

19: George Davidson

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: G. Davidson

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 9th Bn. Cheshire Regiment

Service Number: W/22 Date of Death: 28 September 1918 Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Loos Memorial, Loos-en-Gohelle, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, France

Additional information given by CWGC: None

George Davidson was a son of labourer Thomas and Mary Davidson of Ness. He had attended Ness Holt School, had been wounded 3 times, and apparently had 5 brothers (3 in the army, one discharged wounded) and was 21 when he died.

In the 1881 census, before George was born, agricultural labourer Thomas and Mary were recorded as living at Ness with their eldest child, Edward, who had been born in Puddington in July/September 1879. At that time they were living with Thomas's grandmother, 63-year old Mary who had been born in the village and it was recorded that she *keeps mangle*.

Thomas Davidson had married Mary Rosedale at St Michael's Church, Shotwick, in April / June 1878.

By 1891, still before George was born, the family had increased in size but was still living in Ness:



1891	1	Thomas Davidson	Head	Married	36	Labourer	+	Charles Davidson	Single	11	Labourer	+	Charles Davidson	Single	11	Labourer	+
		Mary Davidson	Wife	Married	30			Elizabeth Davidson	Single	9			Elizabeth Davidson	Single	9		
		Edward Davidson	Son	Single	11			Charles Davidson	Single	11			Charles Davidson	Single	11		
		Mary Davidson	Daughter	Single	9			Charles Davidson	Single	9			Charles Davidson	Single	9		
		Thomas Davidson	Son	Single	8			Charles Davidson	Single	8			Charles Davidson	Single	8		
		William Davidson	Son	Single	5			Charles Davidson	Single	5			Charles Davidson	Single	5		
		Sarah Ann Davidson	Daughter	Single	3			Charles Davidson	Single	3			Charles Davidson	Single	3		
		Joseph Davidson	Son	Single	1			Charles Davidson	Single	1			Charles Davidson	Single	1		

1891 census – Ness Holt

Thomas Davidson	36	labourer	born Ness Holt
Mary	30		born Mollington
Edward	11		born Puddington
Mary	9		born Ness Holt
Thomas	8		born Ness Holt
William	5		born Ness Holt
Sarah Ann	3		born Ness Holt
Joseph	1		born Ness Holt

It is believed that George was born in early 1897 and was registered as John George Davidson although no baptismal record has been found. However, another son, Frank, was baptised privately on 17 September 1898 - Thomas was still a labourer living at Ness Holt - but Frank died and was buried, aged 2 months, on 22 September 1898. From causes which are unknown, Thomas Davidson died shortly after his young son was born and Thomas was buried at Neston on 15 December 1898 aged 45. No record of George's baptism at Neston has been found but the birth of a John George Davidson was recorded for Neston in the 1st quarter of 1897.

At the time of the 1901 census, therefore, young George - the youngest member of the family - was being raised by his widowed mother in Ness:

No. of Inhabitants	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES				Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Condition of Marriage	Age last Birthday of		PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN	(1) Dea (2) Birt (3) Lan (4) Imt m
		Inhabited	Uninhabited	In the process of erection	Building				Male	Female					
6	Ness Lane Ness Holt	1				Mary Davidson	Head	Wid	38					Wks. Mollington	
						Edward Do	Son	S	21		Bricklayers labourer	Worker		Do Puddington	
						Thomas Do	Son	S	18		Teamster on farm	Do		Do Ness Holt	
						William Do	Son	S	15		Yardman on farm	Do		Do Do	
						Joseph Do	Son	S	11		Going to school			Do Do	
						Elizabeth Do	Daugh	-	9		Do Do			Do Do	
						Minnie R. Do	Do	-	7		Do Do			Do Do	
						Charles Do	Son	-	5		Do Do			Do Do	
						George Do	Son	-	4		Do Do			Do Do	

1901 census (extract) - Ness Lane, Ness Holt

Mary Davidson	38	widow	born Mollington
Edward	21	bricklayer's labourer	born Puddington
Thomas	18	teamster on farm	born Ness Holt
William	15	yardman on farm	born Ness Holt
Joseph	11		born Ness Holt
Elizabeth	9		born Ness Holt
Minnie R.	7		born Ness Holt
Charles	5		born Ness Holt
George	4		born Ness Holt

Note: In April 1918 it was reported that Private William Davidson had been injured and that he is ...one of six brothers serving in the army [Birkenhead News - 13 April 1918]. George Davidson was killed just six months later. The Service Records of both William Davidson and Thomas Davidson have also survived.

In the 1911 census George is recorded, aged 14, as being a 'servant - help on farm' for farmer Ralph Leech at Hann's Hall, Willaston. His widowed mother, Mary Davidson was then a general servant living with Margaret Kemp at 'Burton Rocks', Burton. Mary gave her age as 52 (her age is recorded inconsistently; in the 1881 census she was said to be 26) and it was noted that she had been married for 35 years and had produced 11 children of whom 10 were still living.

Although George's Service Record has not been found it is believed that he enlisted, in Neston, shortly after the outbreak of war and the 'Daily Casualty List', of 18 December 1915 reported that he had been injured whilst then serving with the 13th Battalion

Cheshire Regiment. Interestingly, the *Birkenhead News* in February 1917 lists him as having ‘...recently left this country for active service’ and this could indicate that George had, again, been injured before returning to service.

The Daily List [N^o 5368] of 19 September 1917 recorded that George, documented as a Lance Corporal, had been wounded.

In October 1917 it was again reported that George Davidson had been wounded, in the arm and side, and was in hospital abroad. The report of his death in October 1918 noted that he had been wounded on three previous occasions and had returned to the front for the fourth time on Easter Sunday (31 March) 1918.

When George was killed on 28 September 1918 he was serving with the 9th (Service) Battalion Cheshire Regiment. The battalion had formed at Chester on 13 September 1914 as part of Kitchener’s 2nd New Army and were initially under the orders of the 58th Brigade, 19th (Western) Division but transferred to the 56th Brigade in the same Division on 7 February 1918.

Although George first enlisted with the 13th Battalion it is known from his Medals Roll entry that he transferred later to the 1st Battalion, went back to the 13th Battalion, transferred to the 10th Battalion and, finally, moved to the 9th Battalion.

FACING THE FOE.

The young men from this neighbourhood serving on the various battlefields now number several hundreds.

Among those who have recently left this country for active service are:—Privates Hugh Bennett, Thomas Davies, Harry Menlor, George Davidson, Edvi, Lari, John Jones, Edward Jones and John Smith. Several of these have been home on sick leave after being wounded. Their many friends wish them a speedy and victorious return.

Birkenhead News – Saturday 26 February 1917

NESS MAN KILLED.

The death in action is reported of Pte. George Davidson, youngest son of Mrs. Davidson, Ness. Deceased, who was only 21 years of age, was educated at Ness Holt School, under Mr J. S. Warren, and being of a bright, cheerful disposition gained for himself esteem and goodwill. Immediately on the outbreak of war he enlisted in the Cheshire Regt., and after the necessary training proceeded abroad. He was wounded on three separate occasions, and returned to the front for the fourth time last Easter Sunday. The following letter has been received by his mother from one of his officers:—“It is with very deep regret that I have to send you news of the death of your son. Cheerful and a good worker, he was very popular, and his loss is keenly felt by all the officers and men of his company. It occurred during a raid on the enemy’s trenches, and your son was one who failed to return. His body was recovered two days later.” Mrs. Davidson has five other sons, four of whom are serving in the Army at the present time, and one has just been discharged after having been wounded.

Birkenhead News - Saturday 19 October 1918

Transcription:

NESS MAN KILLED

The death in action is reported of Pte. George Davidson, youngest son of Mrs Davidson, Ness. Deceased, who was only 21 years of age, was educated at Ness Holt School under Mr J. S. Warren, and being of a bright, cheerful disposition gained for himself esteem and goodwill. Immediately on the outbreak of war he enlisted in the Cheshire Regt., and after the necessary training proceeded abroad. He was wounded on three separate occasions and returned to the front for the fourth time last Easter Sunday. The following letter has been received by his mother from one of his officers:- “It is with very deep regret that I have to send you news of the death of your son. Cheerful and a good worker, he was very popular, and his loss is keenly felt by all the officers and men of his company. It occurred during a raid on the enemy’s trenches, and your son was one who failed to return. His body was recovered two days later.” Mrs Davidson has five other sons, four of whom are serving in the Army at the present time and one has just been discharged after having been wounded.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
NEUVE CHAPELLE	1918			
	Sept 26		night. Sub sector, left sector. Relief was complete by 11 P.M. Fairly quiet day.	K137
	27		Fairly quiet all day. Patrols pushed out with object of establishing post in old German front line. This was unsuccessful.	K137
	28		At 1 P.M. One platoon of D Coy attacked the enemy old front line at S.5.b.5.1. Enemy machine gun post encountered, and one person captured. Casualties:- 11 ORs killed 3 ORs wounded & 2 ORs missing.	Report K139
	29		Day fairly quiet but enemy artillery became active during evening, shelling PONT LOGY heavily. Our patrols found the enemy to be still holding his front line. Casualties:- 1 OR killed, 2 ORs wounded.	
	30		Enemy artillery quiet. Three picquets were established at M.36.c.55.90 to M.36.c.75.90. Patrols found enemy line still occupied on the left. During the night an inter-Coy relief was carried out A Coy relieving D on the right and B Coy relieving C on the left. Lieut. Col. R.R. Raymer, DSO, proceeded to the 5th South Wales Borderers to take command.	
C. F. King Lieut. Col. Comdg. 9th Bn. Cheshire Regt.				

(A9173) Wt W235(P.6a) 6/24/03 12/17 D. D. & L. Sch. 52a. Form C/2118/13

9th Battalion Cheshire Regiment War Diary, 27 – 30 September 1918

NEUVE CHAPELLE

Sept 27 Fairly quiet all day. Patrols pushed out with object of establishing post in old German front line. This was unsuccessful.

Sept 28 At 1.0pm one platoon of D Coy attacked the enemy's old front line at S.5.b.5.1. Enemy machine gun post encountered, and one person captured.

Casualties:- 11 ORs killed 3 ORs wounded & 2 ORs missing

Sept 29 Day fairly quiet but enemy artillery became active during evening, shelling PONT LOGY heavily. Our patrols found the enemy to be still holding his front line. Casualties:- 1 OR killed 2 ORs wounded.

Sept 30 Enemy artillery quiet. Three picquets were established at M.36.c.55.90 to M.36.c.75.90. Patrols found enemy line still occupied on the left.

During the night an inter-Coy relief was carried out A Coy relieving D on the right and B Coy relieving C on the left.

Lieut. Col R.R. Raymer DSO proceeded to the 5th South Wales Bor'ers to take command.

Notes: C.F. King Lieut. Col Comdg. 9th Bt. Cheshire Regt.

OR is an abbreviation of Other Ranks (those military personnel who are not commissioned officers, including non-commissioned officers, NCOs).

A picquet (sometimes *picket*) was a small detachment of troops performing a particular duty, especially one sent out to watch for the enemy to give an early warning of impending attack (hence *picket line*).

Bor'ers: an abbreviation for Borderers.

Lieutenant Colonel C.F. King DSO (with bar), MC, appears to have survived the war. He was twice mentioned in despatches and he received the Military Cross after *He led several bombing attacks and cleared out at great risk a bomb store which had been set on fire. All this happened after he had been wounded. He refused to leave his post till ordered.*

Unfortunately, no details of the action which caused George's death are known other than he was involved in a raid on enemy trenches and his body was not recovered until two days later. Unfortunately, the War Diary entry for this time (above) is sparse on detail.

W588. HB249/1/18-100 Bks.—Wt. & Sons, Ltd. 1708																
Record No.	Registry No.	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS			CHARGES			Date of Authority	To whom Authorised	Amount Authorised			
					Account and Date	£	s.	d.	£	s.			d.	Account and Date	£	s.
815911	5/10/11/1	Davidson George	9 th Machine Rls W 22	28. 9. 18 in action France	Shrewsbury 12. 10	10	14	9				20. 3. 19	no sole leg. Mary	10	14	9
						18	10	=				12. 1. 20	no sole leg. Mary	18	10	-
					GRATUITY. 19.20 transfer 22. 2.10.19. Sgd Paper 2055 2144 Serial No. 31731.											
					A. F. W. 5070 SENT DATE 24.1.19											

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.

George Davidson had accrued a credit of £10 14s 9d and this was received by his mother Mary, as sole legatee. Mary received also the £18 10s War Gratuity.

The total payment, £29 4s 9d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £4450 in 2018.

Of George's siblings it is believed that:

Edward married Phoebe Leighton (born Holywell) in late 1910. In the 1911 census Edward was a farm labourer and they were living at 7 New House, Ness.

In the 1939 Register (29 September) Edward and Phoebe were living at 23 Talbot Gardens; Edward had been born on 26 July 1879 (and was recorded as a council worker, sanitary work) and Phoebe had been born on 1 February 1880. With them were unmarried children: Mary (born 14 December 1912 - in early 1941 she married Peter Bostock) ; Edward (born 1 June 1915 - builder's labourer [heavy worker]) and George C. (born 5 March 1917 - market gardener).

Edward died in late 1957 aged 78 and Phoebe died in Wirral in mid-1962 aged 82.

Mary, 26, married labourer John Lloyd of Ness at Neston Parish Church on 8 September 1907. Witnesses were Mary's siblings, Thomas and Sarah. In the 1911 census John Lloyd was recorded as a bricklayer's labourer and, with their daughter Gwendoline (9 months), they were living at Mealor's Cottages in Ness. It is believed that Mary Lloyd died in early 1917 aged 35.

Thomas became a builder's labourer. In 1911 he was living in the home of his widowed aunt, Mrs Thomas (Sarah) Candeland, in Thingwall, and on 6 August 1915

he married one of Sarah's daughters, Elizabeth Florence, at St Nicholas' church in Liverpool.

Thomas joined the 545th Agricultural (Labour) Coy. in early 1917 when he was living at Lostock near Northwich. Thomas served in France and in mid-September 1917 he suffered a gunshot wound to his left arm and abdomen and was returned to England, spending nearly 7 weeks in hospital. Thomas was demobilised on 22 February 1919 and he and Florence lived at 3 Hawthorn Terrace, Pensby Road, Thingwall. The 1939 Register (29 September) records that Thomas (born 10 December 1882, a general labourer) and Elizabeth (born 12 February 1883) were still living at 3 Hawthorne Terrace with Elizabeth's mother, Sarah, and two of Elizabeth's unmarried brothers. Also in the household were Thomas's younger brother, Joseph, (general builder's labourer, born 6 April 1889) and his wife Ellen (born 19 September 1889). Joseph had married one of Elizabeth's sisters, Ellen Candeland, in Liverpool in mid-1914 and, in 1939, two unmarried sons (Joseph [born 19 July 1920 - general landscape labourer] and Thomas [born 24 July 1925 - landscape gardener] were also in the household.

Thomas died in Birkenhead in late 1951 aged 68 and Elizabeth died in Birkenhead in late 1966 aged 83.

Joseph Davidson died in Birkenhead in mid-1958 aged 69 but it is not known for certain when Ellen died.

William (born 26 April 1885), a farm labourer, was recorded in 1911 as being married to Annie (born Thornton) and living with their son, Edward (2) at 1, New Houses, Ness. William married Annie Lee in late 1908.

William joined the Army Reserve on 12 December 1915 and on 22 June 1917 was transferred to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve for the Royal Naval Division. The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division was an infantry division formed originally as the Royal Naval Division in September 1914 from the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and Royal Marine reservists and volunteers who were not then required for service at sea. The eight battalions were named after famous British naval commanders and they fought on land alongside the army units. Mobilised on 22 June 1917 William served with the Howe and Drake Battalions and suffered gunshot wounds to the right thigh (March 1918) and to his right hand (14 May 1918) which required amputation of his thumb. He was discharged on 11 October 1918.

William's address was recorded variously as McGetrick's Cottages, McKettrick's and Mogletrock Cottages near Colliery Farm, Ness but at the time of the 1939 Register (29 September) he was living with Annie at Tranmore Cottages in Puddington. William was then a general labourer at the steelworks on Deeside and Annie was recorded as being born on 26 August 1886. With them in the household (two other entries have been redacted [as at March 2018]) were two children (presumably grandchildren), Rose Davidson (born 19 February 1928) and Eric Davidson (born 23 May 1931).

It is believed that William died on Wirral in early 1959 aged 73 and Annie died in West Cheshire, aged 80, in mid-1967.

In 1901 Sarah Ann Davidson, 14, was a general servant working for farmer John Green in Ness. Nothing further is known of Sarah other than that she was a witness at the wedding of her sister Mary in 1907 and that she may have married Reginald Williams, in Wirral, in mid-1916.

In 1911 Elizabeth (19, no occupation recorded) and Charles (15, farm labourer) were living together at McGetrick's Cottages near Colliery Farm, Ness. No one else was recorded in the household.

Nothing further is known of Elizabeth but Charles died on Wirral in early 1964 aged 68. No record of his marriage has been found and he has not been located in the 1939 Register.

Minnie Rose (*Rosedale*), 17, was a domestic servant working at 34 Church Road, Hoylake, in 1911. She has not been found in the 1939 Register but Minnie married William Henry Alexander in a Civil Marriage on Wirral in April / June 1953. She died in the Oxford district in early 1962 aged 67.

Mary Davidson (born 26 April 1862), George's mother, died in West Wirral in late 1944 aged 81. In 1939 she was living alone at Rock Cottage on the Neston Road, Ness.

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
DAVIDSON.		Ches: R.	Pte.	W/22
George.				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	J/2/101 B.	3	Min A. 28.9.18.	
BRITISH	Do	Do		
15. STAR	J/2/1B. 2.			
Theatre of War first served in		(1) France.		
Date of entry therein		25.9.15.		

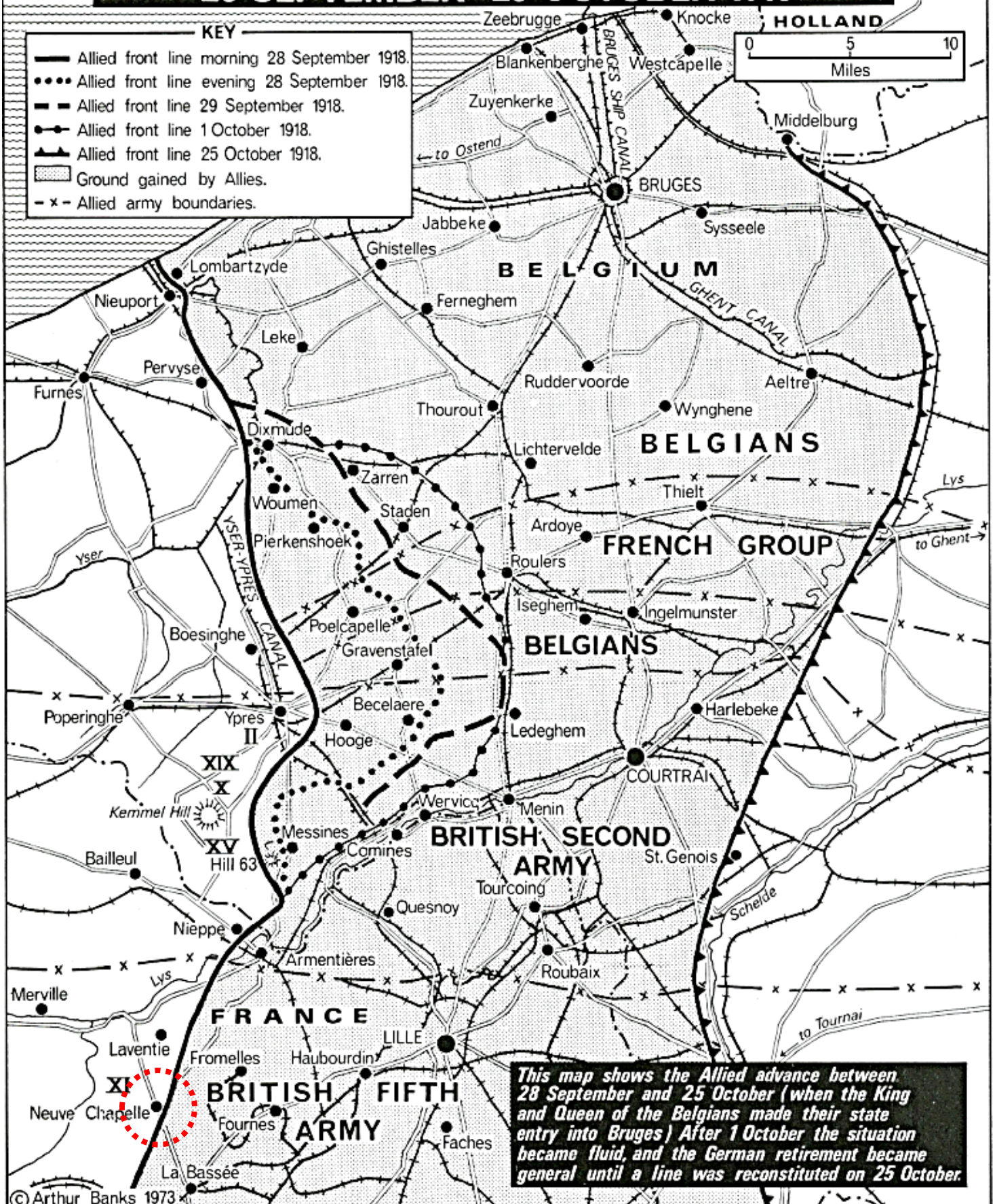
K 1380.

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

THE LIBERATION OF THE BELGIAN COAST 28 SEPTEMBER–25 OCTOBER 1918

KEY

- Allied front line morning 28 September 1918.
- Allied front line evening 28 September 1918.
- - - Allied front line 29 September 1918.
- Allied front line 1 October 1918.
- ▲ Allied front line 25 October 1918.
- ▨ Ground gained by Allies.
- x - Allied army boundaries.



Neuve Chapelle, where George Davidson died, is encircled in red.

[Source: *A Military Atlas of the First World War* Arthur Banks Leo Cooper (an imprint of Pen & Sword Books 2001)]