



## SHANNON Thomas J. E.

Sergeant, Co E, 106th Infantry Regiment, 27th Division

DOW 1 september 1918

Plot B – Rij 03 – Graf 20

Army Serial Number 1207341



Thomas Shannon was born on 7 september 1895. His parents (photo), Thomas Jefferson Shannon and Mary Elizabeth Nugent, had 6 children: John, Julia, Thomas, Charles, Walter, and Joseph. In 1900 the family resided at 96<sup>th</sup>



Street in Brooklyn. Tom grew up in Brooklyn and in 1909 found a job in the advertisement section of the Brooklyn Standard Union. He was renowned for being a devoted employee. A difficult job was usually always entrusted to him.

On 20 April 1914 he volunteered for the 23rd the Infantry Regiment, the local regiment of the National Guard, and served 3 years during the riots of Pancho villa along the Mexican border. On 23 July 1916 he became corporal and on 31 October 1916 sergeant.

Tom was shot in the stomach on 1 September 1918. He endured violent pains and died of his wounds 6 hours later. He was buried in a field close to Kemmel, where a number of other men from his division were interred. In 1919, he was disinterred and reburied at Lyssehoek Cemetery in Poperinge, XXXII.D.15.

Originally Mary had expressed her wishes that his remains be repatriated to the States but eventually his father wrote a letter explaining that they changed their mind: “remain where he is with his comrades”.

In 1930, she visited the Flanders Field Cemetery with the Gold Star Mother Pilgrimage’s. On 13 May she departed on the SS Republic and visited Tom’s grave on 29, 30 and 31 May. At the time she was 66 years of age.



When Thomas left for Europe he had promised to marry Helen McGrath upon his return. Helens grief was immense when she was informed of his death. She wrote the following beautiful poem for Tom.

*I prayed for a pal that was staunch and true,  
And I found him Tom, when I found you.  
As the years seemed to grasp me the more I knew  
That I had a pal and a sweetheart in you.*

*Then war was declared one April Day  
And took you, Tom dear, away.  
The thought of parting I did loathe  
But God knew what was best for both.*

*But oh, what a change I now do see  
To know that you have gone from me  
Not for a day, a month or a year,  
But forever and ever Tom dear.*

*I will not live, I will exist,  
And memories of the past I'll ne'er resist.  
To live in hopes your face to see  
Where we meet again in Eternity.*



Helen decided shortly after to play an active part in the war and became one of the first female military in the Navy (Yeoman 1st Class). On 24 November 1920 she married Tom's brother Charles. All her life, she wore a ring, made of a uniform button of Tom. Now her daughter, Patricia Odermatt, is still wearing it (inset photograph bottom right).



Mary on board of the SS Republic with other *Gold Star Mothers*