

WILLIAM SHIRE, Private 3164 or 202807, 5th & 1/4th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry

William Shire was almost certainly William Robert Shire, the brother of Albert Edward Shire. We can find no other William in Somerset who seems to fit the right criteria, though with only one first name given it's hard to be 100% certain.

William Robert Shire was born in early 1896, the older son of farm labourer Mark Shire and his wife Flora. In later life he gave his date of birth as December 14 1895, but the 1896 date comes from the GRO Indexes. William and Albert were born in Corfe, where the family were living at the time. William was christened there on January 26 1896. In 1901 they were at Windmill Hill, Ashill, and at Swaddles Green, Buckland St Mary in 1911. By this time William, at 15, was away from home, working as a farm servant for the Trivett family, farmers in Broadway, not far from his home off Hare Lane, Buckland.

Early in the War, on September 12 1914 (a date given on his Silver War Badge entitlement) William enlisted in the 5th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry. *The History of the 1/5th Battalion* reports that 'Selected officers were despatched to the various Company areas in Somerset to conduct a recruiting campaign...no less than 916 recruits had joined the Battalion by 14th September.' William was evidently one of those persuaded by them.

As with his brother Albert, which Battalion he was in, and exactly when, is not clear; he appears to have served in the 1/4th and the 5th Btns, both originally Territorial Battalions. Both served overseas for most of the War, in India, Palestine, Egypt and Mesopotamia. His Medal Roll Index Card indicates that he didn't go abroad until August 8 1915, and then probably straight from India to Mesopotamia (Iraq and Syria) as indicated by the 5a Asiatic code on the index card.

Not all of the puzzle is clear, but from the information available, and reading of contemporary histories, this would be our best guess:

We think he left for India to join the 1/5th Btn in the summer of 1915. A draft was sent from the 1/5th to Basrah from India in May 1915, and another in August. We think William must have been in the later one. They were involved (fighting the Turks) in the infamous defence and siege of Kut on the River Tigris. The inconclusive Battle of Ctesiphon was fought in late November; the British retired to Kut; the Turks besieged them and in late April 1916 the British surrendered. The survivors were most cruelly treated; the officers were imprisoned; most of the other ranks died on forced marches or while imprisoned.

In the Battalion's History Private W. Shire is listed as wounded on 22 November 1915. Is this our man? He appears to have survived, so our surmise is that he was evacuated and recovered, and was transferred to the 1/4th Btn, also fighting in Mesopotamia. Unsurprisingly he is not named in the 1/4th War Diaries; his War Badge award lists him as wounded, but there is no sign of fighting up to the time he was discharged. Could this refer to failure to recover completely from the November 1915 wound?



Be that as it may, on June 9 1917 , he was discharged wounded, and awarded a Silver War Badge, No 189,267 (they were uniquely numbered). The War Badge, worn with civilian clothes, made the wearer's ex-service position clear, and protected them from misplaced officious civilian patriotism.

In the 1939 Register William was living at Manor Farm Cottage, Chard, and working as a Cowman. He was married, with two children living at home. "ARP" is written beside his name, so he must have been part of that voluntary force. He died in at Ashwell Farm, Wheddon Cross in 1982 aged 86.



| Name. | | Corps | | Rank | Regtl. No. |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------|
| <i>SHIRE</i> | | <i>Som L.I.</i> | | <i>TG</i> | * <i>3164</i> |
| <i>William</i> | | — " — | | — " — | <i>202807</i> |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Medal. | Roll. | Page. | Remarks. | | |
| VICTORY | * <i>C/2/102.B.16.</i> | <i>2010</i> | <i>Dis. 9.6.17.</i> | | |
| BRITISH | <i>c/o</i> | <i>c/o</i> | | | |
| <i>15</i> STAR | <i>c/2/1B3</i> | <i>250</i> | | | |
| <i>Sub list P.C./410.</i> | | | | | |
| Theatre of War first served in | <i>(5a) Arras.</i> | | | | |
| Date of entry therein | <i>7.8.15.</i> | | | | |

K. 1380.

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY. REGIMENT OR CORPS.

2010(b)

of 1916

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders V & 307

| Regt. No. | Rank | NAME | In sequence Class and Corps previously served with by each individual and Regt. No. (Specify the highest rank, whether substantive, acting or temporary, recorded in Service from 1st July 1914 to the date of War, being shown against the name of the Regiment or Corps which is to be inscribed on the medal.) | Theatre of war in which served | Charge awarded (to be left blank) | Reason of Disposal of decoration | REMARKS |
|-----------|------|------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 14838 | Pte | SHIRE Arthur Frederick | 7th SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | Discharged 14.4.17. |
| 16206 | Pte | SHIRE Herbert | 8th SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | K. in A. 1.7.16. |
| 16939 | Pte | SHIRE John | 8th SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 21.5.19. |
| 16571 | Pte | SHIRE John | 1st SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 22.2.19. |
| 21705 | Pte | SHIRE Sidney | 1st SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | K. in A. 20.8.16. |
| 17348 | Pte | SHIRE Walter | 1st SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 17.2.19. |
| 20287 | Pte | SHIRE William | 5th SOM. L.I. 6(b) | | | (a) Presented | Discharged 9.6.17. |
| 36049 | Pte | SHIRVINGTON John | 2nd S. SMITH. E. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 7.9.19. |
| | | Alfred | 2nd S. SMITH. E. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 7.9.19. |
| 55150 | Pte | SHOBERG Ernest | 2/4 SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 22.2.19. |
| | | William | 2/4 SOM. L.I. 1(a) | | | (a) Presented | To 2 Reserve 22.2.19. |

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place **EXETER** Date **26 AUG. 1927**

Signature and rank of Officer certifying.
INF. RECORDS, EXETER.

ORIGINAL

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the "WAR BADGE."

"P" 38.

WAR OFFICE

| Regt. No. | Rank | Name (in full) | Unit discharged from | No. of Badge and Certificate (To be completed at War Office) | Date of:— | Cause of Discharge (Wounds or Sickness and para. of K.R.) | Whether served Overseas (Yes or No) |
|-----------|------|--------------------|----------------------|--|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 201506 | Pte. | CHENEY, George H | 4th SOM. L.I. | 189,263 | 5.4.15 | Sickness. 392 XVI | Yes |
| 203735 | " | GILLARD, Arthur S | do | 189,264 | 16.3.17 | " " | No. |
| 203900 | " | WATSON, Lewis H | do | 189,265 | 7.4.13 | " " | Yes. |
| 201235 | " | FOY, William A | do | 189,266 | 10.11.14 | " " | Yes. |
| 202807 | " | SHIRE, William | do | 189,267 | 12.9.14 | Wounds. " | Yes. |
| 4598 | " | AMES, Fredk G. | do | 189,268 | 1.11.15 | Sickness. " | No. |
| 202084 | " | WRIGHT, William R. | do | 189,269 | 30.3.16 | Trans. to Class P (T) | No. |
| 200532 | " | HAMBROOKE, Edward | do | 189,270 | 19.6.14 | " " | Yes. |
| 13,13 | " | RAWLINS, Ernest | 5th do | 189,271 | 1.5.11 | Age. 392 XVI. Age 45 | No. |

I certify that the particulars furnished hereon are correct.

Place **EXETER** Date **4 JUN. 1917**

No. **62794**

TERRITORIAL FORCE RECORDS OFFICE

I certify that Badges and Certificates, numbered as above, have been issued to the individuals concerned.

Place **EXETER** Date **12 JUN. 1917**

No. **62794**

TERRITORIAL FORCE RECORDS OFFICE

Signature and Rank of Officer certifying Claimants' service.

H. Hickman 2nd Lieut.

H. Hickman 2nd Lieut.

O.C. TERRITORIAL FORCE RECORDS, EXETER.



WO-95-5030-3 1-4
SLI May 1916-Oct 191



WO-95-5180-4 1-4
SLI Feb 1916-Apr.pdf

References for War Diaries

| ADDRESS. | | SCHEDULE. | | SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES. | | O. V. S. P. or I. | M. or F. | BIRTH. | | | S. M. W. or D. | PERSONAL OCCUPATION. | See INSTRUCTIONS. |
|---|-----|-----------|---------|--------------------------|---|-------------------|----------|--------|-------|---|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | No. | Sub No. | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Day. | Year. | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| WPKD CHARD Registration District and Sub-district 308/2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manor Farm | 68 | 2 | | Jacobs Catherine | F | | | 9 Apr | 90 | M | | Unpaid Dom duties | Special Constable |
| | 69 | 1 | | Jacobs James | M | | | 2 Mar | 95 | M | | Farmer | |
| | | 2 | | Jacobs Ida | F | | | 22 Dec | 98 | M | | Unpaid Dom duties | |
| This record is officially closed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manor Farm Cottage | 90 | 1 | | Brown William | M | | | 29 Mar | 99 | M | | Small Holding Tenant | Special Constable |
| | | 2 | | Brown Sarah | F | | | 30 Apr | 04 | S | | Unpaid dom duties | |
| | | 3 | | Brown Robert | M | | | 20 Dec | 10 | S | | Agriculture Labourer | |
| Manor Farm Cottage | 91 | 1 | | Swain Emma | F | | | 10 Mar | 95 | S | | Collar Prachinist | A. R. P. |
| | 92 | 1 | | Shire William | M | | | 14 Dec | 95 | M | | Farm Cowman | |
| | | 2 | | Shire Phyllis | F | | | 26 Nov | 94 | M | | Unpaid dom duties | |
| | | 3 | | Shire Phyllis | F | | | 24 Dec | 22 | S | | Paid domestic work | 203 |
| | | 4 | | Shire Edward | M | | | 28 Aug | 26 | S | | At School | |
| Manor Farm Cottage | 93 | 1 | | Woodland Robert | M | | | 6 Apr | 98 | M | | Farm Cowman | |
| | | 2 | | Woodland Florence | F | | | 16 Dec | 08 | M | | Glove Prachinist | |
| This record is officially closed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manor Farm Cottage | 94 | 1 | | Brake Henry | M | | | 2 Aug | 99 | M | | Farm Carter | 241 |
| | | 2 | | Brake Sarah | F | | | 30 Dec | 03 | M | | Unpaid dom duties | |
| | | 3 | | Brake Robert | M | | | 18 Dec | 33 | S | | At School | |
| This record is officially closed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Manor Farm Cottage | 95 | 1 | | Chale Francis | M | | | 9 May | 09 | M | | Farm Shepherd | 40 page 14 |
| | | 2 | | Chale Emma | F | | | 20 Mar | 14 | M | | Unpaid Dom duties | |
| | | 3 | | Chale Robert | M | | | 18 Dec | 33 | S | | At School | |
| This record is officially closed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Townsend | 96 | 1 | | Hills Edward | M | | | 23 Apr | 93 | M | | Farm Carter | |
| | | 2 | | Hills Emma | F | | | 15 Apr | 99 | M | | Unpaid Dom duties | |
| | | 3 | | Hills Robert | M | | | 15 Dec | 15 | S | | Collar Prachinist | |
| Townsend | 97 | 1 | | Voss Albert | M | | | 16 Dec | 99 | M | | Farm Shepherd | |
| | | 2 | | Voss Beatrice | F | | | 10 Aug | 96 | M | | Glover | |
| | | 3 | | Voss Robert | M | | | 14 Dec | 31 | S | | At School | |
| Townsend | 98 | 1 | | Fisher Fred | M | | | 12 Aug | 95 | M | | General Dealer | |
| | | 2 | | Fisher Ann | F | | | 14 Dec | 84 | M | | Shoe-making | |
| Townsend | 99 | 1 | | Derrick George | M | | | 25 Sep | 09 | M | | General Farm Labourer | |
| | | 2 | | Derrick Dorothy | F | | | 6 Dec | 12 | M | | Unpaid Dom duties | |
| This record is officially closed. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Townsend | 100 | 1 | | Hawthorn Alfred | M | | | 10 Jan | 91 | M | | Farm Cowman | |
| | | 2 | | Hawthorn Ann | F | | | 4 Dec | 96 | M | | Unpaid dom duties | |
| | | 3 | | Hawthorn Robert | M | | | 10 Dec | 91 | M | | Collar Prachinist | |
| Townsend | 101 | 1 | | Hawthorn John | M | | | 26 Sep | 01 | M | | Farm Prachinist | |
| | | 2 | | Hawthorn Ellen | F | | | 30 Dec | 00 | M | | Collar Prachinist | |
| | | 3 | | Hawthorn George | M | | | 18 Aug | 86 | M | | General Farm Labourer | |
| | | 4 | | Hawthorn Maud | F | | | 16 Dec | 81 | M | | Unpaid domestic duties | |