



# Blakeney WW1 Casualties

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**Pamela Peake**



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Every year Blakeney, like many villages, towns and cities around the country, remembers the sacrifices made in both World Wars by men whose names are inscribed on village memorials. Who were they?

In this study an attempt has been made to collect the names of all who served in WW1, with greater attention being paid to the casualties and it is this group that are considered here. This has not been an easy exercise as the names on the memorials are surnames with initials; nationwide the majority of memorials provide Christian names which makes identification easier. Additional confusion has come from errors introduced during the preparation of the memorial inscription when initials were sometimes transcribed incorrectly. However, one surprising result of this study is the recognition that not all the names of casualties for Blakeney appear on the memorials, both on New Road and in St Nicholas Church.

Various accounts of the casualties have appeared over the past six years either in the **Glaven Valley News** or the **BAHS Newsletters**. At the same time display boards have appeared in the church with similar information plus photographs and details of the battles where individuals were killed.

By September 1914 out of a population of 708 for the village, newspaper accounts show that 80 men had volunteered, by January 1915 this number had risen to 145 and over the next four years it would rise even higher. So there could hardly have been a family or house in the village that emerged untouched from the war.

There are 39 known casualties for Blakeney and detailed records have been completed for 38 of them; these form the basis of the following account. The only absentee is H. Wright who has stubbornly eluded identification. In total 24 were born in Blakeney and 14 elsewhere, with H. Wright completing the list. 8 men are not recorded on the memorials. Casualties ranged in age from 5 teenagers to 20 in their 20s, 11 in their 30s and 2 in their 40s. 11 of these men, at least, were married and this included both 40 year olds who were in the Royal Navy.

The sheer number of casualties on the battle fields, changed forever Britain's attitude to its war dead. In March 1915, the Government issued a ban on the exhumation and repatriation of the bodies of all Imperial soldiers. This decision became the principle which was at the core of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to treat equally every casualty irrespective of wealth, creed or nationality. Thus, for the first time, **soldiers and officers were buried side by side and their names remembered together**. The Royal Navy continued the tradition of consigning casualties, who died at sea, to the deep.

As a result of this policy, families no longer had a local place available to grieve or to show their remembrance. It was not long before war memorials started springing up. These memorials were a powerful response of those feelings, difficult to show, at a time when stiff upper lips prevailed. Consequently it was the next of kin – parents, wives and even grandparents – who had their loved ones remembered on the memorials. Then, rather tellingly, Blakeney was not even the principal abode for the Allen, Ash and Cooke families,

rather it was their second home, a place for holidays or their future retirement. Finally after a 100 years it is now quite difficult for us to understand why some casualties were omitted from the memorials.

## Acknowledgements

Numerous institutions and individuals have helped in many ways but special thanks and recognition are given here to Mary Ferroussat for her pioneering research in the field of WW1 casualties and her publications on the subject, all before the age of the internet. Sara Dobson and Jean Thompson, both History Centre Blakeney volunteers, for their support and contributions in the early days of this research and my husband, John Peake, for his generous collaboration with the Armistice Centenary Exhibition and unwavering patience, constant help and advice throughout the many years researching this project. Thank you everyone.

Last, but certainly not least, finding photographs of the casualties has been particularly difficult so I am grateful to the relatives of the casualties who came to my rescue and the BAHS History Centre and [www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.picture.norfolk.gov.uk) for allowing use of their resources.

## Useful Sources

The BAHS History Centre is a good starting point for researching families living in Blakeney in the early twentieth century. It has copies of all the local parish registers, censuses from 1841 till 1901, a copy of the Blakeney School Admissions Register as well as family history biographies and other useful information.

There is an extensive range of books, journals and websites that cover all aspects of the Great War. Some of those that I have found especially useful include the following;

*A guide to researching First World War Military Family History.* This is a guide to what you can find at Norfolk Library and Information Service, Norfolk Record Office and the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum

Ferroussat, M., Norfolk War Memorials Project 1918-1998, *The Glaven Historian No.1* 1998

Ferroussat, M., Norfolk War Memorials Project 1914-1918: Pt 2, *The Glaven Historian No.2* 1999

Lorraine Petre, F., *The History of the Norfolk Regiment. Vol 2* Jarrold & Sons Ltd 1918  
Willmott, H.P., *World War 1* Dorling Kindersley 2008

Births, Marriages and Deaths [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)

Find My Past [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

Ancestry [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

Norfolk Roll of Honour [www.roll-of-honour.com](http://www.roll-of-honour.com)

National Archives [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

The Long, Long Trail [www.1914-1918.net](http://www.1914-1918.net)

Naval History [www.naval-history.net](http://www.naval-history.net)

The London Gazette [www.london.gazette.co.uk/search](http://www.london.gazette.co.uk/search)

Blakeney Area Historical Society [www.bahs.uk](http://www.bahs.uk)

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## Abbreviations used in this document

<b>ASC</b>	Army Service Corps
<b>A/Sgt</b>	Acting Sergeant
<b>BEF</b>	British Expeditionary Force
<b>Bn</b>	Battalion
<b>Bty</b>	Battery
<b>Corp.</b>	Corporal
<b>Coy</b>	Company
<b>CWGC</b>	Commonwealth War Graves Commission
<b>DLI</b>	Durham Light Infantry
<b>DSO</b>	Distinguished Service Order
<b>GRO</b>	General Register Office
<b>HMT</b>	His Majesty's Trawler
<b>Lieut</b>	Lieutenant
<b>MM</b>	Military Medal
<b>Reg.</b>	Regiment
<b>RFA</b>	Royal Field Artillery
<b>RMLI</b>	Royal Marine Light Infantry
<b>RNR</b>	Royal Naval Reserve
<b>RNVR</b>	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
<b>RTS</b>	Remounts Special
<b>SS</b>	Steam Ship
<b>T.F.</b>	Territorial Force
<b>TS</b>	Transport Special
<b>W.O.</b>	Warrant Officer

## Casualty List

### **ADCOCK, Edward Abel**

Private 235978, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Bn, Lancashire Fusiliers  
Died 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918, aged 27

### **ALLEN, Percy Henry**

Private 20740, 103<sup>rd</sup> Reg., 10<sup>th</sup> Bn, Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force  
Died 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1915, aged 29

### **ASH, Basil Claudius**

Lieut. 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derbys) Reg.  
Died 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1914, aged 28

### **BALDING, Robert**

Able Seaman 190103, (RFR/CH/B/6413) HMS *Aboukir*, Royal Navy  
Died 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1914, aged 34

### **BILHAM, William Charles**

Lance Corp. 13819, 11<sup>th</sup> Bn, Suffolk Reg.  
Died 28<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 21  
Not on Blakeney Memorials

**BOND, Willie David B.**

Known as *William Bond*

Corporal 10644 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derbys) Reg,

Died 20<sup>th</sup> October 1914, aged 25

Not on Blakeney Memorials

**BULLEN, Charles Henry Bullen**

Private G/71256 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Reg.

Died 13<sup>th</sup> April 1918, aged 39

Not on Blakeney Memorials

**BULLEN, Vincent Keeble**

Chief Stoker 277882 HMS *Vanguard*, Royal Navy

Died 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917, aged 44

**CLAXTON, Frederick Charles**

Known as *Charles Claxton*

Leading Seaman 2090D, HM Yacht *Zaida*, Royal Naval Reserve

Died 17<sup>th</sup> August 1916, aged 43

**COOKE, Christopher Arthur Gresham**

Midshipman HMS *Vanguard*, Royal Navy

Died 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917, aged 18

**COOPER, Reginald Charles**

Private 14156, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, Norfolk Reg.

Died 5<sup>th</sup> July 1916, aged 20

**DANIEL, Giles Harry**

Known as *Harry Daniel*

Private 42857, 22<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Durham Light Infantry

Died 14<sup>th</sup> November 1916, aged 35

**DANIEL, Reginald Maurice**

Sergeant 270013, Northumberland Hussars Yeomanry

Died 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1918, aged 32

Not on Blakeney Memorials

**DIGMAN, Henry**

2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer SS *Elterwater*, Merchant Navy

Died 16<sup>th</sup> December 1914, aged 29

Not on Blakeney Memorials

**HAINES. Clarence Emerson**

Private 13251, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, Norfolk Reg.

Died 27<sup>th</sup> July 1916, aged 25

**HAINES, George Henry**

Sergeant 200874, 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Reg.  
Died 19<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 24  
Not on Blakeney Memorials

**HUDSON, George Peter**

Gunner 116211, 301<sup>st</sup> Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery  
Died 12<sup>th</sup> September 1918, aged 33

**KING, George Alfred**

W.O., Gunner 211926, HMS *Crusader*, Royal Navy  
Died 21<sup>st</sup> January 1917, aged 31

**KING, William Edward**

W.O., Gunner HMS *Bulwark*, Royal Navy  
Died 26<sup>th</sup> November 1914, aged 38

**LANE, Thomas Robert Du Verge**

Private 49852, 1<sup>st</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Bn, King's (Liverpool Reg.)  
Died 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917, aged 31

**LONG, James Herbert**

Private 161321, Eastern Command, Labour Centre (E.C.L.C.)  
Died 4<sup>th</sup> November 1918, aged 31

**LONG, James Herbert**

Known as *Herbert J. Long*  
Private 1688, 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Reg.  
Died 28<sup>th</sup> August 1915, aged 21

**LONG MM, John**

Known as *Jack Long*  
Private 9377 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Coldstream Guards  
Died 30<sup>th</sup> November 1917, aged 25

**MITCHELL, Clement Barber**

Corporal 14000, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Reg.  
Died 11<sup>th</sup> August 1917, aged 20

**MOORE, James Lewis**

Private 20771, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, Essex Reg.  
Died 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1916, aged 18

**MOORE, John Edward**

Known as *Jack Moore*  
Gunner 68729, 17<sup>th</sup> Bty, Royal Field Artillery  
Died 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 1914, aged 23

**NEWLAND, John**

Known as *Jack Newland*

Private 28162, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn, East Yorkshire Reg.

Died 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1917, aged 19

**NICHOLLS, Charles**

Deck Hand 8659DA (Ch) HM Trawler *St. John's*, Royal Naval Reserve

Died 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1918, aged 26

**PALMER, Thomas Herbert**

Private 50387, 11<sup>th</sup> Bn, Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Reg.

Died 10<sup>th</sup> August 1917, aged 30

**PYKE, Frederick Walter**

Rifleman 574924 1<sup>st</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Bn, London Reg.

Died 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1917, aged 25

**PYKE, William Samuel**

Private 42161, 9<sup>th</sup> Bn, Essex Reg.

Died 19<sup>th</sup> September 1918, aged 19

**ROE, Cyril Charles Gordon**

Lieut. 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Marine Bn, (1/RMLI)

Died 28<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 21

**SEALES, William Edward**

Private 6/5566, 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Bn, Durham Light Infantry

Died 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1916, aged 19

**SIMPSON, Job**

Sapper 43990 98<sup>th</sup> Field Coy, Royal Engineers

Died 28<sup>th</sup> May 1918, aged 23

Not on Blakeney Memorials

**SMITH, James William**

RTS 10702 Shoeing Smith, Royal Army Service Corps

Died 6<sup>th</sup> January 1920, aged 29

**STARLING, Ernest Hubert**

Corporal 392092, 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Bn, London Reg. (Queen Victoria's Rifles)

Died 27<sup>th</sup> September 1917, aged 22

**STEVENS, Joseph**

Trooper 2354, Household Bn

Died 12<sup>th</sup> October 1917, aged 35

Not on Blakeney Memorials

**TURNER, Alfred Edward**

A/Sgt 16837, 7<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Reg.  
Died 13<sup>th</sup> October 1915, aged 30

**WRIGHT, H**

Unidentified



# Biographies

## Edward Abel Adcock

**Private 235978, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Bn. Lancashire Fusiliers**

**Died 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918, aged 27**

**Remembered at Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres**

**& on both Blakeney Memorials**

Edward was born in Blakeney where he was baptised 27<sup>th</sup> April 1890. He was the eldest son of Abel Richard Adcock and his wife Susannah Elizabeth Thompson who were married at Scarning 1887. His father was an agricultural labourer and whilst most of Edward's 15 siblings were born in Blakeney, 5 were not; his eldest sister Harriet was born in Scarning followed by three brothers Albert, Richard and Arthur born in Morston, Gressenhall and Fransham respectively then Mary Ann born in Titchwell. His younger siblings were two Williams, Walter, Robert, Emma, Ethel and Susanna with Leslie Kitchener Adcock being born in 1915 after the war had begun.

In 1911, the Census records Edward as a groom, aged 20, living on the Morston Road with his grandfather, a fish hawk, and younger brother Arthur. The family home in 1911 was just a few doors away at Temple Place with the census revealing that his parents had been married 24 years, had had 15 children and that only 12 were now alive.

Edward enlisted at Swaffham shortly before 8<sup>th</sup> August 1914, joining the Norfolk Yeomanry, a mounted unit (1524, Private 206130) and would have seen action in Gallipoli and possibly may have moved to Egypt with the Yeomanry. His medal card indicates that he was awarded the Victory and British medals whilst serving with the Yeomanry. However without any surviving service records it is impossible to know exactly when he was transferred to the Lancashire Fusiliers except that it was before February 1917 when the Norfolk Yeomanry became the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment.

The 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers was formed at Salford, September 1914 as a Territorial Force, essentially a home based training and defence unit of volunteers. However they were eventually entrained for service on the Western Front and landed at Le Havre in March 1917 as part of the 197 Brigade in the 66<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> East Lancashire) Division of the Second Army. By early 1918, with a major reorganisation of the army having taken place after the Battles of Passchendaele and Cambrai, this Division was assigned to the XIX Corps of the Fifth Army under General Gough.

The Corps was stationed between Cambrai and St. Quentin and consequently met the full force of the opening battle of the Spring Offensives when the Germans attacked at St. Quentin on 21<sup>st</sup> March over a section of the 40 mile long front that covered the old Somme battlefields. The Fusiliers suffered heavy casualties during the three day battle with Edward losing his life on the first day. He is buried in a cemetery just to the east of Amiens.

His father and three brothers, Albert, Richard and Arthur also served in the Great War but they returned home. His sister Mary Ann married another Blakeney survivor, Charles Arthur Bishop, while a younger brother, Walter, married Rose Stevens nee Beck, the widow of war casualty Joe Stevens.

**Percy Henry Allen**  
**Private 20740, 103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion**  
**Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force**  
**Died 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1915, aged 29**  
**Remembered Vimy Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Percy Henry Allen was born in Surbiton, Surrey, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1885, the second of four sons and third of six children born to John William Allen (born Great Yarmouth 1854) and his wife Annie Laura Butcher (born Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire). Percy's eldest and youngest brothers, John Carlyle Allen (born 1880) and William Ruskin Allen (born 1896) also served in the war and both survived although William was a prisoner of war until Christmas Day, 1918.

Percy was neither born in Blakeney nor ever lived or worked here. His connection with Blakeney, and consequently his *raison d'être* for being included on the War Memorials lies with his father, John Allen, whose family came from Wells. John was an Editor for Longmans, the London publishers, but spent his holidays in Blakeney where he could sail his boats, *Curlew* and *Flittermouse*. He was a keen associate of Dr. Sydney Long, also from Wells, and the two collaborated on local conservation issues together. At first John rented a cottage on the Quay from Augustus Hill then in 1909 bought land on the Morston Road where he built his retirement home, Allendune (now Mallards Reach); this is where Percy visited and William recuperated, after being wounded, before returning to the Front.

The 1911 Census has Percy living at home with his father and brother John at 3 St. Matthews Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey together with a housekeeper and live in maid. His father and brother were Editors to a Publishing firm whilst Percy was 'Clerk to Publishing firm', presumably all working for Longmans of London.

Percy, however had studied Applied Chemistry and Metallurgy at the Manchester Municipal College of Technology and it was as a Motor Engineer that he enlisted with the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1914 at Valcartier, near Quebec. He was unmarried, aged 29, and quite tall, standing at 5ft 10½ inches.

His unit, the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry (103<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Calgary Rifles) left for the UK, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1914, where winter was spent training on Salisbury Plain. They embarked for France, February 1915, and were placed in reserve. Letters Percy wrote home in early May 1915 describe his experiences in Flanders during the opening days of the Second Battle of Ypres. He was exposed to the first gas attack as his battalion rapidly made their way to retake Kitchener's Wood; a successful, but costly, manoeuvre for which they were dubbed the "the Gallant 10th". Later that same month, on the 20<sup>th</sup> May, his unit was back

in action further south, near Festubert in France. The German attacks were again so fierce that, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, his battalion was ordered to withdraw from the trenches they had just captured. During these few days 18 officers and 250 other ranks were lost, including Percy. It is presumed that Percy was killed outright.

Percy lies buried at the “*head of Willow Road, near Festubert*” in an inaccessible position, consequently his grave has never been located. He is remembered with Honour on the Vimy Memorial, The Manchester Municipal College of Technology in the Sackville Building and on both the Blakeney War Memorials.

## **Basil Claudius Ash**

**Lieut. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derbys) Regiment**

**Died 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1914, aged 28**

**Remembered at Chauny Communal Cemetery, British Extension  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Basil Claudius Ash was born 25<sup>th</sup> April 1886 Hampstead, Middlesex where his parents had a home at 2 Parkhill Road. He was the 4<sup>rd</sup> and last son and 7<sup>th</sup> child in a family of 8 children born to Claudius James Ash (born London 1848-1922) and his first wife Alice Emma Whitestone (born London 1852-1897). His siblings were Percy Claude Matchwick, Alice Ethel, Berkeley Noel, Dorothea, Gerald Beaumont, Norah Muriel and Madeline Edith Ash, all born in Middlesex.

After the death of his mother, his father married Louisa Margaret Loynes 1900. She was born in Wells (1868) and died in Bournemouth, Dorset (1961). There were no children to this marriage.

Claudius Ash was a prosperous Merchant and Manufacturer of Mineral Teeth and Dental Materials. With Louisa, he had a second home, Quay House, in Blakeney. This house, immediately west of Blakeney Hotel, was purchased from Charles Johnson Temple-Lynes on July 18<sup>th</sup> 1906 being part of a much larger estate situated in Blakeney, Langham and Wiveton. The house with surrounding gardens was valued at £1,058. A few years later in 1911, Claudius Ash bought the Manorial Lordships from the Calthorpe Auction and thus became the new Lord of the Manor after many generations of Calthorpes.

The 1901 Census shows that Basil, aged 14, was a pupil at Uppingham School, Rutland. The De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour relates that Basil was; “*gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Sherwood Foresters, from the Militia 20 March, 1907, and promoted Lieut. 5 June 1909, being employed with the Nigerian Regt., West African Frontier Force, from the following Oct, until the outbreak of war; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders, and was*

*killed in action 20 Sept. 1914.*" No Service Records have been found for Basil Ash, only his Medal Card.

However from the records of the Sherwood Foresters it is surmised that he was stationed with them in Sheffield before being moved to Cambridge at the outbreak of war, August 1914. The regiment was mobilized from there, 11.9.1914, landing at St. Nazaire for engagement on the Western Front. Basil lost his life just nine days later at Troyon, France during the Battle of the Aisne. He was the first casualty of the Great War from Blakeney.

Of his three brothers, Percy and Gerald are both known to have served and survived; Percy, born 1875, was a Captain serving in the 8<sup>th</sup> London Regiment at the outbreak of war. He rose to the rank of Major in the Post Office Rifles, serving in France where he was severely wounded. Gerald, born 1883, was a Captain with the Royal Medical Corps (Dental) and according to his Medal Card, served in Egypt from 2.7.1915. Both brothers returned home safely although Percy was injured for life having been shot through his lung.

## **Robert Balding**

**Able Seaman 190103, (RFR/CH/B/6413)**

**HMS *Aboukir*, Royal Navy**

**Died 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1914, aged 34**

**Remembered Chatham Naval Memorial  
& both Blakeney War Memorials**

Robert Balding was born in Blakeney, 13<sup>th</sup> January 1880 and baptised a month later, 13<sup>th</sup> February, at the Briston Methodist Church. He was the son of Robert John and Mary Ann Balding nee Folker, who were both born in Blakeney. Robert was the eldest son in a family of 7 children. His siblings, all born in Blakeney, were Maria, Sarah, Esther, Helen, William and James. After his mother died his father married the widow Emma Maria Reeve nee Daplyn of Hindringham. The only child of this second marriage was Maggie Balding.

His father was variously described as a bricklayer (1881) then Shipwright and Boat builder (1891) when living in the High Street. By 1901 the family had moved to Westgate Street but Robert was not with them. At this time his father was listed as a Ship's Carpenter.

In 1911, Robert aged 32, is living at home with his father, stepmother and Maggie. He is described as a boat builder, worker, presumably employed by his father who is a boat builder working on his own account. The family were tenants of the Pightle, a three roomed cottage owned by H. N. Parker of Cley. Robert Balding senior owned Seaview on the north side of the Morston Road and this was possibly the site of his workshop before the property was sold for development.

There is a record for a Robert Balding, aged 21 in 1901, serving in the Navy as Able Seaman on HMS *Pomone*, stationed in the East Indies. This suggests that Robert had joined the Navy earlier and as a reservist was recalled to duty at the outbreak of war. Robert was serving on HMS *Aboukir* when she played a minor role in the Battle of Heligoland Bight before being stationed with her sister ships, HMS *Hogue* and HMS *Cressy* in the North Sea, patrolling the Broad Fourteens.

On the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1914, the three *Cressy*-class armoured cruisers were sheltering together from bad weather, without the protection of any escorting destroyers,

when they were all attacked in succession by the German submarine U-9. HMS *Aboukir* went down first followed within the hour by HMS *Hogue* then HMS *Cressy*. Robert Balding was one of 1,397 enlisted men (527 from HMS *Aboukir*), along with 62 officers, killed as a direct result of this enemy action; his body was never recovered for burial. In all, just 837 men were rescued from the cruisers.

## **William Charles Bilham**

**Lance Corp. 13819, 11<sup>th</sup> Bn, Suffolk Regiment**

**Died 28<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 21**

**Remembered at Brown's Copse Cemetery, Roeux & Field Dalling  
but not in Blakeney**



William Bilham was born in 1896 at Field Dalling, the son of John and Ellen Bilham who came from Flordon and Hethersett respectively. The 1911 census shows William, aged 15, as an under gardener living at home with his parents and younger sister on the Langham Road in Field Dalling . There are only the briefest of records for William; a Medal Card, the fact that he enlisted at Cambridge and that his parents were at that time living at Greencroft, Blakeney. They were later to move to the New Road, Blakeney where they ran a small shop from their home.

The circumstances of William's death are unknown, but coincidentally the 28<sup>th</sup> April was the start of the second phase of the Battle of Arras when the British Front Line was to attack the German lines to the east, flattening Roeux in the process. The 11<sup>th</sup> Suffolks were to play a key role, taking the Old Chemical Works and the Chateau at Roeux. The 10<sup>th</sup> Lincolns were on their right and the 15<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots beyond them with the River on their flank.

It was a difficult day in the face of strong resistance and was described by the Divisional Commander as "... *began badly, continued badly and ended worse*". The attack on the Chemical Works was a costly failure for the Suffolks; 17 officers and 610 men went into the assault with 7 officers and 325 other ranks becoming casualties. Of these, 103 men lost their lives.

William is remembered at Roeux, scene of the Battle, 8 kilometres east of Arras. He is buried at Brown's Copse in the cemetery designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Meanwhile his grieving parents chose to have his name placed on the memorial at Field Dalling where he was born rather than Blakeney where the family were now established.

## **Willie David B. Bond**

**Corporal 10644 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derbys) Regiment**

**Died 20<sup>th</sup> October 1914, aged 25**

**Remembered at Ploegsteert Memorial  
but not in Blakeney**

Willie was registered at birth as Willie David B. Bond in the September Quarter of 1889 while Blakeney School Admissions Register gave his date of birth as 23<sup>rd</sup> May. He was the son of Julia Bond, the unmarried daughter of John and Jane Bond from Bale and Hindringham respectively. His grandparents had subsequently moved to Blakeney where his mother, Julia, was born 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1865.

Willie appears as Willy in the 1891 Census, aged 1, living with his mother and grandmother. The next five years were to prove eventful for him to say the least. His mother had a daughter late in 1891, again no father was named, and then she died three years later, in January 1895 aged 28. This was followed by the death of his grandmother in January 1896, aged 77. Presumably Willie and his sister had been looked after by their grandmother as the school register records that on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, the day before she died, the children "Left for Thursford", the Walsingham District Workhouse. They were still there in 1901 and Willie had become William, the name that would remain with him throughout the rest of his life.

The 1911 Census reveals that William, aged 21, was a career soldier. He was with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters at Plympton, St. Mary Devon having enlisted at Southwall, Middlesex. The internet site for "Army Service Numbers 1888-1914" records that he enlisted 1907, the year he turned 18.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn Sherwood Foresters were part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 6<sup>th</sup> Division and were moved on mobilization to Cambridge. From there they moved to France, 11<sup>th</sup> September, just in time to reinforce the hard pressed British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) on the Aisne (12-15<sup>th</sup> Sep). Within the month, the whole BEF had moved to Flanders where the 6<sup>th</sup> Division was then engaged at the Battle of Armentières, that began 19<sup>th</sup> October. William was an early casualty of the war and while his name is on the Ploegsteert Memorial for the Missing, it is not in Blakeney where there was no close family left to speak up for him.

## **Charles Henry Bullen**

**Private G/71256 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Regiment**

**Died 13<sup>th</sup> April 1918, aged 39**

**Remembered at Ploegsteert Memorial  
but not in Blakeney**



Charles was born 16<sup>th</sup> January 1879 at Brooke, Norfolk, the eldest son of Robert John Bullen, shoemaker, and his wife Lucy. The 1911 census reveals that Charles was still single, aged 32 and in domestic service as Butler to Ella Holmes of The Hall Brooke. Then towards the end of 1913 he married Gertrude R. Adams in Norwich.

A chance discovery of him was on the internet site "Picture Norfolk" where he was identified as Charles Henry Bullen, Royal Fusilier of Blakeney. The photograph however, clearly displays the Britannia badge of the Norfolk Regiment. This immediately led to further research as no Charles Bullen featured on either the Blakeney War Memorial or in any other contemporary village sources. He has since been found in Kelly's Directory for 1916 where he is listed in the Commercial section with no indication of his trade.

There are no Service Records for Charles, only his listing in "UK Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919", a Medal Card and his entry in the "Army Register of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929". However, the information from these few records confirms that he was indeed a resident of Blakeney when he enlisted at Cromer. Furthermore, Charles was initially with the 5<sup>th</sup> Norfolk Regiment before he was later, date unknown, transferred to the Royal Fusiliers. By April 1918, his Battalion was part of the XV Corps in the British First Army led by General Sir Henry Horne.

Both the First and Second British Armies took part in the second phase of the German Spring Offensives at the Battle of Lys, 9<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> April, 1918. On this occasion the objective of the German Army was to capture key road and rail networks supporting the Second British Army located further towards Ypres. The First Army engaged the enemy at Estaires between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> April. This was the opening phase of the Battle of Lys (9<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> April), when German storm troopers made rapid advances and crossed the River Lys. The following day the British were forced to retreat back from Estaires towards the rail junction at Hazbrouck while the Royal Fusiliers were ordered, at noon, to join the Second Army at Bailleul. Charles seemingly lost his life the next day.

However, close inspection of the Register of his "Effects" reveals a quite different story. His death actually occurred sometime between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> April, the exact date and place being unknown. Thus he was killed in action either on the last day of the initial skirmish at Estaires or en route to the Second Army and it would appear that his absence was not immediately noticed. His body was and never has been recovered and consequently his name features on the Panel for the missing at Ploegsteert Memorial and also at Brooke where he was born.

**Vincent Keeble Bullen**  
**Chief Stoker 277882 HMS Vanguard Royal Navy**  
**Died 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917, aged 44**  
**Remembered at Chatham Naval Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Vincent was born 9<sup>th</sup> September 1872 at Cley, not Blakeney, Gloucester as stated in his Naval Records and repeated by the CWGC. He was the eldest son of William Richard Bullen of Holt (1844-1910), plumber and glazier, and his wife Ellen Keeble of Starston (1848-1897). His siblings were William Ahmed born Cley, Mary Elizabeth born Down, Cambridge and Henry Charles born Blakeney. In 1891 the family were living in the High Street, Blakeney, opposite the present Delicatessen. Then ten years later, after the death of their mother and young William, Mary and Henry were living in Newlands Row, High Street opposite the present Royal Legion car park. Mary was a school teacher while Henry was a shoemaker. Their father was absent from home.

Meanwhile Vincent had already signed up with the Navy in 1894 and married Marian Elizabeth Gardiner at Hereford in 1902. They had two daughters; Mary May Bosanquet Bullen and Clara Eleanor Bullen known as Maisie and Claire respectively.

By 1911 Vincent was on board HMS *Mallard*, a Torpedo Boat Destroyer stationed at Malta in the Mediterranean. He was Acting Chief Stoker (Head). Meanwhile his younger brother Henry had also joined the Navy and was 2<sup>nd</sup> Sick Bay Attendant Medical on HM C6 *Submarine* stationed at Harwich.

Sometime later, Vincent was transferred to HMS *Vanguard*, a newly built St. Vincent-class dreadnought assigned to the Home and Grand Fleet. Apart from taking part at the Battle of Jutland, HMS *Vanguard* generally patrolled the North Sea as well as engaging in training exercises. At the time of his death, Vincent was with HMS *Vanguard* in Scapa Flow where she had that very day just finished a training exercise for abandoning ship. At 11.40 pm, shortly before midnight, she suffered a massive internal explosion and sank immediately. In terms of loss of life, it remains the most catastrophic accidental explosion in the history of the UK and certainly one of the worst accidental losses of the Royal Navy.

She was one of five warships destroyed by internal explosion rather than enemy action; the others being HMS *Bulwark* 1914, HMS *Princess Irene* 1915, HMS *Natal* 1915 and HMS *Glatton* 1918. Each explosion was caused by the overheating of cordite and in the case of HMS *Vanguard*, the cordite was stored against an adjacent bulkhead in one of the two magazines which served the gun turrets amidships. This was the culmination of both bad design and bad practice that resulted in the death of some 2,291 sailors from the five warships. Of the 804 men who lost their lives by misadventure at Scapa Flow were 16 year old Alick Grey of Morston, Vincent Bullen and Christopher Cooke, both of Blakeney.

According to his Naval Records his widow, Marion, was living at 71 Commercial Road, Hereford whilst his CWGC certificate gives her address as 5 Ethelbert Street, Hereford.



**Frederick Charles Claxton**  
**Leading Seaman 2090D, HM Yacht *Zaida* Royal Naval Reserve**  
**Died 17<sup>th</sup> August 1916, aged 43**  
**Remembered at Portsmouth Naval Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Although registered at birth as Frederick Charles Claxton and baptised with that name, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1873, Blakeney, he was always known as Charles. He is on the War Memorial as C. Claxton. Charles was the son of Henry John Claxton (born 1841 Bale) and Elizabeth Betts (born 1838 Field Dalling). Henry and Elizabeth had 17 children in all. In 1911, they were living in the High Street, with their grandson Edward Wordingham, the son of their daughter Lucy Dorcas Claxton and her husband Edward Cushing aka Wordingham.

Navy Records give his date of birth as 10<sup>th</sup> February 1872 while Blakeney School Admission Register gives it a year later, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1873. He attended the school from 1876 till 1885, as Charles Claxton and the last time he appeared in any Blakeney record was the 1891 census. By 1911, Charles was at 19 Quay Street, Larne, Antrim, Ireland with his wife Annie and 4 children.

By early August 1916 he was on the yacht HM Yacht *Zaida* which was serving as a tender to HMS *Hannibal*, destroying petrol stores in the western Mediterranean, before moving to the Gulf of Alexandretta. There, just off the coast of Turkey, she was blown up (17<sup>th</sup> August) and 13 were killed instantly including Charles.

*Zaida* (Arabic for fortunate) was owned by Archibald Primrose, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Roseberry, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Midlothian who was briefly British Prime Minister 1894-1895. She was one of many large private yachts taken over by the Admiralty and used for a variety of purposes. By August 1916, HM Yacht *Zaida* was possibly on a spying mission as Captain Charles L. Woolley, Military Intelligence Officer at Port Said, and a friend of T. E. Lawrence, was on board. He was amongst the crew that was captured.

There is conflicting evidence as to how HM Yacht *Zaida* actually met her end – whether it was a mine, U boat or some other misfortune. Since the ultimate source of where German submarines were and what they were doing is extant and readily available in the war diaries of all individual U boats, both U35 and U38 can be ruled out. U35 was off Sicily on the 17<sup>th</sup> August when she sank *Swedish Prince* while U38 had sailed from Constantinople on the 12<sup>th</sup>, sunk the steamer *Remembrance* in the Aegean on the 14<sup>th</sup> and was in the Straits of Sicily by the 18<sup>th</sup>. The current opinion is that HM *Zaida* was sunk by Ottoman shore batteries.

**Christopher Arthur Gresham Cooke**  
**Midshipman HMS *Vanguard*, Royal Navy**  
**Died 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917, aged 18**  
**Remembered at Chatham Naval Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Christopher was born 16<sup>th</sup> June 1899 at Cambridge, son of Dr. Arthur Cooke (1869-1933) and his wife Lucy Vivien Collyer (1871-1956). The family had a holiday home at Blakeney where his younger brother Nicholas was born in 1913. Christopher enjoyed sailing and swimming from an early age. By the age of 12 he was determined to go up to Osborne Naval College on the Isle of Wight as a cadet which is where he began his training before moving to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth.

At the outbreak of war, and with his training incomplete, Christopher became one of the 'boy sailors' ordered by the Admiralty to join various ships of the Navy ready to engage the enemy. He was assigned to HMS *Aboukir*, that together with HMS *Hogue* and HMS *Cressy*, were placed on North Sea patrols. These vessels were old, slow and vulnerable to attacks from the nearby German naval base at Wilhelmshaven. Not surprisingly they were rather derisively referred to in naval circles as the "Live Bait Squadron". As a storm blew up in the North Sea, September 1914, the supporting destroyers were withdrawn and, as feared, HMS *Aboukir* was the first to be torpedoed. When she began to sink, Christopher jumped overboard in his pyjamas and swam towards HMS *Hogue* only to see her blown up in front of him. He was eventually returned home in borrowed clothing.

Christopher was then assigned to HMS *Vanguard* and saw action at the Battle of Jutland in 1916 of which he has left a rather youthful and exuberant account. A year later, and for the second time in his short life, he was in bed when his ship exploded at her base in Scapa Flow. However, on this occasion, there was no time for a lucky escape as HMS *Vanguard* sank immediately.

HMS *Vanguard* was one of five warships destroyed by internal explosion, the others being HMS *Bulwark* 1914, HMS *Princess Irene* 1915, HMS *Natal* 1915 and HMS *Glatton* 1918. Each explosion was caused by the overheating of cordite and in the case of HMS *Vanguard*, a newly built St Vincent-class dreadnought, it was stored against an adjacent bulkhead in one of the two magazines which served the gun turrets amidships. This was the culmination of both bad design and bad practice that resulted in the death of some 2,291 sailors from the five warships. Of the 804 men who lost their lives by misadventure at Scapa Flow were 16 year old Alick Grey of Morston, Vincent Bullen and Christopher Cooke, both of Blakeney.

Christopher is also remembered at Rochester and Ely Cathedrals, Great St Mary's, Cambridge and in the Chapel at St Peter's Court, Broadstairs.

Many years later, at the outbreak of WWII, his younger brother, Flight-Lt Nicholas G. Cooke D.S.O., took a short-service commission in the RAF. He was posted to the RAF station Digby, Lincolnshire on May 12<sup>th</sup> 1940 and on May 31<sup>st</sup> went missing over the North Sea. Dedicated in 1947, Blakeney Church clock with its two seven foot dials was the gift of the Cooke family in remembrance of Arthur and his two sons, Christopher and Nicholas.

**Reginald Charles Cooper**  
**Private 14156, 1st Bn, Norfolk Regiment**  
**Died 5<sup>th</sup> July 1916, aged 20**  
**Remembered at Blakeney (St. Nicholas) Churchyard**  
**and on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Reginald Cooper was born in Cromer and baptised there, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1896. He was the son of Charles Thomas Cooper, a bricklayer, and his wife Marian Louisa Brooks. By 1901 the family were living in Runton and Reginald's siblings were an older sister, Norah Blanche Cooper and a younger brother Charles Thomas Cooper, both born in Cromer.

The 1911 Census records the family living in the High Street, Blakeney, on the east side of the Street, close to if not actually in Anchor Yard. Furthermore his parents had been married 18 years and had had four children with three still living. Reginald, aged 15, was living at home, and working as an Errand boy to a farmer, probably George Hudson.

There are no Service Records available, only brief CWGC details. Reginald enlisted at Norwich, Norfolk. Whereas the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion served with the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Belgium, France and Italy, Reginald appears never to have been sent abroad. His Theatre of War is given as "Home".

His Funeral Notice in the local paper (not identified) records that; *"The funeral of Private Reginald Cooper of the Norfolk Regiment, who died at Epsom, after a few days of illness, took place from his parents' house with military honours on Monday afternoon. The body, in an elm coffin draped with the Union Jack, and covered with choice wreaths, was borne on a hand bier, and preceded by the firing party with arms reversed. It was received by buglers, under the Colonel Tait, with the salute, and followed by a company of soldiers, under the command of Lieut-Colonel (temporary Captain) Monck Mason. The immediate mourners were the parents, sister and other relatives. A number of parishioners were present. The houses on the route of the procession were shaded, and much sympathy shown to a lad who was much respected. The funeral party entered the church to the strains of Beethoven's 'Funeral March' and the service was choral. Deceased was an old member of the choir, who were present and joined the procession, which was headed by a cross bearer Scoutmaster Baugh, of the Sea Scouts, deceased being one of the local troop of Baden-Powell Boy Scouts. In the cortège were also naval men, and a detachment of Sea Scouts. A hymn was sung inside the church, and Psalm XXXIX chanted. The rector (Rev R Gordon Roe) gave a short address. As the service in church terminated the organist (Mr J W Bolton Aston) rendered the 'Dead March' in 'Saul'. At the graveside the hymn 'Peace, perfect peace' followed the committal. After the Benediction the firing party advanced and fired three volleys. This was followed by the sounding of the 'Last Post' by the buglers."*

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission have marked his burial site in Blakeney Churchyard with a dedicated WW1 headstone. It is located on the north side of the church yard, in the eastern section.

**Giles Harry Daniel**  
**Private 42857, 22<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Durham Light Infantry**  
**Died 14<sup>th</sup> November 1916, aged 35**  
**Remembered at Guard's Cemetery, Lesboeuifs**  
**& the Memorial New Road, Blakeney**



Harry Daniel was baptised Giles Harry Daniel, 24<sup>th</sup> November 1880 in Blakeney Church but was always known by his middle name. He is on the War Memorial as H. Daniel. Harry was the son of Giles Daniel (1851-1928) and Martha Ann Dew (1854-1932) who were married in Blakeney, 1876. Giles and Martha had nine children, although two had died by 1911. The first three, Ada, Giles, and Giles Harry were born in Blakeney while five more were born in South Shields. By 1915, Giles and Martha were back living in Westgate Street, Blakeney.

In 1911, the Census has Harry living in Northumberland, where he was a "Labourer on Farm, age 30". However, shortly afterwards, he is back in Blakeney where he features on a list of employees who were presenting a gift to Mr and Mrs Hudson of Manor Farm as they retired.

Harry enlisted at Felling, Co. Durham, 1915, giving his address as Pike's Hole Farm, West Boldon Colliery and occupation as Ploughman. To begin with, he was an Army Reservist and was not mobilised until the following March. In early September, 1916, he was posted to France and transferred two weeks later, to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry, 3<sup>rd</sup> County Pioneers. This Battalion was part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division serving under General Sir Henry Rawlinson. Their role at the Somme was to provide support and labour, assisting the Royal Engineer field companies, often digging tunnels and repairing trenches. Harry is recorded as "Killed in Action, in the Field", 4 days before the end of the Battle of the Somme.

His remains were exhumed in 1920 for "proper burial" at Guards Cemetery, Lesboeuifs, 9 miles NE of Albert, scene of the first Battle of the Somme. His father was informed that *"the new grave has been duly marked with a cross bearing all the late soldier's particulars. The removal was undertaken with every measure of care and reverence, and the re-internment conducted by an Army Chaplain"*.

H. Daniel was a later addition to the casualties listed on the War Memorial in New Road, Blakeney and his name follows H. Wright at the bottom of the list. He has been misidentified as Reginald M. Daniel, his first cousin, by the Norfolk Roll of Honour.

**Reginald Maurice Daniel**  
**Sergeant 270013, Northumberland Hussars Yeomanry**  
**Died 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1918, aged 32**  
**Remembered at Chauny Communal Cemetery, British Extension**  
**but not in Blakeney**

Reginald was born in 1885, the son of John and Caroline Daniel. His parents were married

in Cambridge and had most of their children in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire before moving to South Shields. This is where they were living in 1911 when Reginald, aged 26, was an assistant librarian. Reginald's three brothers also fought for their country; Charles and Sydney in the Great War and Hubert in the Boer War. Hubert subsequently appears to have gone to Canada where he lost his life in 1909 on a training exercise with the Canadian artillery.

No Service Records have been found for Reginald, only his listing on the "Soldiers Died in the Great War", his CWGC burial details and his Medal Cards. However these are sufficient to follow his service in the 1<sup>st</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Northumberland Hussars. This was a mounted unit that had volunteered to serve overseas and as such holds the distinction of being the first Territorial Force in action. They sailed for Zeebrugge, Belgium on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1914 where they acted as Divisional Cavalry for the 7<sup>th</sup> Division taking part in the First Battle of Ypres, for which Reginald was awarded the 1914 Star. Thereafter the Regiment was split up not coming together again until May 1916. The Regiment then moved between different Corps and was attached to 111 Corps in November 1917. As such it was in the Fifth Army, under Gough, facing the barrage of the German Spring Offensive when, on the third and last day of the Battle of St. Quentin, Reginald lost his life.

His brief Service Records also note that his next of kin, his parents, were resident in Blakeney when he enlisted. This is where his father had been born and retired back too but, for whatever reason, chose not to have his son's name placed on the Blakeney War Memorial. Reginald is buried in Chauny Communal Cemetery in the extension that was made for British casualties after the Armistice. This extension was for the burial of remains brought in from the battlefields of the Aisne and from several smaller cemeteries in the surrounding countryside.

Hitherto, Reginald Maurice Daniel has been mistakenly identified, by both the Norfolk Roll of Honour and M. Ferroussat in *The Glaven Historian* (No. 3, 2000), as the "H. Daniel" added to the War Memorial on New Road. However, recent research shows that the true identity of H. Daniel is in fact Harry Daniel. Although baptised as Giles Harry Daniel, he was always known by his middle name and is actually Reginald's first cousin.

## **Henry Digman**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer SS *Elterwater* Merchant Navy  
Died 16<sup>th</sup> December 1914, aged 29**

**Remembered at the Mercantile Marine Memorial, Tower Hill, London  
but not in Blakeney**

Henry Digman was born in South Shields, 1885, the son of Captain Nevison Newbegin and Elizabeth Digman nee Bullen. His father was born in Blakeney (1852), served his apprenticeship in Kings Lynn, where he married (1878) and his two daughters were born. The family then relocated to South Shields where Captain Digman eventually became commodore of the Pelton Colliery Line Fleet. He retired in 1912 to live first at Cley then Blakeney, where he was born.

Henry married Mary Jane Hume (1912) while his two sisters, Maria and Agnes, married the brothers, Arthur and Isaac Walker respectively. Their parents were Arthur and Martha Ann Walker nee Newbegin and she was born in Blakeney, a first cousin of Nevison Newbegin Digman.

By the outbreak of war, Henry was 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer on the SS *Elterwater*, a 1,228 ton steel collier built in 1907 and owned by Sharp Steamship Co. Ltd. of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. She had shipped many of the large machinery components for HMS *Indefatigable* to Devonport Dockyard. HMS *Indefatigable* was subsequently lost at the Battle of Jutland, 1916.

The SS *Elterwater* struck a mine just off Scarborough. She was en route from the Tyne to London when struck at 6.13 pm, sinking in just three minutes with the loss of six lives from a crew of 18. Scarborough along with Hartlepool and Whitby had been bombarded by the Imperial German Navy on 16<sup>th</sup> December. This followed an earlier raid on Yarmouth in November that had demonstrated, to the German Navy, the potential for fast raiding into British waters.

Many in Scarborough and Hartlepool were killed and injured during the December bombardment, including the first British soldier to be killed on British soil. As the German battleships fled from Scarborough, the *Kolbeg* was left behind to lay a minefield off Flamborough Head. This was barely completed when disaster fell with alarming losses to both merchant shipping and human life. First to go was the Norwegian SS *Vaaren* followed 12 hours later by the SS *Elterwater*. The peril was further increased by German torpedo-boats laying more mines on the Dogger Bank. The following day, all traffic between Flamborough and the Tyne was restricted to daylight hours only. For the minesweepers sent in to clear the field, disaster was just waiting. The operation was led by Commander R. Walters, R.N. in the *Brighton Queen* and on the very first day's sweeping, and within ten minutes, three of his trawlers struck German mines!

Henry Digman is remembered at the Mercantile Marine Memorial at Tower Hill, London and in South Shields where his memorial is a stained glass window of a single arched light. It was moved in the 1950s to Laygate Baptist from the Baptist Tabernacle in Laygate. Despite his very close affinity to Blakeney, Henry is not remembered in Blakeney where his father was born, retired to and was buried.

**Clarence Emerson Haines**  
**Private 13251, 1st Bn, Norfolk Regiment**  
**Died 27<sup>th</sup> July 1916, aged 25**  
**Remembered at Thiepval Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Clarence Haines was registered at birth as Clarence Emerson Haines, in the March Quarter of 1891 for the Walsingham District (GR0). Blakeney School Admission Register gives 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1890 as his date of birth. He was the son of single mum Priscilla She was born in Bale (1867) the daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Haines. Priscilla eventually married Robert Thompson of Field Dalling in 1904, who was a carter, at the time of his marriage.

Clarence was brought up by his grandparents, attending school from 1896 till 1904. He was still living with them in 1911 in a cottage on the west side of the High Street in Leatherdale Yard. He was 20 years old and employed as a Farm labourer while his 70 year old grandfather was employed as Waggoner on Farm. Both Henry and Clarence were subsequently listed as employees at the Manor Farm. They were working for the Hudsons prior to the Blakeney Estate, including Manor farm, being auctioned by the Calthorpes.

There are no Service Records available for Clarence, only brief CWGC details. These add that he was born in Blakeney and enlisted in Norwich. The 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., Norfolk Regiment was part of the Regular Army (BEF) that served first in Belgium then France followed by Italy. They were part of the 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division; with 4 Battalions (the basic tactical unit of the infantry) making a Brigade and 3 Brigades a Division.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Norfolk were at the Battle of the Somme that began on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 and by the

16<sup>th</sup>, as part of the Fourth Army, they were reinforcing the troops holding the line between Longueval and High Wood to the north west. They should have been relieved on the 24<sup>th</sup> but this was postponed because of the intense fighting. Instead they were moved forward to assembly posts ready to attack the following morning. Their objective was the recapture of the north of Longueval village and Delville Wood aided by the 1<sup>st</sup> Bedford and 16<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshire Regiments.

A furious battle commenced in the small hours of the morning with horrendous gun fire, gas shells and enfilading. In just a few hours the Norfolks suffered severe casualties; 52 killed, 166 wounded and gassed and a further 50 missing, believed killed. Two days later, after the position was consolidated, the Battalion was relieved. Clarence lost his life on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> and is remembered at Thiepval Memorial to The Missing along with 72,247 other missing Allied soldiers. It is the largest British War Memorial in the world.

**George Henry Haines**  
**Sergeant 200874, 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Regiment**  
**Died 19<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 24**  
**Remembered at Jerusalem Memorial & Haddiscoe**  
**but not in Blakeney**

George Haines was born in Blakeney and baptised there 14<sup>th</sup> August 1892; the son of George Haines of Bale and his wife Dorothy Annie Porter of Cley. He was the second of five children; the eldest two boys being born in Blakeney, then a daughter and two younger sons born in Docking, Downham and Acle, respectively. George Haines senior was a Police Constable, stationed in Haddiscoe during WWI and this is where two of his sons are remembered; Sergeant George Haines on the War Memorial in the churchyard and Rifleman Leonard Haines of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Bn Rifle Brigade, buried in the churchyard.

There are no Service Records for George, only the briefest of facts that he died in Palestine, having fought in the Egyptian Theatre. Significantly he died on the third day of the second Battle of Gaza when his Battalion made the final push on Gaza from Sheikh Abbas ridge. The scene was described as a *“perfect hell of artillery and machine-gun fire”* with devastating numbers of casualties, wounded and missing, so much so that the troops were ordered to return back to the starting point under the cover of dark.

His first cousin Clarence Emerson Haines, also a Blakeney born lad, was a casualty of the Great War. He died 27<sup>th</sup> July 1916 at the Battle of the Somme and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial as well as in Blakeney.

**George Peter Hudson**  
**Gunner 116211, 301<sup>st</sup> Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery**  
**Died 12<sup>th</sup> September 1918, aged 33**  
**Remembered at Croix-Rouge Military Cemetery, Quaëdypre**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



George was born in Blakeney and baptised there, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1885, the son of George and Grace Hudson nee Howlett of St. Margarets, High Street, Blakeney. He was the brother of Grace, Gladys and John, who served in the Indian Army. George married Ellen Walker of Blakeney and was the father of Alan George and May, born 1909 and 1912 respectively.

George enlisted at Enfield, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1915, aged 30 years and 9 months and stated that earlier he had been with the Norfolk Imperial Yeomanry. He was initially placed with the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) reserves until moved the following year to the 18<sup>th</sup> Company RGA when he saw action with the Eastern Coast Defences. During this time he underwent specialist shore and signalling training at Chatham and was then stationed with the 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcing Depot at Bexhill before being posted to the 321<sup>st</sup> Siege Battery (SB) and embarking for France in May 1917.

Three months later he was admitted to hospital for two weeks with "PUO" (Pyrexia of unknown origin), meaning fever. Within a week of returning to duty on the front line, the fever was back and he was readmitted to hospital on 30<sup>th</sup> July, the very eve of the Third Battle of Ypres that led to the fall of Passchendaele. He was passed along the medical line till invalided back to England from No. 30 Base Hospital in Calais.

After time spent recovering in the UK, probably at Gosport (the Heavy and Siege Battery Depot) he was moved first to Shoreham then posted back to France for the second time where he joined the 301<sup>st</sup> Siege Battery of the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1918. The 301<sup>st</sup> Siege Battery had just suffered heavy losses in the German Spring Offensives at Lys and George was just one of many men sent in to bring the battery back up to strength.

Later that year, between mid August and early September, his battery began advancing from their base camp at Walker Farm that was located between Ypres and Dicklebusch. They pushed forward across the Fields of Flanders and had their heavy guns in position ready to take Wytshaete and Messines Ridge when on 7<sup>th</sup> September, they were badly shelled at their base, suffering 6 casualties, 3 wounded and 5 gassed. That very same week, although not necessarily from that particular action, George was admitted to the 10<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Arneke, France suffering with gunshot wounds to his left shoulder, right arm and leg. This was a front-line hospital, situated about 50 km SE of Calais and almost due west of Ypres, and was where George would have met a surgeon for the first time. His right leg and left foot were amputated that same day and sadly, George failed to pull through.

He is buried at Croix-Rouge Military Cemetery, just inland from Dunkirk. This is a very small cemetery with just 89 burials from both World Wars although the majority are WW1 soldiers who died between July and September 1918. His records show that it took a further 3½ years before his widow Ellen, now living at Manor Farm, Glandford, received firstly her pension, followed by his possessions, death plaque and finally his medals. The latter were delivered to her solicitors, Butcher and Andrews, Holt in March 1922.



**George Alfred King**  
**W.O., Gunner 211926, HMS *Crusader*, Royal Navy**  
**Died 21<sup>st</sup> January 1917, aged 31**  
**Remembered at Portsmouth Naval Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



George King was born in Cley, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1885, the son of William and Clara King. William (born 1848 Suffolk) was the local Coastguard officer stationed at Cley at that time. He had transferred from the Royal Navy to the Coastguard Service about the time he married Clara Locke, 1875 in Fulham, Middlesex. The stations that he was posted to included Morston, Burnham Overy, Cley, Thornham, all in Norfolk then Wainfleet St Mary, Lincolnshire and finally, a return to Morston where he was Head Boatman. W. King retired from the Service and became the licensee of the King's Arms in Blakeney. He eventually retired from work altogether and went to live with his married daughter, Elsie Eggleton, at Greencroft where he died, 1937.

George together with three of his brothers, William Edward (born Fulham 1876), Frederick William (born Morston 1877) and Herbert Victor (born Thornham 1889), followed their father into the Royal Navy. Frederick and Herbert survived the Great War with Herbert serving again later in WW2. His other siblings were Florence Alberta, Edith Clara, Charles Christopher, Henry James, Frank Arthur and Elsie Maud, a family with ten children.

George signed on in 1900 as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Boy and received his initial training on HMS *Ganges* stationed at Harwich. He rose through the ranks, serving on at least 15 different ships before being transferred to the Officers Section (Warrant Officer) in 1914 on the eve of the War. Meanwhile he had married Nellie Milton in 1912.

His war service began at 'Attentive II for HMS *Mohawk*'; this phrase causes much confusion but it is the official designation for his placement as a trainer at the Shore Station based at Dover. This was followed by HMS *Vernon* for training that concentrated on torpedo trials, anti-submarine warfare, mines and electrics. He then returned to 'Attentive II for HMS *Viking*', HMS *Yarmouth* for more training and finally 'Attentive II for HMS *Crusader*'. HMS *Mohawk*, *Viking* and *Crusader* were all Tribal-class destroyers, each seeing action in the North Sea and English Channel as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Flotilla and Dover Patrols.

George was lost overboard from HMS *Crusader* during heavy seas. The Court of Inquiry reported that "*he slipped over the ship's side whilst walking aft in the dark*". No blame was attributed to any one. George left a widow and two young children living in Portsmouth. Meanwhile his father, who was by now living in Blakeney, was so aggrieved at the loss of a second son from a naval accident, allegedly descended on the Admiralty in London demanding an explanation.

George, and his oldest brother William who was killed when HMS *Bulwark* exploded whilst moored off the Isle of Sheppey, Kent, were neither born nor ever lived in Blakeney. Nevertheless this is where their parents lived and chose to remember the sacrifice of their sons by having their names inscribed on both the Blakeney War Memorials with an additional inscription added to one of the panels that surrounds the church memorial.

## **William Edward King**

**W.O., Gunner HMS *Bulwark*, Royal Navy  
Died 26<sup>th</sup> November 1914, aged 38  
Remembered Portsmouth Naval Memorial  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



William was born 6<sup>th</sup> February 1876 in Fulham, Middlesex, the eldest son of William Edward and Clara King nee Locke. His father was an ex navy man who, during his married life, was a Coastguard stationed first at Morston, then Burnham Overy, Cley, Thornham, all in Norfolk, then Wainfleet St Mary (Lincolnshire) followed by Morston again. William's 9 siblings were born at these various stations. Three of his brothers, Frederick William (born Morston 1876), George Alfred (born Cley 1885) and Herbert Victor (born Thornham 1889) served in WW1. George was a casualty whilst Frederick and Herbert were survivors. Indeed Herbert was called back to serve in WW2. William senior retired from the Coastguards to become landlord of the King's Arms, Blakeney. He died at Greencroft, 1937.

William junior joined the Royal Navy, aged 15, serving first on HMS *Impregnable*. By 1911 he was a gunner instructor serving on HMS *Tamar*, stationed in Hong Kong, China. Prior to this he had married Sarah Stacey in Portsea and was the father of two boys, both born there in 1913 and 1915 respectively. All told, he served and/or trained on 14 different vessels becoming a Warrant Officer 1<sup>st</sup> January 1908. He then had four more postings before transferring to HMS *Bulwark*, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1913 and was still with her the following year when war was declared. His last known address ashore was 25a Kingston Crescent, Portsmouth.

HMS *Bulwark* was attached to the Channel Fleet, conducting patrols in the English Channel. On 26<sup>th</sup> November while stationed near Sheerness, just off the north coast of Kent, where she was loading ammunition, HMS *Bulwark* was accidentally destroyed by an internal explosion with the loss of 736 men, including William King. His body was never recovered. There were initially sixteen survivors (7 died) and at the inquiry that followed, sabotage was ruled out. It was concluded that the tragedy was caused by the overheating of cordite charges stored next to a boiler room bulkhead.

The loss of HMS *Bulwark* was reported by the **Norfolk Chronicle**, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1914, as follows; “*The terrible explosion of HMS Bulwark claims a local victim in the person of William E. King, son of Mr and Mrs King of the King's Arms. The deceased officer was one of the four brothers who joined the Navy and have all done well in their father's profession. Mr King was for many years connected with the Coastguard service at Cley and Morston, and is much respected. The sympathy of the district goes out to the stricken parents. The pathos is rendered acute by the fact that Mr King had that morning received a letter from his son asking him in the event of disaster befalling him to look after his wife and small family.*”

**Thomas Robert Du Verge Lane**  
**Private 49852, 1<sup>st</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's (Liverpool Regiment)**  
**Died 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917, aged 31**  
**Remembered at Tyne Cot Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Thomas was baptised in Blakeney Church, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1886, as Tom Robert Du Verge Lane while rather unusually his birth was registered in the September Quarter, 1886, first as Robert then again as John Robert Du V. Lane. Blakeney School Admissions Register makes it clear that his name had settled as Thomas and gives his birth as 28<sup>th</sup> May 1886. He was the son of a baker, Thomas Lane and his wife Anne Elizabeth Gravelling who were born in North Walsham 1857 and Thornage 1856 respectively and were married in London, 1882.

His siblings, all born in Blakeney, were Cyril Hawkins Leopold, Sarah Laura, Reuben and Groom Sendall. After the death of their father in 1900 at the age of 42, the family went in different directions. By 1911, his mother was working in a boarding house in Cley; Sarah and Groom were living with their grandfather James Hawkins, a retired draper, at Wye House, High Street, Blakeney; Cyril had disappeared and Reuben was a draper's assistant working for Pullman and Son in Nottingham. Thomas, aged 24, was living on his own in the High Street, Blakeney, working as a groom. The Census places him in a cottage on the west side of the High Street, two doors to the south of Sugar Plum Cottage.

There are no Service Records for Thomas, only that he enlisted at Cromer and was killed in action from his listing in “Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919”. The 20<sup>th</sup> September was the beginning of the Second Army's attack on the Menin Road Ridge that was led by General Plumer. This was the first of four initial attacks that paved the way towards the final assault on Passchendaele and is possibly where Thomas lost his life. He is remembered on the “Curved Memorial to the Missing” at Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium

where he is numbered amongst the 35,000 officers and soldiers who have no known grave.

His brothers, Cyril and Groom, served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) and both survived.

**James Herbert Long**  
**Private 161321, Eastern Command, Labour Centre (E.C.L.C.)**  
**Died 4<sup>th</sup> November 1918, aged 31**  
**Remembered on both Blakeney War Memorials**



James was born in Blakeney, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1887, the son of George Bennington and Catherine Charlotte Long nee Daniel. Both parents were born in 1857; George in Morston and Catherine in Blakeney. They married in October 1880, Blakeney, where George was a fisherman and coxswain of the Blakeney RNLI lifeboats (1896-1920). They had eight sons, with James being the fifth, and four daughters. His siblings were; George (1880), Herbert Charles (1881), William Henry (1882), Eveline (1884), Henry Matthew (1886), Frederick (1888), Ellen (1890), John (1892), Samuel Daniel (1895), Catherine Charlotte (1897-1899) and Claudia (1899). All the boys served in the war, 6 in the armed services, one in the Merchant Navy and one on the Home Front while Claudia was a nurse.

The 1911 Census records his father at No. 80 High Street, Blakeney with his second wife Fanny as well as three children. Meanwhile James, aged 22, was living with his uncle and aunt, James and Phoebe Lee, on Mariners Hill and described as a fisherman working on his own account. The following year, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1912, James enlisted with the Norfolk Regiment at Wells giving his age as 22 years 10 months when he was actually 2 years older. His medical at Fakenham noted that his physical condition was good, but slightly deaf; a condition that was to blight his military service.

He trained during 1912 and 1913 with his regiment then the 2<sup>nd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Private 1673) when called up at the outbreak of war. His unit assembled at East Dereham and to begin with had neither guns nor equipment let alone any uniform. By December they were camped at Peterborough where they were issued with Japanese rifles. 1915 began with a recruitment march through Norfolk followed by a return to Peterborough for more training then on to Cambridge where James agreed to serve overseas. This was never to happen and he moved on with his unit to Bury St Edmunds, Thetford and Brentwood, where they dug trenches before returning to Bury St Edmunds for the winter of 1915/16.

1916 was a downward spiral for James as he was moved with other low category men of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Bn. first to the 61<sup>st</sup> Provisional Bn., then to the 11<sup>th</sup> Bn. Finally he was transferred from military to civilian service beginning with the Norfolk County Agriculture

Company in March 1917 followed by the 428<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Company of the newly formed Labour Corps in May. This Company was under the command of the Eastern Command Labour Centre and James, still a Private, was assigned a new number, 161321.

Within the year his case was before a Medical Board where his suffering from a disability made either reclassification or discharge probable. The evidence provided showed that James had *"suffered from ear damage [for] as long as he could remember. Thinks it was due to a cart wheel going over his head."* His ear injuries and continuing inflammation of the middle ear were considered to be both attributable and aggravated by military service and in April 1918, he was reclassified and transferred to the Army Reserve, Class W. He was then placed with the Chemical Manure Works at King's, Lynn. Although now out of Military control, the army retained the right to call him up if necessary and his work contributed towards his army pension.

James died at the West Norfolk and Lynn Hospital of pneumonia and influenza in November, a casualty of the Spanish flue. He is not commemorated by the CWGC.

### **James Herbert Long**

**Private 1688, 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Regiment**

**Died 28<sup>th</sup> August 1915, aged 21**

**Remembered Helles Memorial, Turkey**

**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Although registered at birth and baptised in the Methodist Church as James Herbert Long, he was always known as Herbert. Herbert was born 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1894, the 4<sup>th</sup> son of 7 children born to William (born Morston 1856) and Elizabeth Long nee Secker (born Wells 1865). His siblings, all born in Blakeney and baptised in the Methodist Church, were John William (Jack), Alice, William Henry (Henry), Ernest Albert, Frederick and Edward. Apart from Edward, born 1902, all his brothers appear to have served in the Great War and all returned home safely.

The family lived initially in the High Street but by 1911, William Long with his wife and 4 youngest sons was living in Westgate Street. Edward, given as age 7, was already at school while Herbert, aged 16, like his father and older brother Ernest were fishermen working for themselves. Frederick, aged 14, was neither at school nor working. His occupation was left blank.

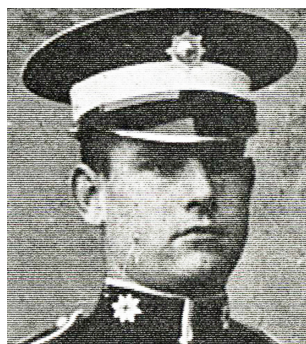
Herbert enlisted at Wells joining the 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Norfolk Regiment (T.F.) as Private 1688. He was with the 54<sup>th</sup> East Anglian Brigade when they landed at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli for the second land offensive in early August 1915. Sadly he was to die towards the end of the month in an ambush that has never really been solved. Seemingly the 5<sup>th</sup> Norfolks became separated on the right of the Line and momentarily less strongly opposed than the rest of the Brigade. A bold officer led some 270 men on, pushing the enemy before them. As Sir Ian Hamilton wrote in his dispatch of 11<sup>th</sup> December, *"they charged into the forest and were lost to sight or sound. Not one of them ever came back."*

The **Norfolk Chronicle**, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1915 reported as follows; *"Mr William Long has received official intimation from the War Office that his son, HERBERT LONG, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Norfolks, has been missing since August 25<sup>th</sup>. His cousin, Samuel, also of the 5<sup>th</sup> Norfolks, saw him about this date when he was well and happy. The Long family is numerically represented in the fighting line, and the general hope is expressed that good news may be forthcoming when the Turkish authorities consider the opportunity fitting to render a list of British prisoners in their hands."*

"August 28<sup>th</sup> is the date given for his death by the CWGC when Herbert is listed on the

Helles memorial. He is remembered on the Blakeney War Memorial as H. J. Long, not to be confused with his cousin, James Herbert Long who is listed as J. H. Long

**John Long MM**  
**Private 9377 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn, Coldstream Guards**  
**Died 30<sup>th</sup> November 1917, aged 25**  
**Remembered at Gouzeaucourt New British Cemetery**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



John, always known as Jack, was registered at birth in the June Quarter of 1892 while his school record gives 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1893, Blakeney as his date of birth. He was the 7<sup>th</sup> son of 8 boys and 9<sup>th</sup> child of 12 born to George Bennington Long (1856-1939), Fisherman and coxswain of the lifeboat and his wife Catherine Charlotte Daniel (1857-1905). The children, all born between 1880 and 1899, were George 1880, Herbert Charles "Charlie" 1881, William Henry "Will Watch" 1882, Eveline 1884, Henry Matthew "Matthie" 1886, James Herbert 1887, Frederick "Thin Freddy" 1888, Ellen 1890, John "Jack" 1892, Samuel Daniel 1895, Catherine Charlotte 1897 (who died aged 2) and Claudia 1899.

By 1911, aged 18, Jack was a fisherman living with his father and stepmother at 80 High Street, together with his younger brother and sister, Samuel and Claudia.

Except for Charlie and William, all his brothers served as soldiers in the Great War and the **Norfolk Chronicle**, Friday June 25, 1915 photographed them under the title "**Patriotic Blakeney Family**" with the comment that "*practically every eligible man is serving and Blakeney is proud of her sons.*" It was also noted in the article that Charlie played his part on the Home Front as Harbour Master and 2<sup>nd</sup> coxswain of the lifeboat, *Caroline*. Completely missing from the account was William who was to serve in the Merchant Navy.

There are no surviving records for Jack apart from enlisting at Hempton and the award of his Military Medal, 1916. However, the following obituary from an unidentified newspaper is revealing; "*He enlisted in the Coldstream guards and here his early training among wildfowl of Blakeney stood him in good stead. Constant practice on the muds had given him a quick eye and an accuracy of aim ... one of the best shots in the army ... He was often specially chosen for perilous enterprises, and as a sniper must have rendered valuable service ... He was a lad of singularly reticent character, content to do his duty and not talk about it, and it was only with the receipt of the official notification that his father learned that ... he had been awarded the Military Medal ... He kept a good heart worthy of his regiment and of the old regular army, and in the brief span of his life of twenty-five years he has added an imperishable jewel to the Immortal crown of brave Blakeney boys who have laid down their lives in the face of the foe.*"

After Passchendaele and under a cloak of utmost secrecy, the British Third Army, assisted by massed tanks, mounted an attack in front of Cambrai. This was a major rail centre where the German defences on the Western Front were at their strongest. Battle commenced on 20<sup>th</sup> November and although initially successful there was constant moving of the front line both backwards and forwards in the ensuing days. Ten days later the Germans ripped open the British line around Gouzeaucourt, capturing then loosing it a few hours later when the Guards stormed in to retake the village. Jack lost his life during this action and is one of the 55 original burials that are still left in place in the cemetery

**Clement Barber Mitchell**  
**Corporal 14000, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Regiment**  
**Died 11<sup>th</sup> August 1917, aged 20**  
**Remembered at Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Clement's birth was registered in the June Quarter, 1897 for Walsingham District while Blakeney School Admissions Register gives his date of birth as 4<sup>th</sup> April 1897. He was baptised 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1897 in Blakeney Parish Church, the son of single mum Phoebe Mitchell. Phoebe was born in Blakeney 1876, the daughter of Robert and Martha Mitchell formerly Massingham. The 1901 Census records that Clement was living with his grandparents whilst his mother was working as a servant in London. By the time of the 1911 Census, Clement aged 13, was boarding in the home of Mary Jane Nurse in the High Street and his employment was given as an Errand Boy to a Cycle Agent.

There are no surviving records for Clement only that he enlisted at Norwich (no date) and was awarded medals for his service on the fields of France and Flanders. However the **Norfolk News**, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1914 reported that 11 Blakeney men signed up to Lord Kitchener's new army on Blakeney Quay on Saturday and left the village the following Monday morning. Meanwhile they had been joined by even more recruits making 18 at least. Then a week later the **Norwich Mercury** 12<sup>th</sup> September lists all 18 men with C. Mitchell being one of them.

The battalion experienced many difficulties in the early days, lack of equipment, clothing, boots as well as tents and even eating utensils. Everything was shared amongst the men who were all fired with the same enthusiasm for the adventure that lay ahead. The first winter was spent at Colchester training and then on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1915 they embarked at Folkestone to join the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. Together with the 10<sup>th</sup> Essex, 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire and 8<sup>th</sup> Suffolk Regiments, the 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolks made up the 53<sup>rd</sup> brigade.

Two years later, in July, 1917, they moved to Ypres ready for the 31<sup>st</sup> that was to be the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres. During the first nine days of August they were at the rear of the action then, on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, came the order to advance to Chateau Segard to take part in an attack at 7pm from trenches in front of Inverness Copse. Together with the 6<sup>th</sup> Berkshires they were to take over the front line of the 54<sup>th</sup> brigade. A good deal of confusion ensued that day and evening and part of the line was still held by the 11<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bedfords of the 54<sup>th</sup> brigade.

There was much confusion and the Norfolks were not in place until well into the night. They were attacked early the next morning, 4.30 am, suffering many casualties, with Clement numbered amongst them. The battalion was so depleted that in less than six months, the 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolks paraded for the last time. They were disbanded on January 29<sup>th</sup> 1918.

**James Lewis Moore**  
**Private 20771, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, Essex Regiment**  
**Died 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1916, aged 18**  
**Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Turkey**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

James was baptised 5<sup>th</sup> June 1898 Blakeney, son of single mum Louisa Moore. She was to marry John Thomas Betts of Blakeney (1903) and have three sons. After John died, she married Harry P H Elston (1917) and again there were three children born to the couple. Meanwhile, James lived with his grandparents, George and Martha Moore nee Tomlin, at The Butts (1901) then the High Street (1911). He attended Blakeney School from October 1901, when his birth date was recorded as 21<sup>st</sup> October 1897 and by 1911, aged 13, he was a farm labourer.

The 1911 Census records George and Martha Moore living on the east side of the High Street, somewhere near the Methodist Church. It is not possible to be more precise. The extended family consisted of their son, Robert, a daughter and three grandchildren. James, aged 13, was a farm labourer as was his grandfather, uncle Robert and cousin John Edward Moore who was always known as Jack. Three Moores feature on the worker's list for Manor Farm and whether J. Moore was James or his cousin Jack, is impossible to determine.

James enlisted at Norwich, serving first as Private 14021 in the Norfolk Regiment before being transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> Bn Essex Regiment. No Service Records have been found for James, but his place and date of death clearly indicate that he was at Gallipoli, not France as reported below by the *Norfolk Chronicle*, 21<sup>st</sup> January 1916. Moreover, fatally wounded, James died rather tragically just one week before the final evacuation of all troops from Cape Helles, Gallipoli on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1916.

*“ Intelligence has been received from the War Office by the relatives of Private James Moore, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Essex Regiment, that the above named soldier died in France (sic) on January 2<sup>nd</sup> from wounds. Deceased who enlisted in Kitchener's Army in the early days of the war, was only 18 years of age, and great sympathy is felt for the relatives as he is the second member of the household to die for his country.”*

He was just 18 years and two months old, one of five teenagers from Blakeney to die in the Great War. His body is buried at Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Turkey.

His first cousin Jack (John Edward Moore), son of his mother's sister Mary Moore was, like James, brought up by his grandparents and was the first member of the family referred to above. Jack was the 4<sup>th</sup> casualty of the Great War from Blakeney when he died 29<sup>th</sup> October 1914, aged 23 years.

**John Edward Moore**  
**Gunner 68729, 17<sup>th</sup> Bty. Royal Field Artillery**  
**Died 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 1914, aged 23**  
**Remembered Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

John, always known as Jack, was registered at birth in the June Quarter, 1892 in the Walsingham District, although his Army Records state he was born, Holt. He was baptized three years later in Blakeney, 21<sup>st</sup> April 1895 with Mary Elizabeth Moore given as his mother. She married John Edward Sands of Sharrington (late 1892), and there were eight



children born to the couple; Martha, George, Roland and Maud (all born in Sharrington), John (born Blakeney), Annie and Edna (born Morston) and William (born Binham).

Seemingly, however, Jack was brought up by his grandparents, George and Martha Moore nee Tomlin, at the Butts in Blakeney (1901), a farm cottage belonging to the Calthorpe family. The family subsequently moved to the High Street (1911) where Jack, aged 19, and his cousin James Lewis Moore were listed as farm labourers. Three Moores feature on the worker's list for Manor Farm one being G, presumably for George, another being R, presumably for Jack's uncle Robert then just one J Moore. Whether this was for Jack or his cousin James is impossible to determine. Both cousins were to lose their lives in the Great War.

There are no records for Jack's service in the War, just the certificates produced by the CWGC and ancestry.co.uk. Additional information adds that he enlisted at Hempton and died on the fields of France and Flanders, during the Western European Theatre. Note; the Index No. M.R.29 for Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial PART XXVII (U.K.) gives October as the month of death, not 29<sup>th</sup> November as printed on the CWGC Certificate.

The **Norfolk News**, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1914 also supports the October date when it reported "*The friends of Gunner J E Moore, 17<sup>th</sup> Battery, Royal Field Artillery, have received a brief notice that he has been killed. He makes the third man from here to yield up his life in the present war*". However, as it transpires, Jack was actually the fourth man from Blakeney to die in the Great War and one of the six that were to lose their lives before Xmas 1914.

**John Newland**  
**Private 28162, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn, East Yorkshire Regiment**  
**Died 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1917, aged 19**  
**Remembered at Faubourg D'amiens Cemetery, Arras**  
**& on both Blakeney Memorials**

John Newland's birth was registered in the December Quarter, 1897, for the Walsingham District and recorded as 1<sup>st</sup> September by the Blakeney School Admissions Register. He was the son of James and Mary Ann Newland nee Holmes, one of 10 sons born to the couple. The 1911 census records the family living in the High Street with John listed as 'Jack', a school boy, together with his parents and six of his brothers; Walter, Robert Holmes, James, Richard Waterson, William and Warnes. An older brother, Edward, was absent from home whilst brothers George and Richard had died as infants. Two of the brothers, James and Robert, served in the Merchant Navy during WWI and both survived while all 10 sons are named on their parent's headstone in Blakeney churchyard.

John entrained at Norwich, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1915 giving his age as 19 and occupation as gardener. He was in fact a year younger. Initially he served in the 4<sup>th</sup> Bn., Norfolk Regiment as Private 5373. By late September of the following year he was on the field in France where within two weeks of arriving he was wounded and transferred back to Leeds General Infirmary. Then in March, 1917, he was transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> Bn., East Yorkshire Regiment, declared fit for foreign service and sent back to France where he became a casualty yet again, mid April.

John, still just a teenager, died a few weeks later on 3<sup>rd</sup> May from gun shot wounds to his abdomen. His possessions, returned home, consisted of two discs, letters, photos, 2 pipes, pocket book, religious book, purse and a metal wrist watch. John lies buried at Faubourg D'amiens Cemetery, another of the War Cemeteries that was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens.

## **Charles Nicholls**

**Deck Hand 8659DA (Ch) HMT *St. John's*, Royal Naval Reserve**

**Died 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1918, aged 26**

**Remembered at Chatham Naval Memorial  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Charles was born in Blakeney, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1891, the son of William Starling Nicholls of Blakeney and Rosa Rachel Twiddy of Cley. His parents were married in Cley, 1884 and by 1911, the Census reveals that they had had 17 children with only 9 still living; Rosa, Marianne, William, George, Charles, Elsie, Polly, Bertie and Gertrude. The family home was in Blakeney in the row of cottages at the very top of the High Street on the west side, Charles, however, age 19, a Bricklayer's Labourer together with William and Elsie, his brother and sister, were living with their widowed grandmother, Mary Ann Twiddy in Beacon Cottage at the corner of Little Lane with the High Street.

At some time between 1911 and 1914, Charles joined the Royal Naval Reserve. This Reserve was composed of professional seamen from the British Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets, who could be called upon during times of war to serve in the regular Royal Navy. They would be trained in aspects of gunnery on drill-ships stationed around the British coast, for one month every year. Officers, who received further training, wore distinctive chained lace and this gave rise to their colloquial name "the wavy navy".

Charles spent his war service on His Majesty's Trawler (HMT) *St. John's*. These vessels were either purpose built or requisitioned, with the former known as "*Admiralty Trawlers*". In all, the Navy requisitioned 215 trawlers, of which 72, including HMT *St. John's*, were lost during WW1. HMT *St. John's*, of 208 tons, was built in 1910 and operated in peacetime by The Hull Steam Fishing and Ice Co. Ltd. of Hull. She was hired, for the duration of the war, by the Admiralty as No. 1906. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1918, whilst patrolling the Atlantic some 45 miles north of Tory Island, Northern Ireland, she was attacked and sunk by the U-boat U 101

This particular U-boat, captained by Carl Siegfried Ritter von Georg, was launched in April 1917 and served 8 patrols between 10<sup>th</sup> July 1917 and 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918; sinking a total of 23 ships and damaging 3 more. HMT *St. John's* was the very last to be sunk and while the Skipper and two engineers were taken prisoner, the bodies of Charles and his fellow crew members were never recovered. U 101 surrendered 21<sup>st</sup> November 1918, along with the entire German Fleet, 10 days after the Armistice. She was subsequently broken up at Morecambe at the beginning of June 1920.

Charles Nicholls was the second RNR from Blakeney to lose his life in the Great War. His brothers William and George however, served in the army and both returned home safely.

## **Thomas Herbert Palmer**

**Private 50387, 11<sup>th</sup> Bn, Royal Fusiliers (City of London) Reg.**

**Died 10<sup>th</sup> August 1917, aged 30**

**Remembered at Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Thomas was baptised in Blakeney Church 21<sup>st</sup> August 1887 and according to Blakeney School Admissions Register, was born 20<sup>th</sup> March 1887. He was the son of George Francis and Susannah Palmer, formerly Cushing, who were both born in Blakeney. They had seven children, Mary Ann Louise, Esther Ellen, George William, Thomas Herbert, Emily, Charles Anthony and Robert John. The family home was at Temple Place, along the Morston Road.

Whereas Thomas was a casualty of the war, his brother Charles was a surviving serviceman. George, the eldest son, emigrated to Canada in April 1912, arriving at St. John, New Brunswick on the *Lake Erie*.

Thomas married Ethel Mary Thompson, the daughter of Edward and Mary Ann Thompson formerly Otway in 1910. By 1911 they were living in the High Street, Blakeney and Thomas was listed as a 'gardener labourer'. He was one of the few married men with children when he signed up in Norwich; his children being Olive May P. Thompson, Ada F. Palmer, George W. Palmer, Ethel D. Palmer and Albert T. Palmer, all born between 1908 and 1917.

There are no surviving Service Records for Thomas. What we do know is that after the failure of the French offensive on the Aisne, General Haig favoured a plan that would gain control of the Belgian coast. Consequently he launched the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917 across the Field of Flanders. After a bad start there was a renewed attack on August 10<sup>th</sup> against the deeply entrenched German Army on the Gheluvelt plateau. This was also the day that the 11<sup>th</sup> Fusiliers, who had been holding the line of the 54<sup>th</sup> brigade, were due to be relieved by the 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolks. However the late arrival of the 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolks, plus a combination of heavy rain and a successful German counter barrage, resulted in heavy losses including the death of Thomas on the 10<sup>th</sup> and Clement Mitchell, of the 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolks, the following morning.

**Frederick Walter Pyke**  
**Rifleman 574924 1<sup>st</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Bn, London Regiment**  
**Died 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1917, aged 25**  
**Remembered at Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Frederick was born in Blakeney 25<sup>th</sup> May 1892. He was the third of 5 sons born to the blacksmith Samuel Pyke (born Cley 1859, died Blakeney 1901) and his wife Mary Ann Harvey (born Blakeney 1858). They were married in Blakeney, 1880 where all their children were baptised; Alice May, Matilda Edith, May, William Samuel 1886-1887, William 1888-1888, Elizabeth Jane, Frederick Walter, Emma Eliza, Herbert Ernest and William Samuel, born 1898.

In 1911, the Census records Frederick as an 18 year old "gardener domestic" living with his widowed mother, Emma and William on the west side of the High Street, in a cottage located on the south side of Parker's Post Office Yard.

There are no Service Records for Frederick and even the brief details provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, apart from enlistment at Deptford, leaves both his unit and exact location of his death unresolved. Somewhat perplexing is his unit as the

1/17<sup>th</sup> seems to have only served in France. Was he transferred? One conflicting burial document for Fred somewhat confirms this as it lists him serving with the 1<sup>st</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> London Regiment and they certainly saw action with the The Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) at the Third Battle of Gaza. Whatever, Fred died in the aftermath of the capture of Jerusalem on 9<sup>th</sup> December and the subsequent defence of Jerusalem that began later that month. He was probably with the 60<sup>th</sup> (2/2<sup>nd</sup> London) Division, set to secure Bireh astride the road north from Jerusalem to Nablus, when he was killed in action.

Frederick died 2 days before Xmas and is one of 3,300 WW1 Commonwealth soldiers buried at Ramleh War Cemetery. His cross has the added inscription "*He laid down his life for us*" that was added at his mother's request for an additional cost of 6s 5d. Less than a year later, his mother lost a second son to the Great War when William Samuel Pyke was killed in France. Frederick and William Pyke are one of three sets of brothers that lost their lives; George and William King and John and James Long being the others.

**William Samuel Pyke**  
**Private 42161, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Essex Regiment**  
**Died 19<sup>th</sup> September 1918, aged 19**  
**Remembered at Doingt Communal Cemetery Extension**  
**& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

William was born in Blakeney, 1898, the fifth son and last child of 10 born to Samuel Pyke, blacksmith, and his wife Mary Ann Pyke nee Harvey. His parents were born in Cley and Blakeney respectively and married in Blakeney, 1880, where they lived and all their children were born. William's siblings were Alice May, Matilda Edith, Mildred May, William Samuel (1886-1887), William (1888-1888), Elizabeth Jane, Frederick Walter (1892-1917), Emma Eliza and Herbert Ernest.

By 1911, the Census records William, aged 12, living with his widowed mother, brother Frederick and sister Emma at No. 24 High Street, Blakeney. William was possibly still at school since no occupation is recorded for him. He enlisted at Cromer and was initially placed with the Hertfordshire Yeomanry (106287) before being transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Bn. Essex Regiment. There are no Service Records for William, only his medal card and the briefest of details given on his listing of the "Soldiers died in the Great War 1914-1919 Transcription". The latter includes the information that he died from wounds.

These injuries may have occurred either when the Fourth Army engaged the enemy at the Battle of Epehy, France September 18<sup>th</sup> or in the lead up to this engagement. This large scale offensive, part of an advance to break the Hindenburg Line, ranks amongst the greatest ever British military achievement and although the Germans carried on fighting, their ability to continue was declining fast. At long last, after 4 years of bloody battle, the end was in sight.

William may not even have been on the Front Line when he died but further away in a hospital. We simply do not know. What is certain however, is that William Pyke was the last of the Blakeney teenagers to lose his life in the war and also the last of Mary Ann's five sons to die, the second of two she lost to the war. Moreover, he was the last Blakeney casualty to die on a battle field.

William is buried in a cemetery extension in a small village on the eastern outskirts of Peronne, alongside 418 other war casualties. His grave, at his mother's request, has the added inscription "*At Rest*" just as she had requested for her son Frederick Pyke who lost his life outside Jerusalem, two days before Christmas 1917. Both brothers are remembered on the Blakeney War Memorials.

## **Cyril Charles Gordon Roe**

**Lieut. 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Marine Bn, (1/RMLI)**

**Died 28<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 21**

**Remembered at Arras Memorial  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Cyril Charles Gordon Roe was born 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1895 at Blo'Norton, the son of Rev. Canon Robert Gordon Roe and his wife Isobel Kysh who were born at Cambridge and in India, respectively. He was the youngest son of three and last child in a family of six. All the sons fought in WWI, Robert for the Canadian Over-Seas Force, Douglas for the United States Army and then Cyril, the only casualty. Canon Roe was Rector of Blakeney from 1915-1923 as well as Vice Chairman of the Parish Council 1916-1918, Hon. Canon of Norwich 1918 and then Rector of Acle 1923-27.

In the 1911 Census, Cyril, aged 15, was a scholar at St Johns College, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex while his parents were at Leiston, Suffolk. They had been married for 27 years and had 6 children.

No Service Records have been found for Cyril just a brief service history that reads as follows: "*ex-No.2 Officer Cadet Bn., ex 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. 2<sup>nd</sup> Suffolk Regt. (To France 30/8/14 – 1914 Star issued by War Office); Commissioned Temporary 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Royal Marines 22/11/16; Draft for BEF 8/2/17, joined 1<sup>st</sup> RM Bn. 23/2/17-28/4/17 DD.*" Cyril joined the 1<sup>st</sup> RM Bn. a week after their disastrous engagement at Miraumont (Ancre, 17<sup>th</sup> February) when they had suffered grievous casualties and their strength was greatly reduced from 500 to barely 100 fit for duty. The 1<sup>st</sup> RM Bn. (1/RMLI) was one of the four battalions of the 188<sup>th</sup> Brigade, the other brigades making up the 63<sup>rd</sup> (RN) Division being the 189<sup>th</sup> and 190<sup>th</sup>.

Two months later the marines saw action in the Second Battle of Arras. The role of the 189<sup>th</sup> & 190<sup>th</sup> brigades was to take Gavrelle, a small village between Ypres and Passchendaele to the north, the Somme to the south and overshadowed by Vimy Ridge to the north. This they successfully achieved on the 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> April. Then on the 28<sup>th</sup> April the 1/RMLI and 2/RMLI, battalions of the 188<sup>th</sup> Brigade, moved forward to take Gavrelle Windmill and the high ground to the north of the village.

Almost immediately all communication with 1/RMLI was lost. Some marines made it through the German barbed wire defences to the other side but the men were in isolated pockets. Gradually these small groups were overcome either being killed or forced to surrender when their ammunition ran out, at which time they were taken prisoner. The War Diary entry for the day reads "*Bn., attacked on sector left of Gavrelle-Oppy Line at 4.25am and gained objective but was driven out by counter attacks*" followed by 2/Lt Roe listed amongst the missing officers, assumed dead.

By next morning the 1<sup>st</sup> RM Bn. (1/RMLI) once again ceased to exist as a fighting unit having suffered more casualties at the Battle of Gavrelle than in any other single engagement in their entire history. For his grieving parents, the Blakeney War Memorials are where they chose to commemorate their youngest son even though it is doubtful whether Cyril ever had the opportunity to visit his parents at Blakeney.

**William Edward Seales**  
**Private 6/5566, 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Bn, Durham Light Infantry**  
**Died 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1916, aged 19**  
**Remembered at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen**  
**Blakeney Churchyard and on both War Memorials**



William was born in Blakeney 4<sup>th</sup> March 1897, the eldest son of James Edward William Seales and his wife Edith Maria Eggleton. His parents were born in Morston 1871 and Blakeney 1874, respectively and married in Blakeney 1896 at which time James gave his occupation as labourer. He was later to become a seaman and eventually retired as chief engineer with Rix and Sons of Hull.

James and Edith had 6 children; William Edward, Charles Barnabas (1899-1922), Gladys Mabel, Edith Doreen, Robert James and Herbert Walter, all born in Blakeney. Their names were provided by his mother before the Local Justice of the Peace, Charles Temple Lynes, 14<sup>th</sup> July 1919.

The 1911 Census shows that William was living with his aunt, Susan Dack, formerly Anthony nee Eggleton at Greencroft and that his occupation was 'Farm Boy General'. His aunt Susan was his maternal grandfather's sister and therefore, more correctly, his great aunt.

He enlisted in Norwich, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1915 with the Norfolks as Private 5381 before transferring to the 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Durham Light Infantry sometime late September 1916. The War Diaries of the 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which was attached to the 151<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 50<sup>th</sup> Northumbrian Division, 4<sup>th</sup> Army under General Rawlinson, indicate that William was with the army at the Somme. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October the 1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Battalion DLI set up a tent camp and spent several days training till they moved forward and took part in the last battle of the Somme at Transloy Ridges. The Battle ended after 141 days of atrocious trench warfare. In all, the Allies had advanced just five miles and at a cost of some 893 men lost each day. Two Blakeney born servicemen are numbered amongst those who lost their lives in the closing stages of the battle and both, coincidentally, were serving with the Durham Light Infantry; William Seales and Harry Daniel.

At first glance, the cause of William's death is somewhat of a puzzle for his Army records have differing causes; firstly "*Died from Trench Fever (Tetanus)*" then secondly "*Died of Natural Causes (Tetanus) in Hospital at Rouen, France*". Medical clinicians had only recently identified Trench Fever (1915) as a new disease transmitted by body lice, but it was a diagnosis slow to be accepted by the sceptics. Although debilitating, it was not necessarily a killer. Tetanus on the other hand was; it was due to contamination of wounds by bacteria (*Clostridium tetani*) that only survive deep in the soil, in anaerobic conditions. Hence it was a hazard for soldiers who had deep tissue wounds caused by gunshot or

shelling and who were fighting on new, heavily manured fields or digging and living in trenches where they had intimate contact with the soil. Immediate wound care was virtually non-existent and hygiene standards were woefully inadequate. Tetanus was a killer of one out of every four infected.

Whatever the cause, William, one of Blakeney's teenage soldiers, died in Hospital and not on the field in action. He is also remembered and named on his eldest brother's headstone in Blakeney churchyard although the month is wrongly inscribed as October.

**Job Simpson**  
**Sapper 43990 98<sup>th</sup> Field Coy, Royal Engineers**  
**Died 28<sup>th</sup> May 1918, aged 23**  
**Remembered at Pozieres Memorial**  
**but not in Blakeney**

Job was born in Blakeney, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1894, the eldest son of the butcher Job Simpson from Kings Lynn and his wife Charlotte Boast from Hardley, Norfolk. By 1900, Job and Charlotte together with their four children, Job, Jonathan, Harriet and James had left Blakeney and returned to Kings Lynn where Job senior became a railway coachman and Edward was born. Thereafter there was a final move for the family to Thornage where Charlotte and Jeremiah were born.

The 1911 Census reveals that Job and Charlotte, living in Thornage, had been married for 18 years and had had nine children, although three had died in infancy. Job Simpson junior, aged 16, was an apprentice white smith.

Records for Job are scant, however his listing in "Soldiers died in the Great War 1914-1919" relates that he was born in Blakeney, resided in Thornage and enlisted in Norwich. The 98<sup>th</sup> Field Company joined the 21<sup>st</sup> Division at Chesham in January 1915 and Job was with them when they embarked for France, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1915 and thereafter served on the Western Front.

Field Companies of the Royal Engineers provided the skill and know how in support of the fighting units of every Division. The war relied on them to build and maintain railways, roads, bridges, inland waterways, transport and water supplies as well as the maintenance of communications, signals, front line defences, guns and all other weapons. In addition they managed the printing and stationery units, a crucial role as every Division of every army ran on forms and instructions, printed by the hundreds of thousands.

Job's Division was moved between the both British and French armies during the Spring Offensives of 1918. It was with the Sixth French Army at the Battle of the Aisne (27<sup>th</sup> May to 6<sup>th</sup> June). They were part of a small and very tired British Force sent south to Chenin des Dames in exchange for fresh French troops that were needed elsewhere. In the event, his unit was struck hard and virtually destroyed with Job losing his life on the second day of the action.

Job's body was never recovered for burial and consequently he is remembered by name at Pozieres Memorial and at Thornage where the church is custodian of his Death Penny.

**James William Smith**  
**RTS 10702 Shoeing Smith, Royal Army Service Corps**  
**Died 6<sup>th</sup> January 1920, aged 29**  
**Remembered on both Blakeney War Memorials**



James was born 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1890 in Blakeney, the son of James Curry Smith, blacksmith and his wife Elizabeth Thompson. James was the eldest of their three children followed by Herbert Ernest, who also served in the Great War, and Sarah.

In 1911, James junior, aged 20, was a blacksmith living with his parents, siblings and grandfather, George Thompson, at 116 and 118 High Street. This was one house at that time, located at the top of Nurse's or Smith's Yard. The following year he married Agnes Maud Curson and their children were George, Herbert, Alec Kitchener and James Curry, all born between 1912 and 1919.

James enlisted at Great Yarmouth 21<sup>st</sup> April 1915, aged 25, giving his address as Binham. He declared that he had served in the Norfolk Volunteers. This time he was to serve with the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) as a Shoeing Smith No. 98451, with pay noted as 5/- a day. Within 3 months he was posted to France to serve with various Brigades until he returned to the UK, April 1917. A year later, April 1918, he was transferred to the Remount Depot of the Army Service Corps (ASC) at Ormskirk and given a new number, 10702. His records show two prefixes, firstly TS for Transport Special and then RTS which denotes Remounts Special. He spent a year at Ormskirk, the Depot taking charge of horses arriving at Liverpool, predominantly from South America, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland.

The spring following the Armistice, James was transferred to Class Z, Army Reserve on Demobilisation, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1919. Although there are no medical forms with his Service papers it is clear that he suffered from rheumatism. His demobilisation records that his rheumatism was wholly attributable to his war service and he left with a disability pension for 26 weeks. Rheumatism had blighted his service and was ultimately the cause of his death, for which there was an inquiry brought by the Holt Branch of the Discharged Sailors and Soldiers' Federation against the Walsingham War Pensions Committee. Seemingly James had first sought their help in June and then, with the help of his local representative Mr. C. Temple-Lines, repeatedly over the next six months only to die 20 minutes before an ambulance finally arrived to take him to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. This caused a great deal of public feeling and it was felt that there had been gross neglect on the part of some one. The case needed to be ventilated so that the public might come to the right conclusion.

Essentially the case hinged on whether James was a soldier or a civilian, even though he was still a Class Z reserve. Blame was passed back and forth with the secretary of the War Pensions Committee, Sam Peel, insisting James was a civilian, that Dr Kay could and should have sent him to hospital and that he, Sam Peel, was never informed of the seriousness of James's condition until late December. It was a sorry saga of considerable misunderstanding, missed opportunities and letters that, seemingly, Sam Peel never received! The **Norfolk Chronicle** reported in full on all three meetings, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>



January and 13<sup>th</sup> February 1920, and gave the finding of the Chairman of the War Pensions Committee as follows; *“that while there had been apparently some delay in this case they were all of the opinion that their secretary had done his best.”*

James Smith has not been recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and to this day he lies in an unmarked grave in St Nicholas churchyard.

## **Ernest Hubert Starling**

**Corporal 392092, 2<sup>nd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Bn, London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles)**

**Died 27<sup>th</sup> September 1917, aged 22**

**Remembered at Tyne Cot Memorial  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Ernest's birth was registered in 1894, at West Ham. He was the son of John Thomas Starling of Blakeney, Master Mariner and his wife Sarah Ann Breese of West Beckham. Two of his siblings, William Thomas and Alice Agnes were born in West Ham whilst his younger brother, Herbert Samuel was born in Blakeney 1897. The family had returned to live in Blakeney where all the children attended the local school.

His father was First Mate of the steamship *Homer* which disappeared with her whole crew save one, after a collision with *Hoppet* near Spurn Head early in 1901. By 1911, his mother was living alone in Blakeney while all her children had dispersed. She stated that she had had five children and that four were still alive. William, Alice and Ernest have not been located while Herbert was at the Royal Merchant Seaman's Orphanage, Wanstead. He served in WWI as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut in the Royal Flying Corp. and was a survivor.

There are no records for Ernest only that his residence was Kensington at the time of enlisting in London as Ernest Herbert Starling, in error for Ernest Hubert Starling. He was initially a Private 5379, of the 9<sup>th</sup> London Regiment before later transferring to Queen Victoria's Rifles. His date of death coincides with the attack on Polygon Wood by the Second Army under the command of General Plumer. This was the second of four attacks that led the way to the final assault on Passchendaele.

Ernest is commemorated on the “Curved Memorial to the Missing” at Tyne Cot Cemetery, together with Thomas Lane and Joseph Stevens. This memorial actually forms the north-eastern boundary of the cemetery that contains nearly 12,000 burials, 8,366 being of unidentified service men whilst the “Curved Memorial to the Missing” bears the names of some 35,000 officers and soldiers who have no known grave and all of whom died after 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917. Designed by Sir Herbert Baker, it is the largest cemetery of Commonwealth war dead in the world.

## **Joseph Stevens**

**Trooper 2354, Household Battalion**

**Died 12<sup>th</sup> October 1917, aged 35**

**Remembered at Tyne Cot Memorial and Woking Town Memorial  
but not in Blakeney**



Joseph Stevens was born in Mayford, Woking and baptised there, 24<sup>th</sup> December 1882. He was the son of Thomas Stevens, a railway worker and his wife Sarah Ellen Chewney, one of 11 children born to the couple. Some 24 years later, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1906, Joe married Rosetta Beck in the same church. She was Blakeney born and bred, the daughter of Henry William and Martha Ann Beck nee Murrell, both of Blakeney.

Joe and Rosetta had three children born in Woking; Joseph William, Edith Hope and Ronald Thomas and each time they were baptised, Joe's occupation was given as a nursery gardener. Sometime after May 1917, Rosetta and her children moved to Temple Place, Blakeney and it was there that Olive Rose was born posthumously. The older children were admitted to Blakeney School the following November.

Joe enlisted at Woking, 10<sup>th</sup> December 1915 and was initially placed in the Reserves and it was not until 19<sup>th</sup> May 1917 that he embarked at Southampton and was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on the Western Front. His records relate that he was killed in the field on the very day that the Second Army launched their attack on Passchendaele, in earnest.

Although his CWGC details give both his father and wife as next of kin, all the correspondence in his records were clearly directed to his wife in Blakeney. This relates to pension, notice of death, personal effects and medals and it is clear that the authorities regarded Joe as a resident of Blakeney.

Joseph is commemorated on the "Curved Memorial to the Missing" at Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium where his name is featured with 35,000 other officers and soldiers who have no known grave.

**Alfred Edward Turner**  
**A/Sgt 16837, 7<sup>th</sup> Bn, Norfolk Regiment**  
**Died 13<sup>th</sup> October 1915, aged 30**  
**Remembered at Loos Memorial**  
**and on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Alfred was born in Blakeney 1886, the 4<sup>th</sup> of five sons born to Edward Clifford and Anna Turner nee Buck. His siblings were Clifford John, Ellis Capps, William Buck and Harry Page, all born in Blakeney and living at Sunnyside (Blakeney House), the house built for them in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

His brother, William Buck Turner, left for Canada in 1908 where he married Florence Kate Hagell in 1910. William then joined the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force at Calgary in December 1915, when he served in WW1 and lived to come home safely. He died at Nor-West (Miranda Cottage), Little Lane, Blakeney in 1964.

Alfred, aged 25, was the only son recorded at home with his parents and their servant by

the 1911 Census. He was listed as “Corn and General Merchant, Shipowner”. Initially, he had wanted to join the Royal Engineers but found himself in Kitchener’s Army when he enlisted at Norwich, becoming part of a Service Battalion. His Battalion was part of the 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade at the Battle of Loos. Loos was noteworthy for being the place where the British Army used poisoned gas for the first time. The 13<sup>th</sup> October dawned a bright, sunny day with an ideal wind for moving a smoke screen towards the enemy line. However, in the early afternoon, just as the 7<sup>th</sup> Norfolks and 7<sup>th</sup> Suffolks began their advance, the smoke was inadvertently turned off in error, allowing the Germans clear sight of the impending attack. The ensuing losses were great and the 7<sup>th</sup> Norfolks were withdrawn the following day. The Battalion was soon back in their billets in Béthune. Their next move was to Vermelles, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and from there to the front line on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that Alfred was amongst those caught in the ensuing crossfire on 13<sup>th</sup> October while his parents record a different scenario on the kerb surrounding their burial plot in Blakeney Churchyard. It would appear that they had reason to believe that Alfred died on the way to Vermelles. The inscription reads as follows; “IN LOVING MEMORY OF ALFRED EDWARD TURNER, AGED 29 WHO GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY BEING KILLED IN ACTION AT VERMIELLES BY A GERMAN SHELL OCT. 25. 1915.” Consequently the true circumstances of his death are uncertain.

Newspapers of the day, reporting at the time of his death in 1915, noted that ... *“he was partner of the well known firm of Messrs Page and Turner and did a lot of the market work of the firm, especially at Norwich, Lynn and Fakenham. As a lad he was prominent in athletics and known at many local meetings. He was for long the Hon. Secretary of the Blakeney Football Club. He was also a member of the Golf Club and a keen wildfowler.”*

Alfred is remembered on the Loos Memorial in France and in Blakeney on both War Memorials as well as the north kerb of his parent's burial plot.

## **H. Wright**

### **Remembered on both Blakeney War Memorials**

Although the name H. Wright appears on both Blakeney War Memorials the memory of him has long since been lost to the village and despite extensive research, he remains an enigma.

Without knowing what the “H” stands for makes it just that much harder to solve. Was the “H” an initial for his first name, a middle name, or did “H” stand for a nickname? Then who was his next-of-kin who put his name forward to be included on the War Memorials? Was it his parents, a wife or even grandparents? Was H. Wright even born in Blakeney or just living here at the outbreak of war or was it where his next-of-kin was living? This is no more and no less than hunting for a needle in a haystack.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) lists several hundred H. Wrights in the army, 3 in the Merchant Navy and 13 in the Royal Navy, yet none of them indicate a Blakeney connection, even when using the CWGC's 'advanced search' facility. Parish Registers, census returns, Electoral Rolls and Trade Directories have all been searched to no avail.

Hopefully the first Blakeney Parish Council Minute Book may just have thrown some light on our H. Wright, for an entry dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 1920 shows that a “Mrs H. Wright” was being considered as a tenant for the newly built War Memorial Cottages in New Road. Who was she? Could this mean that H. Wright was a married man and that his wife was living in the village? Was she the one with connections to Blakeney and not him?

A quick search of the Blakeney School Admission Register shows that they had no young children of school age. And there the trail goes cold again. Providing "Mrs H. Wright" neither left the village nor remarried then it may be possible to resolve this conundrum when the 1921 Census is released. Meanwhile t