

# TOM DENNIS



*Tom's Regiment Badge*

BORN 1885

DIED 1973

My great-great grandad was Private Thomas Dennis , his army number was 41275. He was a Prisoner of War in the first world war. He was in the Norfolk Regiment.



*Private Thomas Dennis*

Tom came from a very poor family of miners in south Yorkshire. Tom was the youngest of 12 children.

His dad died of a heart attack in 1884 before Tom was born.

He attended Swinton Board school, where his mother paid 1p a day for his education. He left school at 12 years old.

Tom went to learn how to be a butcher in his brother in law's shop. Tom set up his own shop at 7 High street Mexborough.

He met Alice May while delivering pork to her sister's house. Tom Dennis married Alice May in 1908.

They worked hard together, he did the meat and she baked the pies.

My great-great uncle Reg was born in 1914.

## Private Thomas Dennis

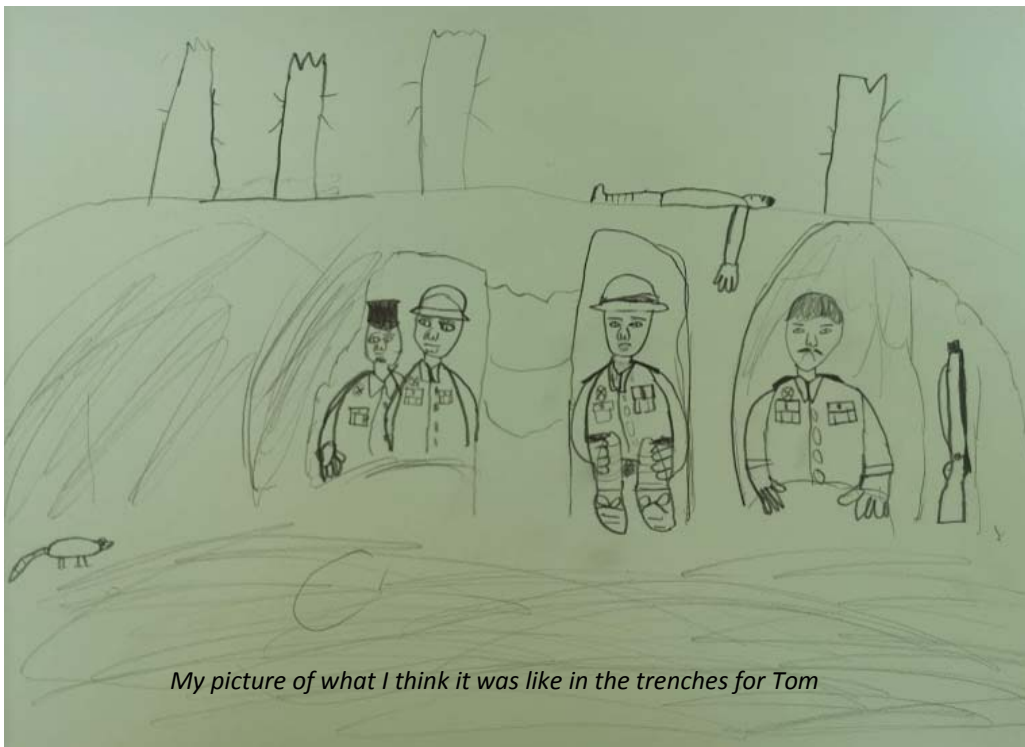
Tom joined the army in 1917. This was the most disastrous year for the British army in France and Belgium. On average 5500 men died every day.

Tom had very little training and soon was fighting on the western front. Years later Tom told his grandson that the conditions he was fighting in were terrible. For example he said:

- The trenches were filthy and rat ridden.
- The battle fields were seas of waist deep mud.
- They had very little to eat.
- It was difficult to sleep because of the noise of the battle

After 6 weeks, Tom was involved in an attack on the Germans in the **Battle of Cambrai**. He was wounded 3 times and Wandered the wrong way across German lines because he was faint from blood loss and then collapsed.

A German patrol found him and got a medical corps to come and get him. The medical corps found Tom and took him prisoner.

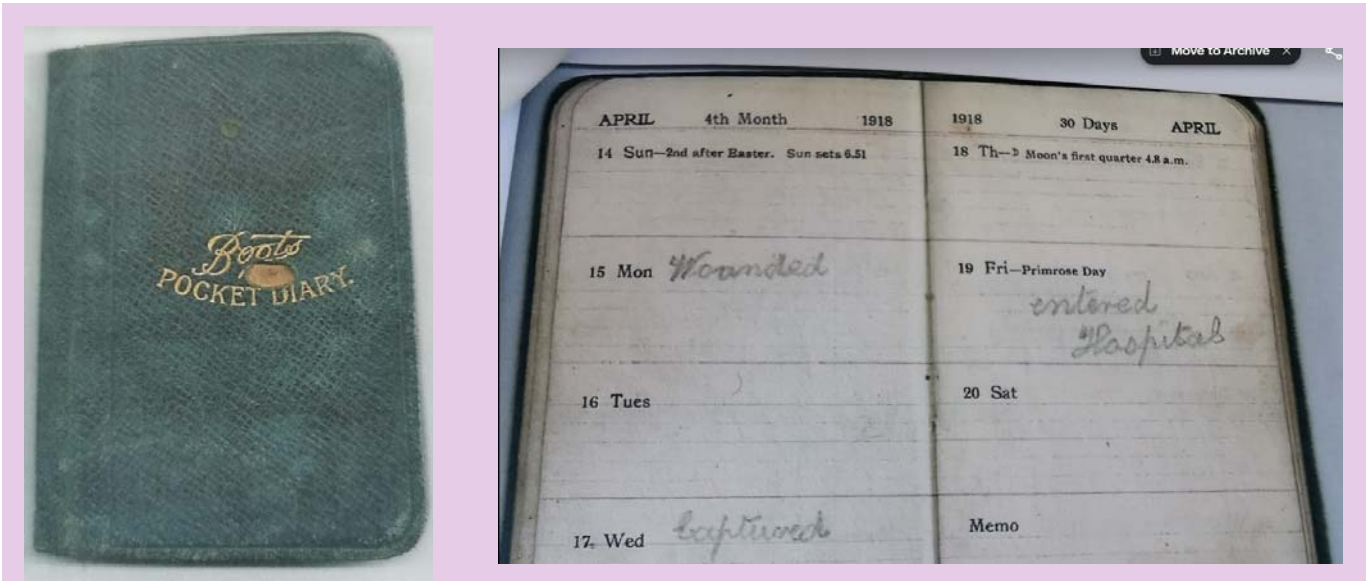


Tom was presumed dead and his wife was told. It wasn't until later that he was found alive

# Tom's Diary

I have a copy of Toms diary.

Tom was wounded on the **15th of April 1918**. At dawn the next day he was taken prisoner .



On this day the battle of Lys was happening, this was started by the Germans. Tom must have been very scared . It took 5 days for Tom to receive treatment for his wounds.

Lots of things have happened on the 15th April in history:



1912

The Titanic sank



1955

The first McDonalds opened



1989

The Hillsborough disaster



1989

Tiananmen Square protests began



2013

Boston Terror attack



2019

Burning of Notre Damme

.....AND IN 1978 MY DAD WAS BORN!

**15th of April 2020.**

102 years after Tom was wounded in battle we are in a lockdown for a global pandemic. The media are describing this as an “invisible war”.

It is scary but at least we are safe in our homes, Tom was living in a filthy trench and then an enemy hospital.

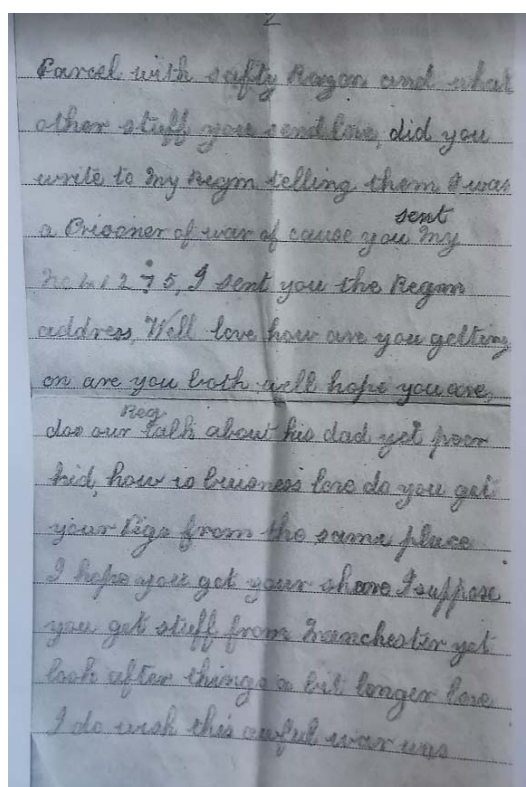
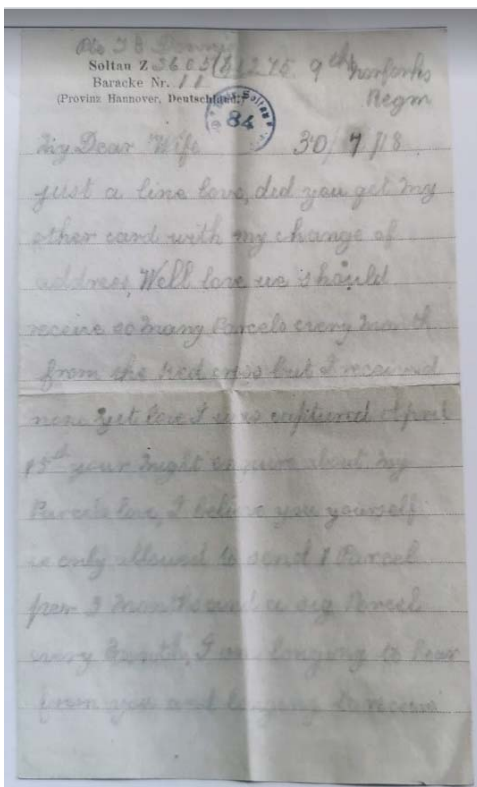
The nurses and the doctors in the NHS are fighting the coronavirus, and the soldiers like Tom in the war were fighting the German enemy. Both fights are for peace and to make our country safe.

In the first world war the people that stayed at home didn't have any rationing but food was scarce. We still have lots of food but getting it is difficult because it is not safe to go to the shops and everyone has to queue. The government has said we can only leave our houses to get essential food.

Not all parents have to fight our invisible war, only those that are in healthcare, in the war that would not be the case, Tom would have had to have left Reg to go and fight and he would only have been 3. I am lucky to have my mum and dad at home to look after me.

## Tom's letters

In Tom's diary he made a note of every time he sent a letter home. He didn't know that they weren't being received. They all arrived home after he did. All of his family thought he was dead. Here is one of the letters Tom wrote to Alice.

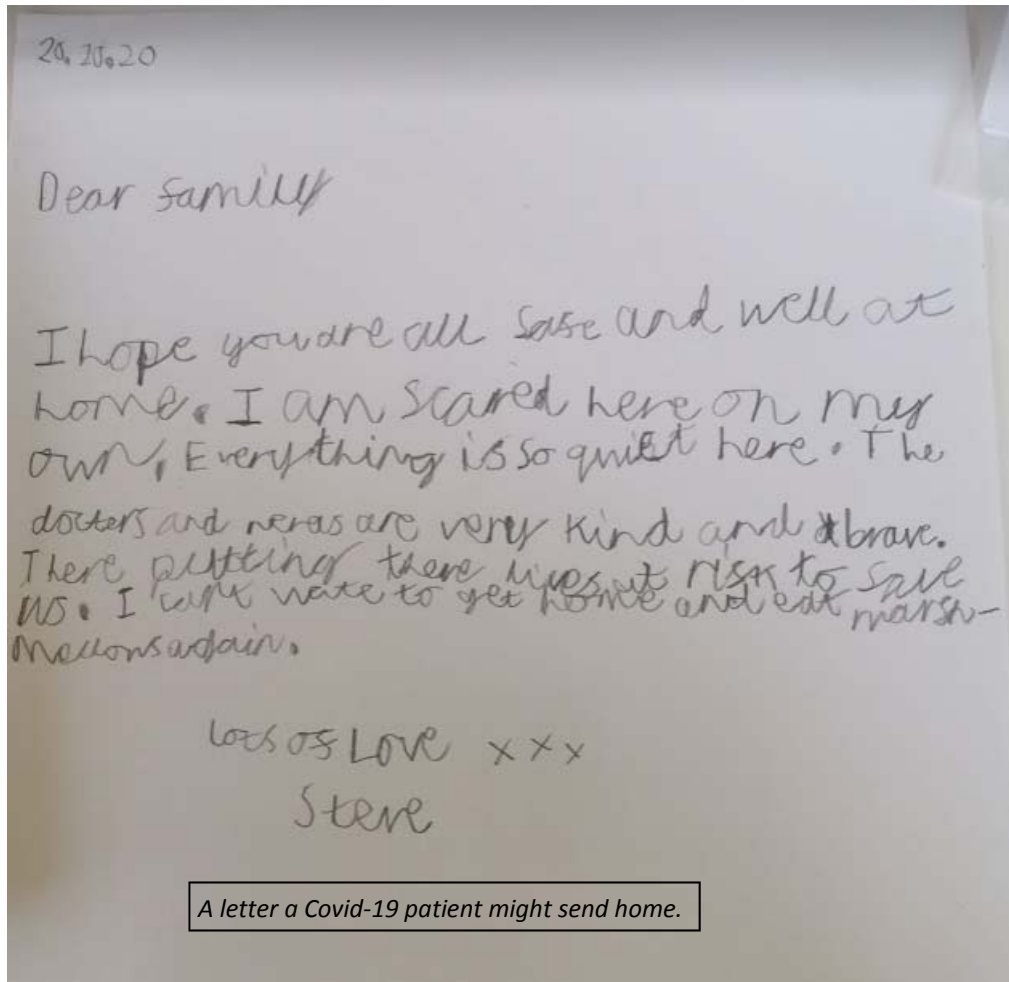


In the letter he asks Alice if she had got his other letters as he hasn't heard from her.

One of Tom's letters home



Tom could not see his family at all. This reminds me of the covid-19 patients that can't see their families.



## Coming home

Tom was repatriated to Tooting Hospital in London on the 23rd of September 1918. His family did not think he was alive for 5 months.

World War 1 ended nearly 2 months later on the 11th of November 1918. All the big leaders in the war signed a treaty for peace at 11 o'clock in the morning because Germany were having to retreat and they lost a lot of their soldiers and overseas territory.

Tooting Hospital was used as a military hospital and used for shell shocked service men until 1923.

