

88: Joe Williams MM

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Joe Williams MM
 Rank: Sergeant Major Recorded as Company Sergeant Major by CWGC and on headstone
 Battalion / Regiment: 15th Bn. Cheshire Regiment
 Service Number: 10728 Date of Death: 24 March 1918 Age at Death: 23
 Buried / Commemorated at: Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France
 Additional information given by CWGC: The son of Joseph and Elizabeth Williams of Nelson Cottage, Parkgate

NOTE: At least two different soldiers named Joe / Joseph Williams of Parkgate served in WW1 and both gained the Military Medal. This entry deals with Private / Company Sergeant Major Joe Williams of the Cheshire Regiment who gained the MM whilst serving in France [London Gazette 21 October 1916] and died in France in March 1918.

The second known man of this name, Gunner / Lance Bombardier Joseph Williams served with the Royal Field Artillery, gained the Croix de Guerre, the Italian Medal and gained the MM for his action in Italy on 27 October 1918. A noted member of the 'Parkgate Entertainers' – he had been both the treasurer and secretary - he survived the war.

Joe Williams was the 3rd child of labourer - later domestic gardener - Joseph and Elizabeth Williams of Parkgate and his birth was registered in the 3rd quarter of 1895 although no record of a baptism has been found.

Joseph Williams	Head	M	42	✓	Labourer General			Do
Elizabeth Do	Wife	M	40	✓				Herefordshire
Nessie Do	Daughter		8	✓				Parkgate Chas
George Do	Son		7	✓				Do
Joe Do	Son		6	✓				Do
Mary Do	Daughter		4	✓				Do
Jack Do	Son		3	✓				Do
Ann Do	Daughter		2	✓				Do

1901 census (extract) – Parkgate

Joseph Williams	42	labourer, general	born Parkgate
Elizabeth	40		born Herefordshire
Nessie	8		born Parkgate
George	7		born Parkgate
Joe	6		born Parkgate
Mary	4		born Parkgate
Jack	3		born Parkgate
Ann	2		born Parkgate

By the time of the 1911 census both Joe and Joseph, together with George, are recorded as domestic gardeners. Nessie, the oldest child (now 18) was a domestic housemaid to widow Constance Houghton in Devonshire Road, West Kirby.

Mary, the 4th child, aged 14, was a kitchen maid (one of 6 servants) in the household of colliery proprietor Richard Branker in Heswall and Jack was recorded as John in 1911.

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.					
<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>																		
		For Infants under one year state the age in months as "under one month," "one month," etc.	Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Total Children Born Alive.			The reply should show the precise branch of Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &c.		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.	(2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Dependency, Colony, &c., and of the Province or State.	(3) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country.	(4) If born at sea, write "At Sea."	(5) If of foreign nationality, state whether "French," "German," "Russian," etc.	If any person included in this Schedule is— (1) "Totally Deaf" or "Deaf and Dumb," (2) "Totally Blind," (3) "Lunatic," (4) "Imbecile," or (5) "Feeble-minded," state the infirmity opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.
		Ages of Males.	Ages of Females.	Completed years of the present Marriage has lasted.	Children born alive to present Marriage.	Children who have died.												
Joseph Williams	head	52	—	Married	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
Elizabeth Williams	Wife	50	—	Married	20	9	9	0	—	—	—	—	Herefordshire, Upper Sapey	—	—	—	—	
George Williams	Son	17	—	Single	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
Joe Williams	Son	15	—	Single	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
John Williams	Son	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
Daniel Williams	Son	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
William Williams	Son	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
Ann Williams	daughter	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
Elizabeth Williams	daughter	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Neston Parish, Ches.	—	—	—	—	
William Moffatt Evans	Lodger	30	—	Single	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Pennyboughtfawry, Montgomeryshire	—	—	—	—	

(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 examined the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, 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: W.S.

(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.

Rooms: 7 Males, 3 Females, 10 Persons.

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

Signature: Joseph Williams
Postal Address: Parkgate

1911 census – Parkgate

Joseph Williams	52	gardener, domestic	born Neston parish
Elizabeth	50		born Herefordshire, Upper Sapey
George	17	gardener, domestic	born Neston parish
Joe	15	gardener, domestic	born Neston parish
John	12		born Neston parish
Daniel	9		born Neston parish
William	6		born Neston parish
Ann	11		born Neston parish
Elizabeth	5		born Neston parish
William Moffatt Evans	30	single, lodger, shop Manager (grocery)	born Pennyboughtfawry, Montgomeryshire

Joseph and Elizabeth had been married for 20 years and all nine children had survived.

The Service Record of Joe Williams has not been found but it is recorded that he was serving with the 15th Battalion Cheshire Regiment when he died in March 1918.

However, some further details are known as, in September 2010, Joe Smith's medals and Memorial Plaque were auctioned at Bonhams in London. The details of Lot 46 were:

"A Great War M.M. group of four to Warrant Officer J. Williams, Cheshire Regiment, Military Medal, G.V.R. (10728 Sgt. J. Williams. 15/Ches.R.); 1914-15 Star (10728 L. Cpl J. Williams. Ches. R.); British War and Victory Medal (10728 W.O.CL.2 J. Williams. Ches.R.); Memorial Plaque (Joe Williams).

With Cheshire Regiment badge. The medals extremely fine, the plaque drilled at 12 o'clock and very lightly polished.

FOOTNOTES M.M. London Gazette 21.10.1916 For France. Warrant Officer Joe Williams was born in Neston, enlisted at Chester, he was killed in action on 24.3.1918 whilst serving with the 15th Battalion. He was the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Williams of Nelson Cottage, Parkgate, Cheshire. He is remembered in the Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval. Sold with WW1 Memorials Scroll with typed entry glued to scroll and cemetery paperwork".

The medals and plaque were sold for £1 175.

Whilst no details are known of the circumstances under which Joe Williams gained the Military Medal (other than it was *For The Somme*) it is known that his award was notified in *The Supplement to the London Gazette* on 21 October 1916.

The inscription on the family headstone in Neston Cemetery notes that Joe 'Officially presumed died of wounds received in action 23 March 1918 aged 23 Years' - this is, in fact, the day before his 'official' date of death.

The 15th (Service) Battalion Cheshire Regiment was one of the three Bantam regiments and was also known as the 1st Birkenhead Regiment having being formed in Birkenhead on 18 November 1914 by Alfred Bigland MP. The troops moved to Hoylake and, in June 1915, came under the orders of the 105th Brigade in the 35th Division at Masham, near Harrogate. In August 1915 they moved to Salisbury Plain and, having been adopted by the War Office on 15 August 1915, finally embarked for France after Christmas and landed at Le Havre in January 1916.

On 24 September 1917 the Daily List [N^o 5372] recorded that Joe had been wounded, an earlier injury than that which led to his death.

If the presumption on the gravestone is correct - that Joe was injured on 23 March 1918 (although, officially, he was recorded as being killed in action) - then it is very likely that he was injured on the final day of the 3-day conflict known as The Battle of St Quentin, the first of the German offensives in Picardy when the allied forces were put under great pressure after significant earlier losses.



Detail of the family grave in Neston Cemetery, Raby Road



Although the 15th Battalion was not involved directly in this conflict it led into The Battle of Bapaume (24 - 25 March) in which the 15th Battalion saw Front Line involvement and some sense of the events at that time can be read in *The Cheshire Bantams*, Stephen McGreal's book [2006] on the history of the 15th, 16th & 17th Battalions of the Cheshire Regiment in WW1. The following is an extract, unamended, from that book [pages 192 - 196]:

On the 22nd [March] after marching eight miles to the railhead at Ypres, the 15th Cheshires commenced a twelve hours' rail journey of jolting and stopping and starting, guaranteed to prevent even the weariest of passengers from snatching some sleep. The tired troops who had been packed forty to a cattle truck now detrained and marched seventeen miles through a frosty night from Mericourt l'Abbe on the Somme to the village of Suzanne near Bray. The roads were congested with transport of every description, retiring troops and despondent civilian refugees filled the roads, all heading in the opposite direction to the fresh reinforcements. Against this tide of humanity the 35th Division struggled, at every halt the troops fell asleep at the roadside. A general retirement had been ordered to the line of the Somme, yielding precious ground steeped in the allied blood of the Somme battles. The Brigade pushed on three miles more to a rendezvous, where it was hoped to snatch some rest and food before going into action. They finally reached their billets at 4 a.m. but at the moment of their arrival, demoralised troops from the 9th and 21st Divisions came streaming back to the rear reporting that the Hun was hard on their heels. So there was nothing for it but to move against the enemy, these events were meticulously recorded in the diary of Lieutenant Colonel Harrison Johnson (at this time he was a Major) and remain the finest account of the battalion's involvement in this battle, passages from the diary are included in the subsequent account. Before midday on Palm Sunday 24 March the 15th Battalion was ordered to attack and regain two lines of trenches yielded after much carnage by the embattled 21st Division. The Cheshires now launched a spirited counter-attack against Clery Ridge, south of Marrieres Wood. They advanced for more than a mile in splendid order advancing as if involved on an exercise, successfully retaking both of their objectives, as a result the enemy had to withdraw 150 yards. They captured the Clery-Bouchavesnes Ridge, suffering serious casualties in the process; after a morning of sharp and fluctuating fighting, they established themselves and prepared for an imminent counter attack. The 15th Sherwoods were deployed north of Hem Wood thereby attacking on the left of the 15th Battalion, with a big gap between, and share the glory of this admirable action. Each battalion consisted of only three companies, the fourth having been kept behind to unload the train. The Germans regrouped and both battalions were desperately counter attacked by a force of superior numbers, who attacked in waves supported by high explosive gas shell, rifle and machine gun fire, and grenades. Above their heads enemy aircraft continually buzzed the allied line and sunken road dropping bombs from an altitude of only fifty feet. The two forward companies of the 15th Battalion Z and X though completely surrounded by the enemy, owing to the wide gap between them and the Sherwoods, held up the German advance all day. Our boys' casualties steadily rose and the sunken road west of Hem Wood became lined with approximately 45 stretcher cases awaiting evacuation, all requests for ambulances dispatched through cyclist, telephone, and runner met with no response. A steady stream of demoralised men from assorted regiments and corps were now rushing past the Cheshire officer, who ordered the Regimental Sergeant Major supported by military police to round up the stray men and order them back into the line. The Cheshires were now joined by a group from 13th Sussex Regiment and a Canadian Motor Machine Gun Company who assisted on the right flank mowing down swathes of field grey clad infantry. When their ammunition ran out the vehicles drove off for fresh supplies, taking with them as many of the wounded men they could manage. This company carried out invaluable work until early afternoon; by this time all their officers were killed or wounded and insufficient men

remained to man the few surviving guns. The Cheshire regiment's left flank began to falter, prior to falling back slightly, two tanks now rumbled forward and restored the situation. The continual onslaught produced a similar effect on the right flank that also began to waver until reinforcements arrived. The numerically stronger enemy continued to advance steadily; both forces were now in such close proximity they were able to shout at each other. At such a short range the enemy snipers rarely failed to hit; 60 yards forward of X company's line a deadly marksman was steadily whittling down the company. Twenty-one year old Captain Kidd M.C. the commander of X company was sniped, swiftly followed by the No.1 and No. 2 of three Lewis gun teams of X company, Lieutenant [Tp] Edward H. Hodson was also killed Captain Kidd M.C. about this time. An unnamed volunteer resolved to eradicate the sniper; the Cheshire soldier broke cover and set off alone across the intervening ground, zig-zagging his way towards the sniper. He bravely got within ten paces of the sniper before spinning around with a bullet through his throat; he stumbled forward a few steps and fell down dead. Meanwhile Z Company led by the Battalion C.O., Lieutenant Colonel H.P.G. Cochran, found itself in an increasingly untenable position. The withdrawal of Brigade H.Q. prompted Johnston to despatch Doran, the C.O.'s servant, forward with a message and the officer's revolver. Doran located Z Company but failed to find the officer commanding. Doran reported back and, accompanied by another man, they set off laden down with bandoliers of ammunition and water for the location of Z Company. Returning to the trench they discovered two Germans; Private Doran shot both men with the revolver, before scrambling into the next trench occupied by members of Z Company. While dispensing the ammunition he spotted a German who had advanced to within fifty yards of the trench, Doran borrowed a rifle, took careful aim and gently squeezed the trigger; a shot rang out and the Hun fell dead. With his mission now completed Doran reported back to Lieutenant Colonel Johnston advising him that Z Company were almost surrounded. By the time he imparted this information Lieutenant Colonel Cochran, the Adjutant Captain, V.G. Barnett and Major H.F.A. Le Measurier and approximately thirty men were themselves completely encircled by the Germans. Fighting with determination isolated Cheshires were either killed or captured. The Sherwoods found themselves in a similar position and towards 3-30 p.m. both companies were outflanked by the enemy and wiped out. At approximately 5 p.m. the order came to retire to the line reaching from Curlu to the village of Hardecourt, north east of Maricourt; the 17th Royal Scots who had been in support provided covering fire, assisted by as many slackers from other units Johnston could find. Many men succeeded in fighting their way out, carrying their wounded with them, they fell back to the sunken road to the west of Hem Wood, where they remained until receiving the order to with-draw. The unevacuated wounded were not abandoned for when the majority of the battalion had safely pulled back, the covering party were ordered that no one could leave without the corner of a stretcher upon his shoulder. Due to a lack of stretchers they were improvised from rifles and tree branches, other wounded were carried piggy-back style. The weary troops wound their way along the sunken road with shells exploding to their left and right. Men lay dead all around this escape route, including two groups of five corpses formerly four stretcher bearers and their patient, all victims of the shelling. Further along the road Johnston encountered a youth of 19 lying in a roadside ditch and another soldier attempting to persuade him to get up. The teenager had been shot through the mouth, and the wound had swollen terribly, Johnston advised the youth of the consequences of falling into enemy hands but his spirit was broken and he had no fight left in him. Eventually they coaxed the youth to his feet and with arms around him both men practically carried him for almost a half mile to the next position. One of the divisional cooks was set up here and the famished men seized the opportunity for a scalding hot brew of tea. The General now gave Johnston a roasting for allowing his men to stand around drinking tea! He ordered the Cheshires to line the road from the junction to the river. By 6 p.m. the dispositions of the battalions were: the 13th Sussex upon the north bank of the River Somme, the 17th Royal Scots extended this line to a point 100 yards to the north of the Clery-Maricourt road. The 15th Cheshires,

who were now severely reduced in numbers, carried on the line for an additional 1,500 yards. The 15th Sherwood Foresters covered their left flank towards Maurepas, the North Staffords remained in support at Maricourt. The orderly retirement continued while the 17th Royal Scots provided cover for the retirement to the line Curlu-Hardecourt. Immediately on arrival there the German army launched another attack, this was repulsed with withering rifle and machine gun fire. Once the new line was firmly established and all the wounded recovered, the 13th Sussex and 17th Royal Scots withdrew to the right flank. Major Johnston was all too aware his section of the line was undermanned and began to remedy the situation by rounding up South African stragglers, and a Lewis gun team. By 8 p.m. all was in order, the Cheshire battalion established forward patrols and prepared themselves for a hostile night attack. As the hellish day drew to a close a layer of hoar frost appeared adding to the discomfort of the exhausted soldiers. Johnston had to continually move up and down his section of line to keep his men awake. No further action took place that night; as so heavily had the enemy been punished, the new line was not attacked....The 15th Cheshire casualties were heavy and the opportunity was taken to reorganise its hierarchy as the battalion had lost its colonel....

The War Diary of the 15th (S) Battalion Cheshire Regiment gives some further details:

Delto	10/3/18 to 22/3/18	Training was carried on vigorously for this period and was interspersed by reconnaissances of various positions in the Army Battle Zone and by Divisional Competitions in Guard mounting rapid firing Competitions and Football. In the two latter the Battalion showed up admirably, remaining unbeaten and reaching the semi final of the Football Competition by defeating the 15 th Sherwood Foresters the 4 th North Staffs and the Divisional Team. And scoring the highest points in the rapid firing competition which took place at MILLAM. The latter result was achieved by No 9 Platoon (Y Coy) which scored 363 points. Subsequent events however put a sudden end to these competitions which were never completed.	
	23/3/18 3.5am	W Coy entrained at ROUSBRUGGE STATION (Sheet 19 W20 Central)	0/0/032
<small>D. D. & L., London, E.C. (A783) Wt W8-9/1072 59,000 4/17 Sch. 52a. Forms/C/118/14</small>			
ROUSBRUGGE	23/3/18 7am	and the remainder of the Battalion with transport at 7am. The railway journey continued throughout the day and terminated at MERICOURT L'ABBE at 8pm. On arrival at the latter place the Battalion was ordered to proceed to billets at SUZANNE by march route and immediately marched off.	

War Diary extract, 15th (S) Battalion Cheshire Regiment, 10 – 31 March 1918

Transcription

[NOYONCAMP]

10/3/18 to 22/3/18 Training was carried on vigorously for this period and was interspersed by reconnaissances of various positions in the Army Battle Zone and by Divisional Competitions in guard mounting, rapid firing competitions and football. In the two latter the Battalion showed up admirably, remaining unbeaten and reaching the semi-final of the Football Competition by defeating the 15th Sherwood Foresters, the 4th North Staffs and the Divisional team and scoring the highest points in the rapid firing competition which took place at MILLAM. The latter result was achieved by No. 9 Platoon (Y Coy) which scored 363 points. Subsequent events however put a sudden end to these competitions which were never completed.

23/3/18 3.15am W Coy entrained at ROUSBRUGGE STATION (Sheet 19 W20 Central) and the remainder of ROUSBRUGGE the Battalion with transport at 7.0am. The railway journey continued throughout the day and terminated at MERICOURT L'ABBE at 8.0pm. On arriving at the latter place the Battalion was ordered to proceed to billets at SUZANNE by march route and immediately marched off. (Continued on following page)

SUZANNE	24/3/18	Billets were reached at 4 am but immediately on arrival orders were	
MARICOURT	25/3/18	received to proceed to MARICOURT in support of the front line troops and almost immediately the Battalion were engaged in active operations against	Report
BRAY MEAULTE	26/3/18	the great enemy offensive. The nature and result of such operations appear	
BUIRE-SURANCRE	27/3/18	from the report attached, and it only remains to be added that never had	
Billets	28/3/18	our officers and men shewn better form. At no time was any sign of	
Billets	29/3/18	retirement shewn and positions were only evacuated ^{on direct orders from superior authority} as a result of operations	
Billets	30/3/18	on our flanks, large numbers of the enemy were killed. Our losses although	
		heavy were very small in proportion to those inflicted on our opponents and	
		generally the fine reputation of the Battalion was greatly enhanced. When	
		one remembers that the action was that most difficult operation in warfare –	
		a rearguard action – and that it was carried out absolutely according	
		to plans and in perfect order – higher praise cannot be given more	
		especially as heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy.	
LA HOUSOYE	31/3/18 5 am	The Battalion was relieved by the 37 th Battalion Australian Infantry	o/o No 33
		and went to billets in LA HOUSOYE	

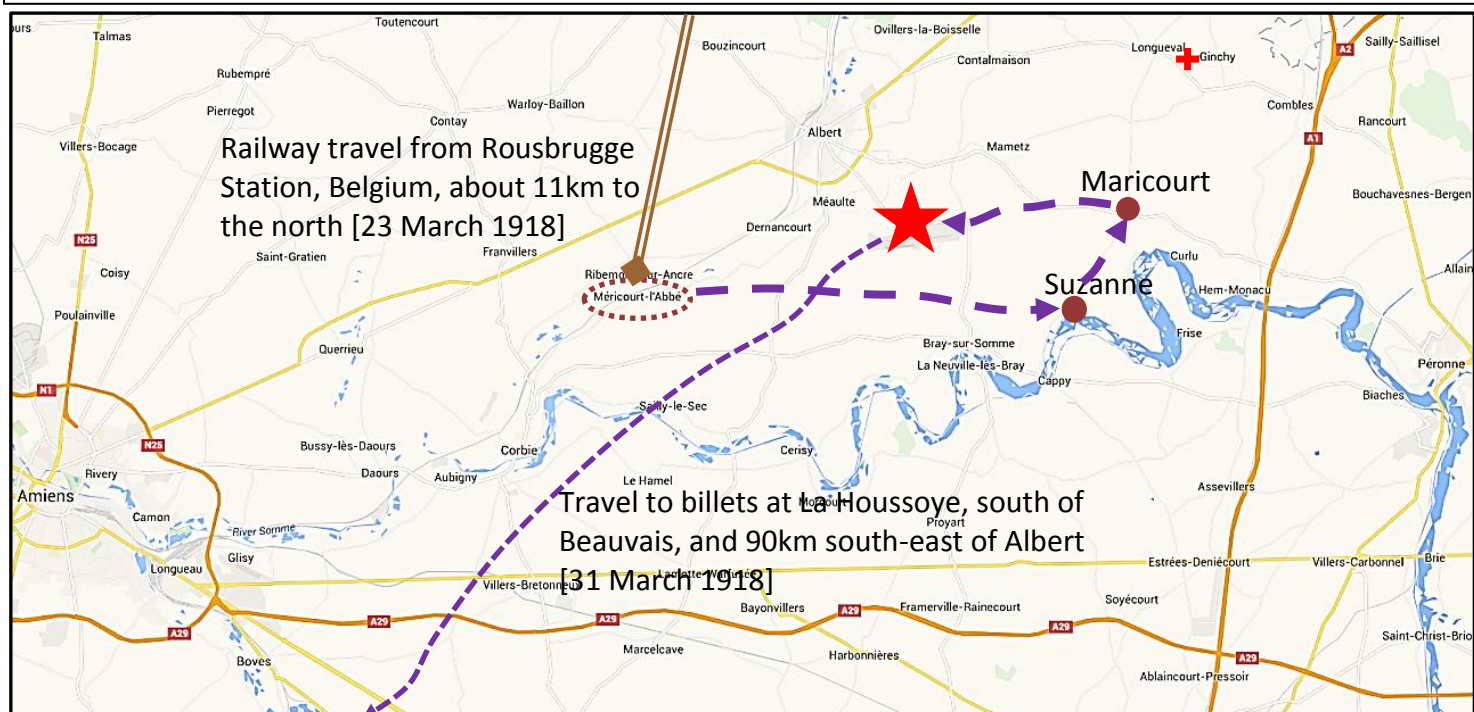
Transcription (continued from previous page)

SUZANNE 24/3/18 Billets were reached at 4.0am but immediately on arrival orders were received to proceed to MARICOURT in support of the front line troops and almost immediately the Battalion were engaged in

BRAY MEAULTE road 26/3/18 active operations against the great enemy offensive. The nature and result of

BUIRE-SURANCRE 27/3/18 such operations appear from the report attached, and it only remains to be added that never had our officers and men shewn better form. At no time was any sign of retirement shewn and positions were only evacuated on direct orders from superior authority as a result of operations on our flanks, large numbers of the enemy were killed. Our losses although heavy were very small in proportion to those inflicted on our opponents and generally the fine reputation of the Battalion was greatly enhanced. When one remembers that the action was that most difficult operation in warfare – a rearguard action – and that it was carried out absolutely according to plans and in perfect order – higher praise cannot be given more especially as heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy.

LA HOUSOYE 31/3/18 5am The Battalion was relieved by the 37th Battalion Australian Infantry and went to billets in LA HOUSOYE.



The route taken by the 15th (S) Battalion Cheshire Regiment between 23 March and 31 March 1918. The approximate location of their action against German forces on, and after, 24 March (the day on which Joe Williams died), is shown by the red star. The location of Delville Wood Cemetery, where Joe Williams is buried, is shown by the red cross near Longueval in the north-east corner of the map. The river is the Somme.

[base map: Google Maps]

830187	15/11/1919	Williams (M.M.) Joe.	15 th Cheshire B. & M. 10728	on or since 24:3:18 3-19 pres. dead	13	1	8	-	15-5-19/1	two + 11 legs Elizabeth Mrs & Sole leg Elizabeth	13	1	8	
		A. F. W. 5070 SENT DATE 26 JUL 1919		WAR GRATUITY. Effects 15-19-20 Transfer 21-2-10-19 Dead Papers 2-25-16-3 Serial No. 31650	24	=	=		17/11/19		24	-	-	

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. In July 1919 Joe's mother, Elizabeth, as sole legatee, received £13 1s 8d from the army and a War Gratuity of £24. This, a total value of £37 1s 8d, is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £5700 in 2018. This form also records that Joe died 'on or since 24:3:18, pres. dead' and that he was a CSM (Company Sergeant Major)

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.

On the day that Joe Williams died, 24 March 1918, 133 men of the Cheshire Regiment are known to have died of which 52 were serving with the 15th Battalion. Of these 52 men, 50 were killed in action (two others died of wounds) of whom just two were buried at Delville Wood Cemetery. Forty-three of the men are commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial which records those men who have no known grave and who died on the Somme from 21 March to 7 August 1918.

Joe's father, Joseph Williams, died on 14 January 1920 aged 61 and Elizabeth Williams died, aged 73, on 21 November 1933. They are buried in the family grave in Neston Cemetery.



None of the four daughters of Joseph and Elizabeth Williams married and they died:

Nessie	12 June 1982 aged 89
Mary	1 March 1981 aged 84
Ann	6 September 1980 aged 80
Elizabeth	3 January 1950 aged 44

All are buried in the family grave in Neston Cemetery.

In the 1939 Register (29 September) Nessie (born 3 October 1893) was recorded at 'Seafield', Parkgate Road, the housekeeper for widowed retired medical practitioner Lewis Grant (born 12 January 1870).

The other sisters have not been identified in the Register.

Dan Williams lived in Saudi Arabia and he died in 1964. After cremation his ashes were buried in the family grave in Neston Cemetery. Nothing is known for certain of the other brothers, George, John (Jack) and William.

The complete family gravestone in Neston Cemetery