THOMAS WALTER DOUGHTY

Born: 1892, Wood Norton[1]

Enlisted: (1) Army Service Corps (Driver T4/045185); and
(2) 1st Battalion, the Royal Irish Rifles (Rifleman 1/47409)[2]

Died: 24th March 1918 – killed in action

Age: 26

Memorial: Bouchoir New British Cemetery, IV.E.128 (the Somme)[3]

Medals: British War Medal; Victory Medal[4]

Residence: Wood Norton in 1911[5]

Thomas Walter Doughty was born in 1892, the son of Thomas George and Anna Maria Doughty. He was baptised on the 24th January 1892 in Wood Norton parish church *(see Figure 1)*.

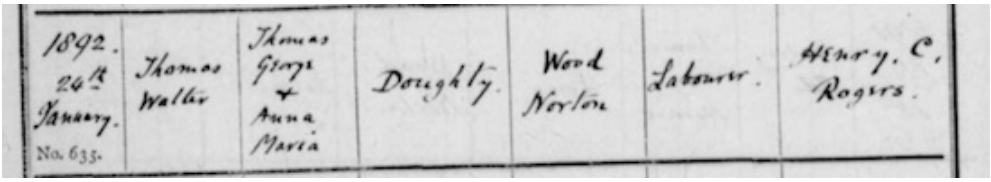

Figure 1: From the Baptisms Register, Wood Norton, 1892

Whilst the British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920 do not appear to have survived for Thomas, there are some extant records that indicate that he served in two branches of the

[1] FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1892, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.75 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1892 *(www.familysearch.org).*
[2] British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[3] CWGC commemoration *(www.cwgc.org).*
[4] British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[5] 1911 Census, Wood Norton (Schedule 198) *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*

military – as a driver in the Army Service Corps (later the Royal Army Service Corps), and as a rifleman in the 1st Battalion the Royal Irish Rifles *(see Figure 2)*.[6] Thomas was serving with the Royal Irish Rifles when he was killed during the First Battles of the Somme in 1918.

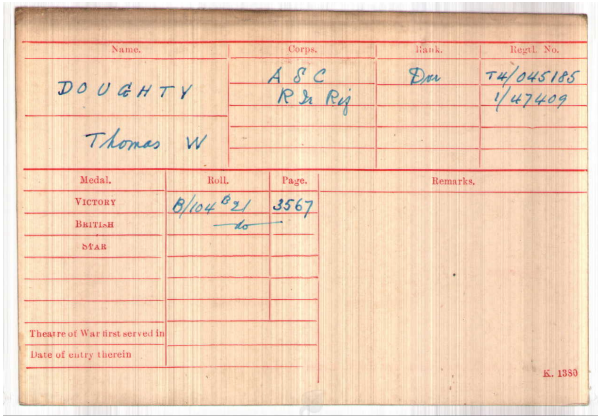

Figure 2: Medal Roll Index Card for Thomas Walter Doughty, showing that he served in the ASC and the Royal Irish Rifles

The Royal Irish Rifles war diary[7] for March 1918 records that they were at Essigny, in northern France. They had been involved in heavy bombardment at the beginning of the month which was followed by a quieter period with training. The 17th March, St Patrick's Day, was

> *… observed as a holiday. 1st and 2nd Battalions united at Mass by Revd. F. Gill D.S.O, M.C.; first time since 1854. Football match in morning. 1st Battn. 2 goals. 2nd Bn. 1 goal. … Battalion sports in afternoon.*

On the 20th March the men were working on the trenches in the Battle Zone and at Artemps. The Battle HQ moved from the village to Battle Dugouts in the Quarries, as a German offensive was expected to start the next morning, according to information received from prisoners. The offensive came at around 04.30am on the morning of the 21st March 1918, when the Germans launched operation *Michael*, with heavy bombardment near Saint-Quentin. The aim was to confront what was perceived as a weakened British Expeditionary Force (BEF); outflank it, attack the lines of communication and cut off the supply lines from the channel ports, thus defeating the British and forcing a French armistice.[8]

On the 24th March, the Battalion was at Beaumont en Beine, and marched to Montelimont on Cugny-Villerselve Road and dug in. A general engagement opened up and reinforcements approaching from the rear were badly shelled. At 3.30pm the Battalion was practically surrounded and had to retire on Villerselve, where a defensive position north and west of the village was taken up. The 9th Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers were seen to counter-attack, the enemy now approaching rapidly in large numbers. On the 26th March further fighting took place at Erches, where the enemy approached the village, securing posts by the use of French uniforms whilst using the white flag to distract our soldiers, until it became necessary to warn

[6] British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[7] War Diary, 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, March 1918 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[8] Royal Irish website: Battle Honour St Quentin – German Spring Offensive 1918 *(www.royal-irish.com/events/battle-honour-st-quentin-german-spring-offensive-1918)*; Wikipedia *(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Michael)*.

our soldiers to fire on all fronts. Fighting continued on and off until the end of March. The war diary records that the Battalion covered 168.7 kilometres during the month, and that

> *During these operations the following casualties occurred: 31 O.R. killed, 248 wounded, 155 missing. 9 wounded and missing – a total of 439.*

Following the fighting in March, Thomas's parents presumably received a communication with the dreadful news that their son was missing in action. They wrote to the Red Cross (as many families of missing soldiers did) to seek help in locating their son, and the index card for Thomas survives in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) records *(see Figure 3)*.[9]

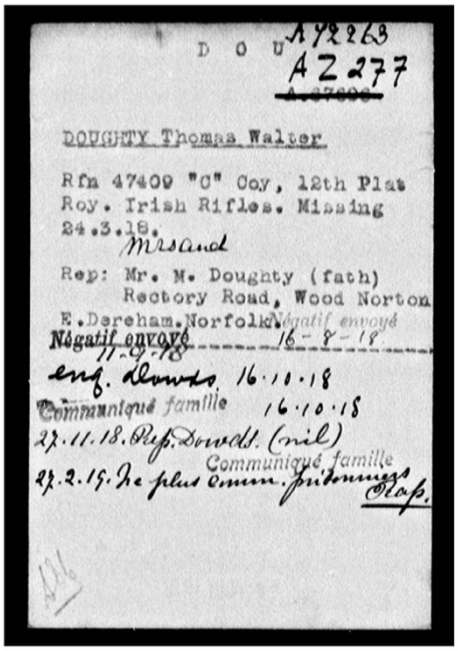

Figure 3: International Red Cross index card for Thomas Walter Doughty

The card records the date Thomas went missing, his regimental details, and his parents' address. It is stamped *14 AOUT 1918* (14th August 1918) on the reverse. The enquiries made by the Red Cross are listed on the card (in August, September, October and November 1918), but each came with the response '*Négatif envoyé'* – the soldier was not registered as a prisoner, so there was, therefore, a negative response. The final communication with Thomas's family was on the 27th February 1919 – '*ne plus comm. prisonniers Rap*' (which may mean that there had been no further information received from repatriated prisoners).

Thomas, had, in fact, been killed in March 1918, and his Record of Soldiers Effects drawn up in September 1919 records *'Death accepted 24.3.18'*.[10] An amount of £39 13s 2d was paid to his father, Thomas George Doughty in March 1920, which included a War Gratuity of £18.

The Commonwealth War Grave Commission's Burial Return dated 3rd November 1919 records that Thomas's body was interred in Bouchoir New British Cemetery *(see Figure 4)*.[11]

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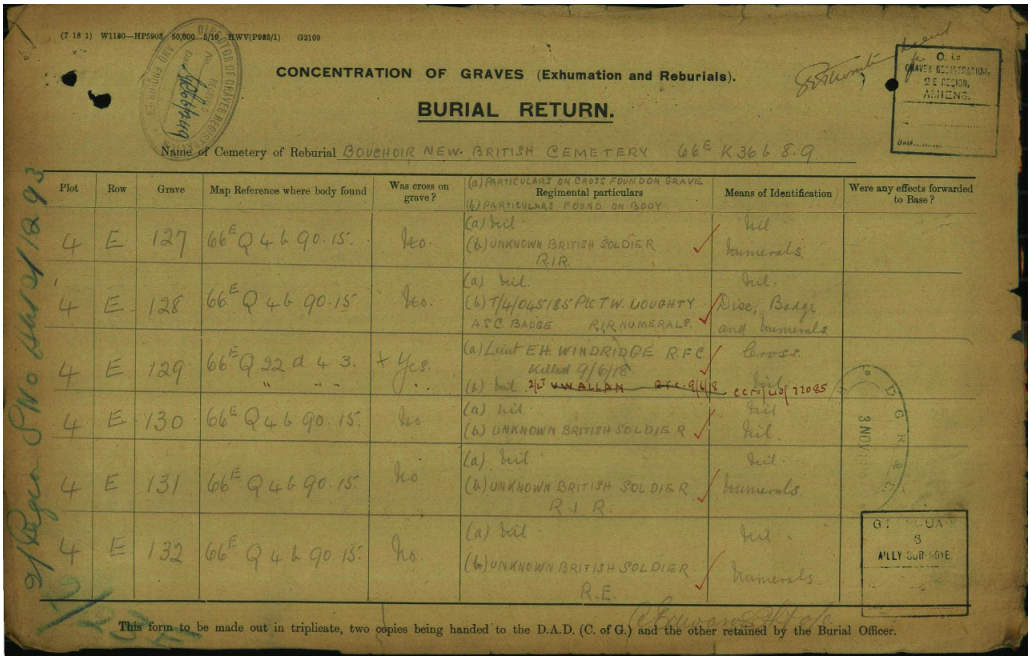
[9] ICRC 1914-1918: Prisoners of the First World War ICRC Historical Archives *(https://grandeguerre.icrc.org).*
[10] UK, Army of Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[11] CWGC Concentration of Graves (Exhumation and Reburials) - Burial Return for T.W. Doughty *(www.cwgc.org).*

The Burial Return lists individuals who have been recovered or exhumed from their original burial location and moved to a particular cemetery. The return includes the original trench map grid reference and indicates that Thomas had been buried in an unmarked grave; five out of the six men recorded on this return having been recovered from the same location. Thomas's body was identified by his identity disc, Army Service Corps badge and Royal Irish Rifles numerals. The body was recovered from trench map grid reference 66E Q4b 90.15, near Erches, where the Battalion had been involved in fighting on the 26th March 1918 (which possibly might indicate that although Thomas' death was recorded as being on the 24th March 1918, he may have died two days later).



CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Reburials).

BURIAL RETURN.

Name of Cemetery of Reburial BOUCHOIR NEW BRITISH CEMETERY 66E K36 8.9

Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found	Was cross on grave?	(a) PARTICULARS ON CROSS FOUND ON GRAVE. (b) PARTICULARS FOUND ON BODY. Regimental particulars	Means of Identification	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
4	E	127	66E Q4b 90.15.	Yes.	(a) Nil. (b) UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER R.I.R.	Nil. Numerals.	
4	E	128	66E Q 4b 90.15	Yes.	(a) Nil. (b) T/4/045185 Pte T.W. DOUGHTY A.S.C. BADGE R.I.R. NUMERALS.	Nil. Disc, Badge and Numerals.	
4	E	129	66E Q 22 d 4 3.	+ Yes.	(a) Lieut E.H. WINDRIDGE R.F.C. Killed 9/6/18 (b) Nil. 2/Lt V.W. ALLAN R.F.C. 9/6/18	Cross. Nil.	
4	E	130	66E Q4b 90.15.	Yes	(a) Nil. (b) UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	Nil. Nil.	
4	E	131	66E Q4b 90.15	Yes	(a) Nil. (b) UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER R.I.R.	Nil. Numerals.	
4	E	132	66E Q 4b 90.15.	Yes	(a) Nil. (b) UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER R.E.	Nil. Numerals.	

This form to be made out in triplicate, two copies being handed to the D.A.D. (C. of G.) and the other retained by the Burial Officer.

Figure 4: CWGC Burial Return, November 1919

Figure 5: Thomas Walter Doughty headstone, Bouchoir New British Cemetery (Reproduced by kind permission of The War Graves Photographic Project)

It appears that Thomas's mother, Anna, applied to the British Ministry for Pensions for a Dependant's Pension in September 1918 *(see Figure 6).*[12] The pension card records that Thomas was *Missing* (from the 24th March 1918) and that he was serving as a Rifleman with the Royal Irish Rifles. Anna was awarded a weekly pension of 8s from the 26th November 1918.

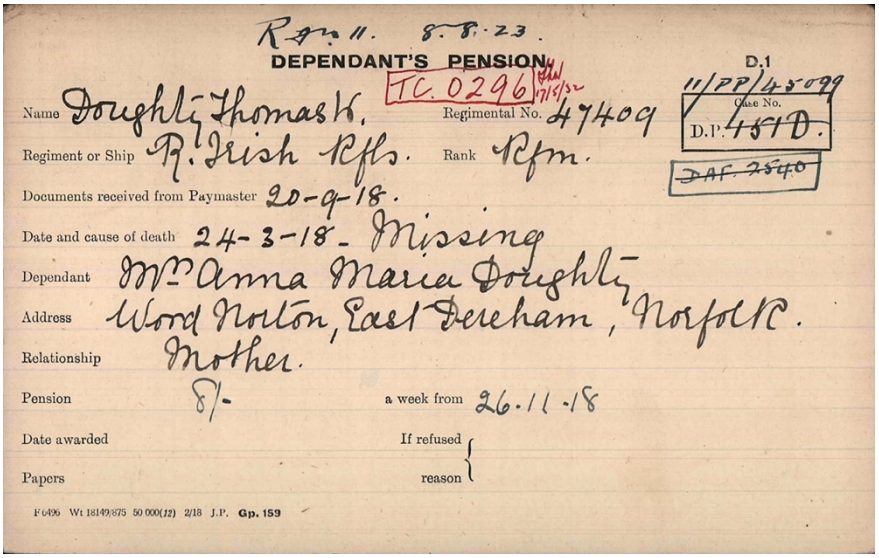


Figure 6: Dependant's Pension card in respect of Thomas Walter Doughty

Further research into Thomas's family reveals that his father, Thomas George Doughty was born in 1870 in Wood Norton, the son of Thomas and Martha Doughty.[13] He married Anna Maria Waterson on the 9th January 1892 in Wood Norton parish church.[14]

In the 1911 census for Wood Norton, Thomas George is recorded as aged 40 and a farm labourer; he died in 1943, aged 72, and is buried in Wood Norton - the Burial register notes that he was living in the Council Houses (in Church Road) at the time of his death. Anna Maria Waterson was born on the 27th February 1874 and baptised on the 12th August 1877, in Stibbard parish church, the daughter of Mary Waterson.[15] She died in 1945, aged 72, and is buried in Wood Norton.

The 1911 census reveals that of the seven children then born to Thomas George and Anna Maria, five had survived:

Name	**Born**	**Died**
Thomas Walter	*1892, in Wood Norton.* *In the 1911 census, Thomas is aged 19, and a farm labourer.*	*24 March 1918; France (the Somme).*

[12] UK, WW1 Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[13] FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1870, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.81 (www.freebmd.org.uk);* 1871 Census, Wood Norton (p39) *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*
[14] FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1892, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.143 (www.freebmd.org.uk); Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages 1892 (p.97).
[15] Baptism Register, Stibbard, 1877 *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*

Rosalie Mabel	1897, in Wood Norton (baptised 2nd May 1897).[16] In the 1911 census, she is aged 14, and at school.	
Bessie Edith	1899, in Wood Norton (baptised 21st March 1900). In the 1911 census she is aged 12, and at school. Bessie married Edgar Reynolds in 1924.[17]	Bessie died in 1980, aged 80.[18]
Harold Charles	1902, in Wood Norton.[19] In the 1911 census he is aged 9, and at school.	Harold died in1933, aged 31, and is buried in Wood Norton. The burial transcript notes that he was buried by Coroners Order following a fatal accident. He was living at 1 Council Houses.[20]
Hilda Grace	1910, Wood Norton. In the 1911 census she is 10 months old. Hilda married Thomas William Taylor on the 2nd April 1938, in Wood Norton.[21]	Hilda died in 1987, aged 76, and is buried in Wood Norton. She was living at 1 Council Houses.[22]

The two children who had died prior to the 1911 census were:

- Cyril Harry Doughty: baptised on the 4th June 1893 in Wood Norton. He died in 1906 aged 13 and is buried in Wood Norton.[23]
- Florence Mabel Doughty: baptised on the 9th February 1896 in Wood Norton parish church. She died in 1896 aged 2 months and is buried in Wood Norton.[24]

[16] FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to June 1897, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.80 (www.freebmd.org.uk);* Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1897 *(www.familysearch.org).* FreeBMD, Marriages, *Quarter to December 1925, Mitford, Vol.4b, p.694 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*.

[17] FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to September 1899, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.92 (www.freebmd.org.uk);* Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1900 *(www.familysearch.org.uk)*; FreeBMD, Marriages, *Quarter to December 1924, Mitford, Vol.4b, p.694 (www.freebmd.org.uk).*

[18] Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007, *Quarter to March 1980, Norwich Vol.10, p.1831 (www.ancestry.co.uk).*

[19] FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1902, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.82 (www.freebmd.org.uk).*

[20] *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials 1933 (p.132).

[21] FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to September 1910, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.71 (www.freebmd.org.uk);* Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1900 *(www.familysearch.org)*; FreeBMD, Marriages, *Quarter to June 1938, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.213 (www.freebmd.org.uk; Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages 1938 (p.105).

[22] *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials 1987 (p.134);

[23] Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1893 *(www.ancestry.co.uk)*; FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to June 1893, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.87 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; FreeBMD, Deaths, *Quarter to September 1906, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.47 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials 1906 (p.130).

[24] Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1899 *(www.ancestry.co.uk)*; FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to March 1896, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.87 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; FreeBMD, Deaths, *Quarter to March 1896, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.60 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials 1896 (p.129).

Thomas and Anna went on to have two more children after the 1911 census date:

- Ethel Mary Doughty: born 12th July 1912. Ethel married Herbert Sydney Page on the 10th February 1940 in Wood Norton parish church. She died in Cromer on the 7th December 2010, aged 98.[25]
- Cyril Clare Doughty: born on the 16th September 1914 and baptised on the 17th July 1921 in Wood Norton. Cyril married Muriel Doris Ethel White on the 19th July 1941, in Wood Norton parish church. He died in 1992, aged 78.[26]

[25] 1939 England and Wales Register, Walsingham RD, Enumeration District TSBD, Schedule 59 *(www.ancestry.co.uk)*; FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to September 1912, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.155 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; FreeBMD, Marriages, *Quarter to March 1940, Fakenham, Vol.4b, p.965 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages 1940 (p.106); UK and Ireland, Obituary Index, 2004-Current *(www.ancestry.co.uk).*

[26] FreeBMD, Births, *Quarter to December 1914, Aylsham, Vol. 4b, p.150 (www.freebmd.org.uk); Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms 1921 (p.42); FreeBMD, Marriages, *Quarter to September 1941, Fakenham, Vol. 4b, p.949 (www.freebmd.org.uk); Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages 1941 (p.107); *England and Wales, Civil Registration Death Index 1916-2007 (Quarter to October 1992, Southwark (Greater London), Vol. 15, p.13) (www.ancestry.co.uk).*