

William Elias Whitelock's Death Penny

In June 2012 Robert Fowler, a fellow Guild of One Name Study member sent me an email advising that some WWI militaria relating to William Elias Whitelock was listed for sale on eBay. The item gave the following information:

WWI DEATH PLAQUE WILLIAM ELIAS WHITELOCK RGA 113TH HEAVY BTY . PORT TALBOT ROLL OF HONOUR SHOWS HIM LISTED THERE.

WHITELOCK, WILLIAM ELIAS

Rank: Gunner

Service No:200362

Date of Death:25/10/1918

Regiment/Service:Royal Garrison Artillery

113th Heavy Bty.

Grave Reference

II. A. 17.

Cemetery

HIGHLAND CEMETERY, LE CATEAU

The item listed on eBay was a "Death Penny" which wikipedia describes as: "The Memorial Plaque was issued after the First World War to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire service personnel who were killed as a result of the war.

The plaques (more strictly described as plaquettes) were made of bronze, and hence popularly known as the "Dead Man's Penny", because of the similarity in appearance to the somewhat smaller penny coin. 1,355,000 plaques were issued, which used a total of 450 tonnes of bronze, and continued to be issued into the 1930s to commemorate people who died as a consequence of the war."

I checked my records and discovered that William Elias Whitelock was a member of the WHITLOCK01 family, my own line.

I searched for Port Talbot, Wales using Google and found a sight dedicated to the Port Talbot, Roll of Honour. This put me in touch with Carol Scott who was researching all the soldiers listed on the Port Talbot Roll of Honour. I emailed Carol to let her know that William Elias Whitelock was part of my family. I think he was born in 1897 as his birth was registered in Neath, Wales in the March quarter 1898. His parents were Thomas & Mary (Morgans) Whitelock. William Elias Whitelock was one of the soldiers who died in the last weeks of the war with the tragic result that his parents likely received notice of their son's death while the country was celebrating the end of the war.

You can imagine my surprise when Carol emailed back to me to say she had just purchased William Elias Whitelock's Death Penny!! A few weeks later I received another email from Carol

with a great photo.

My thanks to both Robert Fowler and Carol Scott for sharing their research with us.

As mentioned William Elias Whitelock is part of the WHITLOCK01 chart. He descends from Christopher Whitlock (1815-1893) who married Mary Heysett in Shebbear, Devon Nov.2,1834. The family moved to Wales about 1840. Christopher was the son of William & Sarah (Hutchings) Whitlock and he and three of his brothers left Devon about the same time. Elias (Mary Osborn) went to Wales like Christopher and William (Mary Brook) and Isaac (Priscilla Horrew) came to Canada. The only brother to stay in Devon was the eldest, Thomas (Elizabeth Richards).

SOURCES: PH1423