

Frank BAKER

Born	1898
Killed in Action or Died	1st December 1918 age 20
Buried	Grave D. 124., Ely Cemetery
Unit	402nd Home Service Company, Labour Corps Formerly Royal Fusiliers (London Regiment)
Rank	Private, Service Number G/67219 Royal Fusiliers
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Frank Baker was born in Little Downham in the autumn of 1898 to James and Eleanor Baker. James Baker (born 1861) was a small farmer and originally from Wisbech, but he had married local girl Eleanor Brittain (1862 Little Downham) and they had settled at the Holts in White Horse Lane, Little Downham. Frank had five older siblings: Annie (1885); Lilian (1886); William (1888); Alfred (1891) and Samuel (1896). Frank probably did not know his eldest sister very well, as she went into service and was living in Islington in London while he was growing up.

The 1911 Census saw the Baker family living at Common Side in Little Downham; James no longer called himself a self-employed farmer, but was working as a farm labourer. William and Alfred had followed their father into farm work. At this time Frank was completing his schooling, but he was later to become a garden labourer.

The Bakers later moved into Ely itself, to Rose Cottage at 79 Lynn Road. It was from here that Frank joined the local Training Reserve on 2nd March 1916, becoming number TR/10/26808 in the 31st Reserve Battalion. Frank was called up for active service in February 1917 when he was eighteen years of age; he was then still living with his parents in Lynn Road, Ely. He was attested into the Royal Fusiliers (despite requesting to serve with the Royal Garrison Artillery) and his paperwork described him as 5 feet 6 inches tall and with teeth which required attention. His service in France did not last very long as he joined his unit at the Front on 12th August and was wounded in the back and right shoulder by shrapnel on 26th September when carrying a wounded comrade to safety. It was not until 30th September that the badly injured Frank was finally passed down the line from the advancing Front to the 4th Casualty Clearing Station at Lozingshem. He was eventually invalided back to England on 8th October. He was able to rejoin the 5th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers at Dover on 2nd April 1918, but after a week he was transferred into a Labour Corps on home service (with a new service number—546795). This would have been as a result of the permanent effects of his shoulder injury as the transfer coincided with Frank's spending over ten weeks between April and June in Croydon Hospital with "necrosis of the spine and at the scapula".

Frank died after the Armistice at the Inns of Court O.T.C. Detention Hospital at Berkhamsted, but not as a result of his troublesome injuries. He had been admitted to the hospital on 19th November 1918 with influenza and a temperature of 104.2 degrees and despite poultices, liniment, medicine, and stimulants such as brandy, his breathing became difficult and he was soon coughing up blood. As his condition deteriorated pneumonia was diagnosed and his family were sent for; his mother Eleanor was with him at the end. A note on his medical file states "all his mother's family were tuberculous" - a somewhat unfair comment given that an influenza pandemic was then sweeping the country. The report also confirmed the illness was "contracted on military service" but "not caused or aggravated by military service". The family took Frank's body back to Ely for burial, and he was buried in Ely cemetery on 6th December.

Eleanor was sent Frank's effects, which amounted to £17 11s 4d.

Frank is commemorated on both the Market Place Memorial and in St Mary's Church.

Thomas BARNARD - MODEN

Born	1887
Killed in Action or Died	22nd January 1916, age 29
Commemorated	Panel 21 Menin Gate, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen , Belgium
Unit	2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 6131
Awards	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Thomas was born in Ely in 1887. He appears on the Ely War Memorial by his official name of **Thomas Barnard**, but was actually known in the city as **Thomas Barnard-Moden**—his variations of name can be traced through various public records.

Thomas' father was born in 1868 to a single mother, Esther Moden; she registered his name as Thomas Barnard Moden, and within a short period married his father Thomas Barnard. Thomas senior was to use the surnames Barnard and Barnard-Moden during his lifetime, as, obviously, did his children. In 1887 Thomas Barnard married Eliza Chapman of Littleport who was four years his senior and heavily pregnant with their first child—this was Thomas who was registered at birth as Thomas Barnard.

The 1891 Census was the first after Thomas' birth and in it he can be found living with his parents and younger brother Charles (1890) in Lynn Road; at this point the family was using the surname Barnard-Moden, which the census enumerator recorded as just "Moden". Thomas senior was then working as an engine fitter.

In the 1901 Census the Barnard- Moden family was still living in Lynn Road. Four more boys had been born, namely: Ernest (1892), Herbert (1896), Jack (1899), and Robert (1900). All members of the family are this time shown on the census with the surname B. Moden. Thomas senior was working as a foreman in Ely Gas Company. Thomas himself had begun work as a baker's errand boy, but then served for seven years in the Army, in the 2nd Suffolk Regiment. Upon his return to Ely he was placed on the Reserve.

The Barnard-Modens attended the Countess of Huntingdon's Free Church in Chapel Street, Ely.

Ten years later, at the time of the 1911 Census, the family was living in Potters Lane and Thomas senior used their official surname of Barnard in filling out the census form. A seventh child, the only girl of the family, had been born, this was Ellen (1904). Charles was unemployed at this point but described himself as a baker's journeyman, while Herbert was a shop assistant in a tobacconists. Thomas had returned to Ely and become a lamplighter, working for Ely Gas Company where his father Thomas was still a Gas Foreman. The Ely Standard described him as "a familiar figure around the city". The family of eight (Ernest was absent) lived in a six roomed house. It is probable that the family still preferred to use the name Barnard-Moden, as when Thomas senior died in August 1912 his death is recorded as Thomas B. Moden. Eliza then moved the family to a house on Back Hill.

As a Reservist Thomas was recalled to the Suffolks at the outbreak of War and arrived in France as early as 23rd August 1914. He took part in the Battle of Mons, and shortly afterwards his battalion suffered appalling casualties at Le Cateau. Throughout 1915 Thomas' battalion saw action around



Bellewaarde, St Eloi, and Hooge in Flanders. St Eloi was a site of continuous mining warfare throughout 1915, with at least 33 mines being constructed, chiefly by the Germans, under enemy trenches then exploded with great devastation. On 22nd January 1916, at 2.00 a.m. another huge mine exploded under the Suffolks' position on "The Bluff" and a number of men were killed. Twenty-four bodies could not be found—one of these was Thomas. The sergeant in charge of the Suffolks' signallers wrote to Thomas' mother: *"Your son with two other signallers were in a station very close to where the explosion took place and were probably hurled up. I have waited a few days in hopes that they would be found alive..but nothing has been heard of them....I have known him for about 10 years and considered him to be a good and valuable man. The staff has lost one who cannot be replaced in a short time."*

Thomas' effects were divided amongst his mother and six siblings who each received £2 13s 9d (although Ellen gave her share to her mother). Shortly before her death Eliza received a final £9 from the Army.

In October 1919 Thomas' mother died and her death was registered under the name of Eliza B.Moden. It was after this date that the War Graves Commission consulted the family about the insertion of Thomas' name on the memorial to the missing on the Menin Gate and, at the family's request, it was recorded as T. Barnard Moden.

Thomas was commemorated on both the Holy Trinity Church Memorial and the memorial in Ely's Market Place as T Barnard, and as Thos. Barnard on the memorial in the Countess Church.

Bertram Leeds Thomas BARNETT

Born	22nd June 1875
Killed in Action or Died	18th April 1915 age 39
Buried	Grave AH. 338, Aldershot Military Cemetery, Hampshire
Unit	Royal Army Service Corps
Rank	Captain
Awards	<i>No overseas service</i>

Bertram Leeds Thomas Barnett was born in June 1875 at Knighton Grange (aka Nyton House), Aldingbourne in West Sussex. Bertram's father Thomas owned and farmed 140 acres in the area and employed six men and two boys. Bertram was baptised at Aldingbourne parish church on 18th July 1875.

Thomas Barnett (1822) was originally from London and Norfolk and his wife Sarah (nee Leeds, 1827) was from Whitwell in Norfolk. Bertram was the youngest of their nine children, the others being: Ellen (1851 Alby, Norfolk); Edith (1853 Kempton Park, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex); Julia (1856 Sunbury on Thames); Arthur (1858, Sunbury on Thames); Francis (1861 Sunbury on Thames); Katharine (1864 Sunbury on Thames); Harold (1865 Sunbury on Thames); and Mabel (1866 Sunbury on Thames).

As can be confirmed by the births of his children, Thomas Barnett was for a period the owner of Kempton Park and Lord of the Manor of Sunbury. He sold Kempton Park a year after Bertram's birth, in 1876, and moved his family to Sussex. He did however, retain his title as Lord of the Manor, as this was later held by Bertram's brother Canon Arthur Barnett when he was vicar of Stoke Poges. The extended Barnett family had originally made their money in gunmaking.

In the 1881 Census the only members of the family living at Aldingbourne were Bertram, Mabel, and his parents, with Arthur on holiday from Cambridge University. To support this reduced household the Barnetts employed a cook and two housemaids, as well as a Swiss governess to school the children. In 1883 Bertram's sister Julia died at Wandsworth.

In 1891 the Barnett family was still living at Aldingbourne, although fifteen year old Bertram was then a boarder at Malvern College, a public school of about four hundred boys. 1891 was actually the year in which the Duke and Duchess of Teck and their daughter (who was later to become Queen Mary) visited the school and Bertram must have seen the royal party.

Bertram's brother Francis had trained as a chemical analyst - he died in 1896 while working at Bulawayo, Matabeleland, South Africa. Meanwhile his brother Arthur was ordained as a priest in the Church of England.

Once Bertram left Malvern College he was admitted to St John's College, Cambridge in 1893 to take a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Master of Arts (1896), followed by a Bachelor of Medicine (1902). In 1901, while a medical student, he lodged with the Flynn family in Aldingham, Sussex. Bertram became a Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. In 1903 Bertram's first significant post was as Inspector of the Public Health Department of Cairo and as Port Officer for Suez. This role was followed 1904-1907 with a post as an Assistant Medical Officer of Health for the Hong Kong Government and Secretary to the Board of Examiners for the Hong Kong Sanitary Institute, where he particularly studied the effects of plague.

Bertram's mother Sarah died at the family's second home of Holm Leas in Worthing in May of 1904 and was buried at Aldingbourne. She left her husband Thomas her effects worth £3871 12s 8d. Thomas himself died in January of 1908 and in his case probate was sworn at £37,229 10s 9d (a millionaire in today's terms). At the time of his father's death Bertram had returned to England from

Hong Kong and was described as a law student in the record of probate.

In November 1909 Bertram was articled as a solicitor. In the 1911 Census he can be found lodging with the Martin sisters in a boarding house at 19 Woolwich Common, London. He was one of two boarders listed as “medical men” and Bertram’s role was again described as “public health”. At the same point (in 1909) he became a lieutenant with the Territorial Army - Royal Army Service Corps-2nd County of London Regiment.

In October 1911 Bertram obtained the post of Medical Inspector of Schools for the Isle of Ely and came to live at the Lamb Hotel where he resided for the next three years while he had a large house called “Nyton” built on Barton Road, on land he had purchased from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He also acquired three further plots of freehold building land.

Early the next year (1912) Bertram was also made County Medical Officer of Health. The newspaper accounts speak of Dr Barnett’s good character locally: “well known and highly respected.... a very familiar figure in the streets of the city. Of a bright and cheery disposition, he was often known to lend a helping hand when needed. ... a motor car in which he was often seen...he showed all the qualities which go to make up a gentleman, and his untimely death came as a shock to his friends in Ely.”

With the commencement of the War Territorial Army troops began to be called up for War Service and so Lieutenant Bertram Leeds Thomas Barnett was called up by the Royal Army Service Corps and gazetted Temporary Captain on 14th November 1914—an appointment which was then cancelled in the London Gazette of 3rd December and renewed once more on 18th January 1915. This change of plan was because Bertram was incapacitated with varicose veins and had undergone an operation and then rejoined his unit. When the health problems returned, early one Sunday morning, Bertram hanged himself in his tent at Ash near Aldershot while still on Home Service; here he was found by his driver, O.G. Tidmarsh, at 7.20 a.m. The inquest verdict was that he was “of unsound mind” and it was assumed that this had been brought on by lack of sleep caused by the pain in his legs and a fear that he would be prevented from serving abroad. Bertram had been the officer in charge of supplies, and the inquest confirmed that there was nothing amiss with either his Army accounts or his own personal finances which could have caused him to commit suicide.

Bertram left effects of £6369 9s 7d. Nyton was sold at auction for £1,200.

Back in Ely there were numerous public and private expressions of regret at Bertram’s passing.

His gravestone carries the legend: “joined the army as captain for the Great War, died at Ash Camp.....Great are they Tender Mercies O, Lord.”

Bertram was not eligible for any war medals as he had not served overseas.

The book “Record of service of solicitors and articled clerks with His Majesty’s Forces 1914-1919” created after the War (1920) recorded Bertram’s passing as “accidental death”.

Norman Henry BARNETT

Born	1889
Killed in Action or Died	4th November 1918 age 29
Buried	Grave VII. K. 1, Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq
Unit	1st/4th Battalion Hampshire Regiment (Territorial Force)
Rank	Private, Service Number 204081 (formerly 2234)
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Norman Henry Barnett was born in the summer of 1889 in the School House , Walpole Lane, Ely, to James and Priscilla Barnett. James was a teacher in the Walpole Lane Elementary School; he had been born in Willesborough, Kent (1853), while his wife Priscilla Thomas (1857) was from Pembroke Dock in Wales. The Barnetts had been living in Ely for over a decade, and Norman was the fifth of their children to be born in the city. His older siblings were: Priscilla (1880); William (1881); Frederick (1883); and Percival (1885). A younger sister, Audrey, was born in 1899 and named after Ely's great saint.

In the 1901 Census the family were still living in Walpole Lane School House and the older children were embarking on their careers: Priscilla had joined her father teaching at the school; William was a brewer's clerk; and Frederick had been apprenticed as a mechanical engineer. Percival was living with his uncle William Barnett's family in Plumstead (Kent) at this point, and was working as a boy copyist at the local Board of Education. Norman himself was a pupil at the Cambridge County High School for Boys (now Hills Road Sixth Form College).

By the time of the 1911 Census James Barnett had been promoted to the post of headteacher at the Boys National School in Silver Street, Ely and the family had moved to the adjoining school house, where they were now sufficiently well off to employ a live in domestic servant. In 1911 only Priscilla and Audrey still lived with their parents. Norman had become a bank clerk and was working in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, where he was boarding at 23 Bishop Street.

By 1914 Norman must have moved to live and work in Hampshire, as, when the War broke out, he enlisted with the 1st/5th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment at Southampton. After training on Salisbury Plain the battalion embarked for India from Southampton on 9th October 1914, arriving at Karachi on 11th November. Early in 1915 Norman was transferred into the 1/4th Battalion with whom he reached Basra on 18th March 1915 to be part of the Second Battle of Kut, and was serving under General Maude when the troops entered Baghdad on 11th March 1917.

The Ely Standard of 22nd June 1917 shared Norman's impressions as he entered Baghdad, which he had included in a letter he wrote home to his parents. (No doubt his other letters had similar interesting insights—perhaps his father shared these “geography lessons” with the boys at the school?) “There are a large number of very fine girls here and in their native costumes they look very picturesque. In Baghdad there are something like 10,000 RC Christians, and I have heard it said that if the British had been 24 hours later in taking Baghdad all the Armenians would have been murdered. When the first troops entered Baghdad they were loudly cheered by the people. The youngsters in the street run up and catch hold of you and kiss your hands, and look upon you as their saviour.” In a later letter Norman said: “Things have improved up here with regard to the comfort of the troops, but I know what it is to be without food and water. We have all been inoculated against cholera again, so you see they are taking all precautions.....I see you are pretty well restricted with regard to food in England now, but when I tell you that they are feeding us pretty well out here I am sure you will not mind so much.”

As the War moved into its final week on the Western Front, Norman Henry Barnett died at Baghdad, a city he had helped to take under General Maunde.. His record shows he died of dysentery, one of

the hundreds who suffered from the combination of extreme heat and sickness during the Mesopotamian campaign. Norman left effects of £538 13s 2d.

The records show that, following his father's retirement, Norman's parents continued to live in Ely and resided at 24 Back Hill.

Norman is commemorated on the Roll of Honour at Hills Road Sixth Form College, which was once his high school, as well as on the memorial in Ely's Market Place and in St Mary's Church.

Rex BARWICK

Born	1895
Killed in Action or Died	16th August 1915, age 20
Buried	Grave II, A, 12, Brewery Orchard Cemetery, Bois-Grenier, Nord, France
Unit	1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 2624
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Rex Barwick was born in the Spring of 1895 in Ely to James John and Fanny Sarah Barwick. James and Fanny were originally from Norfolk with James being born at Raveningham in 1864 and Fanny (nee Green) in Swaffham in 1862. Rex was their second son; his surviving siblings were Edward (1893) and Doreen (1898). Rex's brother Leonard (1903) died in November 1910, aged seven.

For a time the Barwicks owned and ran a grocer's shop on Ely's Market Place. In 1901 two grocer's assistants, Harry Taylor and Kate Ellingham, lived with the family.

In the 1911 Census Rex and his family were living in Railway Terrace and James had become a commercial traveller selling the products of Ely Jam Factory. Edward was actually working at the Jam Factory as a jam boiler, but Rex had taken a different route and was working as a motor mechanic, originally for Mr Cass of Ely, but at the time he enlisted he was working in Wisbech for Messers Crabtree, Motor Engineers.

The Barwicks attended the Countess of Huntingdon's Free Church in Chapel Street, Ely.

When war was declared nineteen year old Rex enlisted in the Cambridgeshire Regiment; he was just one of hundreds of teenagers who flocked to enlist fearing the "War will be over by Christmas".. He was one of the first group of Ely men to enlist and his name is included in what is called a "Roll of Honour" in the local press on 18th September 1914. He went with his good friend Bertram Chard who lodged with the Barwicks and was engaged to Doreen. Rex's older brother Edward was in the same regiment, and the brothers were fortunate enough to stay together throughout the War. After training at various camps around East Anglia, the Barwicks' battalion reached Le Havre in France on 14th February 1915. Thereafter the battalion was involved in action around St Eloi and Ypres until Rex was killed in "a quiet time" in the line near Bois-Grenier by a sniper. He did not live to see his twenty-first birthday.



We can see Rex's death through the eyes of those who were with him:

On 27th August 1915 the local press carried the letters Rex's mother received about his death; they were published under the heading "I have done my bit":

The first letter was from Captain Seaton, of the 1st Cambridgeshire Regiment, a name that many Ely families would instantly recognise as their own sons' captain. *"I have the sad duty to perform in breaking the news that this morning, about 2 a.m., your son was hit by a bullet and died shortly afterwards. Besides this bare announcement I hardly know what to say to you, for what words of mine can be of any account in face of such a blow as this? But if it is any comfort of you to know, not only*

that he gave his life for his country, but that he was highly valued by this Company, by both officers and men, that comfort is yours. He was one of those who, without pushing themselves into prominence, steadily and faithfully do their best, and win thereby an appreciation of which they themselves are unconscious. I wish there were more men in the Company like him. He was engaged in fatigue work just behind the trench when a bullet struck him just below the heart. His brother was working close beside him, and was with him to the last...

Sergeant H Wells of D Company also wrote:

".....He was working with his brother and several others at the back of the fire trench when he was killed. I can assure you that everything was done that was possible for him. He lived about 15 minutes; his brother was with him when he died. It must have been very hard for Edward, as they were very much attached to each other. Perhaps it will be a great relief to you to know that he was buried in a very nice little graveyard with several others. He had a Christian burial and several of his friends attended his funeral. I can assure you that it is a great loss to me to lose such a good fellow...."

And finally was what the paper described as a "pathetic letter" from brother Ted:

"I expect by the time you get this letter you will know what has happened to our dear Rex. He has been killed. He was working with me at the time, and he died a brave boy. God bless him. I was with him until the end. I hope you will bear up well mother dear. Is suppose it was God's will that he should go. I kissed him almost at the last breath—he asked me to. He said "Never mind, Ted, I have done my bit." I am trying to get my leave now as soon as I can, so I can come home and comfort you a bit. God knows how I prayed for him to live, but it was no use. It has upset me and I hardly know what I am doing. I never felt so ill in all my life.....bear up and be brave."

James was sent his son's effects which amounted to £6 17s 9d, with a further £3 in 1919.

Rex Barwick was commemorated on the Holy Trinity Memorial and in the Countess Free Church, as well as being commemorated on the memorial in Ely's Market Place. Edward survived the War.

James BAULK

Born	1894
Killed in Action or Died	15th June 1918 age 23
Commemorated	Special Memorial at II Mem. Row, Choques Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France
Unit	2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 41699 (formerly 34987)
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

The Baulk family worked across most of southern Cambridgeshire as agricultural labourers, ending up in the Prickwillow area in the opening years of the twentieth century. Head of the family, Samuel Baulk, had been born in Guilden Morden near the Hertfordshire border in 1865, while his wife Susannah (nee Angell), was five years his senior and from the village of Toft. The couple had twelve children, including James, of whom eight survived. The children's birthplaces show how the family moved around from farm to farm: Frederick (1886 Ashwell); Sarah (1887 Ashwell); Margaret (1889 Ashwell); Lily aka Lilian (1890 Guilden Morden died aged four); **James** (1894 Guilden Morden); Jessie (1897 Little Chishill); Beatrice (1889 Little Chishill); Bertha (1901 Little Chishill). When James was born the family was living in Church Street, Guilden Morden; he was named after his paternal grandfather.

The family spread out as the boys took up farming work and the girls went into service. By 1911 Samuel and Susannah with just Sarah, James, Jessie and Bertha were living in a six-roomed house at Branch Bank, Prickwillow. Samuel was a stockman on a local farm, and James was working as a farm labourer.

When conscription came in James was working as second horseman for Mr J L Luddington on Shippea Hill Farm. Mr Luddington was actually a member of the Ely Urban Tribunal and in March 1916 he appealed to the Tribunal (absenting himself from the discussion) for James, and his other horseman George Peachey, to be exempted from serving. In fact the two men were given just one extra month each before they had to enlist.

As a young man of seventeen, and struggling to find labouring work, James' father Samuel had signed up with the 3rd Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment (the local militia) for six years of service. Perhaps James was encouraged by his father's stories of army life when he was called up and enlisted at Ely (where the recruiting team misunderstood the name of his birthplace and registered him as from Morden in Essex). It was fairly common for soldiers to be moved between battalions, and even regiments, on the Western Front as depleted units needed to be reinforced and brought back up to strength; this led to James serving with three different regiments. He was attested into the 6th Battalion of the Royal West Surrey Regiment (The Queen's Regiment) (No. 41602), was transferred to the 114th Labour Company, then ended up at the Front with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment.

In January 1917 James' mother Susannah died at the family home at Shippea Hill.

It is not certain at which point James was transferred into the Suffolks, but in 1918 his battalion was in the region of Bethune and part of the Battles of St Quentin, Bapaume, Arras, Estaires, Hazebrouck, and Bethune. James Baulk was killed in action on 15th June 1918 to the north of Bethune—overnight 14th/15th June the Battalion had attacked and taken the German lines at La Pannerie, near Hinges. His body was brought to Choques by a field ambulance unit where he was buried with eight other members of the Suffolk Regiment. Following the War his family were consulted about the inscription for his headstone and asked for this to read "R.I.P Till We Meet"; unfortunately the exact location of his grave was not known and he is instead commemorated on a special memorial in the Choques cemetery with the other Suffolks which reads "believed to be buried

in this cemetery actual graves unknown”.

James' effects were sent to his father and amounted to £15 8s 4d and then a further £8 10s in 1919.

The Baulks were still at Shippea Hill Farm, Prickwillow after the War and had James' name placed on both the Prickwillow and City of Ely memorials.

Herbert BEAMISS

Born	1898
Killed in Action or Died	30th December 1917 age 19
Commemorated	Chatby Memorial, Alexandria, Egypt
Unit	5th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 21766
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Herbert Beamiss was from an Ely family; his father Walter was born in Ely in 1870 and his mother Susan (nee Manning 1872) was from a Fenland family and gave her birthplace as "Feltwell Fen". Herbert had two older sisters called Winifred and Elsie (born in Ely in 1894 and 1896 respectively). In 1901 the family, which included Susan's younger brother Isaac, was living in Bernard Street in Ely. Herbert's father Walter was working as a barman, while his uncle was a carpenter. Ten years later, in the 1911 Census, the family of five was still at the same address; Walter was working at Ely Jam Factory as a packer and Winifred had begun working as a dressmaker's apprentice, while Elsie and Herbert were still at school. The family later moved to Hills Lane, Ely.

Herbert worked for Great Eastern Railways, first at Ely in 1916, then as an acting fireman at Cambridge.

Once he was eighteen, Herbert was attested into the 5th Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment on 11th April 1917. The battalion was then at Gaza, in Palestine, and, after crossing to France in November 1917 Herbert sailed from Marseilles three weeks later, on board the troopship HT Aragon, to Alexandria to join them. His parents later received a couple of letters which he had written while at sea.

At Alexandria the Aragon was permitted to enter the harbour, but was later ordered out again for logistical reasons before the troops had disembarked. The ship anchored outside the harbour in the Alexandria Roads, without any protection, where she was spotted and torpedoed by the German submarine UC34; 380 of the 610 officers and men aboard the Aragon perished, including Ely's Herbert Beamiss and another twenty-four men from the new draft of the 5th Bedfords.



Herbert's effects amounted to £5 7s 11d with a further £3 which were sent to his father Walter.

Herbert is commemorated on both the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

Herbert is not the only member of the Beamiss family commemorated in St Mary's Church as he was a direct descendant of the William Beamiss who was hanged for his part in the Littleport/Ely riots His son, William Beamiss Junior, who was also Herbert's direct ancestor, spent one year in Ely Gaol for his part. William Beamiss Senior is one of the men commemorated on the memorial stone to the executed rioters at the back of the church.

Victor Louis Sydney BECKETT

Born	24th May 1882
Killed in Action or Died	14th July 1916 age 34
Buried	Grave I. C. 28, Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-l'Abbe, Somme, France
Unit	9th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (Yorkshire Hussars)
Rank	Major (Acting Lieutenant Colonel)
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal



Victor Louis Sydney Beckett was the son of Ely's Dr Francis Mears Beckett (1836 Canterbury, Kent) and Harriet (nee Allden, 1851 Intwood, Norfolk). Francis and Harriet married in Ely in 1875 and raised a family of four children, Victor being the youngest. Victor's older siblings were Francis (1876), Lilie (1878) and Hugh (1880).

The Becketts lived in a large house of 15 rooms, called St Audreys, on Ely High Street with four live-in servants. The three boys, Francis, Hugh and Victor, attended the King's School in Ely as day pupils, Victor from 1893-1900. The two oldest brothers went on to attend Epsom College. At this time Dr Francis Beckett was Surgeon Captain to the local Volunteer Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. Dr Beckett was actually a veteran of the American Civil War, in which he had lost an eye.

Victor Beckett entered Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1901, but when his father died on 5th January 1903 he left university to enter the Army as a "university candidate". Meanwhile his eldest brother, Dr (Francis) Henry Nears Allden Beckett, took on his father's role as Ely's doctor and was appointed Medical Officer of Health for Ely U.D.C., and Medical Officer for the Ely Fever Hospital.

In 1903 Victor became a Lieutenant in the Army Service Corps, but resigned his commission on 3rd January 1906 due to ill health. He then went to Canada to farm, but returned at the time of his mother's death in late March 1912.

Victor trained in dental surgery and was licensed in 1913. (It seems likely that he either trained or practised in the Wakefield area as he was a member of Wakefield Golf Club and is commemorated on their War Memorial as VBS Beckett.)

On the outbreak of the War Victor was recalled to the Army; on 30th September 1914 Victor was gazetted Lieutenant, then on 22nd October gazetted Captain. He landed at Boulogne on August 27th 1915 with the 9th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment. The battalion spent the winter of 1915 in the Armentieres sector and the spring of 1916 in and out of the line around Angres and the Souchez river. As Major Beckett he arrived with the battalion on the Somme on June 24th 1916. One week later, on 1st July, the battalion took part in the attack on Contalmaison during which Victor was wounded. Major Victor Louis Sydney Beckett was taken from the line for treatment at the 36th Casualty Clearing Station at Heilly where he died of his wounds on July 14th 1916.



Victor left effects of £2055 1s 10d. He is commemorated not only on the War Memorial in Ely's Market Place, but also on the King's School Roll of Honour, and the Memorial of Holy Trinity Church. His name was added to his parents' gravestone in Ely Cemetery.

Of the Ely casualties Victor has the only CWGC gravestone which includes a Latin inscription: *REQUIEM AETERNAM DOMINE ET LUX PERPETUA LUCEAT EI*. This is a prayer from the Liturgy of Hours which translates as "Eternal" rest grant unto him O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him". This is the same inscription Victor's mother had placed on his father's grave in 1903, and it was Victor's brother Dr F. Henry Beckett who arranged for his brother to be commemorated with the same prayer, with, in his case, the addition of the words "ELY CAMBS".

Harry BEEDEN

Born	1893
Killed in Action or Died	24th September 1917 age 23
Buried	Grave IV. E. 9, Larch Wood (Railway Cutting) Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen , Belgium
Unit	1st/1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 325841 (formerly 2625)
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Harry Beeden came from a large family from Marlesford in Suffolk. His father Thomas (1861 Marlesford) was a carpenter with a business in Marlesford High Street, and his mother Kate (1861 nee Pask) was originally from Bury St Edmunds. Harry' siblings were: Thomas (1888); Ella (1891); Frank (1896); Ivy (1898); Eric (1899); and Myra (1902). In 1910 the Beedens lost their daughter Ivy.

In 1911 Harry was employed as a footman, but it is not obvious where, as when the census took place in April he was away from work, visiting the Gregory family in Great Glemham, Saxmundham (although the fact that his host Charles Gregory was a coachman could mean that they worked together at nearby Great Glemham House, the seat of the Earls of Cranbrook).

Within the next few years Harry moved to Ely as a footman to the Bishop of Ely. He also played amateur football for the Ely City Team which was then in the Cambridgeshire Senior League. Harry was one of the first group of Ely men to enlist in the local Cambridgeshire Regiment and his name is included in what is called a "Roll of Honour" in the local press on 18th September 1914. Of the 73 enthusiastic young men who enlisted in Ely that day, nine were to figure on a rather different Roll of Honour.

The Cambridgeshires left for Le Havre on 14th February 1915. At this point Harry was acting as officer's servant to Ely's Captain Keenlyside and continued to do so until the Captain was killed on 20th July.

In 1917 Harry's Battalion played its part in the Battles of Pilkem Ridge, Langemarck, and the Menin Road Ridge, until finally he was injured in the area of Hill 60 and died of his wounds a few hours later. The Cambridgeshires were in a vulnerable position holding this part of the line, as there were no protective trenches, just shell holes turned into little "forts" by being surrounded with sandbags, and soldiers such as Harry were under fire as they moved around the area. The whole area was under particularly heavy artillery fire for the first part of September and most days they were in the line the Cambridgeshires lost men as a result.

Harry was the only one of his family not to survive the War. His parents arranged for him to be commemorated on both the Marlesford and Ely memorials—his first and last homes. On his grave in Belgium they had inscribed "Sleep on Beloved, Sleep and Take Thy Rest". Kate was sent his effects of £6 2s 2d with a further £13 10s in 1919.

Harry is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and in St Mary's Church.

David Stanley BEER and William Newton BEER

Ely's Postmaster Henry Beer and his wife Mary lost two of their five sons in the Great War.

Born <i>D. Stanley</i>	18th March 1895
Killed in Action or Died	1st July 1916 age 21
Commemorated	Pier and Face 13C, Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Unit	1st/16th Battalion London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles)
Rank	Rifleman, Service Number 551380
Awards	1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Born <i>William</i>	1893
Killed in Action or Died	3rd September 1917 age 24
Buried	Grave I. H. 3, Voormezele Enclosures No.1 and No. 2, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	"A" Company, 1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 326002
Awards	1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Henry Beer had been born in South Molton, Devon in 1856, he married Mary Turner (1855) in her home town of St Woolos, Newport, Monmouthshire, and this is where all their children were born: Mary (1878); Henry (1880); Charles (1884); Maria (1886); Florence (1888); Elsie (1891); **William** Newton (1893); **(David) Stanley** (1895); and Trevor (1896).

Henry worked for the Post Office, beginning as a Post Office clerk in St Woolos, he was provisionally placed in charge of the post office there (1891). By 1901 he was assistant superintendent at the main Newport Post Office, until he eventually achieved promotion to postmaster at Royston, after which he brought his family to Ely, where they lived in the Post Office building at 52 St Marys Street. The two youngest Beers, David and Trevor were then enrolled at Needhams Secondary School on 29th April 1910.

Henry Beer junior became a sorting clerk at Newport Post Office and Charles became a clerk at the Chamber of Commerce, and they do not appear to have come to Cambridgeshire with the rest of the family. The 1911 Census shows that William became as assistant in a local grocery business in Ely, while in 1911 younger brother Stanley was completing his schooling.

Twenty-one year old William Newton Beer was one of the first of Ely's young men to answer the call to arms when the War broke out, and enlisted in September 1914. After training at various camps around East Anglia, William and the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment reached France on December 8th 1916. The battalion was in action on the Ancre in 1916, then in 1917 the Battles of Langemarck, the Menin Road and Polygon Wood. William left his regiment for some time and was seconded to a tunnelling company. He had only just rejoined his regiment when he was killed with three others "after breakfast" when a shell aimed at the British guns fell short and landed in the trench where they had been eating. Four men were killed outright, including William.

William's younger brother Stanley Beer had left Needhams to become a clerk with Great Eastern Railways at Ely, but he was in fact living and working in West Ealing, London, when the War broke out. He had become a clerk in the chief goods manager's office at Paddington Station and thus an employee of Great Western Railways. He too enlisted in his local regiment, which was the Queen's

Westminster Rifles (a battalion of the London Regiment). Stanley reached Le Havre at the beginning of March 1915, less than a month after William had passed through. His battalion took part in the Battles of Aubers Ridge, Festubert, Loos and the Hohenzollern Redoubt in 1915. In 1916 came the Battle of Vimy Ridge and then the Somme. On 1st July a great Franco-British offensive began on a 25 mile front north and south of the Somme. At the end of a day of appalling conflict the British had 57,470 casualties, of which 19,240 men were killed. The French had 1,590 casualties and the German 2nd Army lost 10,000–12,000 casualties. One of the 172 members of Queen's Westminster Rifles killed in action on this fateful day was Stanley Beer. The regimental padre wrote to Stanley's parents: *"He went over to attack the German trenches and did not return....We had very few return unwounded and they knew little about anyone else....Most of our casualties are missing. Our men made a gallant charge and took three lines of German trenches but later in the day they had to abandon them and many could not get back....If he survived he is certainly in German hands."* Stanley was not amongst the prisoners taken on this day; His body was not recovered and he is named, with 129 of his regimental colleagues who died with him, on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing. It was April 1917 before his parents received the official communication from the War Office that Stanley must be presumed dead, although Stanley's comrades told them later that he was last seen heading towards the German trenches and, although nobody had seen him fall, many who were with him had been killed by heavy shelling.

Stanley was described as "very much liked (in the company) on account of his cheery nature, bravery, and readiness at all times to do his duty".

William Beer was included on Newport's WW1 Roll of Honour, but apparently his brother Stanley's name was omitted. The brothers are both commemorated on Ely Market Place and in St Mary's Church.

After the War Great Western Railways placed Rolls of Honour bearing the names of all their staff who had died in the War in every one of their major railway stations. These were eventually replaced with the main memorial now in Paddington Station on which David Stanley Beer figures.

Henry was sent Stanley's effects of £3 19s 3d with a further £4 10s in 1919, and £26 16s 4d for William with a further £14 in 1919.



William Beer



(David) Stanley Beer

George Henry BENTON

Born	1877
Killed in Action or Died	7th August 1918 age 41
Buried	Grave III. C. 15, Pernois British Cemetery, Halloy-Les-Pernois, Somme, France
Unit	1 st /1 st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Regimental Sergeant Major, Service Number 3456
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

The Bentons were an Ely family: William, who was a gardener to Archdeacon Emery, was born in 1844 and his wife Elizabeth Sanderson in 1852. As well as **George Henry** (1877), their children were: Florence (1873); William (1874); Elizabeth (1876); Maud (1879); Frederick (1882); Bertram (1883); Frank (1886); Charles (1893); and Ernest (1894). Father William had served in the 17th Lancers and so it is not surprising that several of his sons also had careers in the regular army.

The family attended St Peters Mission Church in Broad Street, and here George was part of Harold Arthur's Confirmation Class. After the War Harold Arthur paid for a memorial in the church for the members of his class who had died.

In the 1891 Census the nine Bentons were shown living in a cottage in Deacons Lane and the oldest children were beginning work, with William junior being an engine maker's apprentice and Elizabeth junior a dressmaker's apprentice. In this year George described his employment as "drummer" which probably meant he was a drummer boy with the Suffolk Regiment and had embarked on his long career with the regular army which was to take him to Malta, South Africa, Egypt, and finally to France. He was awarded both Long Service and Good Conduct Medals for his time in the Army.

When the 1901 Census took place the Benton parents had just their three youngest sons left at home. George was then in South Africa with the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. The 1st Battalion had been in Dover when the South African War broke out and mobilisation was ordered. One month after mobilisation the Battalion was at the Cape. In January 1900 the first major battle was to assault a hill near Colesberg. The Regiment suffered many casualties, including the Commanding Officer and the hill was subsequently renamed Suffolk Hill by the Boers in recognition of the courage of the regiment during the assault. There followed three years of arduous campaigning throughout Boer territory until victory was achieved in 1902.

In 1911 George was serving with the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in Khartoum, Egypt, as a Colour Sergeant Instructor. Back in Ely his parents had moved round the corner into New Barns Road and still had William (a domestic gardener like his father) and Ernest (a tobacconist's assistant) at home.

The First Battalion of the Suffolks left Khartoum for England at the outbreak of the War and after a short period of training and recuperation reached France and the Western Front early in 1915. It was involved in heavy fighting around Ypres and in May was nearly wiped out with over 400 casualties.

Back in Ely, George's father William died in August 1915. It was commented that he then had four sons serving in the Forces, drawing attention to George's brother Bertie who had won the DCM.

George was transferred to the 2nd/1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshires and then later, in June 1918, Sergeant Major George Henry Benton was transferred into the 1st/1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment. As Regimental Sergeant Major George would have been well known to the other "old soldiers" who served with the Battalion— five of whom appear with him on the Ely memorial—as he had been their permanent staff instructor for several months prior to mobilisation. When George finally reached the Cambridgeshires they were in the line east of Martinsart. They moved to support the trenches at Ribemont which were sited in fields of still growing corn and the

regimental history records that the fenland men were out each night, harvesting! The headquarters was bombed by the Germans most evenings, with no casualties—until George dashed out one evening after the bombs had fallen to check that the sentries were unhurt, only to himself fall victim to the next bomb. He was critically injured and died of his wounds at No. 4 Casualty Clearing Station. He had served a total of twenty six years with the colours.

Early in 1918 George had married Emily Stone in Plumstead and they had set up home at 180, Herbert Road, Plumstead. Emily (nee Cresswell) was the widow of Drummer Sergeant William Henry Stone who had served with George in Egypt and died there in 1915.) For her second husband Emily chose the epitaph "A Beautiful Life Lived and Laid Down for Others" for his headstone. On George's death Emily received his effects of £26 14s 9d.

George Henry Benton was commemorated on the Memorial in Holy Trinity Church in Ely as well as the Market Place Memorial and in St Peters Church.

George's brother Bertram served with the Royal Engineers and survived the War; in 1915 he received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. In the closing days of the War George's brother Freddie received the Military Medal.