

104: Thomas Frearson

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Thomas Frearson
 Rank: Private
 Battalion / Regiment: 9th Bn. Cheshire Regiment
 Service Number: 11718 Date of Death: 04 July 1916 Age at Death: ?
 Buried / Commemorated at: Cerisy-Gailly French National Cemetery, Cerisy, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France
 Additional information given by CWGC: None

Thomas Frearson was the only son of Daniel Wilson Frearson and Ellen of Burton-in-Kendal, Westmorland.

Daniel Frearson was a son of Jonathan Dixon Frearson and Margaret; in the 1851 census Jonathan, 40, was a tanner, Margaret was 25 and the family (Daniel was the 5th child, born in late 1849) were living in Cartmel. In the 1861 census Jonathan was recorded as a tea dealer.

Daniel Frearson married Ellen Williams at St James' Church, Didsbury, Lancashire, in mid-1877 and in the 1881 census they were living by Dragley Beck in Ulverston, now in Cumbria:

Daniel Frearson	Head	Male		Tanner (journeyman)	do do
Ellen do	Wife	do	26		Salop St Martins
Isabella do	Daughter		7	Scholar	Lancashire Manchester
Alice do	do		2		Westmoreland Kirkby

1881 census (extract) – Dragley Beck, Ulverston

Daniel Frearson	31	joiner (journeyman)	born Ulverston
Ellen	26		born St Martins, Shropshire
Isabella	7		born Manchester
Alice	2		born Kirkby, Westmorland

The narrow alley known as Cocking Yard in Burton-in-Kendal [Source: <http://burtonswiftbirdstudygroup.blogspot.co.uk/>]

In 1891 Daniel Frearson was now recorded as a farmer and they were living at Cocking Yard in the village of Burton-in-Kendal in Westmorland, a narrow alley-way leading from Burton Main Street. It is not clear why Daniel Frearson had, at this time, changed his profession.



Daniel Frearson	Head	M	41	/	Farmer			Westmorland Burton
Ellen	Wife	W	34	/				Shropshire Leamington
Ethel	Daughter		5	/				Shropshire Leamington
Thomas	Son		3	/				Westmorland Burton
Elizabeth Jackson	Head	Wid		/				

1891 census (extract) – Cocking Yard, Burton-in-Kendal

Daniel Frearson	41	farmer	born Cartmel
Ellen	34		born St Martins, Shropshire
Ethel	5		born Burton, Westmorland
Thomas	3		born Burton, Westmorland

Thomas Frearson had now been born - his birth was registered in late 1887.

At the time of the 1891 census Isabella Frearson (recorded as Isabel, 17, housemaid) was in the household of her grandmother, widow Margaret Frearson (67), at Devonshire Square in Cartmel. Alice Frearson (12) was staying with her other grandmother, widow Ann Williams (78) on Overton Road in St Martins, Shropshire.

By the time of the 1901 census Daniel Frearson had moved a very short distance within Burton-in-Kendal:

Daniel Frearson	Head	M	51	/	Farmer	Worker	Cartmel
Ethel	Wife	W	15	/	Servant domestic		Westmorland Burton
Thomas	Son	S	13	/			Cartmel

1901 census (extract) - Barker Lane, Burton-in-Kendal, Westmorland (now Cumbria)

Daniel Frearson	51	joiner (or farmer?)	born Cartmel
Ethel	15	servant, domestic	born Burton, Westmorland
Thomas	13		born Burton, Westmorland

It is unclear as to whether Daniel Frearson has been recorded as a joiner or a farmer.

The family situation now appears to be confused and the known facts are outlined here.

Whilst Daniel is recorded in the 1901 census as being married no record has been found of his wife, Ellen, elsewhere in the 1901 census and no record has been found of her death. However, in the 1901 census a *George* Frearson is recorded at 133 Jack Lane, Hunslet, Leeds, with a wife named Ellen who had originated from the small village of St Martins in Shropshire:

George Frearson	64	leather trade, currier	born Kendal
Ellen	47	jacket maker, working at home	born St Martins, Shropshire
George	7		born Leeds
William	3		born Leeds

In late 1896 an Ellen Frearson was born in the vicinity of Ulverston and it is believed that this Ellen married a Gilbert Jackson in Ulverston in late 1924. The identity of Ellen's parents is not known.

In the 1911 census Daniel Frearson was now recorded as working in the leather trade and living north of Ulverston on the south side of the Lake District:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Daniel Frearson	Head	61	Married	9	5	2	2	Tanner	802	Walter at home	Cartmel	parish	West	
2	Emma Frearson	Wife	59	Married	9	5	3	2				Pateley Bridge	Yorks		
3	William Jackson	Large	64	Widower					Currier	803	Booker at home	York			
4															

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

Totals of Enumerated		
Males	Females	Persons
2	1	3

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Pantries, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor washhouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Daniel Frearson
 Postal Address: Daniel Frearson, Ulverston

1911 census (condensed) – Lowick Green, Greenodd, nr. Ulverston

Daniel Frearson	61	tanner, working at home	born Cartmel parish
Emma	59		born Pateley Bridge, Yorks.
William Jackson	64	widower, currier, working at home	born York

Daniel and Emma had been married for nine years and it is recorded that of 5 children 3 had survived.

Daniel was now married to Emma and it is recorded that a Daniel Wilson Frearson married Emma West in the Kendal area in late 1901. Little is known of Emma West but there is no strong evidence that she had been married previously; it is not clear, therefore, who the children mentioned on the census return were.

Interestingly, a William Jackson was living in the household - the same surname as the spouse of Ellen Frearson who was born in 1896!

In 1911 George and Ellen Frearson were still living in Hunslet, Leeds:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	George Frearson	Head	75	Married	21	2	2	0	Hawker of chips		Burnhouse	Kendal	Westmorland	430	
2	Ellen Frearson	Wife	56	Married	21	2	2	0				St Martin	Shropshire	270	
3	George Frearson	Son	17	Single					Shoe Maker	300	Shoe factory	Leeds	Yorkshire		
4	Willie Frearson	Son	13	Single					errand lad	6090	axe works	Leeds	Yorkshire		

1911 census (condensed) – 39 Sayner Lane, Hunslet, Leeds

George Frearson	75	hawker of chips	born Kendal
Ellen	56		born St Martins
George	17	shoe maker, shoe factory	born Leeds
Willie	13	errand lad, axle works	born Leeds

George and Ellen had been married for 21 years and both children had survived.

Although the census records that George and Ellen Frearson had been married for 21 years, no record of a marriage has been found but it is recorded that a George Frearson married Hannah Postlethwaite in Ulverston in late 1891.

Whilst it may be conjectural, the most reasonable conclusion is that Daniel and Ellen Frearson separated (possibly after the birth of Ellen in late 1896?) and, presumably, divorced. Daniel Wilson Frearson married Emma West in the Kendal district in late 1901 and Ellen is said to have married George Frearson around 1890/91 ¹. There was, presumably, a blood relationship between Daniel Frearson and George Frearson although they do not seem to have been brothers - but it has not proved possible to trace George Frearson in early census returns. It may be of significance that Jonathan Frearson, Daniel's father was recorded in 1851 as a tanner, that Daniel was recorded as a tanner in 1911 and that George Frearson was a carrier in the leather trade in 1901.

Whatever was happening further north, Thomas Frearson had left home and was working as a groom in Puddington at the time of the 1911 census:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.														
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.											Number of Schedules <u>59</u> (To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)			
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.														
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (Date of Birth) and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.				BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.	
			For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.	Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the name of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Completed years of present Marriage (if no children born alive write "None" in Column 7).	Children born alive to present Marriage (if no children born alive write "None" in Column 7).	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account.	Whether Working as Hire.				
1	Hugh Henshaw	28	Single					Chauffeur domestic 477	Domestic			Puddington, Cheshire		
2	Thomas Frearson	24	Single					Groom 476		Worker		Burton, Westmorland 439		

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—
 (1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.
 (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 11 and 12 separately, and have compared their sums with the total number of persons.
 (3) After making the necessary entries in 1, I have completed all entries on the Schedule with appropriate initials, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Initials of Enumerator A. D. S.

Total.	Males.	Females.	Persons.
0	2		2

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Hugh Henshaw
 Postal Address Puddington, Chester

1911 census (condensed) – Puddington

Hugh Henshaw	28	chauffeur, domestic	born Puddington
Thomas Frearson	24	groom	born Burton, Westmorland

Thomas Frearson was living in a cottage close to Puddington Hall and Puddington Old Hall. Both of these large halls were then occupied by corn merchants; Arthur B Earle (54) and Lucy (56) at Puddington Old Hall and George Percy Sanday (31) and Harriet (35) at Puddington Hall. Both halls had a significant number of staff who lived in the properties or in other tenanted cottages close by but it is difficult to determine with certainty who worked for whom. However, the newspaper obituary for (Thomas) William Crofts, probably a friend of Thomas Frearson ², noted that William worked, before enlisting, as an under gamekeeper for Mr S Sanday of Puddington Hall and so it could be assumed that Thomas Frearson worked for the same employer.

Whilst the Service Record of Thomas Frearson has not been found it was reported in both the *Birkenhead News* and *Birkenhead Advertiser* of 29 August 1914 that he

¹ No record of this marriage has been found.

² They both enlisted for the 9th Battalion Cheshire Regiment and at the same time – Croft's Service No. was 11720 and Frearson's was 11718.

enlisted for the Expeditionary Force so it is clear that he had entered the army on the outbreak of war as Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914.

As noted above, it is very probable that Thomas Frearson was a friend of Thomas William Crofts [see entry **103: (Thomas) William Crofts**] - in 1911 he was living very close to him in Puddington and they probably enlisted together (in Birkenhead) and served together in the 9th Battalion Cheshire Regiment.

Thomas Frearson was with the 9th (Service) Battalion Cheshire Regiment when he died on Tuesday 4 July 1916 although he could not have joined the 9th Battalion when he enlisted as this was not created (in Chester) until 13 September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Second New Army.

The battalion came under the orders of the 58th Brigade, 19th (Western) Division, and it is likely that Thomas was posted to the 9th immediately following its establishment. The 9th Battalion moved to Salisbury Plain and by December 1914 was in billets in Basingstoke, returning to Salisbury Plain in March 1915.

On 19 July 1915 the troops landed at Boulogne and on 7 February 1918 they were transferred to the 56th Brigade in the same Division.

It seems most probable that Thomas Frearson died at The Battle of Albert (1 - 13 July 1916) which marked the first two weeks of Anglo-French offensive operations in The Battle of the Somme. On 4 July, the day on which Thomas Frearson died, it is known that the 19th Division was, from 8.30 am, clearing the area of La Boisselle. This objective was achieved by 2.30 pm except for some of the ruins at the end of the village.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission [<http://www.cwgc.org/somme/>] provides the following introduction to the events around that time:

In the early morning of 2 July 1916, the British 30th Division, holding the newly won Montauban Ridge repulsed two determined German counter-attacks. Both British and German commands recognised it was here, in the cramped southern sector of the battlefield (where most of the meagre British successes of 1 July had been achieved), that offered the most likely opportunities for further exploitation. But in the immediate aftermath of 1 July Rawlinson sanctioned repeated assaults against unbroken German defences over the battle-strewn uplands of the entire line of his original attack.

The period 2-13 July was characterised by a series of grindingly slow and costly British subsidiary attacks (principally in the southern end of the line), made to secure the flanks for a later major assault on the German second line positions. In a succession of bloody encounters the Fourth Army sought to secure Trônes Wood, Mametz Wood and Contalmaison; operations characterised by vicious hand to hand fighting, within devastated villages and shell-thrashed woods riddled with concealed strongpoints. Heavy rain on 3 and 4 July produced the first quantities of the infamous Somme mud and hinted at the difficulties which terrain and weather would pose later in the campaign. On 2 July Fricourt was occupied by British troops but 3 July saw the failure of the British attacks at Ovillers and Thiepval. La Boisselle was captured after much fierce counter-attacking between 4-6 July. Offensive operations began on 7 July to capture Mametz Wood, Contalmaison and Ovillers. 8 July saw the first attacks on Trônes Wood. The period 9-13 July witnessed bitter fighting for Trônes Wood and the eventual capture of Mametz Wood and Contalmaison.

Arthur Crookenden related the chaotic events around the 4 July 1916:

On 1st July, the 9th Battalion, 58th Bde. of 19th Division, was in reserve to the attack on La Boisselle.

After the comparative failure of the original attack, the 58th Brigade was ordered to attack at night, at 10-30 p.m. The C.O., Colonel R. B. Worgan, was sent for to Brigade H.Q. at 7 p.m., and the Battalion meantime was directed to the old British front line, from Locknagar to Inch Str. After getting his orders, Colonel Worgan hurried to the front, as there was no time to lose. But he found no trace of the Battalion. The trenches were not only very much knocked about, and full of dead and wounded, but were also being heavily shelled. Eventually, he found Captain Ward, with "D" Company, who explained that the Battalion had been delayed by finding the communication trenches full of wounded. Colonel Worgan told Ward to remain where he was and then went ahead to find the remainder. From wounded men he learnt that some 60 unwounded were holding the crater where a 600-lb. mine had been fired just before zero on the 1st July, and some 200 more, with two or three officers, holding a part of the German front line—all belonging to the 34th Division. Realizing the importance of holding on to our gains, he sent "D" Company to reinforce the crater. On further search, he found Lieut. C. F. King with portions of two companies near Bécourt Wood, and he sent him also to the German trenches alongside the crater. It was now 9-40 p.m., too late to carry out the original plan of attack, especially as the remainder of the Battalion was not to be found. So, after reporting personally at Brigade H.Q., Colonel Worgan returned to the front line and ordered consolidation to be put in hand at speed. The scene beggars description. Every shell-hole held a killed or wounded man. The whole area was littered with all the debris of a battle, with equipment, clothing, timber, stores, and dud shells.

At 2-30 a.m. on 2nd July, a telephone message from Brigade H.Q. ordered the C.O. to prepare to attack at once. Although the Battalion was very scattered and not easy to get hold of, Colonel Worgan had them assembled in the old German front line ready to attack, in 20 minutes. But the trenches were found to be too crowded and some men were withdrawn. It was not till 4 a.m. that definite orders came. The Battalion was to attack La Boisselle and to bomb through it, clearing all dug-outs. It was pitch dark, deathly quiet, no shelling, no machine-gun bursts, and no Verey-lights.

At 4-30 a.m., the Battalion went over the top under its own covering fire, and charged across the open for the German support trench. Some of the men used a Russian sap to get forward, till it was blocked with wounded. A deep and wide, and unexpected communication trench held up the advance. Bombers were sent right and left to clear a way forward. It was terribly difficult to keep direction in the dark and among this maze of trenches. Captain T. L. Jackson, killed later in the day, and Lieut.

C. F. King, wounded, were invaluable in leading and organizing the companies.

At 8-30 a.m. on 3rd, the advance had gone as far as the strength of the Battalion warranted, some 300 yards short of La Boisselle. Consolidation was put in hand, and only then did Lieut. C. F. King go to have his wounds dressed. At the end of the day, Lieut. E. Watts was the only officer left with the C.O.

At 2-45 a.m. on 4th, further orders were received to continue the attack in conjunction with the 57th Brigade on our left and the 9th Welch on our right. By 3-45 a.m., no touch had been gained with either flank, so our men started bombing along saps towards the Germans. Attack over the top, without troops on our flanks, and without covering fire would have been impossible. The ground was swept by German machine-gun fire, and four rows of uncut wire protected their front.

During this attack, a small party was detached to bomb a post, but the party was driven off and one man was left wounded and prisoner. He was taken down into a dug-out where there were twenty-five Germans. There he remained until a commotion overhead and the explosion of a bomb at the end of the dug-out told him that the British were advancing again. He was quick to act. He seized a bomb in one hand and a revolver in the other, and under this threat his captors more or less cheerfully consented to become the captives. His comrades found him in charge of twenty-five Germans when they started "mopping up."

These bombing parties, under Lieut. Watts, progressed till stronger parties of German bombers attacked and drove them back. At this point, Captain G. G. Symons, who had been kept back to replace casualties, came up and did splendid work in organizing and inspiring the defence. The position was held till 3-30 a.m. on the 4th, when the Battalion was relieved. It was, certainly, cruel luck on the C.O. and his Battalion to be thus pitchforked into action in such impossible circumstances. We can be proud of the magnificent spirit and determination which they displayed.

[The History of the Cheshire Regiment in the Great War : 1914 – 1918 Arthur Crookenden, Colonel of the Regiment WH Evans, Sons & Co. Ltd. 1938]

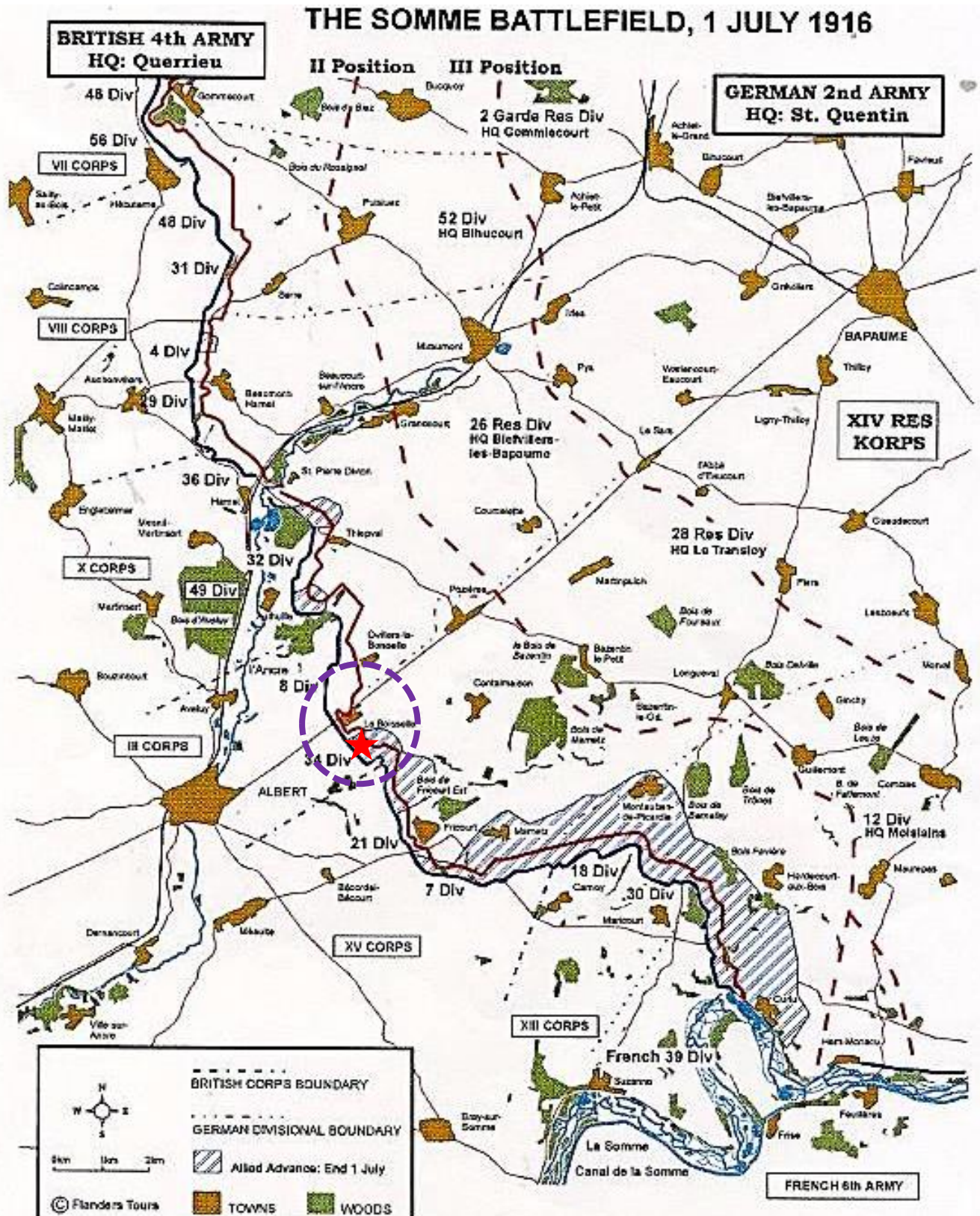


127. A CAPTURED DUG-OUT NEAR LA BOISELLE.

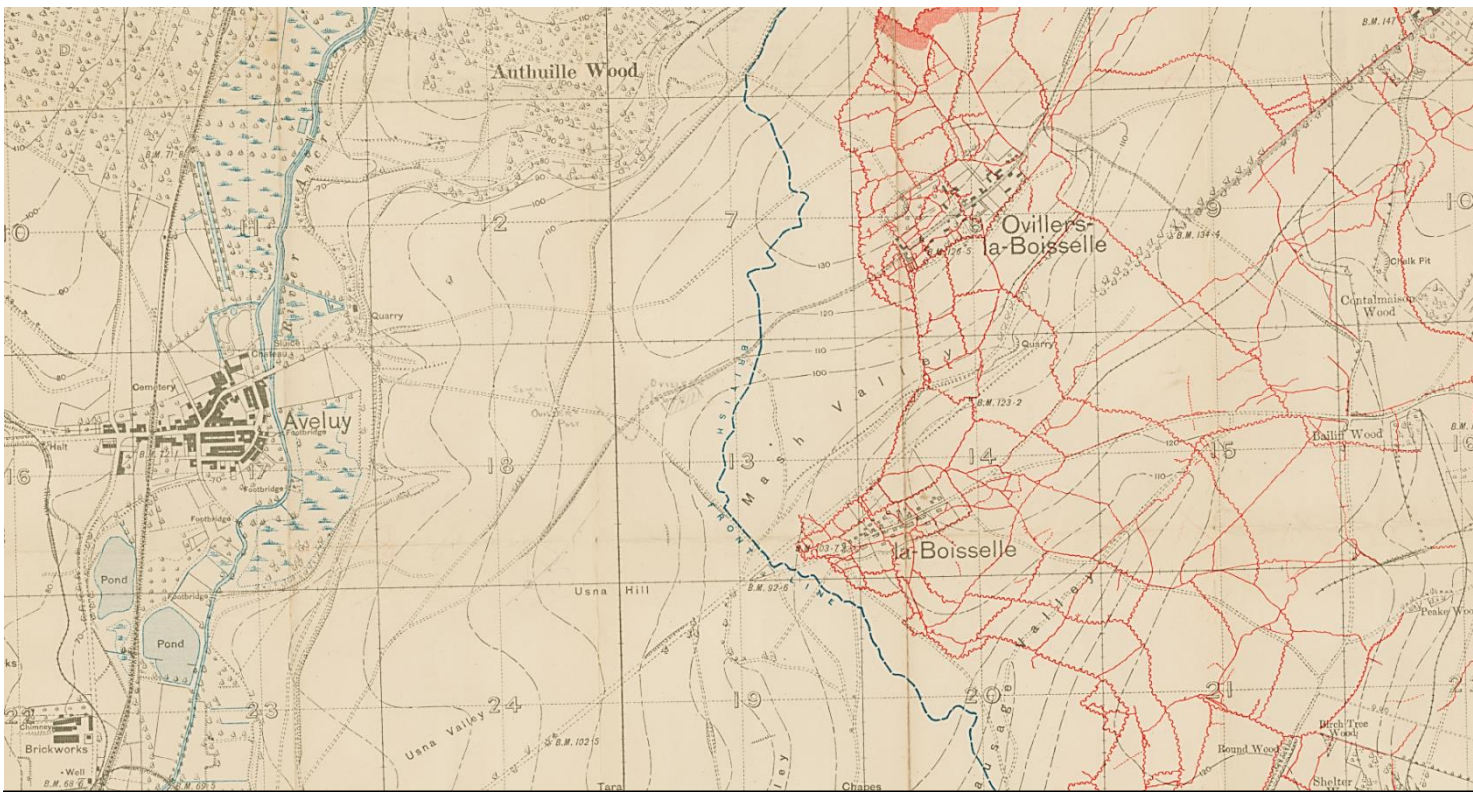
"Daily Mail"
Official Photograph
Crown Copyright reserved

[Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Daily_Mail_Postcard_-_A_captured_dug-out_near_La_Boisselle.jpg]

It is of interest to note that, on the day that Thomas Frearson died, Siegfried Sassoon (who became recognised as a leading poet of WW1) was making his own "one man" attack on the Germans in Mametz Wood - the largest woodland on the Somme battlefield - just to the east of La Boisselle. Unlike Thomas Frearson, Sassoon survived and died in Wiltshire on 1 September 1967.



Map source: Flanders Tours, Wilton, Salisbury The purple circle identifies the area of La Boisselle and the red star, within the circle, the location of the 9th Bn. Cheshire Regiment on 4 July 1916



1 mile

The region around La Boisselle on 19 August 1916, a month after the conclusion of the Battle of Albert, indicates that German forces had regained the higher land and settlements of Ovillets-la-Boisselle and La Boisselle. The British front line is indicated by the north-south blue line and the German trenches to the east of this are shown in red.

[Source:

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/index.cfm#zoom=15&lat=50.0257&lon=2.6865&layers=101465251&b=1>]



Battle of Albert the opening phase of the Battle of the Somme. British troops in a communication trench before an attack early in the conflict.

[Source:

<http://www.examiner.co.uk/lifestyle/lifestyle-opinion/denis-kilcommons-tales-ordinary-mens-6638022>]

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
FREARSON	Ches R.	PLC	11718
Thomas			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	5/2/10135	1332	M - A 4/7/16.
BRITISH	-D-	-D-	
15 STAR	8/2/11313	429	
Theatre of War first served in (17 France)			
Date of entry therein 19/7/15			

412,000 7/2	8/341686	Frearson Thomas	9 th Btn 1/4 7-16	Shrewsbury 14 2 6	14 2 6	m/o 5/17	11-5-17	Fa: Daniel Wilson	14 2 6
			Cheshire	France	3/17				
			PLC	In					
			11718	Deton					
		A. F. W. 5070 SENT DATE 4-7-19	WAR G 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100		8 10 =	6/10/19 Fa: Daniel Wilson		8 10 =	

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. In July 1919 Thomas’ father Daniel received a payment of outstanding wages of £14 2s 6d from the army and a War Gratuity of £8 10s. This, a total value of £22 12s 6d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £3500 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

Daniel Wilson Frearson, Thomas’s father, died in late 1920 aged 70.

It is believed that Thomas’s sister, Isabelle (Isabel) married either William Armstrong or James Thompson in Ulverston in late 1910 but nothing further is known.

Nothing is known for certain of any of the other members of the family.