

## 41: John Norman Hughes MC & Bar

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: John Norman Hughes

Rank: Lieutenant MC & Bar

Battalion / Regiment: 4th Bn. Cheshire Regiment

Service Number: ? Date of Death: 02 August 1918 Age at Death: 24

Buried / Commemorated at: Senlis French National Cemetery, Senlis, Departement de l'Oise, Picardie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of John and Sarah Wilson Hughes of Liverpool Road, Neston.

John Norman Hughes was the son of domestic gardener John and Sarah Hughes of Liverpool Road, Neston and John jnr was also recorded as being a gardener in 1911.

John Hughes married Sarah Wilson at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in July / September 1891 and it appears that they lived at Hooton before moving to Liverpool Road in Neston:

111	70	1	4	John Hughes	Head	Mr.	40	Gardener - "Domestic"	Neston - Cheshire
				Sarah	Wife	Mr.	43		Neston - do
				John N.	Son		6	Scholar	Liverpool, Lancs.
				Margaret E.	Daughter		4		Hooton - Cheshire
112	80	1	4	Reuben Wilson	Head	Mr.	20		Neston - do

### 1901 census (extract) – Liverpool Road, Neston

John Hughes	40	gardener 'domestic'	born Neston
Sarah	43		born Liverpool
John N.	6		born Hooton
Margaret E.	4		born Neston

At the time of the 1911 census they were probably living in the same house:

1	John Hughes	Head	50	Married	20	3	Gardener Domestic	Ince Cheshire
2	Sarah Hughes	Wife	53	Married	20	3		Liverpool Lancashire
3	John Norman Hughes	Son	16				Gardening Domestic	Hooton Cheshire
4	Margaret Elizabeth Hughes	Daughter	14				School	Little Neston Cheshire
5	Reuben Wilson Hughes	Son	8				School	Neston Cheshire

(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 entered the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 respectively, and have compared 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.

Initials of Enumerator: *R.W.*

Total.		
Males	Females	Persons
3	2	5

(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.

4

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

Signature: *John Hughes*

Postal Address: *Liverpool Road, Neston*

### 1911 census (condensed) – Liverpool Road, Neston

John Hughes	50	gardener, domestic	born Ince
Sarah	53		born Liverpool
John Norman	16	gardening, domestic	born Hooton
Margaret Elizabeth	14		born Little Neston
Reuben Wilson	8		born Neston

John and Sarah had been married for 20 years and all three children had survived.

It is known that Margaret Elizabeth was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 11 July 1897 and that Reuben Wilson Hughes was baptised privately on 11 February 1902. John was recorded as a gardener on both occasions.

It is known also that Reuben married Nancy Amy Schroder at Neston Parish Church in late 1942.

It is believed that Margaret married although no details are known for certain.

The Service Records of John Norman Hughes have not been found so there are no

deepest truths of Christianity. - Practically every home has the issue at heart, another great batch of good local lads just recently landing on foreign soil. They are prepared, physically and morally, to "face the foe." Lance-Corpl. Norman Hughes, of Liverpool-road, who has written delightful letters from the Dardanelles, is now in hospital in Liverpool, recovering from dysentery. T. Bushell and others are there, too. Lance-Corpl. Hughes, who is a grandson of Capt. Willson, and of Mr. Hughes, agent for the period of a lifetime on the Park-Yates estate at Ince, has secured ambulance qualifications, and has had many interesting adventures. He deplores the attacks of dysentery, several splendid young fellows collapsing from this cause in one day, but writes with a fine appreciation of the cause at heart.

Cheshire Observer - Saturday  
2 October 1915 (extract)

personal details and few facts relating to his time in the army. However, a newspaper article in late 1915 recorded that he was then a Lance Corporal and that he had served in the Dardanelles but had been invalided to a hospital in Liverpool suffering with dysentery. The *Birkenhead News* in December 1917 recorded that John was called-up on the outbreak of the war and that he '... was sent out to the Dardanelles and took part in the historic landing at Suvla Bay .....After a short stay in England he rejoined his regiment and it was during the recent operations in Palestine that he won his decoration'.

The 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Territorial Force was stationed in Birkenhead in August 1914, as part of the Cheshire Brigade of the Welsh Division, and then moved to Shrewsbury and Church Stretton, then Northampton and then Cambridge. In May 1915 they moved to Bedford where the formation became the 159<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Division and, in July 1915, they embarked for Gallipoli from Devonport.

On 9 August 1915 the troops landed at Gallipoli, seemingly as part of the Suvla Bay landing. The landing at Suvla Bay was an amphibious landing on the Aegean coast of the Gallipoli peninsula in the Ottoman Empire as part of the August Offensive, the final British attempt to break the deadlock of the Battle of Gallipoli. The landing, which commenced on the night of 6 August 1915, was intended to support a breakout from the Anzac sector, five miles to the south.

Despite facing light opposition, the landing at Suvla was mismanaged from the outset and quickly reached the same stalemate conditions that prevailed on the Anzac and Helles fronts. On 15 August, after a week of indecision and inactivity, the British commander at Suvla, Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Stopford was dismissed. His performance in command was one of the most incompetent feats of generalship of the First World War. [Adapted from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing\\_at\\_Suvla\\_Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_at_Suvla_Bay)].



In December 1917 the forces were evacuated from Gallipoli to Egypt because of the high level of casualties resulting from combat, disease and harsh weather - the Division had been reduced to just 15% of its full strength with just 162 officers and 2428 men remaining. There is, however, no record that the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion ever served in Palestine, although it is known that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Garrison Battalion Cheshire Regiment were there, so it is probable that John Norman Hughes did not always serve with the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Certainly, it was at this time that the *Birkenhead News* carried a report that he had been awarded the Military Cross for an action ‘..during the recent operations in Palestine..’:

**Neston Officer Wins M. C.**

Another Neston officer has gained a decoration. Lieut. Norman Hughes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, Liverpool-road, has been awarded the Military Cross for gallantly holding a position with a handful of men until relief came. Lieut. Hughes joined the Cheshire Regiment as a Territorial, and was called up on the outbreak of war. He was sent out to the Dardanelles and took part in the historic landing at Suvla Bay. He was wounded in the side, and also fell a victim to dysentery, and was invalided home. After a short stay in England he rejoined his regiment, and it was during the recent operations in Palestine that he won his decoration. He is a very promising young officer, and the news of the distinction gained has been received with much pleasure.

*Birkenhead News* – Saturday 29 December 1917

**Transcription:**

“Another Neston officer has gained a decoration. Lieut. Norman Hughes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, Liverpool-road, has been awarded the Military Cross for gallantly holding a position with a handful of men until relief came. Lieut. Hughes joined the Cheshire Regiment as a Territorial, and was called up on the outbreak of war. He was sent out to the Dardanelles and took part in the historic landing at Suvla Bay. He was wounded in the side and also fell a victim to dysentery, and was invalided home. After a short stay in England he rejoined his regiment and it was during the recent operations in Palestine that he won his decoration. He is a very promising young officer and the news of the distinction gained has been received with much pleasure.”

The awarding of the MC to Hughes took place only about four months after he had become a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

In July 1918, less than one month before John Norman Hughes died, the following notification appeared in the *London Gazette* and these are the only official details we have for the action for which he was awarded the Bar to his Military Cross:

**2nd Lt. John Norman Hughes, Ches. R.**  
 For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Having captured an enemy position, he was at once subjected to heavy frontal and enfilade fire. He held on until dark, and then withdrew the majority of his men in safety. By his courage and coolness he undoubtedly saved many lives.

*Supplement to The London Gazette* -  
 18 July 1918

**Cheshire Regt.—Sergt. John Norman Hughes to be 2nd Lt. 16th Aug. 1917.**

*Supplement to The London Gazette*, 2 October 1917

**TERRITORIAL FORCE.**  
 Cheshire Regiment.—Sergt. John Norman Hughes to be second-lieutenant. Second-Lieut.

*Chester Chronicle* - Saturday 6 October 1917

**MILITARY CROSS.**  
 Second Lieut. John Norman Hughes, Cheshire Regiment.

*Chester Chronicle* - Saturday 23 February 1918

In fact he was Gazetted (the official notification of a military award) on 18 February 1918; unfortunately, such notifications rarely contained details of *where* such actions took place or give a precise date.

Fortuitously, some further details were provided of the action for which John was awarded his first Military Cross in an account published in the *Cheshire Observer* in December 1917:

## ANOTHER NESTON HERO.



Neston "boys" are coming rapidly to the fore in the matter of decorations, and this week we have the pleasure of announcing that the Military Cross has been awarded to Lieut. J. Norman Hughes, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Hughes, Liverpool-road. He is a born soldier,

*Cheshire Observer* - Saturday 29 December 1917

and his military career may be said to have begun when he was a member of the Neston Boys' Brigade. He also belonged to the Boy Scouts connected with the Congregational Church, and afterwards joined the Cheshire Territorials. He was called up when war was declared, and subsequently sailed for the Dardanelles, taking part in the famous Suvla Bay landing. He was badly wounded in the side, and also suffered from dysentery, and was invalided home. On arrival in this country he was despatched to Highfield Hospital, Liverpool, and while there he celebrated his 21st birthday. Later he joined his regiment, and his military abilities were so pronounced that he was offered a commission, and is now a second lieutenant. The following extract from one of his letters gives an idea of the tight corner he and his men were in, and it is for holding out that the decoration has been bestowed:—"We had to attack one morning at 8 o'clock, and my platoon were first over the top. The enemy, who is very watchful, caught us and simply rained machine-gun bullets and shrapnel bullets into us. I rushed on to my objective, only to find myself with 21 men isolated—cut off from everyone, only a few yards from the enemy. I had to stay there for ten hours in the burning hot sun, but my men were most cheerful; I don't know how to thank them. I told them that we were all going to fight till the last, but although sniped from practically all sides, the enemy did not summon up enough courage to come out and attempt to capture us. My word, if they had tried we would have given them a warm time! However, at night, in the dark, I returned safely with my men, and the Colonel and all the other officers shook hands with us. It appears that they all thought we were gone for ever." The following, which was received from a brother officer, shows how much he is esteemed:—"Dear Hughes,—Heartiest congratulations (on receipt of Military Cross) from myself and all the other officers in B Co. There was great excitement among the company to-day when I read out the wire. They were all very pleased to hear that one of the old B Co. sergeants should be among the honours. Hope you will live to receive several bars to it.—Yours ever, B.C." Many messages of congratulation have been received by his parents, together with sincere good wishes for his future welfare.

It is known that John Hughes was injured in action on 1 August 1918, dying of his injuries the following day, and he was buried at Senlis some 40km north of Paris.



Details of the action were recorded in the War Diary and the relevant extract is reproduced, below.

The 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was attached to the 102<sup>nd</sup> Brigade (under the command of Brigadier General E. Hilliam) in the 34<sup>th</sup> Division and the troops were in action in the so-called Battle of the Soissonais and of the Ourcq (part of The Battle of the Marne) from 23 July - 2 August 1918. John Norman Hughes appears to have been a casualty of the last days of this conflict which resulted in the 34<sup>th</sup> Division capturing the Bagneux Ridge. Again, although precise locations and dates are unknown, it is most probable that Hughes gained the Bar to his Military Cross in this final conflict, the only details of the award being in the official notification in the *London Gazette* in November 1918, some three months after his death:

**2nd Lt. John Norman Hughes, M.C., Ches.  
R.**

**He led his men to the attack with amazing dash and initiative. When his own and then another company commander was wounded, he took charge of the two companies, and controlled them with great ability until he was seriously wounded. His example of leadership inspired all ranks.  
(M.C. gazetted 18th February, 1918.)**

*Supplement to The London Gazette –  
7 November 1918*

Arthur Crookenden, the Colonel of the Cheshire Regiment, recorded the events leading up to and around the time that John Norman Hughes died:

**MARNE, 1918. 20th July to 2nd August.**

**SOISSONNAIS OURCQ. 23rd July to 2nd August.**

Maps p. 151, 153

The 4th and 7th Battalions had come from Palestine into the reconstituted 34th Division. With all the rest of the infantry of the Division, they had had no experience of war as waged in France, except in one respect, this was no great drawback, as open warfare was expected. The one exception was that they knew nothing of gas. So, they were slow to recognize gas shelling. This caused casualties which troops accustomed to gas would have avoided.

Before they went into action in France, it had not been possible to send more than a small proportion of the men home on leave. Many of the men who were killed in this fighting had been abroad on service for over 18 months without seeing their families.

The Battalions reached France in June. Soon after this, the Division was transferred to the 30th French Corps.

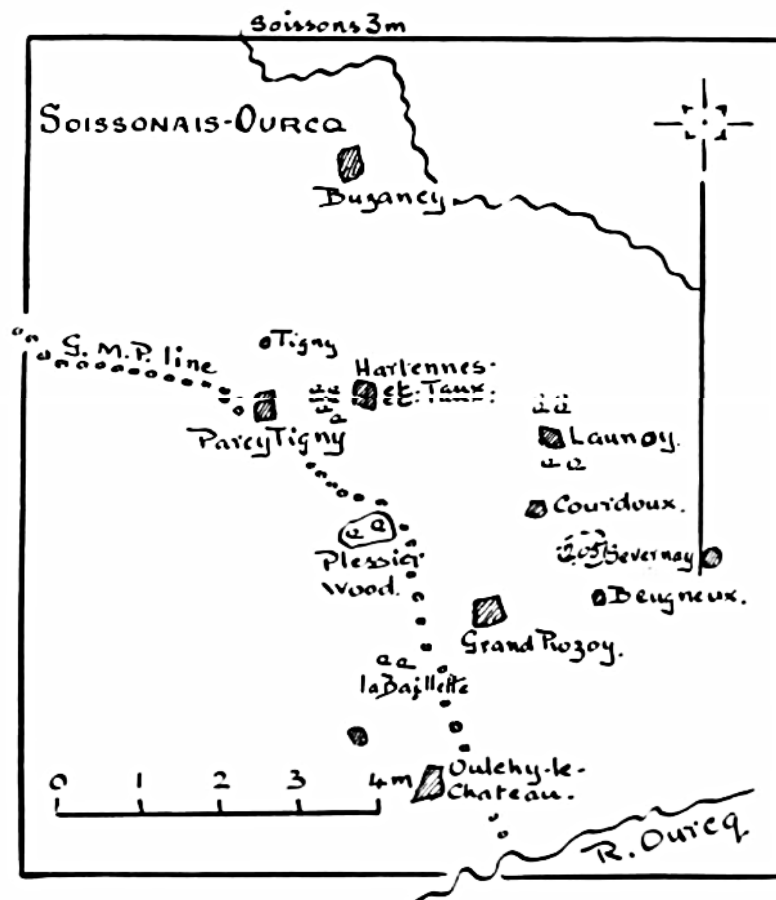
On account of its experience in open warfare, French G.H.Q. had asked for this Division to assist in these operations, which were to storm the ridge dominating the whole country-side between the Aisne and the Ourcq, and so bite off the big salient which the German attacks in May

already described, had driven into the Allied front.

On the 18th of July, the 10th French Army attacked the west side of the German salient, north of Soissons, and drove the enemy back some five miles, taking prisoners and guns. The 34th Division was to take part in the exploitation of this victory.

Orders on the 21st to relieve a French Division in the line, near Parcy Tigny, were quickly followed by orders for an attack to take place on the 23rd.

The 34th Divisional history says "In the most favourable circumstances, this would have been difficult for any troops. But, for a newly constituted Division, composed of troops which had not yet been in action in France and which had just completed a trying move by rail, bus and march route, it was a severe test. The country was entirely new.



There was no time for reconnaissance. There were no organized trench systems on either side. The enemy's positions were never more than approximately known till they had been captured. To all these difficulties, were added those inseparable from acting for the first time with foreign troops."

On the 23rd July the Division advanced on Launoy with two French Divisions, while other French troops made turning movements round the woods on either side of that place.

The country was looking its best. The battlefield was a stretch of fields of ripe corn, surrounded by glorious forests.



The plan was for the 7th Battalion to take Reugny Wood, and then for the 4th Battalion to pass through and secure Hartennes.

The advance was planned to begin twenty minutes after a rocket signal, but the message reached the signal station late, and even then, when the rockets did go up, they were not visible to the troops. However, orders were received in sufficient time by telephone and wireless.

Owing to the standing corn, the advance of the 7th Battalion was difficult to control, and Lewis guns had to be fired from the hip. After gaining some 1,200 yards under heavy machine gun fire, they were held up, owing to the failure of the French to capture Tigny. The companies instinctively moved into dead ground and here dug in, suffering severe casualties from shell, gas and machine guns.

During the night, the line was advanced and our two Battalions were in touch with each other and with the French.

On this day the 4th Battalion lost 4 officers and 276 others and the 7th Battalion 180 of all ranks, including Captain Thomas Furnell, who died of wounds. He had been with the Battalion since mobilization, and had gained his rank by keenness and hard work. Both Battalions were heavily shelled on the 24th by our own guns.

On the 25th, the enemy was kept alive by very active patrolling, and by continual pushing forward of small parties from trench to trench and by the construction of forward strong points.

On the night of the 27th/28th both Battalions were relieved by the French. On the next night, the Division concentrated in the Baillette Wood, prior to launching an attack on Beugneux and Grand Rozoy. The Brigade (102nd) was in Reserve.

As soon as the main attack was held up, which became evident about 10-50 in the forenoon, the Brigade was ordered to outflank Beugneux by the west, and then to push on to the original objective.

Preparations took till 2-30 p.m., when the attack began. The 4th Battalion moved to fill a gap caused by French withdrawals on the left. Shelling was heavy and snipers in Grand Rozoy were very troublesome.

A German counter-attack delayed the advance, and the troops were halted and reorganized in the G.M.P. line (Government Militaire de Paris—outer Paris defences).

The French took Grand Rozoy on the 30th.

On the 1st August, the advance was resumed. The 4th Battalion and 1st Herefords had the task of following the attack, and holding a spur south east of Bucy Le Gras, to cover the advance of the 12th French Division.

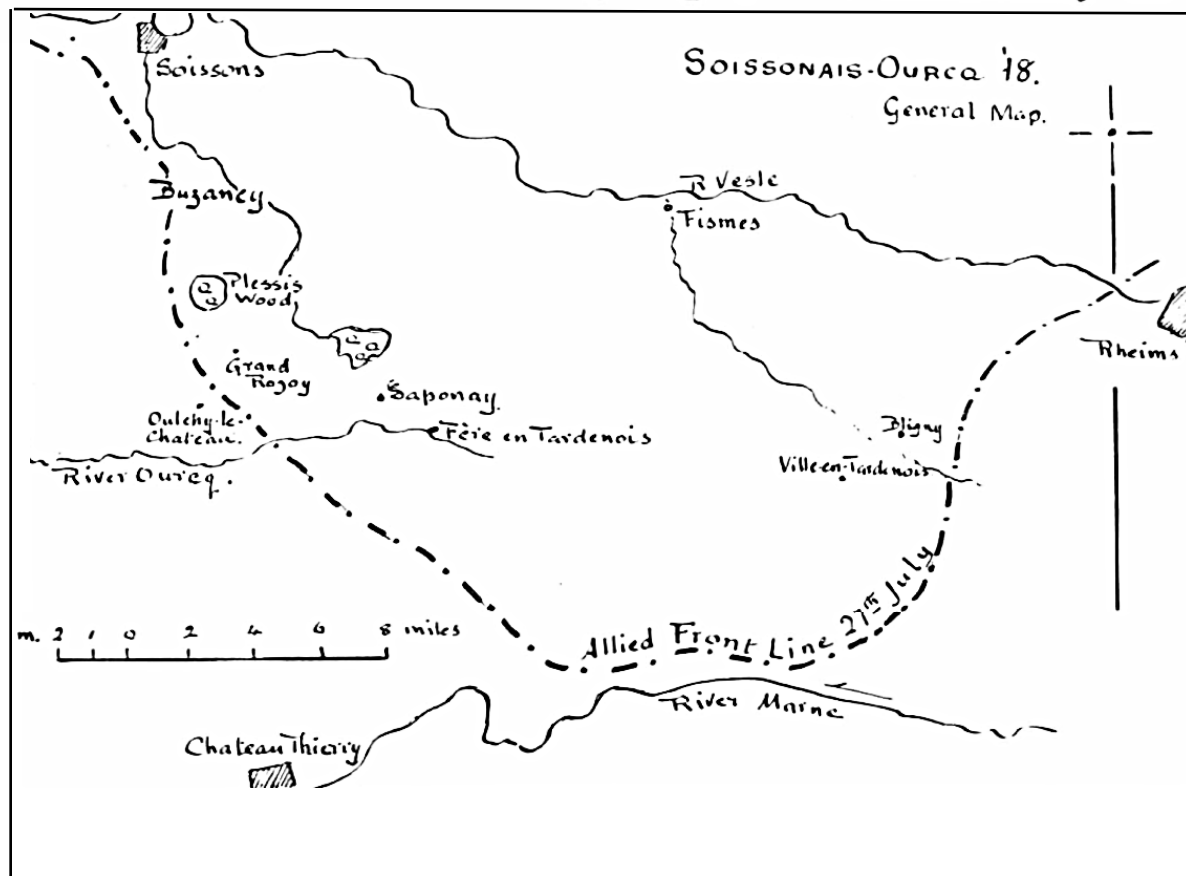
The 4th Battalion, carrying out their tasks in a way that earned the warmest praise of the French Generals, reached a line just south of the Beugneux-Courdoux Road. But they suffered a very great loss. Their gallant commanding officer, Colonel G. H. Swindells, was killed. He had commanded the 4th Battalion since October, 1914, when he was transferred from the 7th Battalion. With the exception of a short break recovering from wounds received at Suvla, Swindells had been at duty

the whole war. In peace, he had been one of the keenest and most studious officers in the Cheshire Brigade. In war, he earned the devotion and affection of all who served under him.

A further advance of some 4,000 yards was necessary to command the valleys on either side of the hill 192, whence the Germans could get observation into Severnay.

However, the Germans had had enough, and began to withdraw on the 2nd August.

A feature of the operations was the splendid work done by signallers and runners. The French were most appreciative of the work of the Division and bestowed decorations promptly and handsomely on our troops.



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



The ruins of Oulchy-le-Chateau, 1918.

[Sources:

(above) <https://www.delcampe.net/fr/collections/cartes-postales/france>

(right) <http://www.fyrac.com/ADMIN/TXT/206TXT/1918.php>



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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.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.**  
(Erase heading not required.)

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Vol 3

Army Form C. 2118.

1/4<sup>th</sup> B<sup>n</sup> THE CHESHIRE REGIMENT

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices										
Map OULCHY LE CHATEAU 1/20,000	1/8/18	4.0 am 4.30 am 7.00 7.30 9.0 am 11.0 am 4.0 pm 7.0 pm 9.0 pm	<p>B<sup>n</sup> moved through wire &amp; formed up in Artillery Formation B &amp; D Corps in Front A &amp; C Corps in rear forming 4<sup>th</sup> wave of attack. 101 BDE in front, 103 BDE right flank, 25<sup>th</sup> French Division Left Flank. Advance commenced. Slight Artillery fire. Slight resistance and 1 M.G. encountered in Wood in Square 183-279 just north of GRAND ROZOY - BEUGNEUX ROAD.</p> <p>101 BDE holding their objectives in front. B<sup>n</sup> moved out to left front to assault enemy positions.</p> <p>B<sup>n</sup> had captured all objectives. Commanding Officer Lt Col G.H. SWINDELLS wounded. Unable to bring him in owing to severe machine gun fire. The line at this time ran approximately 849.809 to 846.814, being held by 1/4 CHESHIRE REGT and 2 sections M.G.C. The French Division moving up from the rear commenced to fill up the line. The line was thinned by withdrawing part of this B<sup>n</sup> and forming a second line about 100 yds in rear.</p> <p>A cornfield about 847.812 was set on fire by tracer bullets &amp; anti-tank shells, exploding an Enemy Ammunition Dump, which killed Capt &amp; Adj. J. HOLDING.</p> <p>B<sup>n</sup> withdrawn to dead ground to reorganise.</p> <p>B<sup>n</sup> occupied support line about 100 yds in rear of front line to support French attack later. Distributed in shell holes.</p> <p>French advanced about 800 yards.</p> <p>Enemy heavily shelled front line supports but no counter attack developed.</p> <p>Casualties O. 7. OR 59.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Killed</td> <td>Wounded</td> <td>Missing</td> <td>Gas.</td> <td>Sick</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0 OR 3</td> <td>0 OR 10</td> <td>0 OR 3</td> <td>0 OR 1</td> <td>0 OR 1</td> </tr> </table> <p>Officers Casualties were:-            Killed Lt Col G.H. SWINDELLS.            Capt &amp; Adj. J. HOLDING.            Lieut HE HOWES.            Wounded Capt R.W. CORDEN MC            Lt J.N. HUGHES M.C.            Lieut F.N. RYALLS.</p>	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Gas.	Sick	0 OR 3	0 OR 10	0 OR 3	0 OR 1	0 OR 1	<p>See Brief Account of Operations 22/7/18 to 2/8/18.</p> <p>Attached.</p>
Killed	Wounded	Missing	Gas.	Sick										
0 OR 3	0 OR 10	0 OR 3	0 OR 1	0 OR 1										

(A7092). Wt. W2239/M1295. 75,000. 1/17. D. D. & L., Ltd. Form C/2118/14

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.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.**  
(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Map. OULCHY LE CHATEAU 1/20,000	2/8/18	3.0 am	<p>Relieved by 25<sup>th</sup> French Division and withdrew to Bois de Montceau taking up position in Paris line at 4.30 am B<sup>n</sup> commanded by Lieut J.A.L. BARNES. Areas covered in advances on 29<sup>th</sup>/7 + 1/8 were thoroughly salvaged, dead buried and bodies of the Comdg Officer, Adjutant and Lieut HE HOWES brought to B<sup>n</sup> HQ for interment. A Cemetery for other ranks killed in Action was established about 846.807. Officers &amp; other ranks were interred by the Senior Chaplain at about 827.789. Div<sup>n</sup> Commander presented French Decorations &amp; officers received to be prepared to move at 2 hours notice.</p> <p>Casualties Officers NIL O.R. 3 (Sick) Officers decorated. Lieut BARNES. Croix de Guerre</p>	

## War Diary, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Regiment (34<sup>th</sup> Division), 1 & 2 August 1918

### Map – Oulchy Le Chateau 1:20 000

1/8/18 4.0am B<sup>n</sup> moved through wire and formed up in Artillery Formation, 'B' & 'D' Corps. in Front, 'A' & 'C' Corps. in Rear forming 4<sup>th</sup> wave of attack. 101 BDE in front, 103 BDE right flank, 25<sup>th</sup> French Division Left Flank.

4.30am Advance commenced. Slight Artillery fire. Slight resistance and 1 M.G. Encountered in Wood in Square 183-279 just north of GRAND ROZOY-BEUGNEUX ROAD.

7.00 101 BDE holding their objectives in front. B<sup>n</sup> moved out to left front to assault Enemy positions.

7.30 B<sup>n</sup> had captured all objectives. Commanding Officer Lt Col. G.H. SWINDELLS wounded. Unable to bring him in owing to severe machine gun fire. The line at this time ran approximately 849.809 to 846.814, being held by 1 / 4 CHESHIRE REGT and 2 sections M.G.C. The French Division moving up from the rear commenced to fill up the line. The line was thinned by withdrawing part of this B<sup>n</sup> and forming a second line about 100yds in rear.

9.0am A cornfield about 847.812 was set on fire by tracer bullets & anti-tank shells, exploding an Enemy Ammunition Dump, which killed Capt. & Adj. J. HOLDING.

[Transcription continued on following page]



[Transcription continuation from previous page]

11.0am Bat<sup>n</sup>. withdrawn to clear ground to reorganise.

4.0pm B<sup>n</sup>. occupied support line about 100yds in rear of front line to support French attack later. Distributed in shell holes.

7.0pm French advanced about 800 yards.

9.0pm Enemy heavily shelled front line and supports but no counter attack developed.

Casualties O. 7 OR. 59

<u>Killed</u>		<u>Wounded</u>		<u>Missing</u>		<u>Gas</u>		<u>Sick</u>	
O	OR	O	OR	O	OR	O	OR	O	OR
3	10	3	42	-	3	-	3	-	1

Officer's casualties were:-

Killed Lt. Col. G.H. SWINDELLS

Capt. & Adj. J. HOLDING

Lieut. H.E. HOWES Gas 2Lt. C. MOSS

Wounded Capt. B.W. CORDEN MC

2Lt. J.N. HUGHES MC

Lieut. F.N. RYALLS

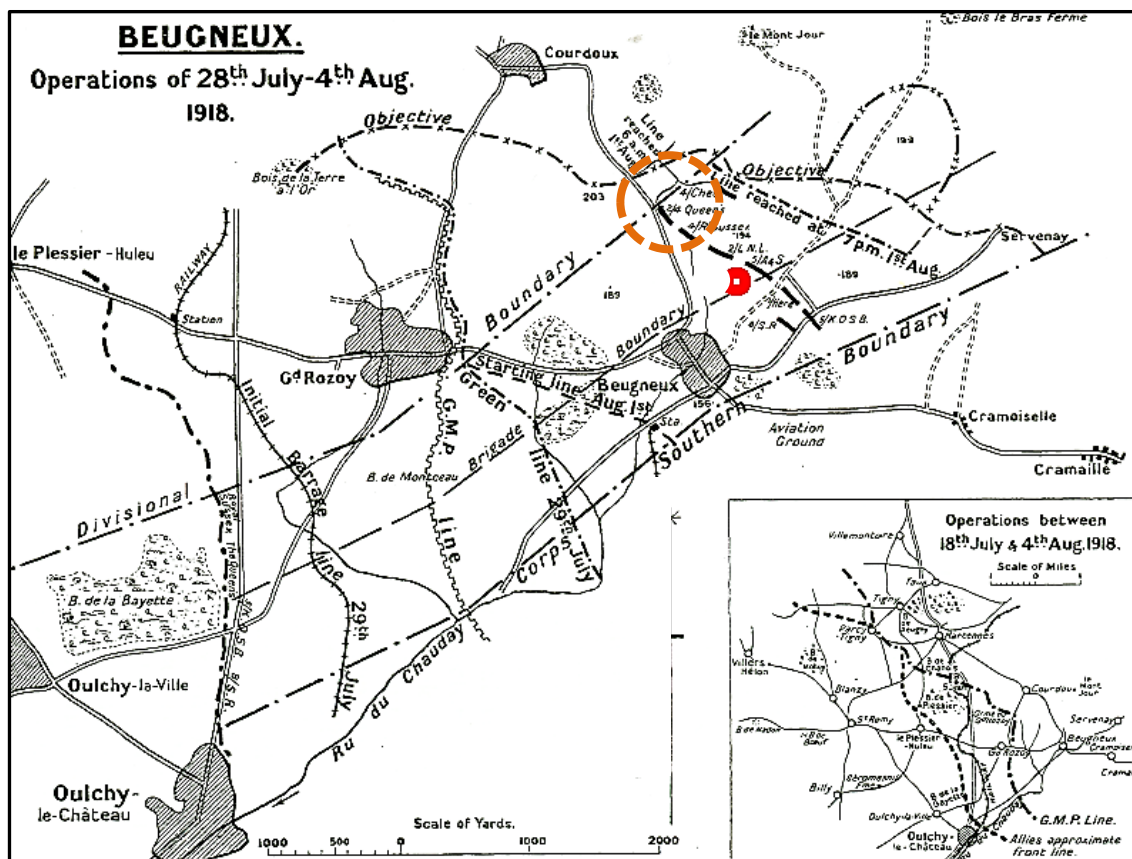
2/8/18 3.0am Relieved by 25<sup>th</sup> French Division and withdrew to BOIS DE MONTCEAU taking up position in Paris Line at 4.30am. B<sup>n</sup>. commanded by Lieut. J.A.C. BARNES. Areas covered in advances on 29<sup>th</sup>/7 and 1/8 were thoroughly salvaged, dead bodies and bodies of the Comdg. Officer Adjutant and Lieut. H.E. HOWES brought to B<sup>n</sup>. HQ for internment. A cemetery for Other Ranks killed in action was established about 846.807. Deceased Officers were interred by the Senior Chaplain at about 827.787. Divis<sup>l</sup>. Commander presented French decorations and orders received to be prepared to move at ½ hour notice. Officers and Other Ranks.

Casualties Officers NIL OR 3 (Sick) Officers decorated

Lieut. B.A.R. JONES – CROIX DE GUERRE

## Notes

The abbreviation 'O' is used to designate Officers and 'OR' represents Other Ranks. Oulchy-le-Chateau is a village 19 km due south of Soissons, on the road to Chateau-Thierry. The front-line positions, and the location of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Regiment on 1 August 1918, are shown on the map, below.



The area of operations in late July/early August 1918 around Beugneux.

The position of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Rgt. on 1 August is indicated by the orange circle.

[<http://www.bridgeofweirmemorial.co.uk/profile-millarrobert.html>]



In mid-August 1918 the news of Hughes's death had not reached Neston and the *Birkenhead News* carried this brief article although by the close of the month this news, and the notification of other deaths, had reached the town:



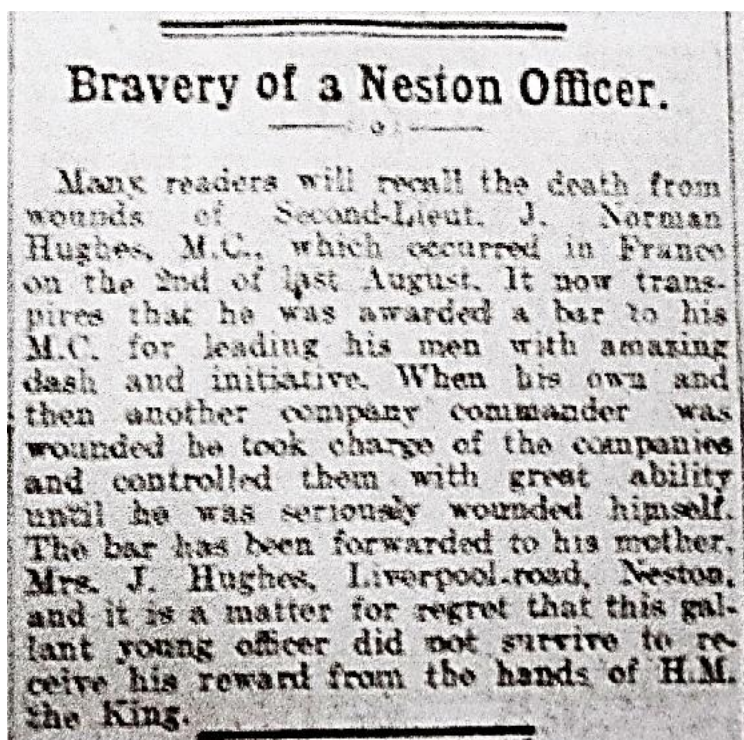
*Birkenhead News* – Saturday 24 August 1918

#### **Anxiety Regarding a Neston Officer**

*For some days past anxiety has been felt as to the fate of Lieut. Norman Hughes, though there is lack of official news. He is one of the heroes of the Gallipoli campaign and has also seen much active service in Palestine where he was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery and where he received his commission. A few weeks ago he went to France and was badly wounded on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and was carried into hospital by his orderly, who arrived at Neston on Saturday last. He was only 24 years of age but was an extremely promising young officer, and a great favourite with all ranks.*

*Birkenhead News* – Friday 31 August 1918

In December 1918 the *Birkenhead News* reported that John Norman Hughes had received a Bar to his Military Cross:



*Birkenhead News* – Saturday 7 December 1918

Transcription:

Many readers will recall the death from wounds of Second-Lieut. J. Norman Hughes, MC, which occurred in France on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of last August. It now transpires that he was awarded a bar to his MC for leading his men with amazing dash and initiative. When his own and then another company commander was wounded he took charge of the companies and controlled them with great ability until he was seriously wounded himself. The bar has been forwarded to his mother, Mrs. J. Hughes, Liverpool-road, Neston, and it is a matter for regret that this gallant young officer did not survive to receive his reward from the hands of HM the King.



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<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>WAR GRATUITY.</b>  Transfer 2/1948  Regd. Paper 3/11/1920  Serial no. 11-12-19 </div>											

## 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.

John Norman Hughes had accrued a total of six credits, amounting to £67 12s 5d and at least some of this money was transferred through the bank of Cox & Co., the finance organisation used by many officers. A War Gratuity of £20 10s was also paid.

The total payment, £88 2s 5d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £13 400 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.

In the 1939 Register unmarried Reuben Hughes (born 29 October 1904) <sup>1</sup>, John's younger brother, was living at 2 Miles Cottages, Liverpool Road, Neston, where he was recorded as a master painter. With Reuben was Mary Hughes (unmarried, born 20 August 1855, ladies' maid, retired, incapacitated) - she may have been a sister of Reuben's father. No record has been found of Reuben's death.



John Norman Hughes' grave, Senlis French National Cemetery [Photo: CWGC]



The inscription on the family grave at Neston Cemetery gives the deaths of Sarah and John and John Norman Hughes's brother, Reuben.

However, the inscription records, incorrectly, that John Norman Hughes was killed in action in 1917 whereas he actually died on 2 August 1918.

<sup>1</sup> 1904 is, clearly, the wrong year; it is known that Reuben Wilson Hughes was born in late 1901.