

160: Richard Rowlands

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Richard Rowlands
 Rank: Private
 Battalion / Regiment: 11th Bn. Cheshire Regiment
 Service Number: 25913 Date of Death: 21 October 1916 Age at Death: ?
 Buried / Commemorated at: Thiepval Memorial, Thiepval, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France
 Additional information given by CWGC: None

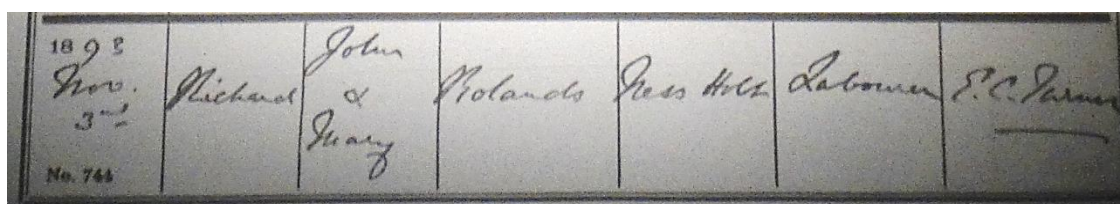
Richard Rowlands was the fifth child of labourer/collier John and Mary Rowlands of Ness. In the 1891 census, before Richard was born, the family consisted of:

John Rowlands	42	agric. labourer	born Little Neston
Mary	29		born Ness Holt
Solomon	8		born Little Neston [bpt 8 July 1883; John a collier]
Susan	7		born Ness [bpt 27 Nov. 1885; John a labourer living at Colliery]
Mary Jane	3		born Ness Holt [bpt 29 June 1888; John a labourer]

John Rowlands married Mary Peers at St Peter's Church, Liverpool, in July/September 1882. Mary was the daughter of labourer Richard and Alice Peers of Ness Holt and she was baptised at Neston 25 January 1864.

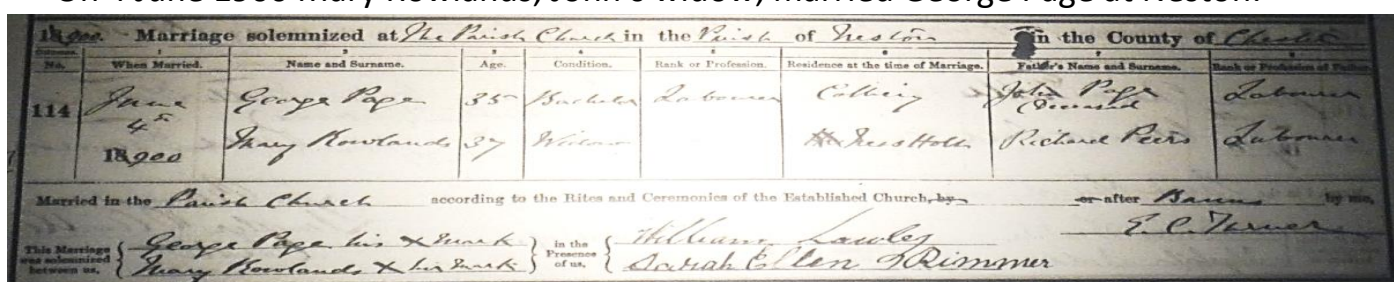
Information on John Rowlands is incomplete and contradictory; in the 1881 census (38, agricultural labourer, born Seacombe) John was working for William and Betsy Johnson on their 117-acre farm at Denhall. At that time Mary was a servant, aged 19, working for farmer and hotel keeper John and Rebecca Smith near Ledsham Hall.

Richard Rowlands was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 3 November 1893:



By the time of the 1901 census John Rowlands had died; he was buried at Neston 1 September 1898 although his age was recorded as being 57. The only John Rowlands registered as a birth on Wirral, in the period 1836 - 1856, was in mid-1845 in Birkenhead.

On 4 June 1900 Mary Rowlands, John's widow, married George Page at Neston:



George gave his occupation as labourer and his residence as Colliery; in the 1901 census he is recorded as an agricultural labourer and so it is likely that he was working at Colliery Farm. It is possible that both George and Mary were illiterate as both marked the marriage register with a cross.

By the time of the 1901 census (31 March), less than 10 months later, the family had moved to Rodney Row in Little Neston and Mary had just given birth to George Henry who was baptised at Neston on 24 May 1901:

George Page	Serv	M	38	✓	Farm Labourer	Widder		Cambridge
Mary	Wife	M	39	✓				Ness Holt
Mary J. Rowlands	17 Years	F	14	✓				Ness Holt
Sarah E. do	10 Years	F	10	✓				Ness Holt
Richard do	7 Years	M	7	✓				Ness Holt
Alfred do	6 Years	M	6	✓				Ness Holt
Ethel do	3 Years	F	3	✓				Ness Holt
George Page	1 Mo	M	1 Mo	✓				Little Neston
Robert Pittsoll	12	M	12	✓				Little Neston

1901 census (extract) - 3 Rodney Row, Little Neston (near the Durham Ox Inn)

George Page	38	farm labourer	born Cambridge
Mary	39		born Ness Holt
Mary J. Rowlands	14		born Ness Holt
Sarah E. Rowlands	10		born Ness Holt
Richard Rowlands	7		born Ness Holt
Alfred Rowlands	6		born Ness Holt
Ethel Rowlands	3		born Ness Holt
George Page	1 month		born Little Neston

Solomon Rowlands has not been traced in the 1901 census (and it is believed that he remained unmarried) but Susan Rowlands, 16, was a general servant at a farm in Raby. Susan married William Pritchard of Little Neston in late 1905 in a Civil Marriage on Wirral and in 1911 she was living in Lees Lane, Little Neston, with her two young children; Joseph William (5) and Matilda (3). William was not at home and has not been reliably traced. Two other children are known: Alfred (born 17 August 1911) and Bernard (mid-1913).

Sarah Ellen Rowlands (19) married labourer Thomas Quigley (36) at Neston Parish Church on 12 November 1910 and a witness was Sarah's brother, Solomon.

Sarah and Thomas have not been traced in the 1911 census although they registered a daughter, Mary Jane Quigley, born in Neston in late 1911. Sarah died, aged 21, in July / September 1912 in the Bebington district.

Mary Jane Rowlands, Richard's sister, married Samuel Fewtrell at St Mary the Virgin. West Derby, Liverpool, in mid-1908 and, in 1911, they were living on Chester Road, Neston, with Richard (18, general labourer) as a boarder.

In the 1911 census Ethel was recorded as an inmate, aged 12, in Dr Barnardo's Girls Village Homes in Barkingside, Ilford, Essex. The fact that Ethel was placed in an orphanage suggests that George and Mary Page had died (they have not been traced in the 1911 census ¹) although it has not been possible to verify this. However, a George Henry Page died in Sevenoaks, Kent, in late 1908 aged 44).

The Service Record for Richard Rowlands has not been found and so no details of his army service or the circumstances of his death are known although he was serving with the 11th Battalion Cheshire Regiment when he died on 21 October 1916. Previously, he had served with the 1st Battalion and it is known also that he enlisted in Birkenhead.

The 11th Battalion was formed at Chester on 17 September 1914 as part of the Kitchener's Third New Army (K3) and then moved to Codford St Mary on Salisbury Plain in the 75th Brigade of the 25th Division for training. The troops were then moved to Bournemouth and, in May 1915, to Aldershot, before being mobilised on 26 September 1915 and moving to France where they were in action on the Western Front. It is most likely that Richard was killed in the early actions in The Battle of Ancre Heights (1 October - 11 November 1916), the continuation of British attacks after The Battle of Thiepval Ridge from Courcellette near the Albert-Bapaume road, west to Thiepval on the Bazentin Ridge. It was recognised that British possession of the higher land would deprive the German 1st Army of observation towards Albert to the south-west and give the British observation north over the Ancre valley to the German positions around Beaumont Hamel, Serre and Beaucourt. Large attacks were conducted on 1, 8, 21 and 25 October and, later, from 10 - 11 November 1916.

One of the prime objectives of the early actions at Ancre Heights was to take Regina Trench (Staufen Riegel), a German trench dug along the north-facing slope of a ridge running from north-west of the village of Le Sars, south-westwards to Stuff Redoubt (Staufenfeste), close to the German fortifications at Thiepval. It was the longest such

The Girls Village Home, Barkingside was built by private donations. Thomas Barnardo was always at the forefront of new ideas, his plan for The Village Home was that it be built as a Garden City so that each cottage had its own garden, front and back. One of the chief features of the village is the new purpose built steam laundry that did all the washing from all the branch homes. The girls that were received at Barkingside ranged from infancy onwards and most of them remained until they reached the age of seventeen. Over the years from 1876 till

1939 thousands of girls would pass through the Village Home, Barkingside portal for training as domestic service maids, cooks etc in such a thorough fashion that there was always a great demand for Dr Barnardo's well trained girls.



<http://www.goldonian.org/barkingside/>

¹ A Mary Jane Page, aged 46, died on Wirral in late 1908 but there is no clear record of the death of George Page locally

trench on the German front during the First World War and was attacked several times, particularly by the Canadian Corps.

On 21 October, the 4th Canadian Division attacked the western portion of Regina Trench, as the 18th Division, 25th Division (which included the 11th Battalion Cheshire Regiment) and the 39th Division of II Corps., attacked the part further west (known as Stuff Trench to the British). The Canadians met little opposition and gained the objective, as the II Corps divisions captured Stuff Trench in thirty minutes, giving the British control of the Thiepval Ridge. Three counter-attacks were repulsed by the Canadians and by 22 October, more than a thousand Germans had been taken prisoner. The east end of the trench was finally captured by the 4th Canadian Division during the night of 10/11 November.

The involvement of the 11th Battalion Cheshire Regiment in attacking the Regina Trench on 21/22 October was documented by Arthur Crookenden:

This attack was carried out under a barrage starting at 12-6 p.m. The troops had by now gained confidence in barrages and moved forward close under it. The enemy's wire had been effectually cut and was no obstacle.

The only one of our Battalions in the front line was the 13th which advanced in three waves and took its objectives without much difficulty, though the casualties were severe, 12 officers and 198 men.

* * * *

The 11th Battalion was split up, one company was attached to the 8th Border Regiment, one company was "carrying" for the two assaulting Brigades, and two companies were holding Hessian trench.

Some of the men of the 11th Battalion, attached to the 8th Borders overran the objective and got ahead of the barrage. In consequence a gap occurred at the point of junction of the Brigades, and here the enemy held out for some time. In the end the enemy post was taken and its defenders all killed or captured; a large dug-out holding 150 men was afterwards found at this point.

[The History of the Cheshire Regiment in the Great War Arthur Crookenden (Colonel of the Regiment) W.H. Evans, Sons & Co. Ltd. 1938]

An extract from the War Diary of the 11th Battalion, covering the date of Richard Rowland's death (21 October) is on the following page.

An aerial view of the shell-pocked landscape surrounding Regina and Kenora trenches on the Somme in Autumn 1916.

[Source:
<https://legionmagazine.com/en/2011/07/slaughter-on-the-somme/>]



Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Trenches	17/X/16 18/X/16 19/X/16 20/X/16 21/X/16		<p>A & C Coys relieved by 10th Cheshires & returned to X 2c37 - Return party lost & killed & 2 wounded by a H.E. shell.</p> <p>Instruction of Battⁿ in details of attack intended for tomorrow.</p> <p>Relieved 10th Cheshires in HESSIAN TRENCH from R 22 c37 to R 21 d79 - Men filed in by Coys, one from each platoon consecutively so as to space them in trench for attack by 4 waves in Company Column. Battⁿ H.Qs HESSIAN trench R 21 d89 - Orders reached Battⁿ about midday attack postponed 24 hours. A Coy moved back to dugouts at X 2 c37, & C Coy to R 27 B 17. 2/Lieut L. HICKEY wounded. Trench strength O-22 - O.R. 526</p> <p>At 2 am. received orders for postponement of attack a further 24 hours. Message to A Coy did not reach them in time to prevent them moving up again to trench. Orders about 6 pm that 8th Borders are to carry out attack allotted provisionally to 11th Cheshires, on REGINA TRENCH from R 22 a 33 to R 21 b62.55</p> <p>A Coy 11th Cheshires & 4 other officers are attached to them for that purpose. Relieved by 8th Borders by 8 am. Battⁿ H.Q. moved back to R 27 b17. A Coy 11th Cheshires attached to 8th Borders on their left, zero 12.7 noon. B & D Coys then filed in to hold HESSIAN TRENCH vacated by 8th Borders & 8th S. Lances. D Coy moved up after the attack to reinforce garrison of REGINA trench, C Coy were split up as carrying parties for 3 Batts. delivering attack. Battalion Service bombers also reinforced 8th Borders after capture of REGINA trench.</p> <p>1875 Wt. W593/826 1,000,000 4/15 J.B.C. & A. A.D.S.S./Forms/C.2118.</p>	Ref. M. 46 Sheet 57 D: 5, 5. 2.0000
Trenches	21/X/16 cont ^d		<p>In the attack, A Coy captured a German Machine Gun, cleared with a bomb a German dugout in REGINA TRENCH, & went about 400 yards beyond along road, clearing several dugouts & taking prisoners.</p> <p>Casualties - 2/Lieut K.W.L. Scott - <u>killed</u> 2/Lieuts A.G. Carpenter, C.F.S. Rhodes, H. Holland & K.P. Hall - <u>wounded</u> 2/Lieut E.S. Lacey - <u>missing</u></p> <p>Other Ranks 8 killed, 52 wounded, 14 missing</p> <p>Relieved by 7 pm by 19th Division - marched to camp near ALBERT (W 20a)</p> <p>Marched to WARLOY - billets</p> <p>Marched to huts at AUTHIEULE</p>	Ref. M. 46 Sheet 57 D: 5, 5. 2.0000
WARLOY AUTHIEULE	22.X.1916 23.X.1916 24.X.1916			

Trenches 17/X/16 A & C Coys relieved by 10th Cheshires & returned to X2c37 – Return party lost & killed & 2 wounded by a H.E. shell.

18/X/16 Instruction of Battⁿ in details of attack intended for tomorrow.

19/X/16 Relieved 10th Cheshires in HESSIAN TRENCH from R22c37 to R21d79 – Men filed in by Coys, one from each platoon consecutively so as to space them in trench for attack by 4 waves in Company Column. Battⁿ HQs HESSIAN trench R21d89 – Orders reached Battⁿ about midday attack postponed 24 hours. A Coy moved back to dugouts at X2c37 & C Coy to R27B17. 2/Lieut L. HICKEY wounded. Trench strength: O – 22 O.R. – 526.

20/X/16 At 2am received orders for postponement of attack a further 24 hours. Message to A Coy did not reach them in time to prevent them moving up again to trench. Orders about 6pm that 8th Borders are to carry out attack allotted provisionally to 11th Cheshires, on REGINA TRENCH from R22a33 to R21b62.55; A Coy 11th Cheshires & 4 other officers are attached to them for that purpose.

21/X/16 Relieved by 8th Borders by 8am. Battⁿ HQ moved back to R27b17. A Coy 11th Cheshires attached to 8th Borders attacked on their left, zero 12.7 noon. B & D Coys then filed in to hold HESSIAN TRENCH vacated by 8th Borders & 8th S. Lances. D Coy moved up after the attack to reinforce garrison of REGINA trench, C Coy were split up as carrying parties for 3 Batts. delivering attack. Battalion Service bombers also reinforced 8th Borders after capture of REGINA trench.

In the attack, A Coy captured a German Machine Gun, cleared with a bomb a German dugout in REGINA TRENCH, & went about 400 yards beyond along road, clearing several dugouts & taking prisoners.

Casualties – 2/Lieut K.W.L. Scott – killed

2/Lieuts A.G. Carpenter, C.F.S. Rhodes, H. Holland & K.P. Hall – wounded

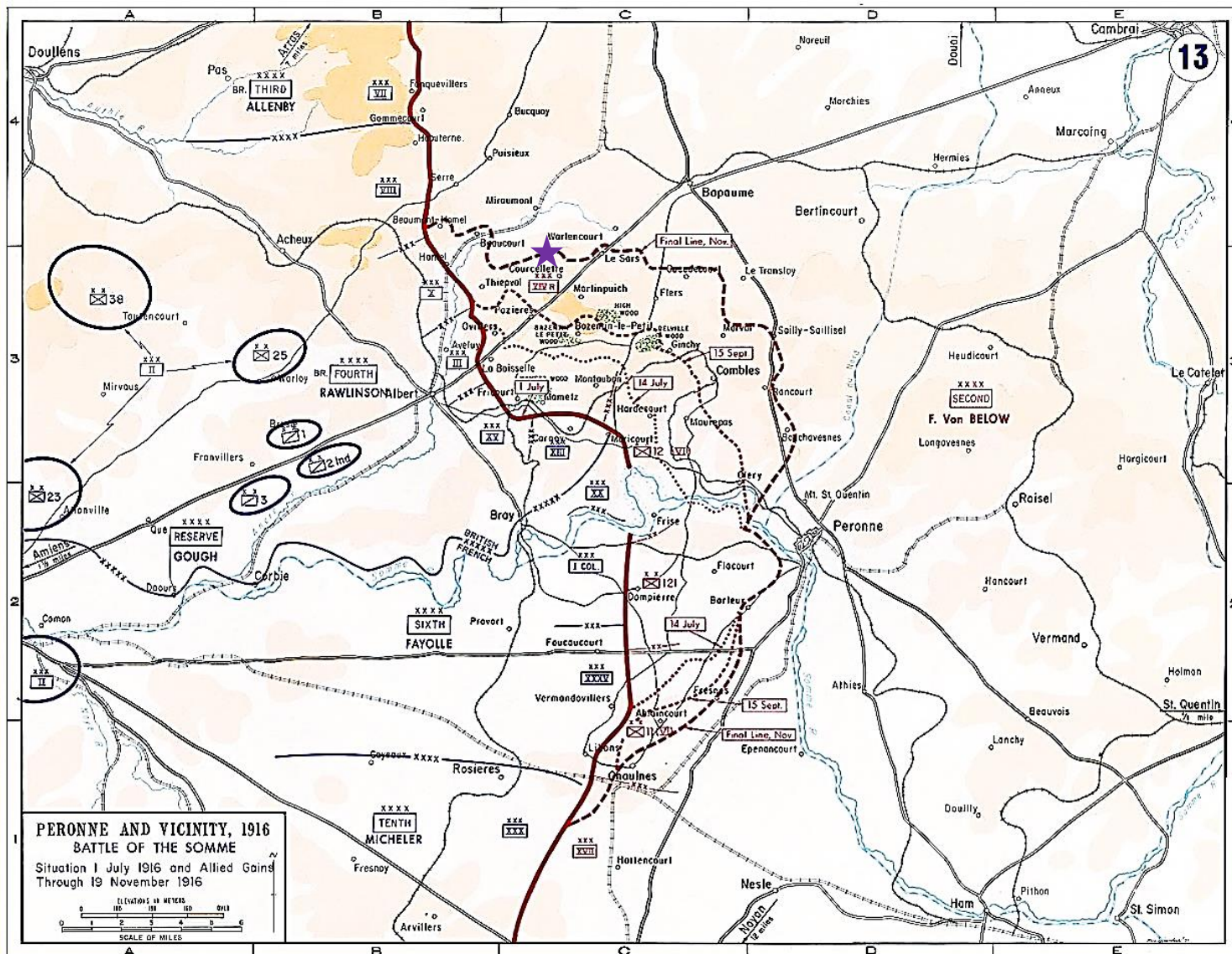
2/Lieut E.S. Lacey – missing

Other Ranks 8 killed, 52 wounded, 14 missing

22.X.1916 Relieved by 7pm by 19th Division – marched to camp near ALBERT (W20a).

WARLOY 23.X.1916 Marched to WARLOY – billets.

AUTHIEULE 24.X.1916 Marched to huts at AUTHIEULE.



The first day on the Somme, 1 July 1916, was the opening day of the Battle of Albert (1–13 July), and resulted in a serious defeat for the German Second Army. Over the following months the Allied forces pushed north and eastwards from the July front line (the north/south continuous red line on the map) with the Third Phase lasting from 15 September to the conclusion of The Battle of the Ancre, 13–18 November.

Richard Rowlands died in The Battle of Ancre Heights (1 October – 11 November), in the vicinity of Courcellette; the approximate location is indicated by ★, around six miles north-east of the town of Albert.

[Source: <http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/war/WW%20I/Somme/Somme%20Map.html>]

The Battle of the Ancre Heights was fought after Haig made plans for the Third Army to take the area east of Gommecourt, the Reserve Army to attack north from Thiepval Ridge and east from Beaumont Hamel–Hébuterne and for the Fourth Army to reach the Péronne–Bapaume road around Le Transloy and Beaulencourt–Thillooy–Loupard Wood, north of the Albert–Bapaume road. The Reserve Army attacked to complete the capture of Regina Trench/Staff Trench, north of Courcellette to the west end of Bazentin Ridge around Schwaben and Staff Redoubts, during which bad weather caused great hardship and delay. The Marine Brigade from Flanders and fresh German divisions brought from quiet fronts counter-attacked frequently and the British objectives were not secured until 11 November. [Wikipedia]

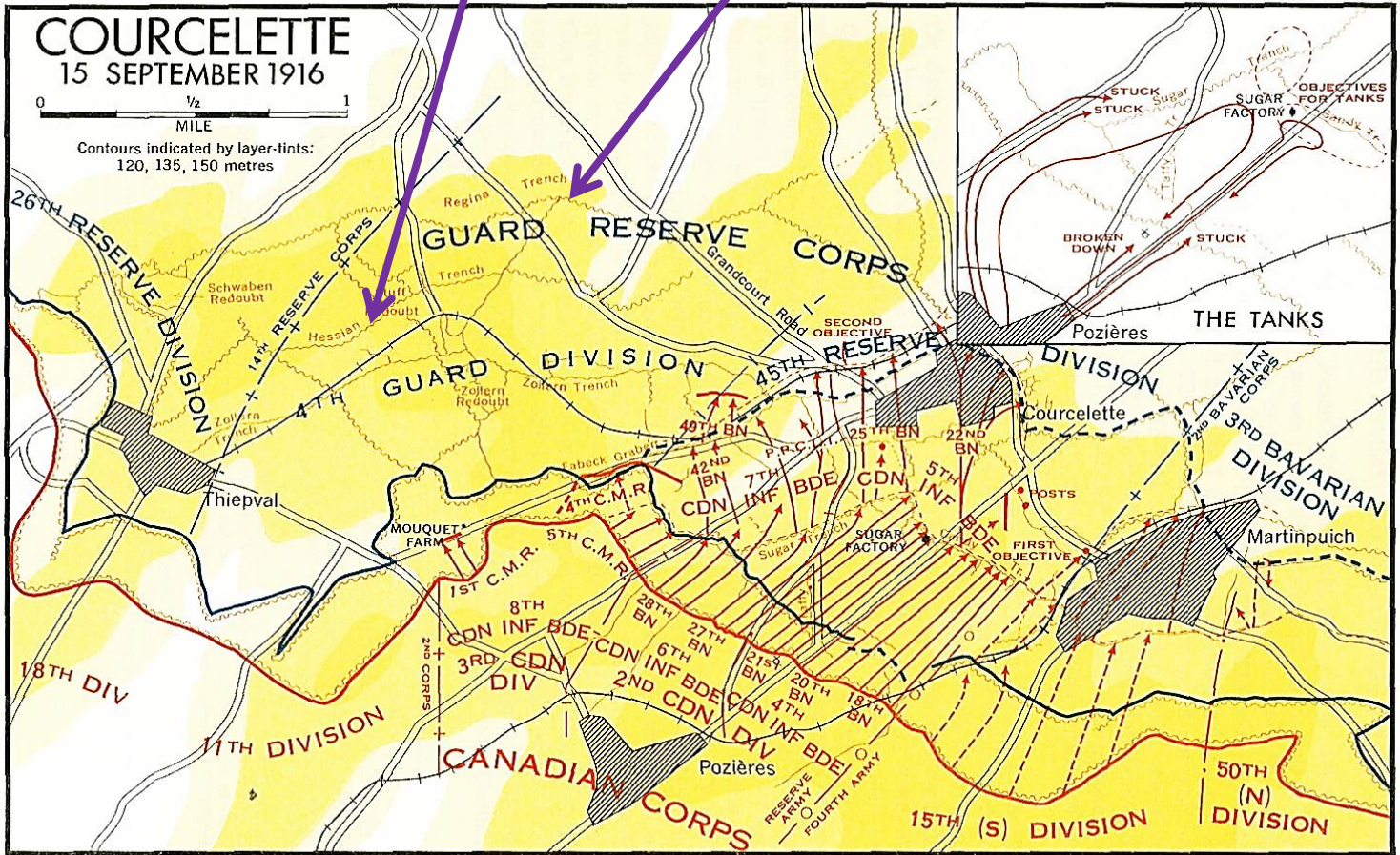
25913	Pte.	ROWLANDS, Richard	Ches. R. Pte. 25913,	X					Infantry Base Depot.
			1/Ches. R.						
			11/Ches. R.						

WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920 British War Medal and Victory Medal

Hessian Trench

Regina Trench

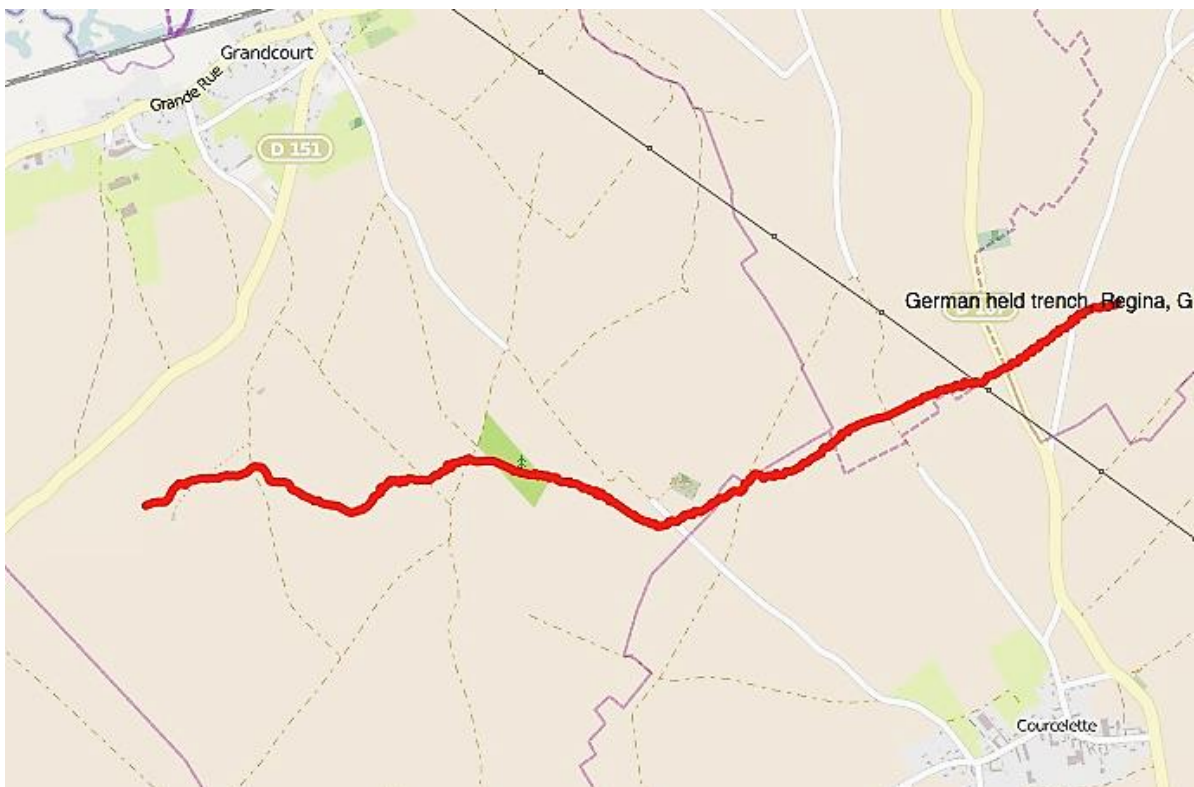
MAP 6



Reproduced by Army Survey Establishment

Compiled and drawn by Historical Section G.S.

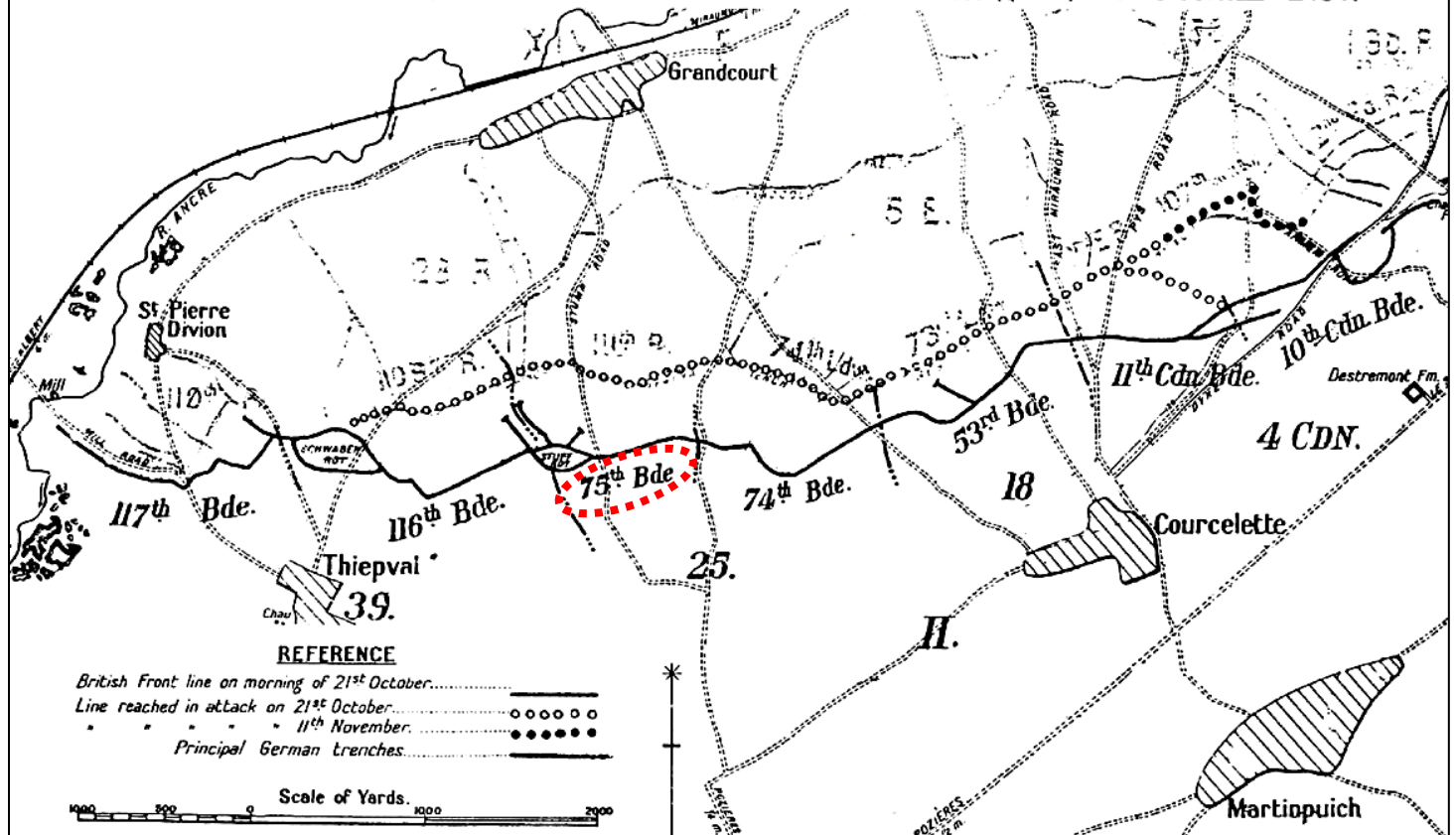
Trench map of mid-September 1916 showing the location of Hessian Trench and Regina Trench between Thiepval and Courcellette. [Source: <http://blupete.com/DJ%20&%20Malcolm/Ch%2010.htm>]



The location of the Regina trench (the British name) on a modern day map of France at about 2.7238W, 50.0708N.

[Source: <http://dhcommons.org/journal/issue-1/can-20-million-documents-change-first-world-war>]

THE SOMME, 1916: Battle of the Ancre Heights, 21st Oct. & 11th Nov.



The 75th Brigade (encircled in red) of the 25th Division was immediately south of the front line (and adjacent to Stuff Redoubt) on the morning of 21 October 1916, the day on which Richard Rowlands was presumed to have been killed in action.

[Source: *The Somme: The Day-to-Day Account* Chris McCarthy Arms & Armour Press 1993]

578860	Rowlands Richard	11 th Btn 21-10-16	8 th Bury 1917	1	13	6	NO. 1.18.	5-1-18	Serv: Mrs Mary J Fewtrell	1	13	6
		Chester Bn r	Pte Perce 101									
		25913. Death										
		Assumed										
		WAP GRATUITY		6	10			2-19			6	10
		Effects 1920/1879						3.				
		Transfer 6318										
		Regd Paper 1/238 226										
		Serial No 1/1391										
		A.W. 5070 Sent 19-6-19										

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 June 1919 Richard's married sister, Mary Jane Fewtrell, received a payment of outstanding wages of £1 13s 6d from the army and a War Gratuity of £6 10s. This, a total value of £8 3s 6d, is equivalent to a labour value (wages) of around £1270 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.

Ironically, the *Chester Chronicle* of Saturday 9 December 1916 listed Richard as having been wounded - this was some seven weeks after he had died. As Richard Rowlands is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial it is clear that he was one of the 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave – presumably he was amongst the 14 Other Ranks who were recorded as being ‘missing’ from the 11th Battalion on 21 October 1916 and was assumed to have been killed in action.

Name	Corps.	Rank	Regt. No.
ROWLANDS	BHES: R.	PW	25913
Richard	-1-	-1-	-1-
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	J/2/10/1310	3170	Asst Rm A 21.10.16
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	J/2/5/131	1107	
Theatre of War first served in	1 France		
Date of entry therein	2.7.15		

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

Solomon Rowlands, Richard’s older brother, died on Wirral in June 1955 aged 72. In the 1939 Register he is recorded as an agricultural labourer living on Bridge Street, Neston. Unmarried, his date of birth is recorded as 1883, no day or month being shown.

Susan Rowlands married William Pritchard in late 1905 and, in 1911, the family was living on Lees Lane, Little Neston. However, none of the family has been located in the 1939 Register and nothing further is known of them.

Mary Jane Rowlands, Richard’s sister, married Samuel Fewtrell in West Derby in mid-1908 and at the time of the 1911 census they were living on Chester Road, Neston:

Samuel Fewtrell	28	fisherman	born Neston
Mary J	24		born Neston
Betsy Mary	10 months		born Neston
Richard Rowlands	18	single, boarder, general labourer	born Neston

Mary and Samuel had been married for three years and their one child was still living. In the 1939 Register they are recorded at 3 Cottage Close, Burton Road:

Samuel Fewtrell	born 10 September 1883	builder’s labourer
Mary J	born 5 February 1887	
Bessie	born 25 September 1916	hospital ward maid

Two lines of the record have been redacted

The two redacted lines probably conceal the records of Samuel (registered in mid-1920) and Dorothy (registered in late 1923).

Bessie Fewtrell married Walter Bailey at Neston Parish Church in mid-1940.

Samuel Fewtrell died on Wirral, aged 81, in late 1964 and Mary Jane died in mid-1980 when her date of birth was recorded as 5 February 1886.

Sarah Ellen Rowlands married labourer Thomas Quigley on 12 November 1910 and Sarah died, aged 21, in July / September 1912.

It is not known when Thomas Quigley died although he may have remarried.

Alfred Rowlands was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 27 March 1896 when John was recorded as a labourer and their address given as Ness Holt. Albert, recorded as 23, married Sarah Elizabeth Davies, 22, at Neston Parish Church on 17 October 1921 ²:

1921		Marriage solemnized at <i>Neston</i>		in the <i>Parish Church</i>		of <i>Neston</i>		in the County of <i>Cheshire</i>	
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.	
194	<i>Oct. seventeenth</i>	<i>Alfred Rowlands</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Neston</i>	<i>John Rowlands</i>	<i>Labourer (deceased)</i>	
	<i>1921</i>	<i>Sarah Elizabeth Davies</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Spinster</i>		<i>Neston</i>	<i>John Davies</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	

Married in the *Parish Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Established Church* by *John Davies (in Mark)* or after Banns by me, *Arthur Thompson*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Alfred Rowlands* in the Presence of us, *John Davies*

In the 1939 Register they are recorded as living at 22 Talbot Gardens, Little Neston:

Alfred Rowlands	born 7 February 1896	CCC roadman ³
Sarah E	born 1 November 1894	
William	born 9 November 1919	single motor van guard (Port Sunlight)

One line of the record has been redacted

George	born 3 November 1925
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Three lines of the record have been redacted

Richard	born 18 May 1936
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One line of the record has been redacted

The William Rowlands recorded in 1939 was a son of Alfred and Sarah who had been born almost two years before they married.

Alfred Rowlands died, aged 69, in late 1965 but it is not certain when Sarah died.

Ethel Rowlands, believed to be the last child of John and Mary Rowlands, was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 29 April 1898.

As noted earlier, it is believed that Ethel was, in 1912, an inmate, aged 12, in Dr Barnardo's Girls Village Homes in Barkingside, Ilford, Essex. It is possible that Ethel married Harold Jellicoe at St Deiniol, Hawarden, in early 1922; in the 1939 Register they were living at 13 Scot's Road, Mancot, Hawarden:

Harold Jellicoe	born 28 January 1899	steelwork's labourer
Ethel	born 2 December 1897	
Hugh Lloyd	born 16 December 1914	steelwork's labourer

Ethel died in the Hawarden district, aged 69, in mid-1967. It is not known when Harold died.

It has not proved possible to locate George Page (born February 1901), the only known child of George and Mary Page, in the 1939 Register. A George Page, born *about* 1900, died in the Chester district in mid-1969.

² Although Albert's real age was then 25 years 7 months and, if Sarah's date of birth was recorded correctly in 1939, she would have been nearly 27

³ CCC refers to Cheshire County Council