

83: John William Thackery (Thackwray)

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: John William Thackery / Thackwray
 Rank: Private
 Battalion / Regiment: 10th Bn. Cheshire Regiment
 Service Number: 221 Date of Death: 03 September 1916 Age at Death: 22
 Buried / Commemorated at: Blighty Valley Cemetery, Authuille Wood, Authuille, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France
 Additional information given by CWGC: The son of George and Eliza Thackwray of 15, Olive Rd., Neston.

The CWGC records the surname correctly as Thackwray although the name inscribed (incorrectly) on the memorial



in Neston Parish Church, and elsewhere, is shown as *Thackery* [see image, above]. On the Graves Registration Report Form the surname appears to have been spelt 'Thackerwray', this being crossed through and the name 'Thackwray' handwritten above [see extract].

John William Thackwray (he was known generally as William) was the fifth child of railway platelayer George and Eliza Thackwray and was born in Bromborough (the family lived in Rake Lane) in the third quarter of 1894 shortly before the family moved to Neston.

GFP. 10.9.20. Army Form W. 3372.
 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT. GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.
 3rd Area Serial No. W/3480
 REPORT No. 18 SCHEDULE No. 82
 COMMUNE: AUTHUILLE, AVELUY C.E.F.
 PLACE OF BURIAL: BLIGHTY VALLEY (AUTHUILLE WOOD).
 Certified complete and correct.
 Map Reference 57d.W.12.u.7.9.
 The following are buried here:— D/ Major.
 10/Cheshires 221 THACKWRAY J.W. 3.9.16 (G.W.G.) 25.

George Thackwray	Head	m.	36	Foreman Platelayer	Worker	Yorkshire
Eliza do	Wife	m.	33			Stoke - Cheshire
Lavinia do	Daughter		13			Hooton do
Albert do	Son		10	Scholar		Bromborough do
Emily do	Daughter		8	do		do do
William do	Son		6	do		do do
Ethel do	Daughter		4	do		Neston do

1901 census (extract) – Raby Road, Neston

George Thackwray	36	foreman platelayer	born Yorkshire
Eliza	33		born Stoke, Cheshire
Lavinia	13		born Hooton
Albert	10		born Bromborough
Emily	8		born Bromborough
William	6		born Bromborough
Ethel	4		born Neston

By 1911 the family had moved to 29 Gladstone Road, Neston (the house number was shown on the address side of the census form):

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.															
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.		
of every Person, whether Member of Family, Visitor, Boarder, or Servant, who		For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.	Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," or "Daughter," or other Relative, "Visitor," "Boarder," or "Servant."	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one year."	Total Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have Died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account.	Whether Working at Home.	(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish.	State whether— (1) "British subject by parentage." (2) "Naturalised British subject," giving year of naturalisation. (3) "Totally or partially blind," or "Feeble-minded," state the infirmity opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.
1. G. Thackwray	Head	47	Married	24	8	6	2			Platelayer on Railway	Worker			Yorkshire	
2. Eliza Thackwray	Wife	43	Married							General Servant	Worker			Cheshire Stann[e]y	
3. Emily Thackwray	Daughter	18	Single							General Servant	Worker			Cheshire Broomborough	
4. William Thackwray	Son	16	Single							Joiner (Apprentice)	Worker			" "	
5. Ethel Thackwray	Daughter	14	Single							General Servant	Worker			" Neston	
6. Maggie Thackwray		9	Single							School				" "	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex columns.
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 2 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Initials of Enumerator: ON

Total.		
Males.	Females.	Persons.
2	4	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 (Kitchens, Halls, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

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

Signature: George Thackwray

Postal Address: Gladstone Rd Neston Cheshire

1911 census – Gladstone Road, Neston

G. Thackwray	47	platelayer	born Yorkshire
Eliza	43	general servant	born Stann[e]y, Cheshire
Emily	18	general servant	born Broomborough
William	16	apprentice joiner	born Broomborough
Ethel	14	general servant	born Neston
Maggie	9	school	born Neston

George and Eliza had been married for 24 years and six of their eight children had survived.

The two children who died, both in infancy, were:

Charles Arthur	born 2 nd quarter of 1889	died 1 st quarter of 1890
George	born 2 nd quarter of 1899	died 3 rd quarter of 1899

William's father, George Russell Thackwray, was born on 30 August 1863 at Leyburn in North Yorkshire; the surname is not unusual in that region. George married Eliza Cooper (born 9 March 1868 at Little Stanney) at St Peter's Church, Liverpool, in the 3rd quarter of 1886; Eliza was the daughter of farm labourer Samuel (born Burton) and Margaret Cooper. George died 31 March 1948 (his age was registered as 76 although the family grave records him, correctly, as 84) and Eliza died 7 March 1957 aged 89. Sometime before September 1916 they had moved the short distance from Gladstone Road to Olive Road, Neston although in the 1939 Register they are shown at 27 Gladstone Road and George's Probate record of May 1948 gives this same address.



29 Gladstone Road, Neston

Little is known of the service career of William Thackwray as his Service Record does not seem to have survived. It is known that he enlisted in the 13th Battalion Cheshire Regiment early in the war and that the enlistment probably took place at Port Sunlight.

The 13th (Service) Battalion, known unofficially as the 'Wirral Battalion', was formed at Port Sunlight on 1 September 1914 by Gershom Stewart, MP. In October the troops moved to Chester where they came under the orders of the 74th Brigade in the 25th Division. By December 1914 the troops were billeted in Bournemouth, moving to Aldershot in May 1915 before landing in France on 25 September 1915.

The newspaper report of William's death notes that '*...he had been wounded four times, and had only been out of hospital a few days when he fell a victim to the enemy's poisonous gas*'. At some unknown time William had transferred from the 13th to the 10th Battalion Cheshire Regiment (in the 7th Brigade, 25th Division) and he was serving with them when he died.

Neston Man Succumbs to Gas.

Official notification has been received by Mr. and Mrs. George Thackwray, Olive-road, Neston, of the death of their youngest son, John William Thackwray, from the effects of gas poisoning on Sept. 3rd. He was a very patriotic youth, and one of the keenest members of the Boy Scouts attached to the Congregational Church. Deceased was also an ardent footballer, and was very popular among his companions, one of his greatest friends being Pte. W. H. Tozer, whose death and funeral we recorded last week. Pte. Thackwray was one of the first to answer his country's call, and enlisted in the 13th Cheshires, proceeding to the front with the Battalion. He ha

been wounded four times, and had only been out of hospital a few days when he fell a victim to the enemy's poisonous gas.

Birkenhead News – Saturday
20 September 1916

It seems most probable that William was involved in The Battle of Pozières, a two-week struggle for the French village of Pozières and the ridge on which it stands, during the middle stages of the 1916 Battle of the Somme. This commenced on 23 July and concluded on 3 September, the day when William died.

Although British divisions, including the 10th Battalion Cheshire Regiment (and the 11th and 13th Battalions), were involved in most phases of the fighting they did not take part in any set-piece attacks, and Pozières is remembered primarily as an Australian battle and one in which losses on both sides were great especially as it appears that both sides used poison gases. In fact, the Australians bombarded the village with phosgene and tear gas before their main advance.

For the 25th Division The Long, Long Trail records that, for the Battle of Pozières: *From 23 July to 10 August 1916, the Division held a sector of the line north of the River Ancre. Once again, just as in the Bazentin battle, the Division is recognised as having been in action during the Battle of Pozières, without being in the area of most attention during the fighting. Relieved by units of 6th and Guards Divisions between 7 and 14 August, the Division moved to Bus les Artois for rest and training. Divisional HQ moved up to Hedauville on 18 August and the infantry moved into the trenches of the Leipzig Salient. A local attack by 7th Brigade on 21 August was carried out successfully, using for the first time a device known as a "push pipe mine" to destroy enemy defences before the infantry went in. Further attacks were made on 23, 25 and 26 August. On 3 September, a larger scale attack was made in support of the 4th Australian Division which was assaulting Mouquet Farm.*

The Battalion War Diary entries give some details of the events around this time:

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

(Erase heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

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

10 Cheshire R
Vol 12

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BOUZINCOURT	31/8/16		Working party of 2 officers & 100 OR detailed & reported at CRUCIFIX CORNER at 7.30 PM. Order BMX 26 arrived suddenly at 11 PM that the Battalion was placed at disposal of the GOC 75 th Bde & was to relieve the 8 th Border Regt same night. This relief was duly carried out. Batt. HQs at QUARRY POST. Only A Coy in front line. D Coy in support. B Coy in trenches near TITHBARN. C Coy at WOOD POST.	Batt. HQs at QUARRY POST
IN TRENCHES	1/9/16		SITUATION - Considerable shelling on front line, support trenches & communication trenches during afternoon. CASUALTIES - OR 2 killed 2 wounded. We push up & occupy points R31 & 62. At about 4 PM the working party of 2 off & 100 OR from CRUCIFIX CORNER rejoined the Battalion & reported the following CASUALTIES OR 4 wounded, 6 missing 2 of which believed killed. C & B Coys were placed at the disposal of Staff Captain 75 th Bde for the purpose of forming dumps of materials. A Coy received orders to form dumps in her line ref P35 in accordance with Bde order. A Bombing Post was established at pt R31 & 73. Orders for patrol on our front line were received from Bde.	P35 Batt. HQs 724
Has QUARRY POST	2/9/16		SITUATION - Trenches badly damaged by heavy shelling during night, but fairly quiet during day. INTELLIGENCE ETC. - One patrol got into trenches with 9 th LIVL on our right. A special patrol reconnoitred the trench 73.84.15 & found it badly damaged. The enemy were reported to have been digging a good deal on our left during night. CASUALTIES - OR wounded 9 Killed 1 Missing 2. Orders received for our relief by 11 th Ches. Relief was carried out as in orders P58 & P91. A, B & C Coys were reported in Billets at BOUZINCOURT at about 10.0 PM.	75 th Bde 1st-0 No 28 P35 - P91
BOUZINCOURT	3/9/16		D Coy returned to BOUZINCOURT in early morning. About 11.30 AM, orders received to relieve 3 rd Worcesters & 2 nd S. Lancs in line. These two regiments had taken part in an unsuccessful attack in early morning. Relief was carried out & completed by about 3 PM. DISPOSITION - D Coy left of front line, C Coy right of front line. B Coy in support in TOBERMORY STREET. A Coy in reserve in AUTHUILLE village. Batt. Front ran from THIEPVAL AVENUE to CAMPBELL AVENUE but N/M Coy in front was covered by 8 th Borders holding captured trenches in LEIPZIG REDOUBT. Batt. HQs CAMPBELL POST.	12 F 35

10th Battalion Cheshire Regiment War Diary extracts, 31 August 1916 – 5 September 1916

BOUZINCOURT 31/8/16 Working party of 2 officers & 100 OR detailed & reported at CRUCIFIX CORNER at 7.30 PM. Order BMX 26 arrived suddenly at 11.0 PM that the Battalion was placed at disposal of the GOC 75th Bde & was to relieve the 8th Border Regt same night. This relief was duly carried out. Batt. HQs at QUARRY POST. Only A Coy in front line. D Coy in support. B Coy in trenches near TITHBARN. C Coy at WOOD POST.

IN TRENCHES 1/9/16 SITUATION – Considerable shelling on front line support trenches & communication trenches during afternoon.

HQs QUARRY POST CASUALTIES – OR 2 killed, 2 wounded. We push up and occupy points R31 & 62. At about 4 PM the working party of 2 off & 100 OR from CRUCIFIX CORNER rejoined the Battalion & reported the following CASUALTIES OR 4 wounded, 6 missing 2 of which believed killed. C & B Coys were placed at the disposal of Staff Captain 75th Bde for the purpose of forming dumps of materials. A Coy received orders to form dumps in her line ref P35 in accordance with Bde order. A Bombing Post was established at pt. R31 & 73. Orders for patrol on our front line were received from Bde.

2/9/16 SITUATION Trenches badly damaged by heavy shelling during night, but fairly quiet during day. INTELLIGENCE ETC. – One patrol got into trenches with 9th LIVL on our right. A special patrol reconnoitred the trench 73.84.15 & found it badly damaged. The enemy were reported to have been digging a good deal on our left during night.

CASUALTIES – OR Wounded 9 Killed 1 Missing 2 Orders received for our relief by 11th Ches. Relief was carried out as in orders P58 & P91. A, B & C Coys were reported in Billets at BOUZINCOURT at about 10.0 PM.

BOUZINCOURT 3/9/16 D Coy returned to BOUZINCOURT in early morning. About 11.30 AM orders received to relieve 3rd Worcesters & 2nd S. Lancs. In line. These two regiments had taken part in an unsuccessful attack in early morning. Relief was carried out & completed by about 3.0 PM. DISPOSITION – D Coy left of front line, C Coy right of front line, B Coy in support in TOBERMORY STREET. A Coy in reserve in AUTHUILLE village. Batt. Front ran from THIEPVAL AVENUE to CAMPBELL AVENUE but N/M Coy in front was covered by 8th Borders holding captured trenches in LEIPZIG REDOUBT. Batt. HQs CAMPBELL POST. [Continued on following page]

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
TRENCHES E. OF AUTHUILLE BETWEEN CAMPBELL AVENUE R31 & 43 AND THIEPVAL AVENUE R31 & 69	3/9/16		The trench system taken over had suffered very severely from shell fire & many important trenches had been completely obliterated. There was a gap of about 250 yds in front trench between D Coy on left & C Coy on right. During night working parties started to cut a trench across this gap. Also a good deal of work was carried out in clearing trenches & opening dugouts which had been blown in. Patrols went out to search for wounded left from attack made by 2 nd S. LANCS in early morning before we relieved. Congratulatory message received from GOC on work done by Batt during last tour in trenches.	J 31 B.M. 817
"	4/9/16		Intelligence Report as follows. Considerable Artillery Activity on front line & communication trenches during afternoon of yesterday. Last evening after dark 2 men of BE (2 nd S. LANCS) returned from German trenches attacked by them yesterday morning. A written Report was sent in an information given by those men. We sent out a patrol last night & made a reconnaissance of No Man's Land between 42 & 48 & found enemy in trench. CASUALTY REPORT - Killed 1. Died of Gas effects 1. Wounded 8. Gassed 4. SITUATION - Quiet generally. The men shewn as gassed were from effect of a gas shell of apparently new type. The man who died, died within 15 mins of being gassed. Also in addition to above casualty report L ^T HOLMES in command of C Coy was wounded. In evening 4 more cases of poisoning by gas shells occurred & two of the cases died within 45 mins of being gassed. This shell resembled an ordinary 'Whiz Bang' & the cases had severe abdominal pains. The MO sent in a lengthy report on this to the ADMS. G794 Received from Bde ref. a message from Army Commander & recent attack.	J 32 H.H.V. G794
"	5/9/16		7 th Bde with intention of attack	

TRENCHES E. OF AUTHUILLE 3/9/16 The trench system taken over had suffered very severely from shell fire and many important trenches had been completely obliterated. There was a gap of about 250 yds in front trench between D Coy on left & C Coy on right. During night working parties started to cut a trench across this gap. Also a Good deal of work was carried out in clearing trenches and opening dugouts which had been blown in. Patrols went out to search for wounded left from attack made by 2nd S. LANCS in early morning before we relieved.

Congratulatory message received from GOC on work done by Batt. during last tour in trenches.

4/9/16 Intelligence Report as follows. Considerable Artillery activity on front line and communication trenches during afternoon of yesterday. Last evening after dark 2 men of BE (2nd LANCS) returned from German trenches attacked by them yesterday morning. A written Report was sent in an information given by those men. We sent out a patrol last night & made a reconnaissance of No Man's Land between 42 & 48 & found enemy in trench.

CASUALTY REPORT – Killed 1 Died of gas effects 1 Wounded 8 Gassed 4

SITUATION – Quiet generally. The men shewn as gassed were from effect of a gas shell of apparently new type. The man who died, died within 15 mins of being gassed.

Also in addition to above casualty report L^T HOLMES in command of C Coy was wounded.

In evening 4 more cases of poisoning by gas shells occurred & two of the cases died within 45 mins of being gassed. This shell resembled an ordinary 'Whiz Bang' & the cases had severe abdominal pains.

The MO sent in a lengthy report on this to the ADMS.

G794 Received from Bde ref. a message from Army Commander & recent attack.

Some of the reports relating to these events give further interesting detail and these are reproduced on the following two pages.

THACKWRAY—September 3, killed in action, aged 22 years, Private J. W. Thackwray; youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. G. Thackwray, 15, Olive-road, Neston. (Deeply mourned by all at home.)

Liverpool Echo - Thursday 14 September 1916

Birkenhead Advertiser – Saturday 23 September 1916

DEATH OF NESTON SOLDIER.

The sympathy of the neighbourhood goes out to Mr. and Mrs. G. Thackeray, who have received official news of the death of their youngest son. Private W. Thackeray was for some time a popular member of the Neston Co. Boys' Brigade, and joined the Cheshire Regiment soon after the outbreak of war. Whilst serving with this regiment he was killed in action a few days ago.

"A" Form. Army Form C. 2121.
MESSAGES AND SIGNALS. No. of Message.....

Prefix..... Code..... m. Office of Origin and Service Instructions.	Words Charge	This message is on a/c of :	Read. at..... m.
	Sent	Service.	Date.....
	At..... m.	From.....	From.....
	To.....	(Signature of "Franking Officer.")	By.....
	By.....		

TO { BA

Sender's Number * J 31 Day of Month 3rd In reply to Number AAA

I have just returned from a tour round this sector of the line AAA There is now no trench of any sort between the bottom of 5th AVENUE and the head of KILMUN a distance of near 250 yards AAA BISSET ST and GOSSET ST also cannot be found in fact the whole of the trench system here has been completely obliterated and is nothing more than a sea of craters AAA I am turning a whole company on to digging across this gap but I am afraid they will not make a very great impression on it AAA I do not of course know whether there is more important work to be done elsewhere but would suggest that some assistance might be obtained from the Pioneers or RE AAA The front line between KILMUN and THIEPVALL AVENUE

From Place Time

The above may be forwarded as now corrected. (2)

Censor. Signature of Addressee or person authorised to telegraph in his name.

* This line should be erased if not required.
(A1) O. Ltd., London— W.14012/M.44. 150,000 Pals. 12/15. Form C.2121.

"A" Form. Army Form C. 2121.
MESSAGES AND SIGNALS. No. of Message.....

Prefix..... Code..... m. Office of Origin and Service Instructions.	Words Charge	This message is on a/c of :	Read. at..... m.
	Sent	Service.	Date.....
	At..... m.	From.....	From.....
	To.....	(Signature of "Franking Officer.")	By.....
	By.....		

TO {

Sender's Number * Day of Month In reply to Number AAA

has also some big gaps in it but I hope to get these cut through tonight AAA KILMUN ST and KILBARRY are badly knocked about and afford no cover AAA I am sending patrols out tonight to examine enemy's wire on my front and to bring in any wounded that may still be lying out

From Place Time

The above may be forwarded as now corrected. (2) 7.30 PM

Censor. Signature of Addressee or person authorised to telegraph in his name.

* This line should be erased if not required.
(A1) O. Ltd., London— W.14012/M.44. 150,000 Pals. 12/15. Form C.2121.

Report compiled on 3 September 1916 concerning the conditions around the front line

"A" Form. Army Form C. 2121.
MESSAGES AND SIGNALS. No. of Message.....

Prefix..... Code..... m. Office of Origin and Service Instructions.	Words Charge	This message is on a/c of :	Read. at..... m.
	Sent	Service.	Date.....
	At..... m.	From.....	From.....
	To.....	(Signature of "Franking Officer.")	By.....
	By.....		

TO { BA

Sender's Number * J 32 Day of Month 3rd In reply to Number AAA

Two men of RE have just returned from the German trench attacked by them this morning AAA They say that this trench is empty but that the Germans are holding a trench about 10 yards behind it from which they bomb the front trench AAA These two men say that they saw no dugouts in this line but one deep sap newly braced and full of shovels etc probably a deep dug out in course of construction AAA There were a lot German bombs in the sap AAA An empty machine gun emplacement was also found in this trench AAA You may have got this information already but send it you in case you have not

From Place Time

The above may be forwarded as now corrected. (2) 10.25 PM

Censor. Signature of Addressee or person authorised to telegraph in his name.

* This line should be erased if not required.
(A1) O. Ltd., London— W.14012/M.44. 150,000 Pals. 12/15. Form C.2121.



To: ADMS.

25th Div in.

HH1

4 9 16

AAA.

We have had 7 cases of gas shell poisoning during the last 24 hours - 3 of whom died. One man died within 15 mins (I was unable to find any wound whatever). The other two died within 45 mins. The circumstances were as follows:-
At 10 o'clock last night I was called to see 4 men, who were brought down in a very exhausted condition & suffering from intense headache & some abdominal pain (one was very mild case & was returned to duty). A shell had burst (with a gentle explosion) within the entrance to the dugout. 3 have been evacuated whilst one died within 15 minutes & the other returned to duty today.
At 7.00 this evening two men were approaching the entrance of a dugout when a shell exploded which wounded both of them rather badly & threw a third who was seated within the entrance of the dugout down the stairs.

As these shells seem to me more deadly & to take effect sooner than any I have yet heard of, I should be glad if you gave me instructions how to act.
I shall not ~~in case~~ have these men buried until I hear from you in case you should think it advisable to have a post mortem performed. They are at the C.C.S. Black Horse Bridge.

M.O.

A.I.

Certified true copy

G. P. King Tan 2/1/16

The two who were wounded were brought down struggling rather violently for breath & complaining of most intense abdominal pain. The pupils were widely dilated, the pulse very thready & the lips quite bloodless. One man had an evacuation of the bowels with great violence. So intense was the pain that I had to administer morphia. Both cases died within 45 mins of their being passed. Their wounds were not of a nature to cause death at any rate so suddenly.
The cases brought down last night were in a condition of collapse & had the appearance of drunken men. The cases brought down this evening were in marked contrast - struggling violently but in possession of all their faculties. Also the shell which caused these latter cases seems according to what I can get to have burst with considerable force - the men in the vicinity thought it was a high bang.

Report compiled on 4 September 1916 on the effects of gassing on the men in the trenches

The report reads:

To ADMS

25th Division

HH1

4.9.16

We have had 7 cases of gas shell poisoning during the last 24 hours - 3 of whom died. One man died within 15 mins (I was unable to find any wound whatever). The other two died within 45 mins. The circumstances were as follows -

At 10 o'clock last night I was called to see 4 men who were brought down in a very exhausted condition & suffering from intense headache and some abdominal pain (one was very mild case and was returned to duty). A shell had burst (with a gentle explosion) within the entrance to the dugout. 3 have been evacuated whilst one died within 15 minutes & the other returned to duty today.

At 7.00 this evening two men were approaching the entrance of a dugout when a shell exploded which wounded both of them rather badly and threw a third, who was seated within the entrance, down the stairs.

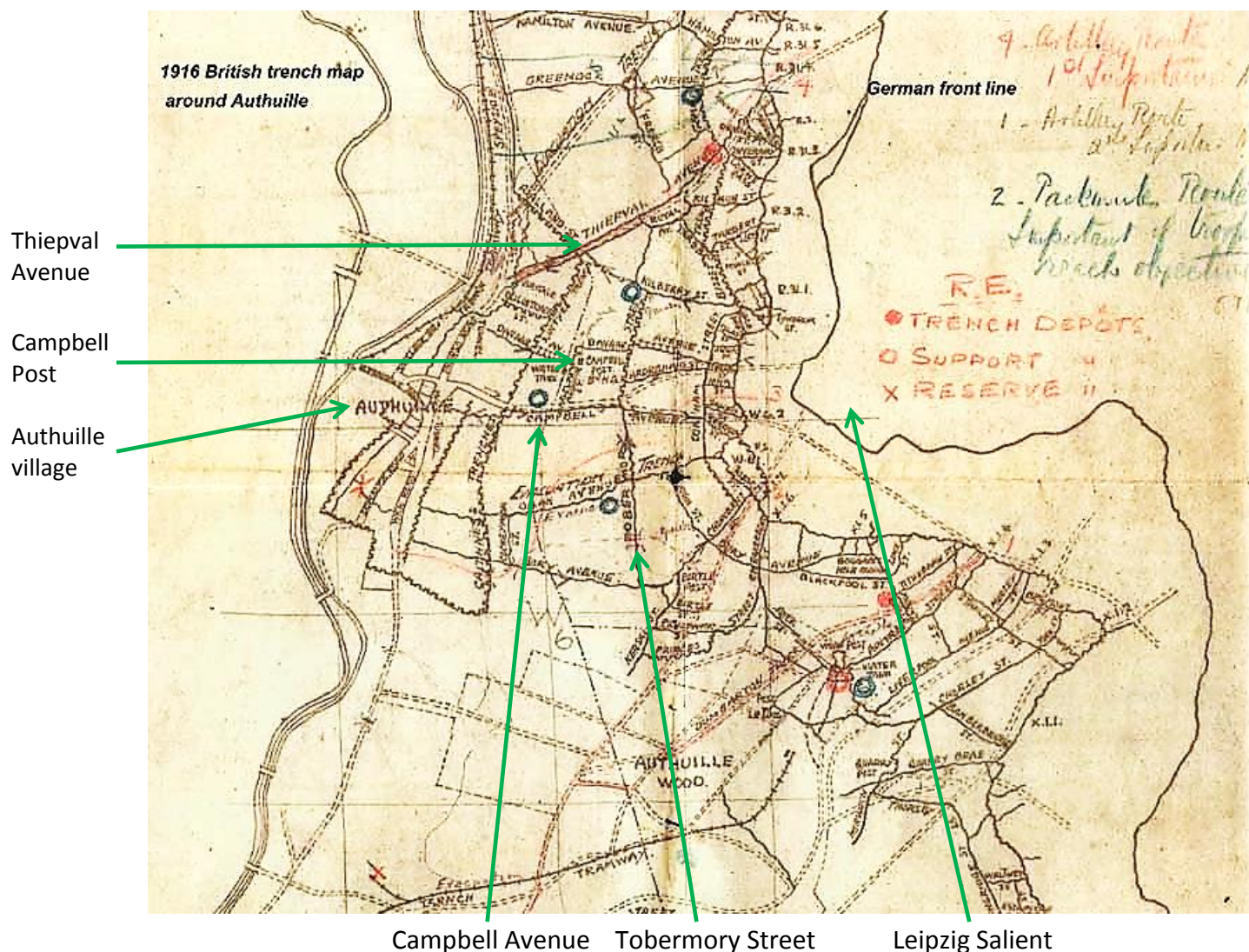
The two who were wounded were brought down struggling rather violently for breath & complaining of most intense abdominal pain. The pupils were widely dilated, the [?] very thread & the lips quite bloodless. One man had an evacuation of the bowels with great violence. So intense was the pain that

I had to administer morphia. Both cases died within 45 mins of them being gassed. Their wounds were not of a nature to cause death – at any rate so suddenly.

The cases brought down last night were in a condition of collapse & had the appearance of drunken men. The cases brought down this evening were in – marked contrast – struggling violently but in possession of all their faculties. Also the shell which caused the latter cases seems according to what information I can get to have burst with considerable force – the men in the vicinity thought it was a whiz bang.

As these shells seem to me more deadly & to take effect sooner than any I have yet heard of I should be glad if you gave instructions how to act.

I shall not have these men buried until I hear from you in case you should think it advisable to have a post mortem performed. They are at the CCS Black Horse Bridge.



The complex of trenches and military installations around Authuille, and just west of the German front line and the Leipzig Salient, in 1916. Some positions recorded in the War Diary extracts for around the time that William Thackwray died have been indicated. Authuille is approximately 4½km directly west of Pozières.

Source: <http://www.tpkaraoke.co.uk/reports/ww1.html>

William Thackwray was buried at Blighty Valley Cemetery just to the south of Authuille. *Blighty Valley was the name given by the Army to the lower part of the deep valley running down South-Westward through Authuille Wood to join the river*

between Authuile and Aveluy; a railway was carried along it soon after July, 1916, and it was for some time an important (though inevitably a dangerous) route. The upper part of the valley was called Nab Valley. Blighty Valley Cemetery is almost at the mouth of the valley, a little way up its northern bank. Blighty Valley Cemetery was begun early in July 1916, at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, and used until the following November. [CWGC]



The Thackwray family grave in Neston Cemetery records the death of George (31 March 1948, aged 84) and Eliza (died 7 March 1957, aged 89), William's parents. Below this it notes: 'Also William, son of the above, killed in action (France) 3rd Sept. 1916 aged 20 years'. His age is recorded incorrectly as he would have been just 22 when he died.

THACKWRAY, Pte. John William, 221. 10th Bn. Cheshire Regt. 3rd Sept., 1916. Age 22. Son of George and Eliza Thackwray, of 15, Olive Rd., Neston, Birkenhead. I. D. 25.

Extract from Grave Registration

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
THACKWRAY.	Phos. R.	Pt.	W/221.
John. W.			

Metal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	J/2/101 B.	30.	DofW. 3-9-16.
BRITISH	-ds-	-ds-	
15. STAR	J/2/181.	17.	
Theatre of War first served in	C) France		
Date of entry therein	25-9-15.		

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966

THACKWRAY George of 27 Gladstone-road Neston **Cheshire** died 31 March 1948 at Clatterbridge Hospital Poulton-cum-Spital Cheshire Probate **Liverpool** 12 May to Eliza Thackwray widow. Effects £893 8s. 3d.

360723	E/167 192	Hackway John William Regt. P.O. 221	10 th Co. Chester France from effects Jds	3.9-16 Shenandoah 11/16	1	17	8	1	17	8.	m.o.ty	19-1-17	Fa: George	1	17	8
													28.10-172 To: George			

In June 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 William Thackwray (recorded here as Thackway) had accrued a credit of £1 17s 8d; George Thackwray, John's father, received this also the £9 War Gratuity. The total payment, £10 17s 8d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £1650 in 2016.

Of Thomas Thackwray's siblings:

Thomas Woodhouse died, aged 80, in mid-1965 and Lavinia, aged 89, in mid-1976.

Emily Thackwray was born in Bromborough in mid-1892. Emily married Albert Evans in early 1912 at a Civil Marriage on Wirral and she died in mid-1966 aged 74.

Albert and Edwin Evans went to Canada in search of employment sometime in or around 1911; it is possible that Edwin had gone there before the UK census in April and that Albert followed sometime after. It is believed that Edwin settled in Montreal but that Albert returned to Neston and, initially, worked at the colliery and served in WW1. Emily and Albert Evans had at least five children:

Albert E	born July / September 1912
Emily	born early 1915
William	born early 1917
Mildred	born April / June 1921
John	born early 1925

Albert Evans snr may have died in early 1949 aged 61 and it is believed that Emily died in mid-1966. They have not been located in the 1939 Register.

Ethel Thackwray was born in Neston on 16 July 1896 and she was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 9 August.

Ethel married Thomas Ernest Rixon jnr (born 23 May 1895) at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in early 1921. Thomas Rixon was the son of joiner Thomas Ernest and Ada Lily Rixon of Birkenhead. It is believed that they had one son, Douglas Edward Rixon who was born on 10 April 1929; he married Jean Skinner at Christ Church, Port Sunlight, in mid-1950 and died in early 2006.

At the time of the 1939 Register Ethel, Thomas and Douglas were living at 61 Greendale Road in Port Sunlight where Thomas was recorded as *machine operator, soap and glycerine*.

It is unknown when Thomas died but Ethel died in late 1974 aged 78.

Maggie (Margaret) Thackwray's birth was registered in late 1901. She married Albert Gilbert at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in late 1937 and she died, in the Birkenhead area, in late 1983 aged 82. She has not been located in the 1939 Register.

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

- Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

"Anthem for Doomed Youth"

Wilfred Owen

(1893 - 1918)

