

**A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS GREAT WAR PHOTO POSTCARD PORTRAYING  
BANDSMAN THOMAS RENDLE. AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR  
ACTIONS AT WULVERGHEM**

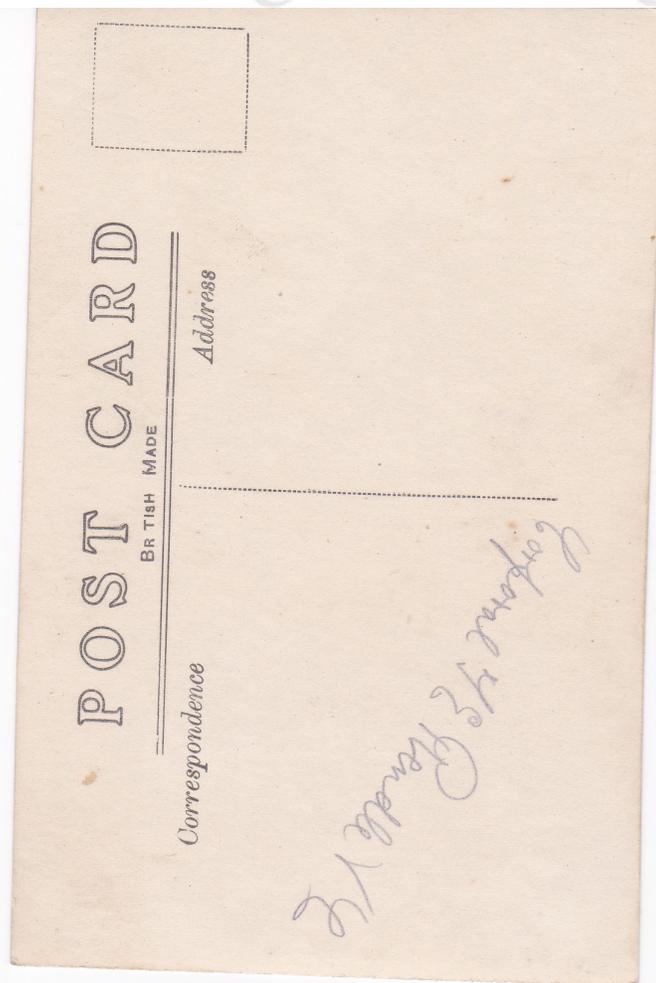


Thomas Edward Rendle (1884-1946) was born at 113 Mead Street, Bedminster, Bristol on 14th December 1884, the eldest of seven children, one of whom died in infancy. His father was James Rendle, who was employed variously as a painter and decorator, and paper merchant's packer. His mother was Charlotte nee Gillard, a domestic servant. His parents married in Bedminster in 1883. After Charlotte died in 1898, James was forced to split up his children. Thomas and daughter Charlotte initially stayed with James, while William, Henry, Elizabeth and Maud either lived with relatives or taken to the workhouse. Thomas was given an education at St Luke's School, New Cut, Bedminster and Kingswood Reformatory in Bristol.

On 7th June 1904, The Bristol Emigration Society arranged for William, Henry and Maud to go to Canada aboard the Lake Erie, departing from Liverpool and arriving in Quebec on 17th June. Having failed to gain a place in the Gloucestershire Regiment, Thomas enlisted in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry on 5th September 1902, and was posted with the 1st Battalion at Stellenbosch, Cape Colony on 3rd January 1903 and served at Middelberg and Wynberg from July 1904. He was awarded Good Conduct Badges in 1904 and 1907.

Thomas married Lilian Sarah nee Crowe at Wynberg, Cape Colony on 7th February 1906. Lilian was the daughter of a 60th Rifles bandsman. Thomas and Lilian had two children – Ruby Lilian Jessie Rendle, born in 1907 at Plympton, Devon, and Edward William Wootton Rendle, born on 10th October 1909 in Gravesend, Kent.

The 1st Battalion was posted to Crownhill, Plymouth in 1906. He and his family left South Africa in March 1906 on HMT Soudan, arriving in April. The Battalion moved to Woolwich in 1907, where Thomas was appointed Bandsman. He also served in Ireland for a time in 1913-1914. Thomas arrived in France with the 1st Battalion on 13th August 1914.



On 20th November 1914 near Wulverghem, Belgium, Bandsman Rendle attended to the wounded under very heavy rifle and shell fire and rescued men from the trenches in which they had been buried from the blowing in of the parapets by the fire of the enemy's heavy howitzers.

Thomas' sight was affected by high explosives a few days after his VC action. He was evacuated to England and sent to Voluntary Aid Hospital No 1 (West of England Eye Infirmary), Exeter. His family moved to be close to him and lived with Thomas' sister in Heavitree, Exeter. Thomas returned to his Battalion on 4th January 1915. He was given a civic reception in Launceston, Cornwall on 28th January and was posted to the 3rd Battalion at Falmouth on 1st February. He was given the role as a recruiter and musketry instructor and later at Aldershot. He was promoted to Sergeant. He received his VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace in 12th July 1915. He was the only man from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry to receive the VC in the Great War.

On 25th August 1915, he was awarded the Order of St George 4th Class (Russia). While based on the Isle of Wight, Thomas became a Freemason, initiated into the Needles Lodge on 2nd August 1916. After the end of the War, he returned to Ireland with 3rd Battalion and was appointed Band Sergeant on 4th October 1919. He was discharged on 12th November 1920 when it was deemed he was unfit for service. He emigrated with his family to South Africa in February 1921, where he was employed as a caretaker and stationary controller of Standard Bank, Cape Town. He was also a part time Bandmaster of the Duke of Edinburgh's Own Volunteer Rifles in Cape Town. Thomas was given the nickname "Provincial Old Bill".

In 1936-37, he read a newspaper article about "Rendle VC" taking part in a British Legion parade in Glasgow, which he had not attended and he alerted the police. It was discovered that an ex-soldier, Joseph William Randell was impersonating Thomas, wearing a replica VC. Randell was fined £5 and lost his job.

Thomas died at Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town on 1st June 1946 and is buried in Maitland No 1 Cemetery. In addition to his VC, he was awarded the 1914 Star with Mons clasp, British War Medal 1914-20, Victory Medal 1914-19 with Mentioned in Despatches oak leaf, George V Silver Jubilee Medal 1935, George VI Coronation Medal 1937, Army Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, Efficiency Medal (Union of South Africa) and Cross of St George 4th Class (Russia).

Postcard sized Approx 13.7 x 8.6 cm. The above taken from the fine vconline website:

<http://www.vconline.org.uk/thomas-e-rendle-vc/4587988072.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC photo postcard