

140 : George William Hughes

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: George William Hughes

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 12th Bn. Cheshire Regiment *

Service Number: 9035

Date of Death: 22 October 1918

Age at Death: 29

Buried / Commemorated at: Plovdiv Central Cemetery, Plovdiv, Obshtina Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Additional information given by CWGC: Son of John and Mary Hughes, of 2 Back Brook St., Chester

It is believed that this is incorrect; George was serving with the 2nd Battalion when he was captured as a Prisoner of War and, subsequently, died.

George William Hughes was the first son, and second child, of carter John and Mary Hughes. John Hughes married Mary Whyley Barry at Christ Church, Chester, in late 1886 [In the 1911 census Whyley is recorded as *Wylie*].

George was born in late 1889 when the family was living in Neston although no record of his baptism in Neston has been found.

By the time of the 1891 census the family had moved back to Chester:

2062	2	1	John Hughes	hus	25	X			
			Mary	wife	21	X			Chester
			Ada	son	3	X			do
			George W.	son	1	X			Chester

1891 census (extract) – 2 Downes Court, Chester

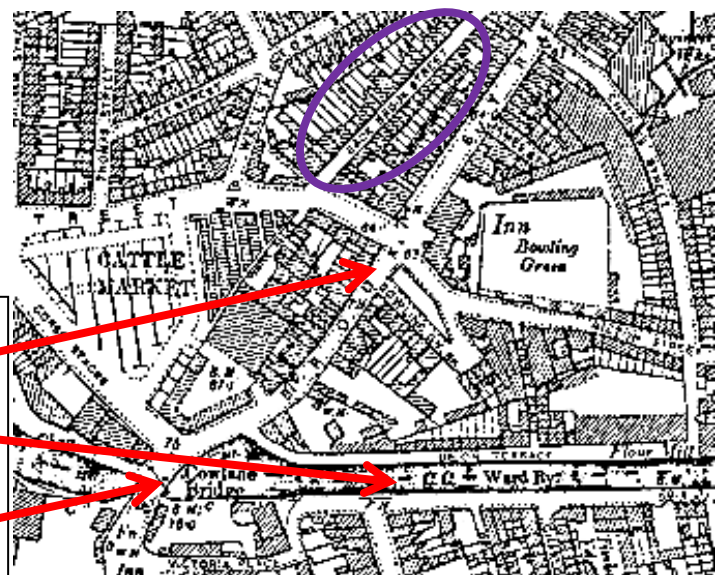
John Hughes	25	carter	born Chester
Mary	25		born Chester
Ada	3		born Chester
George W.	1		born Neston

Downes Court no longer survives but lay off Watson Street (the A5286) in Boughton, north of Grosvenor Park.

The family has not been traced in the 1901 census but, in 1911, was still in Chester and, unusually, was recorded initially in two census returns.

They were now at Back Brook Street which lay north of Cow Lane Bridge (which carries Frodsham Street over the Shropshire Union Canal) and near the old cattle market.

Brook Street
Shropshire Union Canal
Cow Lane Bridge



The location of Back Brook Street (encircled), west of Brook Street which still exists.

[Source: <http://newtownsaints.co.uk/img/bbstreet.jpg>]

This was an area of dense housing which was cleared for the construction of Hoole Way (A56) and more-modern buildings.

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.

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.

Number of Schedule 203
(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

NAME AND SURNAME of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday) 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 names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Children born alive to 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.)	Children born alive to 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.)	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)			
John Hughes	Head	45	Married						Carter (Coal)	Chester		
Mary Wylie Hughes	Wife	45	Married	25	7	6	1			Chester		
John Hughes	Son	17	Single						Parcel Porter Sutton Carrying Co.	Chester		
Martha	Daughter	14								Chester		
Catherine		12								Chester		

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

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

I certify that—
(1) All the names on this Schedule are correct in the present and previous returns.
(2) I have entered the names and relations in Columns 2 and 3 separately, and have entered their ages in the total number of persons, the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be incorrect.
Initials of Enumerator W.M. Male 2 Female 3 Person 5

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Toilets, or Apartments), count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor washhouse, office, shop.
3 Rooms

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Signature John Hughes
Postal Address 19 Back Brook St

1911 census (condensed) – 19 Back Brook Street, Chester

John Hughes	45	carter (coal)	born Chester
Mary Wylie	45		born Chester
John	17	parcel porter (Sutton Carrying Co.)	born Chester
Martha	14		born Chester
Catherine	12		born Chester

John and Mary had been married for 25 years and six of their seven children had survived. The note in the left margin states *Apartments No. 19* indicating that the family occupied 3 rooms in a larger residence.

1	Hannah Poynton	Head	52	Widow					Landry Worker	Chester	
2	Thomas Harris	Son	12						School	Chester	
3	Percy Harris	Son	11							Chester	
4	Alice Harris	Granddaughter	5							Chester	
5	John Hughes	Head	45	Married	7	6	1		General Labourer	Chester	
6	Mary W. Hughes	Wife	45							Chester	
7	John Hughes	Son	17						Parcel Porter	Chester	
8	Martha Hughes	Daughter	12						School Girl	Chester	
9	Kate Hughes		11							Chester	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

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

I certify that—
(1) All the names on this Schedule are correct in the present and previous returns.
(2) I have entered the names and relations in Columns 2 and 3 separately, and have entered their ages in the total number of persons, the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be incorrect.
Initials of Enumerator W.M. Male 2 Female 2 Person 4

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Toilets, or Apartments), count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor washhouse, office, shop.
2 Rooms

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Signature Sarah Poynton
Postal Address 19 Back Brook St Chester

1911 census (condensed) – 19 Back Brook Street, Chester

Hannah Poynton	52	widow, laundry worker	born Chester
Thomas Harris	12	grandson	born Chester
Percy Harris	11	grandson	born Chester
Alice Harris	5	granddaughter	born Chester
John Hughes	45	general labourer	born Chester
Mary W.	45		born Chester
John	17	parcel porter	born Chester
Martha	12		born Chester
Kate	11		born Chester

The note at the foot of the census return states *J. Hughes crossed has apartment of 3 rooms, the Head occupying 2*

On this second census return the enumerator, recognising that an error of entry had been made, ensured that the incorrect entries were crossed through. It is interesting to note, however, that the ages for both Martha and Kate are inconsistent.

George's Service Record has survived - but is rather degraded - and notes that he had enlisted in 1908 for, as was usual, a period of 7 years full time service with the colours, to be followed by another 5 in the Army Reserve. In January 1909 he was at Bordon Military Camp in Hampshire, a new training establishment which had opened in April 1903. Whilst at the camp he had two periods in hospital:

Discharged 12 May 1909 15 days lymphangitis
8 April 1909 – 24 April 17 days scabies

On 23 September 1909 George was sent to serve in Belfast where, again, he was hospitalised:

6 June 1910 - 17 June 12 days [genital bacterial infection]
15 November 1910 - 21 November 7 days [genital bacterial infection]
and conjunctival blepharitis

George Hughes' Regimental Conduct Sheet records that he was disciplined for offences early in his military career; at this time he was with the 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment:

REGIMENTAL CONDUCT SHEET. Army Form B. 120.

Number of sheets } First.
 } (in words)
Signature of C.O. } Lieut.
 } Adjutant
 } 2nd Coy Regt Depot Lanchester Co. Regt.

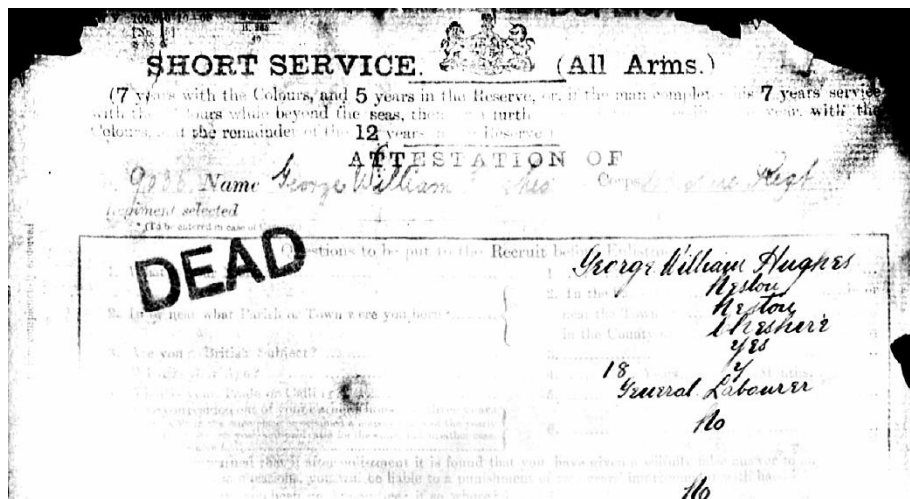
Regimental Number and Name } 2135 Cheshire Regiment of Foot. Attested 190 . Joined 190 .

Place	Date of Offence	Rank	Nature of Offence	Natures of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Time of arrest, or of order imposing with trial	By whom	Date of Commencement	Time of Expiration	REMARKS
Bordon	1909 <u>18 Jan</u>	Pte	Absent from tattoo until apprehended by Civil Police at Bageshot at 11.15am 19 th inst. (13 hours 15 min) 11 - Deficient of kit and necessaries.		10 days CB Pay for deficiencies.	1909 21 Jan	Lieut. 2nd Coy	1909 21 Jan	30 Jan	Forfeit 2 days pay.
Belfast	1910 <u>21 Sept</u>	Pte.	Receiving one tunic and one pair of tweed trousers, the property of Pte. Dace. 11 - Disobedience of Regimental orders (ie) Giving away clothing without permission.		Eight days CB	1910 21 Sept	Lieut. 2nd Coy	1910 21 Sept		Civil Police Chesh. Regt.

Regimental Conduct Sheet – Cheshire Regiment of Foot (abbreviated transcription)

Bordon, 18 January 1909 1 - Absent from tattoo until apprehended by the Civil Police at Bageshot at 11.15am 19th inst. (13 hours 15min).
11 - Deficient of kit and necessaries.
10 days CB Pay for deficiencies. 21 January - 30 January 1909. Forfeit 2 days pay

Belfast, 21 September 1910 1 - Receiving one tunic and one pair of tweed trousers, the property of Pte. Dace.
11 - Disobedience of Regimental orders (ie) Giving away clothing without permission.
Eight days CB 21 – 28 September 1910 [Note: CB is Confined to Barracks]



The first part of George Hughes' Attestation Form of 1908, later over stamped **DEAD**.

George, a general labourer, enlisted in Chester on 16 June 1908 when he was aged 18 years 7 months. He was then 5ft 5inches tall, weighed 115lb (8 stone 3lb / 52.2kg) and had an expanded chest size of 34½ inches. He was recorded as having brown eyes, dark hair, a fresh complexion and was of good physical development.

When George first attested for the Cheshire Regiment, on 16

June 1908, he was attached to the 1st Battalion and he remained in Britain until 5 December 1910 (2 years 173 days) before moving to India where he remained for almost four years. At this time, on 25 December 1910, George moved to the 2nd Battalion Cheshire Regiment.

It is not certain where, in India, George was first stationed but he was hospitalised twice soon after his arrival in two different locations:

- 21 December 1910 to 26 December 6 days [genital bacterial infection] - Plassey
- 3 January 1911 to 9 February 38 days [genital bacterial infection] - No.1 Section Hospital, Secunderabad

By April 1911 George was at Jubbulpore (now Jabalpur) in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. On several occasions George was hospitalised in Jubbulpore:

- 12 February 1911 to 14 February 3 days [genital bacterial infection]
- 16 February 1911 to 3 June 1911 110 days [genital bacterial infection] including 16 April 1911 *abscess gluteal region* (George was then with "F" Coy.)
- 6 April 1912 to 6 May 32 days [genital bacterial infection]
- 7 October 1912 to 23 November 48 days gastritis
- 4 December 1912 to 10 December 7 days *parasites found. To attend for quinine*
- 9 July 1914 to 19 July 11 days

With the outbreak of the war in Europe the 2nd Battalion began, on 19 November, the 35-day voyage back to Britain, landing at Devonport on 24 December 1914. Here, the regiment joined the 84th Brigade of the 28th Division and moved to Winchester. The regiment remained for only 23 days in Britain before, on 15 January 1915, embarking at Southampton and landing at Le Havre the following day. A day before they set sail George was deducted 15 days' pay for being absent without leave.

The 28th Division concentrated in the area between Bailleul and Hazebrouck seeing action in The Second Battle of Ypres (22 April - 25 May 1915) for control of the strategic

Flemish town of Ypres in western Belgium after The First Battle of Ypres the previous autumn. Casualties here were high and, a few days later, (29 January) after 134 days service, George returned to Britain where he remained for 1 year 70 days.

As it is recorded that George received gunshot wounds (specified as the effects of irritants), and that he rejoined his unit on 31 May 1915, it may be presumed that he was receiving treatment during this period.

On 18 April 1916 George was given a 28-day detention sentence for being absent without leave and on 8 August he joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force departing from Devonport on 14 August for Salonica (also known as Thessalonica, the second-largest city in Greece and the capital of Greek Macedonia) where he disembarked on 23 August 1916.

Although George was not part of this contingent, it is understood that most of the 2nd Battalion had been deployed to Egypt in October 1915, sailing from Marseilles for Alexandria, then on to Salonica in January 1916.

The reasons for sending units of the Cheshire Regiment to Macedonia are outlined by Arthur Crookenden:

MACEDONIA.

Map p. 211

The British Government sent troops to Salonika in conjunction with the French, to support the Serbians. The troops arrived in insufficient force and too late. The result was that it was impossible to withdraw those already landed, but on the contrary they had to be reinforced.

The Serbians were wiped out, until they succeeded in reorganizing their army. They played a decisive part at the end of the war on this front.

Expecting an attack on Salonika by Bulgars and Turks, supported by two German Divisions under Von Mackesen, the Salonika force started a formidable system of entrenchments about ten miles from the town, the flanks resting on the sea. This started on Christmas Day, 1915, and the whole force British, French, Italians and Serbs, worked at it with the greatest energy for two months.

No attack came off, and in the spring of 1916, reconnaissances and roads were made for an advance against the Bulgars who had a strong position in front of, and on, the Belashitza mountains.

In the spring of 1916, Colonel H. Smyth took over command of the 2nd Battalion. A Manx company joined about the same time.

In the summer, the whole force moved forward some 60 miles from Salonika. There were five British Divisions. The 28th, to which the 2nd Battalion belonged, moved to the line of the River Struma. The 12th Battalion went to the Doiran front.

In July, 1916, a French force of a cavalry and infantry Brigade advanced some ten miles beyond the Struma, but was attacked by the Bulgars and driven back over the Struma with considerable loss. The 84th Brigade, to which the 2nd Battalion belonged, was brought up to cover the French retreat, and the Bulgars halted and entrenched themselves some two miles from the Struma, which was held by our troops partly on one side of the river, partly on the other.

Thus, except for an occasional raid, from the autumn of 1915, until November 1918, the 2nd and 12th Battalions were constantly employed on making outpost positions, reserve works, roads, and bridges.

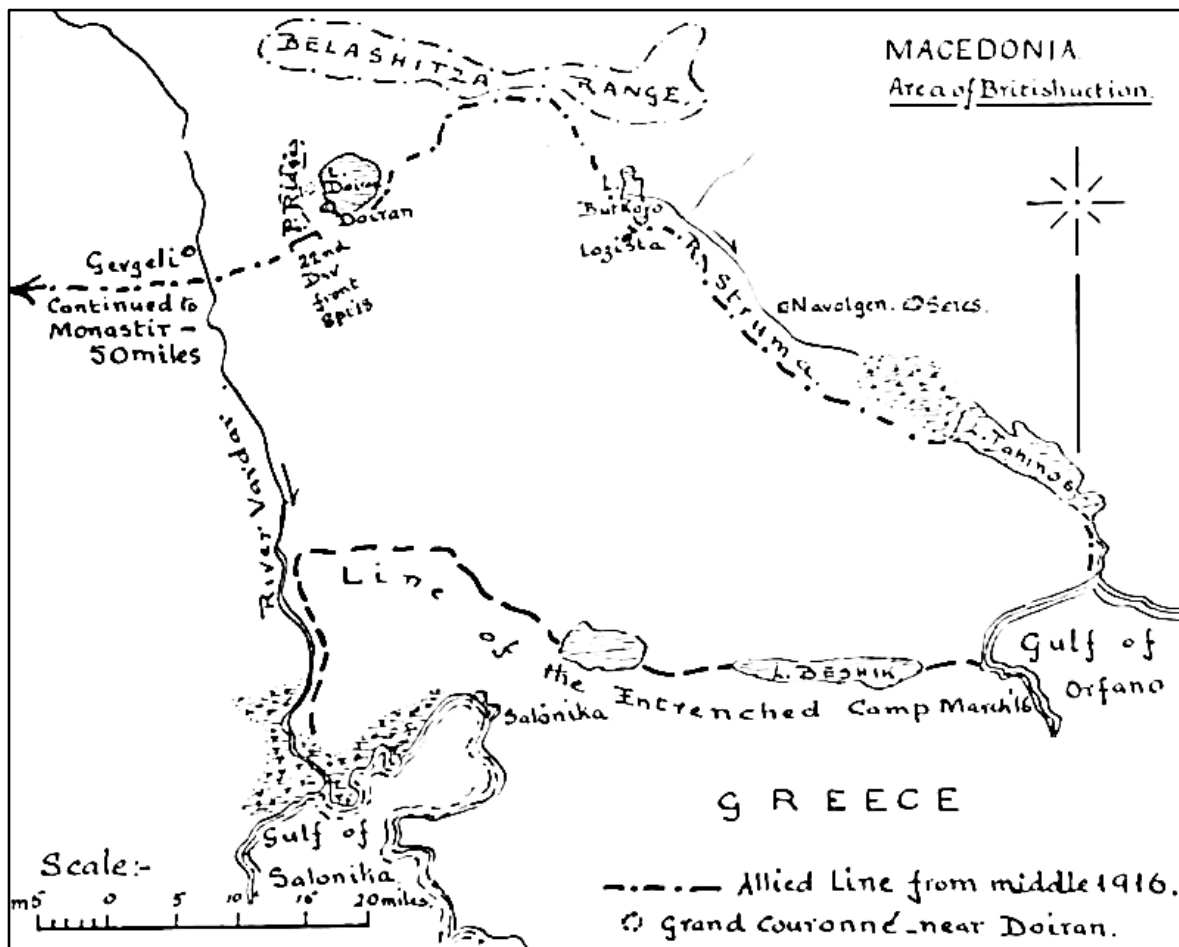
They had much to do to preserve their health under the varied climatic conditions. The winters in Macedonia were bitterly cold, with heavy snow and rain, while the summers were excessively hot, and liable to heavy thunder storms which put rivers in spate and washed away camps and horse lines.

The hardships of the 1916-17 winter were increased by the submarine campaign which caused a shortage of rations and canteen stores. The troops felt this all the more from having been weakened by malaria during the summer.

This loss from malaria was the outstanding feature of the Salonika campaign. What useful military purpose the campaign fulfilled need not be discussed here, but the Germans called Salonika the British internment camp. One wonders what effect the men and stores squandered here and in Gallipoli would have had if they had been employed in France.

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The Struma valley must be one of the most unhealthy places in the world. To sleep on the low swampy ground without elaborate precautions means, to the western European, at the best, a sharp attack of malaria of a malignant form. The 2nd Battalion at Lozista was probably in the worst place in the valley. They had no mosquito nets and no gloves, or other protection and practically no quinine. In three weeks, at this plague-spot, the Battalion lost 700 men, 400 of whom never rejoined. Men attacked by this disease dropped unconscious as if they had been shot. These casualties were as honourably earned as any in action. It was no fault of the regimental officers or men that they were incurred.



[Text and map : The History of the Cheshire Regiment in the Great War, 1914-1918 A. Crookenden, Colonel of the Regiment WH Evans, Sons & Co. Ltd. 1938]

The 2nd Battalion took part in the occupation of Mazirko (2 October 1916) and, on 30 October, George was admitted to hospital with a dislocated elbow, an injury he sustained in the field whilst caring for transport animals.

On 15 May 1917 the troops were in action at the capture of Ferdie and Essex Trenches of Barakli Jum'a and on 16 October 1917 they captured Barakli and Kumli. In 1918 they were in action again, in The Battle of Doiran (18 - 19 September 1918), and The Pursuit to the Strumica valley (22 - 28 September). However, George William Hughes was not part of these later actions as he was captured by Bulgarian forces on or about 15 April 1918. Taken to a camp in Bulgaria he remained in that country for 191 days until his death from pneumonia on 22 October 1918 (possibly at the British Military Hospital in Philippopolis [Plovdiv]). Hostilities with Bulgaria had ended on 30 September 1918 and, although George had been repatriated, he was too unwell to be taken back to Britain.

Although the telegram mentions Salonica (Thessaloniki) in neighbouring Greece, some 150 miles south-west of Plovdiv, this was a centre of military operations and it is

Ref No. 716/4035 (If replying, please quote above No.) **H50 RC 4-5-18**
 Army Form B. 104-83.
 No 2. Record Office,
Shrewsbury
30-4-1918

SIR OR MADAM,
 I regret to have to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office to the effect that (No.) 9035 (Rank) Pte.
 (Name) G. W. Hughes
 (Regiment) Cheshire
 was posted as "missing" on the 15-4-18

The report that he is missing does not necessarily mean that he has been killed, as he may be a prisoner of war or temporarily separated from his regiment.

Official reports that men are prisoners of war take some time to reach this country, and if he has been captured by the enemy it is probable that unofficial news will reach you first. In that case I am to ask you to forward any letter received at once to this Office, and it will be returned to you as soon as possible.

Should any further official information be received it will be at once communicated to you.

I am,
 SIR OR MADAM,
 Your obedient Servant,
A. Vincent Capt.
 Officer in charge of Records.

Important.—Any change of address should be immediately notified to this Office.
 (7 29 98) W1911-P225 60,000 11/17 HWY(F701) Form B.104-83/4 [TURN OVER

Notification that George William Hughes had been reported as missing on 15 April 1918. At that time, perhaps only briefly, John Hughes (George's father) was living at 45 Seaville Street in Boughton. This street still exists although it has been redeveloped.

The telegram to John Hughes announcing George's death
Hughes, 2 Back Brook Street, Chester
Deeply regret to inform you your son 9035 Pte. G. W. Hughes Royal Welsh Fusiliers died 22/10/18 at Pavonine Salonica from pneumonia. I am to express the sympathy of the Army Council on your sad bereavement.

SEE NOTICE AT BACK. POST OFFICE TELEGRAMS. (Inland Telegrams)		No. of Telegram
Prefix <u>A</u> Code	Office of Origin and Service Instructions.	For Postage Stamps. To be affixed by the Sender. Any Stamp for which there is not room here should be affixed at the back of this form. 12 words, including the words in the address, <u>Ad</u> . Every additional word 1d. A Receipt for the Charges on this Telegram can be obtained, price this Penny.
Words.	Sent	
Charge.	To	
	By	
When a reply is to be sent, paid with the words "Reply Paid" in the space below. These words are not charged for.		
TO { <u>Hughes</u> <u>2 Back Brook St</u> <u>Chester</u>		
<p><i>After Lord was the was. Deeply regret to inform you your son died 22/10/18 at Pavonine Salonica from pneumonia. I am to express the sympathy of the Army Council on your sad bereavement.</i></p>		
FROM { <u>Records</u>		
The Name and Address of the Sender, IF NOT TO BE TELEGRAPHED, must be written in the Space provided at the Back of this Form.		

improbable that George died there. Nothing is known of *Pavonine*.

Some further details are given in the website *St Werburgh's Roman Catholic Parish, Chester* [<http://www.stwerburghchester.co.uk/more-about-st-werburgh's/great-war/the-fallen/hughes-g-w.aspx>] which records that George was confirmed at St Werburgh's in 1905 and notes that *His name was on the original Memorial Plaque in St Werburgh's, was omitted from the 1990 Memorial Plaque but will be placed on any new plaque.*

854845	655-414	Hughes, George William	2nd Chechies Bulgaria	22.10.18	Private	32 18 3	275/1/1	John	32 18 3
			9035	19/20	24 10 -		12-3-20	John	24 10 -

A. F. W. 5070 SENT
DATE 14/1/19

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 September 1919 George’s father John, as sole legatee, received a payment of outstanding wages of £32 18s 3d from the army and a War Gratuity of £24 10. This, a total value of £57 8s 3d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £8950 in 2017.

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.

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
HUGHES George W.	ches R	Pte	9035

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	J/2/101 133	614	Died 22/10/18
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/132	176	

Theatre of War first served in	France
Date of entry therein	16-1-15

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

The CWGC notes that *the Commonwealth servicemen buried at Plovdiv Central Cemetery died either as prisoners of war or while serving with the occupying forces following the Bulgarian capitulation in September 1918. It was formerly called Philippopolis (St Archangel) Cemetery and was formed after the Armistice by the*

concentration of graves from the following sites: Philippopolis Protestant Cemetery; Philippopolis Roman Catholic Cemetery; Karagatch Protestant Cemetery; Kostenebanja British Cemetery; Kurtova Konare Civil Cemetery; Mustafa Pasha British Cemetery and Tatar Pazardzik Protestant Cemetery. The cemetery now contains 55 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.