

142: Laurence Olsen Humphreys

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: L. O. Humphreys
 Rank: Second Lieutenant
 Battalion / Regiment: 7th Bn. King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)
 Service Number: ? Date of Death: 13 November 1915 Age at Death: 23
 Buried / Commemorated at: Chocques Military Cemetery, Chocques, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France
 Additional information given by CWGC: Son of the late W. and Clara Matilda S. Humphreys. Native of Liverpool

Laurence Olsen Humphreys (his name is misspelled by the newspapers) was born in late 1892 in the West Derby area of Liverpool, the son of mariner (referred to as Captain by the newspapers) William and Clara Humphreys.

William Humphreys married Clara Matilda Cecilia Susannah Venner at West Derby Register Office in late 1879.

In the 1881 census William, then 29, was recorded as being a Chief Mate in Merchant Service and in the 1891 census he was a mariner, Merchant Service.

William and Clara had four surviving children, of which Laurence was the youngest, before William died, aged 45, in the West Derby area of Liverpool in late 1896.

At the time of the 1901 census Clara and her children were living adjacent to Toxteth Park to the south of the city:

Clara Humphreys	Widow	43	Confectioner, sweet	Kent	Dover
Susie	Daughter	19	Typist	Liverpool	Liverpool
Walter	Son	16	Clerk in cotton office	Liverpool	Liverpool
Frederick	Son	13	Office boy	Liverpool	Liverpool
Laurence	Son	8		Liverpool	Liverpool

1901 census (extract) – 136 Park Hill Road, Toxteth Park, Liverpool

Clara Humphreys	43	widow, confectioner, sweet	born Dover, Kent
Susie	19	typist	born Liverpool
Walter	16	clerk in cotton office	born Liverpool
Frederick	13	office boy	born Liverpool
Laurence	8		born Liverpool

[Susie was born as Susannah Venner Humphreys in the Toxteth Park district of Liverpool in late 1881].

By the time of the 1911 census Clara and her two unmarried children was living with recently-married daughter Susannah and her husband in Toxteth Park. Susannah had married Herbert Asbury at St Michael's Church, Toxteth Park, in 1910 and Walter, now a jeweller's salesman, had married Florence M Glenton at Toxteth Park Register Office in 1908 and was living in Ashbourne Road in Toxteth Park.

GENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedules 257
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

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.

NAME AND SURNAME	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 "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 has lasted. If less than one year write "under one."	Total Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have Died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.			
1. Herbert Stanley Asbury	Head	32		Married					Assistant Manager Cotton Dealer		Employer	Home	Liverpool	
2. Susannah Venner Asbury	Wife	29		Married							Worker	Home	Liverpool	
3. Clara Mathilda Celia	Daughter	53		Widow							Worker	Home	Liverpool	
4. Frederick John Humphreys	Son	23		Single					Cotton Salesman		Worker	Home	Liverpool	
5. Laurence Olsen Humphreys	Son	18		Single					Law Clerk, Solicitor's		Worker	Home	Liverpool	
6. Ethel Jones	Servant	17		Single					General Servant (Domestic)		Worker	Home	Tattenhall, Staffs.	

(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 ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex columns.
 (2) I have entered the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have entered their sum with the total number of persons.
 (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Total:
 Males: 3 Females: 3 Persons: 6

Initials of Enumerator: E. A. E.

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 warehouse, office, shop.

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

Signature: H. S. Asbury
 Postal Address: 27 Amphill Road

1911 census (condensed) – 17 Amphill Road, Toxteth Park, Liverpool

Herbert Stanley Asbury	32	assistant manager cotton dealer	born Liverpool
Susannah Venner Asbury	29		born Liverpool
Clara Mathilda Celia			
Susannah Humphreys	53	widow, boarder	born Liverpool
Frederick John Humphreys	23	boarder, cotton salesman	born Liverpool
Laurence Olsen Humphreys	18	boarder, law clerk, solicitor's	born Liverpool
Ethel Jones	17	general servant (domestic)	born Tattenhall, Staffs.

Laurence Humphreys was a Second Lieutenant with the 7th Battalion King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) when he died, aged 23, on 13 November 1915 although it is recorded that he had served previously with the 6th Battalion The Liverpool Regiment (Service No. 1897). Ironically, his advancement to Temporary Second Lieutenant was reported in the *London Gazette* on 13 November 1914, a year to the day before he died.

The 7th (Service) Battalion was formed at Lancaster in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Second New Army, moved to Tidworth Pennings, north of Salisbury, and came under the command of the 56th Infantry Brigade, 19th (Western) Division. On 28 August 1914 Kitchener had asked for another 100,000 men to volunteer and Army Order 382, issued on 11 September 1914, specified an additional six Divisions, which formed this Second Army.

In December 1914 the troops moved to Andover and, in February 1915, moved to Clevedon and back to Tidworth.

In May 1915 Laurence married (Jane) Anne Greenbank at St Agnes and St Pancras Parish Church, Toxteth Park, Liverpool. Anne was the daughter of laundry van driver John and Jane Greenbank of Kendal and, in the 1911 census (25, bottle labeller at confectionery works), she was living with her married brother



Thomas (he was an electric car driver) in Brierfield near Nelson, Lancashire. No reference is made subsequently to Laurence's married status and no children are recorded.

On 17 July 1915 the 7th Battalion landed in Boulogne and in August 1915 they joined the Lahore Division. The Battalion's first major conflict was at The Battle of Loos (25 September - 18 October 1915), the largest British offensive mounted on the Western Front that year. During this conflict the British suffered a total of 59,247 losses of the 285,107 British casualties on the Western Front in 1915. However, Laurence Humphreys survived this major battle only to die in a later skirmish when he was wounded by a sniper.

It is not clear what connection Laurence had with Neston other than that he occasionally played football for Neston FC. However, it is possible that the family had moved to Wirral sometime after the 1911 census as it is recorded that Clara Humphreys died in the Woodchurch area in the 3rd quarter of 1921 aged 63.



Liverpool Echo - Wednesday 17 November 1915

NESTON FOOTBALLER'S FATAL WOUND.

The death is announced of Second-Lieutenant Lawrence Olsen Humphreys, at the age of 23. He was well-known in and around Liverpool, and especially at Aigburth. He is one of a family of brothers in the Army, the other members being Lieutenant Walter Humphreys (4th Battalion P.O.W. Leinster Regiment) and Sergeant F. J. Humphreys (4th Howitzer Brigade), the latter being at present engaged in France. He was a clever tennis player, and was associated with the Grove Club. He was a good footballer, too, but rarely played that game. When he did he helped Neston F.C. News of his death was received on Wednesday, and much sympathy will be extended to his mother. His father was the late Captain Humphreys, and was well-known in shipping circles.

A letter from a brother officer says:— "Lieutenant Humphreys was out with a working party when he was wounded by a machine-gun. We all greatly regret his death. I am sure the men are cut up, too, as he was always so cheery and so well liked by all who knew him. I wish to express sympathy on behalf of all the battalion."

Birkenhead Advertiser - Saturday 20 November 1915

LAWRENCE O. HUMPHREYS.

The death is also announced of Second-Lieut. Lawrence Olsen Humphreys, of Aigburth, a son of the late Captain Humphreys, a Liverpool shipper. He was very well known to footballers in the Deeside district, having played on several occasions for the Neston F.C.

Birkenhead News - Saturday 20 November 1915

The conditions in mid-November 1915, and the details of Laurence's death in the vicinity of Béthune (probably to the east, towards Festubert) in northern France, are recorded in the War Diary:

INDIB	10	Poured with rain all day. Trenches & dugouts flooded. Ration & water parties compelled to cross open country & subject to fire from enemy snipers. Casualties 2 killed & 2 wounded.
	11	Rain all day - conditions worse than ever, men buried for two or three hours under falling dugouts is a common occurrence. Enemy snipers very active getting two of our men but they themselves are equally uncomfortable and expose themselves from time to time. Our sharpshooters claim four.
Trenches INDIB	11 (cont)	Rain continues, repairs collapse as fast as they are made. But men are all wonderfully cheerful under the circumstances. 2/Lt L O Humphreys shot through abdomen whilst superintending a working party in Barnton trench.
	12	2/Lt L O HUMPHREYS died of wounds in CHOCQUES hospital. Loss deeply regretted by whole Battrn. A good officer whose ever cheerful spirit will be greatly missed by his men & in fact the whole of No. 3 Coy. Rain ceased & a hard frost commences.
	13	A clear frosty day, conditions are improving. Capt. Davies returning from leave is shot by snipers whilst going down to join his company in Rothsay Bay. Wound a nasty one but not dangerous. No warlike operations on either side beyond the usual sniping and occasional exchange of shell fire.
	14	Another dry, cold day & a fair amount of work done in clearing trenches & building shelter for men.
	15	

(November 1915)

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Chocques Hospital, the base for N^o. 1 Casualty Clearing Station, was located in the farming village of Chocques by the banks of the Clarence River, some 3 miles west of Béthune and 30 miles southwest of Lille.

notiaa R/O Overseas

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
HUMPHREYS	6th Bn R. Lancs L.	Plt	1897.
<i>Laurence Olsen</i>			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
X VICTORY BRITISH	Off 101	160	Died 13.11.15 A.P.W.
X 15 STAR	"	2	
Theatre of War first served in <i>France.</i>			
Date of entry therein			

NX 8305 23/8/22 NW6/20523
K. 1880
NY/4 20523.

Correspondence

Address *Mrs Reddoch (widow - remarried)
East Green.
Kinross Scotland*

(1475) W.L. W2793/11P8142 1,000m 12-1 J.F.W. E 8291.

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

The card notes Laurence's earlier service with the 6th Battalion The Liverpool Regiment (Service No. 1897) and his widow's remarried name and address in East Green, Kinross, Scotland.

RECORD OF OFFICERS' EFFECTS, 19										RECORD OF OFFICERS' EFFECTS, 19					
Record No.	Regiment No.	Name and Rank	Regt. or Corps	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS					CHARGES			To whom issued	W/L Letters of Administration, or Intestate	REMARKS
					Description	Amount	Date	Amount	Amount	Account	Date				
13611	712/2	HUMPHREYS 2 Lieut	L. O.	Died of wounds 13/11/15	R.O. 702608 30/10/16	1	2	=	70	9	7	C.P.E. 3/16	£70-9-7 to Mr. R. Adams	Adms	<i>Army</i> C.P.E. 20-2-16/2. Committee of Adjustment held C.P.E. 22-3-16/2. All claims paid C.P.E. 2-11-19-19-20 £99-6s-10d Payer 16-11-20
					Shoreline 439 27/1/16	63	7	6	=	12	6	C.P.E. 3/16	Mrs Anne Humphreys		
					Exp. & Am. 3/10/20	6	-	11	3	4	9	C.P.E. 3/16	£3-4-9 to Mr. R. Adams		
					C.P. Base " 1/15	-	-	11	5	-	-	C.P.E. 2/21-11-19	Adms, Mrs Anne Humphreys	£5	
					" " 1/16	3	6	11	5	-	-	C.P.E. 2/21-11-19	Adms Mrs Anne Riddock	£5	
13612	101626/9	KINROSS	11 Volunteers		C.P.E. 2/20	5	-	-							

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. Anne Humphreys, Laurence's widow and the administrator of his estate, appears to have received several payments of outstanding wages totalling £94 6s 10d from the army and a War Gratuity of £5. This, a total value of £99 6s 10d, is equivalent to a labour value (wages) of around £15, 400 in 2016. The last of the payments was recorded as being to Anne Riddock; it appears that Anne Humphreys married sometime between late-November 1919 and mid-April 1920 although no record for the marriage has been found (although the address of Mrs Riddock in August 1922 was recorded on the Medal Rolls Index as being in Kinross, Scotland).

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.

This is no case of petty right or wrong
That politicians or philosophers
Can judge. I hate not Germans, nor grow hot
With love of Englishmen, to please newspapers.
Beside my hate for one fat patriot
My hatred of the Kaiser is love true: -
A kind of god he is, banging a gong.
But I have not to choose between the two,
Or between justice and injustice. Dinned
With war and argument I read no more
Than in the storm smoking along the wind
Athwart the wood. Two witches' cauldrons roar.
From one the weather shall rise clear and gay;
Out of the other an England beautiful
And like her mother that died yesterday.
Little I know or care if, being dull,
I shall miss something that historians
Can rake out of the ashes when perchance
The phoenix broods serene above their ken.
But with the best and meanest Englishmen
I am one in crying, God save England, lest
We lose what never slaves and cattle blessed.
The ages made her that made us from dust:
She is all we know and live by, and we trust
She is good and must endure, loving her so:
And as we love ourselves we hate her foe.

**"This is No Case of
Petty Right or Wrong"**

Edward Thomas

(1878 - 1917)

