William Charles Funnell

Private, Royal Army Service Corps. Enlisted in London, August 19th, 1915. Served in France. Killed in action at Abbeville, February 7th, 1917. Buried at Creçy, Abbeville. General Service and Victory Medals.

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WILLIAM FUNNELL was born to Sarah Elizabeth (née Blunsden) and Thomas Funnell in Stepney in London in 1894. The family had moved from London to Corsham by 1898, when William's youngest sister Florence was born, and in 1901 the family with their five children were living on the Hartham Park estate in one of the estate cottages. William's father and his brother, also called Thomas, were working on the estate as electrical engineers. In 1911 William, aged 16, had left school and was now working with his father on the estate as an electrician's apprentice.

William enlisted for the Army in London in August 1915 at the age of 21 and was appointed as a Private to the Army Supply Corps, attached to the Royal Engineers as a lorry driver. He was immediately shipped from Southampton to Rouen in France and served in theatre for 1 year and 173 days before he died on 7th February 1917.

Most unusually, William's service history is available to read, and it details that he was found dead in his lorry on the morning of 7th February, having spent the night sleeping in his cab, which was normal practice for drivers in the field. A Court of Enquiry was held into the circumstances of his death and it found that death was due to an acute oedema of

the lungs brought on as a result of alcoholism and exposure to the cold. William is buried in the Communal Cemetery in Picardie in France.

William's parents were still recorded as living in Corsham in 1917 at the time of his death and the subsequent enquiry.