

A Great Uncle Wounded in the Service of the King

By Mark Wareham, July 2011



The Quarter Sessions for Somerset held in Wells in 1668 states that there was an admission of Thomas Jacob of East Pennard to a pension of £40 a year 'who was maimed in the service of Charles I'. The long royalist Parliament which sat from 1661 till 1679 gave out many such pensions, mainly to gentlemen and aristocracy who served the king. But they also gave smaller pensions to those further down the social scale as with Thomas. Sadly he only had a year to enjoy this pension because he died on 9th May 1669.

Thomas was the brother of one of my great x 11 grandfathers, John Jacob of East Pennard, making him my great x 10 uncle. John Jacob was a yeoman farmer and he had died in 1634. My ancestor and Thomas' brother William died shortly before the war in 1640 and his son, my great x 9 grandfather, William was born in 1636 and would have been just 6 to 9 years old during the conflict. Thomas and William, senior had both married in 1627.

What happened to Thomas during the war? He is unlikely to have been active during 1642 when Parliament was in firm control of the county. I very much expect that he was recruited when, as Wroughton (1) says in October 1643, after the King's forces had the upper hand –

'[Sir Ralph] Hopton (pictured to the right) commenced an impressive policy to raise men for his new army.'

Lands at East Pennard had before 1572 been owned by the 1st Marquess of Winchester, William Paulet, and this had later passed to the Napiers of Tintinhull. During the civil war there was therefore probably a connection between that arch-Royalist and Catholic Paulet of Basing House. Given these links to their landlords it is not unexpected that the Jacobs would have been enlisted by the King's forces.

A number of things could have happened to Thomas. He could have been with the Royalist garrison at Nunney castle in Somerset under Colonel Richard Prater until that was lost in 1645 to Sir Thomas Fairfax's roundheads. He could have been with the King's forces laying siege to Parliamentary Taunton. He could have been at Bristol which was recaptured for Parliament in late 1645 or he could have joined



Nunney Castle, Somerset, scene of a siege by roundheads in 1645

one of the King's armies and ended up in one of the large battles of 1644/1645, maybe he was under Sir Ralph Hopton when he was defeated on 29th March 1644 at the Battle of Cheriton in Hampshire?

It is impossible to be certain but the link between the Paulets and East Pennard and Nunney Castle makes that a sound possibility. He may well have been injured by the brief but intense artillery barrage that led to the capitulation of the Royalist garrison.

My family line from my grandparents to Thomas Jacob is shown on page 45.

