

Name	THOMAS GELSON
Birth	13/04/1896 Alnwick
Enlistment/Occupation	Alnwick
Death, date, location	25/08/1917 Killed in action France & Flanders
Age	21
Unit, rank, service no:	66415 Private Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) 20th Bn. Formerly S/4/125563, R.A.S.C.
Family Acknowledgement CWGC	Son of Thomas and Mary Anne Gelson, of Ogle Terrace, Alnwick, Northumberland. (CWGC)
Family	<p>An uncommon name Gelson with only one listed army casualty with this name on the CWGC website and none for any other services in World War I.</p> <p>Thomas was born in Alnwick in 1896 the son of Thomas Gelson, a stonemason of Ogle Terrace and his wife Mary Anne (nee Nolan) who married in 1895. Mary Anne originated from Carlow Tullow in Ireland.</p> <p>Thomas Gelson junior and his father Thomas and the grandfather Robert Gelson had all been to The Duke's School in Alnwick and are recorded in the in the school's list of old boys. Thomas left school in 1910 and at the 1911 census is recorded as a butcher's apprentice aged 14. He enlisted in Alnwick and gave his place of residence as Alnwick. He was killed 25/08/1917.</p> <p>Thomas's links with Wylam remain unclear. The reasons for his commemoration on the Wylam war memorials are unknown. Did he come to work in Wylam as a butcher or did he change his</p>

	<p>occupation to miner or railway employee in the Wylam area? Did he have relatives in Wylam?</p> <p>Given the details of Thomas's Battalion 20th Bn Royal Fusiliers which formed part of 33rd Division and the fact that Thomas is commemorated on the Nieuport Memorial at the Belgian coast it would seem reasonable to assume that he was one of the many casualties during operations associated with Operation Hush along the Flanders coastline during the period June –October 1917.</p> <p>Quote from CWGC Nieuport Memorial:-</p> <p><i>British units did not return to this sector of the Western Front until June 1917, when the 32nd Division relieved French troops stationed at Nieuport in preparation for planned Allied landings on German-held territory along the Belgian coast. German marines launched a pre-emptive attack against the British forces on the river Yser in July and the landings, codenamed 'Operation Hush', never took place. Over 260 men commemorated on the Nieuport Memorial were killed or mortally wounded during heavy fighting with units of the German Marine-Korps Flandern on July 10 1917.</i></p>
Battalion	<p><u>20th (Service) Battalion Royal Fusiliers (3rd Public Schools)</u></p> <p>11.09.1914 Formed in Epsom by the Public Schools and University Mens' Force then moved to Leatherhead joined the 98th Brigade of the 33rd Division.</p> <p>01.07.1915 Taken over by the War Office and moved to Tidworth, Wiltshire.</p> <p>Nov 1915 Mobilised for war and landed in France and then transferred to the 19th Brigade of the 33rd Division and were engaged in various actions on the Western front including;</p> <p>During 1916</p> <p>The Battle of Albert, The Battle of Bazentin, The</p>

	<p>attacks on High Wood, The capture of Boritska and Dewdrop Trenches.</p> <p>During 1917</p> <p>The First Battle of the Scarpe, The Second Battle of the Scarpe, The actions on the Hindenburg Line, Operations on the Flanders coast, The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, The Battle of Polygon Wood.</p> <p>16.02.1918 All disbanded in France and many of the men were commissioned.</p>
Memorials	<p>NIEUPORT MEMORIAL</p> <p>Also commemorated in:-</p> <p>War memorial Plaque St.Oswin's church, Wylam</p> <p>War Memorial Monument, Village Green, Wylam</p> <p>War Memorial, Dukes School, Alnwick.</p>
Comments	
Sources	<p>UK Soldiers died in Great War 1914-1919</p> <p>Commonwealth War Graves Commission</p> <p>1901/1911 Census</p> <p>Old Boys of The Duke's School' Alnwick</p>