

## 64: William Minshull

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: W. Minshull  
 Rank: Private  
 Battalion / Regiment: King's Shropshire Light Infantry  
 Service Number: 34556 Date of Death: 10 November 1918 Age at Death: ?  
 Buried / Commemorated at: Neston Cemetery, Raby Road  
 Additional information given by CWGC: None

William ('Tich') Minshull was the son of joiner Edward and Sarah Ann Minshull of Neston. Carpenter Edward Minshull, the son of farmer John and Margaret Minshull of High Street, married Sarah Ann Norman (the daughter of stonemason James and Elizabeth Norman) of Neston at Neston Parish Church on 26 September 1878.

In 1881, about 15 years before William's birth, Edward and Sarah were living on Raby Road, Neston, with their new family:

Edward Minshull	Head	Mar	28	Joiner	Neston Cheshire
Sarah A. do	Wife	Mar	26	Dressmaker	do do
Alice do	Daughter		1		do do
James do	Son		3 mo		do do

1881 census (extract) – Raby Road, Neston

Edward Minshull	28	joiner	born Neston
Sarah A.	26	dressmaker	born Neston
Alice	1		born Neston
James	3 months		born Neston

Alice Minshull was baptised on 13 February 1880 and James on 11 February 1881, both at Neston Parish Church. Jessie Minshull was baptised on 1 February 1883 and a fourth child, Margaret Elizabeth, was baptised on 31 July 1885 but she died, aged 3 months, and was buried on 13 October 1885. John Minshull was baptised on 31 May 1889.

By the time of the 1891 census the family had moved to Eldon Terrace:

Edward Minshull	Head	Mar	38	Joiner	Neston Cheshire
Sarah A. do	Wife	Mar	36		do do
Jessie do	Daughter		6		do do
John do	Son		2		do do

1891 census (extract) – Eldon terrace, Neston

Edward Minshull	38	joiner	born Neston
Sarah A.	36		born Neston
Jessie	6		born Neston
John	2		born Neston

In 1891 the two youngest children were recorded as boarding with two families in Raby Road, next-door-but-one to each other:

Alice, 11, was boarding with stonemason James (58) and Elizabeth (56) Norman.

James, 10, was boarding with retired soldier John (50) and Jessie (40) Croft.

By 1901 Edward, Sarah and William were on Neston High Street:

Edward Minshull	Head	M.	35	Joiner in Building Trade	Worship	at Home	Neston Cheshire
Sarah Ann do	Wife	M.	34	—	—	—	do do
William do	Son	S.	8	at school	—	—	do do

1901 census (extract) – High Street, Neston

Edward Minshull	35	joiner in building trade	born Neston
Sarah Ann	34		born Neston
William	8		born Neston

The ages of Edward and Sarah have been recorded incorrectly; Edward would have been about 48 and Sarah Ann would have been about 46. It is probable that William was their last child; his birth, in Neston in late 1893, was recorded in Wirral in the first quarter of 1894 although his baptism has not been found.

The older, unmarried, children - William's siblings - were living in Neston at the time of the 1901 census:

Alice - 21, dressmaker, born Neston; living with her grandmother, widow Elizabeth Norman, aged 69, on Raby Road.

James - 20, plumber, a visitor at the home of general clerk John Croft (60) and Jessie (50) at 10, Alvanley Place, Birkenhead. These are the people with whom James was boarding, in Neston, in 1891

Jessie - 18, general domestic servant, born Neston; living in the household of market gardener William and Elizabeth Gleave, Parkgate.

John - 11, errand boy, born Neston; recorded in the household of baker & flour dealer Thomas and Sarah A Cottrell in Liverpool Road, Neston.

The fact that the family was fragmented, certainly at the times of the census returns, might suggest that Edward and Sarah were unable to cope and this suggestion is strengthened by the understanding that Edward Minshull died, aged 52, in Wirral Union Workhouse in 1906 and was buried at Neston on 7 July.

It has not proved possible to find William's mother, Sarah Ann Minshull, in either the 1901 or 1911 census returns anywhere in England/Wales but it is known that she died, aged 62, in Neston in early 1917.

The 1911 census, however, recorded all four siblings, together with two boarders, living in a house in Raby Road:

**CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.**

Number of Schedule 234  
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after selection)

*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	
			State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—			Personal Occupation			Industry or Service with which worker is connected						
<p>of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who</p> <p>(1) passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in this dwelling and was alive at midnight, or</p> <p>(2) arrived in this dwelling on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere.</p> <p>No one else must be included.</p> <p>(For order of entering names see Examples on back of Schedule.)</p>															
<p>State whether "Head," or "Wife," "Son," "Daughter," or other relative, "Visitor," "Boarder," or "Servant."</p> <p>For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.</p> <p>Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.</p> <p>Completed years the present marriage has lasted.</p> <p>If less than one year write "under one."</p> <p>Children born alive since present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)</p> <p>Children still living.</p> <p>Children who have died.</p> <p>The reply should show the precise branch of Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &amp;c.</p> <p>If engaged in any Trade or Manufacture, the particular kind of work done, and the Article made or Material worked or dealt in should be clearly indicated.</p> <p>(See Instructions 1 to 8 and Examples on back of Schedule.)</p> <p>This question should generally be answered by stating the business carried on by the employer. If this is clearly shown in Col. 10 the question need not be answered here.</p> <p>No entry needed for Domestic Services in private employments.</p> <p>If employed by a public body (Government, Municipal, &amp;c.) state what body.</p> <p>(See Instruction 9 and Examples on back of Schedule.)</p> <p>Write opposite the name of each person engaged in any Trade or Industry, (1) "Employer" (that is employing persons other than domestic servants), or (2) "Worker" (that is working for an employer), or (3) "Own Account" (that is neither employing others nor working for a trade employer).</p> <p>Write the name of each person carrying on Trade or Industry at home.</p> <p>(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish.</p> <p>(2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, &amp;c., and of the Province or State.</p> <p>(3) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country.</p> <p>(4) If born at sea, write "At Sea."</p> <p>NOTE.—In the case of persons born elsewhere than in England or Wales, state whether "Irish-born" or "Visitor" in this Country.</p> <p>State whether— (1) "British subject by parentage," (2) "Naturalized British subject," giving year of naturalization, or (3) "Foreign nationality," state the nationality opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.</p>															
1	Alice Minshull	Wife	30	Single											
2	John Minshull	Butcher	21	Single											
3	William Kirvig	Boarder	37	Married											
4	William Minshull	Butcher	17	Single											
5	Jessie Minshull	Servant	28	Single											
6	Frances Mathew	Boarder	17	Single											

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)

I certify that—		
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper column.	Total	
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared my sum with the total number of persons.	Males	Females
(3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on this Schedule which appear to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.	3	3
Initials of Enumerator	6	

(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, Flats, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count outhouses, 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 Alice Minshull

Postal Address Raby Rd. Neston, Cheshire

See Return

1911 census (condensed) – Raby Road, Neston

Alice Minshull	30	dressmaker living on own account	born Neston
John	21	vanman (baker's)	born Neston
William	17	butcher's boy	born Neston
Jessie	28	no occupation	born Neston
William Kirvig	37	boarder, married, baker	born Isle of Man
Frances Mathew	17	boarder, professional (theatre)	born Durham

William's outline army record notes that he was a member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry when he died, that he enlisted in Neston and died, in Britain, of wounds. He would have been aged 24 or 25 when he died.

As with all the other infantry regiments of the British army, the King's Shropshire Light Infantry was greatly expanded during the First World War. In all, twelve battalions were raised, of which eight saw active service overseas. The 7<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion was a war-raised Service Battalion under Lt. Col. J H Barber, formed in Shrewsbury in September 1914. The Battalion joined the 76<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 25<sup>th</sup> Division and landed at Boulogne on 28 September 1915 and served entirely on the Western Front. As there is no indication of when William joined the army - his Service Records have not been found - it is not possible to determine what action he saw prior to his death but it seems that he served with the 4<sup>th</sup> (Territorial) Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry before transferring to the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion was in action at Arras and in the three battles of the Scarpe in April-May 1917. They were back in the Ypres sector in 1917 and the 7<sup>th</sup> took part in the fighting

at Polygon Wood in September (The Third Battle of Ypres) and was back on The Somme for the battles of 1918.

After taking part in the offensives of summer-autumn of 1918, at Albert, Bapaume, the Canal du Nord and the Selle, the 7<sup>th</sup> ended the war as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, at Romeries, near Solesmes, France and it was disbanded in Shrewsbury in June 1919.

William Minshull died in the War Hospital, Reading, on 10 November 1918 - the day before the Armistice - so it is possible that he was injured in one of the last battles of the war involving his battalion, the so-called 'The Last Hundred Days of WWI'. However, it is possible also that he died of some illness.

Built in 1867 as a workhouse, the Reading Union Workhouse, the building became the Reading War Hospital during WW1 providing some 2500 military beds for injured soldiers by the end of the war.

No details of William's injuries, or his death, seem to have been recorded in local newspapers but, unless he died of illness, it is very likely that he was injured during The Battle of the Selle (17 - 26 October 1918) when the German forces established themselves to the east of the Selle River following their defeat at The Battle of Cambrai:

*General Henry Rawlinson was faced with three problems: crossing the river, the railway embankment on the far side and the ridge above the embankment. The decision was made to commence the assault at night and as the river was not so very wide at this point, planks would be used for the soldiers to cross in single file. Later, pontoons would be required for the artillery to cross the river. Field Marshal Douglas Haig, aware that the Germans were near exhaustion, initiated a series of operations designed to get British troops in strength across the river and clear a way for a move against the Sambre–Oise Canal, a further 5 miles (8.0 km) to the east.*

*After a six-day halt for preparations and artillery bombardments Fourth Army troops attacked at 5.20am on Thursday 17 October. Infantry and tanks, preceded by a creeping barrage, moved forward on a 10 miles front south of Le Cateau. The centre and left of the Fourth Army forced crossings of the river, despite unexpectedly strong German resistance and much uncut barbed wire. Fighting was particularly fierce along the line of the Le Cateau–Wassigny railway. The right of the attack, across the upland watershed of the Selle, made most progress and by nightfall the German defences had been broken and Le Cateau captured. Fighting continued from 18–19 October, by which time Fourth Army, much assisted by the French First Army on its right, advanced over 5 miles, harrying the Germans back towards the Sambre–Oise Canal.*

*The British Third and First Armies, north of the Fourth Army, maintained the offensive pressure the following day. In a surprise joint night attack in the early morning of 20 October, Third Army formations secured the high ground east of the Selle. Following a two day pause, to bring up heavy artillery, the attack was renewed on 23 October with a major combined assault by Fourth, Third and First Armies; the fighting, which continued into the next day, resulted in further advances. At this stage, the German Army was retreating at a forced but controlled pace. On 24 October, the German Army counterattacked at the Canal de la Dérivation but were repulsed and pushed back by the Belgian Army. [Wikipedia]*

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
MINSHULL	11-S-L-I	RtE	34556
William			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	5/1/102 <sup>B</sup> 13	3847	
BATTLE	- do -		
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			
K. 1980			

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920



The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion suffered more casualties than any other King's Shropshire Light Infantry battalion, with 1048 killed in action or died during the war, and earned more battle honours than any of the other battalions.

William Minshull's CWGC grave in Neston Cemetery

830104	692435	Minshall William	K.S.L.I. RtE 34556	10-11-18 SHROPSHIRE READING 3-19	Shrewsbury ✓ 10	15 '74	4-6-19/1	Sister Alice	2	13	10	
								Sister Jessie Gleave	2	13	10	
								Sister James	2	13	10	
							<del>16-7-19</del>	<del>Bro John</del>	<del>2</del>	<del>13</del>	<del>10</del>	<del>at 10/11/1918</del>
							27-1-20/2	Bro John	2	13	10	

Includes War Gratuity of £7. 0. 0.

### Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In mid-1919 the army paid the balance of wages accrued by William Minshull, together with a War Gratuity of £7, to his four siblings. The total of £10 15s 4d was divided equally between Alice, Jessie Gleave, James and John, each receiving £2 13s 10d (equivalent to a *labour value* ie wages of around £410 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.

Alice Minshull (born 15 January 1879), William's eldest sister, remained unmarried and died in early 1944 aged 63. It is believed that James Minshull (born 8 May 1889) also remained unmarried. At the time of the 1939 Register (29 September) they were living in the same house on Raby Road and James was recorded as the driver and owner of one taxi. Nothing further is known of John Minshull.

Jessie Minshull married Thomas Gleave (the family she was working for at the time of the 1911 census) at Our Lady & St. Nicholas & St. Anne, the Liverpool Parish Church, in early 1916 and their first child, Thomas Norman, was born in Neston towards the end of that year. They have not been located in the 1939 Register.

At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun  
In the wild purple of the glow'ring sun,  
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud  
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,  
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.  
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed  
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,  
Men jostle and climb to, meet the bristling fire.  
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,  
They leave their trenches, going over the top,  
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,  
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,  
Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it stop!

**"Attack"**

**Siegfried Sassoon**

(1886 - 1967)

