody knew where he lay his head at night so it is now in his death.

Like many of E.A. Thomas’s poems, the ending is serene and peaceful – in contrast with the way many men, including Thomas himself, died during the war. This lowly soldier, a private, is allowed his quiet privacy.

#### ***The Private* by Edward Thomas**

*The ploughman, dead in battle, slept out of doors many a frosty night, and merrily answered staid drinkers, good bed men and all bores:*

*‘At Mrs Greetland’s Hawthorn Bush’ said he, ‘I slept’. None knew which bush. Above the town, beyond ‘The Drover’. A hundred spot the down in Wiltshire.*

*And where now at last he sleeps, more sound in France, that too he secret keeps.*

