

Private Michael Thomas Sarre POW

By Simon J Hamon

I had never come across the Guernsey Prisoner of War Care Committee, until I purchased a receipt for a payment made to them on 2 March 1918. It was made by a Miss G Sarre for eight Shillings for a parcel to be sent to Prisoner of War No. 1403, (see below) and so my investigation began.

GUERNSEY PRISONERS' OF WAR CARE COMMITTEE.
5 Ann's Place, GUERNSEY *March 2nd 1918*

Pollet - Star Co., 20/2/18

Received of *Miss G. Sarre*
the sum of _____ Pounds
8 Shillings _____ Pence
for *parcel* Prisoner of War No. *1403*

£ - 8. 0 *M. M. Hall*
p.p. Honorary Treasurer

Having looked at Service Personnel from Guernsey, who served in the Great War it was evident that the Prisoner of War (POW) number matched that of a man's service number for the Royal Guernsey Light Infantry (RGLI). That man turned out to be Michael Thomas Sarre born in 1897, the son of Michael and Alice Mary Sarre of Ilford Place, Les Rue Frairies St Andrew's, Guernsey. Michael Thomas had two sisters, Lilian Mary born 1893 and Gladys Amy born 1901. Clearly his sister Gladys was the person who had made the payment for the parcel.

His military records show that he was a Private, with service number 1403, initially in the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion RGLI having joined up on 4 April 1917 at the age of 19 with his profession given as a Market Gardener, residing at Rosenheim, St Andrew's. Michael Thomas was a stereo typical Guernseyman being just 5'3 ½". He was transferred into No. 2 Platoon of "A" Company, of 1st (Service) Battalion RGLI. He left Guernsey sailing to Southampton on 23 September 1917 and then travelled onto Le Havre on 27 September 1917. From this he was transferred to the front and on 1 December 1917 when he was listed as missing in action, but on 14 December 1917, he was confirmed as a POW, having been captured possibly at Masnières and Les Rues Vertes. Michael Thomas was returned to unit on 19 November 1918 and was immediately given home leave from 20 November 1918 until 19 March 1919. He then returned to England and was formally demobbed on 20 January 1919, He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal for his service albeit short other than his time as a POW.

As yet I have been unable to confirm where he was held as a POW from his capture on 1 December 1917 until his release some time about 20 November 1918. Any help with this part of his history would be welcomed by the author.