

LESLIE SPENSER WHITE (1905-08)



Date of Birth	14 September 1891 in Hales Street, Coventry
School Information	King Henry VIII's School before the College, which was also attended by his younger brother Major Thomas Otho Shearburn White (1906-12) . His brother Thomas later replaced White with Shearburn- see below.
Career Information	None known.
Date Of Death	15 March 1915
Cause of Death	Accidentally killed by a bomb explosion, while on active service.
Location	Ypres, France
Cemetery	Originally in Asylum British Cemetery, Ypres but then he was moved to Bedford House Cemetery, Ypres, France – see inscription below
Rank	Second Lieutenant
Branch of Service	Joined Artists Rifles immediately on the declaration of war on 5 August 1914; gazette 2 nd Lieutenant to 1 st Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment on 27 January 1915. He went to France in October 1914.

Below is a picture of his gravestone showing the special inscription.

We are indebted to great nephew, Simon Shearburn for confirming that this is the LS White on the Chapel Memorial, despite these details being different to what is contained in the Green Register.



The following is a picture of the White children. Leslie is at the back in the middle and Thomas is the other boy on the left. Simon believes this was taken around 1906, when Thomas went to the College.



Simon has also provided the following detailed information and photo on his brother Thomas :-

For reason's that aren't clear, Leslie's brother Thomas left Framlingham in 1912 and was sent to a school called Plumtree near Bulawayo in Rhodesia. It must have been a real frontier town then. This meant that in 1914 he was 18 and still in Rhodesia, and he enlisted in the 2nd Rhodesia Regiment. They arrived in Mombasa on 15th March 1915 which was the same day his brother was killed in France. Thomas served for nearly 2 years in the East African campaign (which, when the advance got going in 1916, was the polar opposite of the war in Europe). He ended up trekking and fighting across Tanzania for 750 miles until it was decided that the regiment was no longer an effective unit. At this point, near the Rufigi river, there were 25 fit men left and Thomas was one of them. That said, Thomas has succumbed to various tropical diseases and the effects of starvation at various points along the way, but strangely I think his time in East Africa meant that he had more chance of actually surviving the war, unlike Leslie. To complete the story quickly, Thomas came back to the UK in late 1917, spent 6 months with an Officer Cadet Battalion, and then in August 1918 joined the 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps near St. Quintin in France. He took part in the Battle of the Selle (17th October 1918) during which time his best mate from his time in Africa (another 2nd Lieut. in the same battalion) was killed. Thomas stayed with the KRRC in Germany until 1920, and then went back to Rhodesia. In 1926 he decided to



settle in Argentine (I think a cousin there persuaded him it was the place to be). He ran cattle farms there (i.e. he was a rancher as opposed to ranger!), and only came back in December 1939 to rejoin the KRRC. Until 1943 he was a Company Commander, but then became a Staff Officer in North Africa, Italy and until 1947 in Austria involved in getting farming going again.

He changed his name from Thomas Otho Shearburn White to Thomas Otho Shearburn Shearburn (bit of a mouthful) in October 1946 in, I think, anticipation of inheriting Snaith Hall from a remote childless cousin (and which had been build by his great-grandfather William Shearburn). I think the Hall proved rather a financial burden and he ran it as a hotel called the "White Elephant" (a nice pun on his original surname and what it was doing to his bank account, I like to think) and he sold it in the late 1960s.

We are indebted to Robert Smith for sending in the following biography

**2nd LIEUTENANT LESLIE SPENSER
WHITE, attd. 2st BATTN. THE QUEEN'S
OWN (ROYAL WEST KENT REGT.),**

who was wounded on the 14th March, 1915, by the accidental explosion of a bomb, and died next day, was the son of Frank Faulder White, F.R.C.S., Hon. Cons. Surgeon, Coventry Hospital, and Surgeon to the Lewisham Military Hospital, and Eva Dalgairns White (*née* Travers), Hon. Matron, Dobson War Hospital.



He was born at Coventry on the 14th September, 1891, and was educated at King Henry VIII. School, Coventry, and Framlingham College. He joined the Artists Rifles in August, 1914, and served for a time with the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers. He was gazetted temporary 2nd Lieutenant on the General List in January, 1915, and was attached to the 1st Battalion Royal West Kent Regiment when he was killed.

The Major Commanding the 1st Royal West Kent Regiment wrote: "His loss has been much felt by us all; he promised exceptionally well as a soldier, being keen and energetic. He was much liked by his brother officers."