

## Reginald Jonathan “Albert” HALL

<b>Born</b>	1893
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	16th May 1918, age 24
<b>Buried</b>	Grave D.11. Cinq Rues British Cemetery, Hazebrouck, Nord, France
<b>Unit</b>	145th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery
<b>Rank</b>	Gunner, Service Number 82642
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Reginald Jonathan Hall** was born late in 1893 to Jonathan Hall (1851 Littleport) and Caroline (nee Thrumble, 1858 Mildenhall); his birthplace is given as Mildenhall on census records, but this designation should be seen as an indication that he was born in one of the small Fenland communities that straddle the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk borders—in this case Burnt Fen. He had an older brother Ernest (1880 Wilton, Norfolk) and two sisters Alice (1881, Redmere, Norfolk) and Mabel (1887).

Jonathan Hall had originally been an agricultural worker at Hockwold in Norfolk, but by the time of Reginald's birth he was the landlord of the Pig and Whistle Inn on Burnt Fen, a seven roomed public house which also had rented rooms for boarders. In the 1901 Census the family of the parents and two sons were at home and they had just one boarder who was a yardman on a local farm. Ernest was then working as a horsekeeper on a farm.

Jonathan died early in 1902, so in the 1911 Census Reginald appears living with just his widowed mother Caroline and older brother Ernest at the Pig and Whistle on Burnt Fen, and Caroline was acting as the pub landlady. Both Ernest and Reginald were farm servants, and on this night there were no boarders. Reginald's sister Alice was also running a public house at this time as she had married Alfred Oakman of Ely in 1900 and the couple were at the Staunch in Over. Alfred's parents ran the Black Bull in Waterside, Ely, which Alfred and Alice took over on their retirement.

Reginald enlisted at Lakenheath on 28th February 1916, was placed in the Reserve and was then attested in May; he arrived in France on 1st August 1916. He was still living at the Pig and Whistle at this time he enlisted and had been working as a horseman on a farm. He was placed in the Royal Garrison Artillery, probably to make the best use of his horse handling skills, as the guns were pulled by teams of horses or mules. His service record on enlistment describes him as 5 feet 8 1/2 inches tall.

Reginald had only been at the Front for a fortnight before he was granted a week of home leave because of the death of his mother Caroline. After this period his sister, Mrs Alice Maud Oakman of Waterside, Ely, appears as Reginald's nominated family contact. His record then shows a week in hospital over the new year (1916/1917). Then on 8th April 1917 Reginald was injured when he was punctured in the left buttock by a splinter from an exploding shell; it was over a fortnight before he was hospitalised in England and the splinter removed from deep within the thigh. He was back with his Battery in July of 1917 and this was followed by two periods of leave early in 1918; the second period of “special leave” was related to the death of Reginald's brother Ernest.

Reginald himself died suddenly of double pneumonia, and the Court of Enquiry carried out into his death stated: *“Gunner Hall..rode down from his battery to his billet in the ration lorry at 6.30 p.m. and as he said he felt unwell he went to bed at 7.30 p.m. About 9.00 p.m. the man lying next to Hall noticed that he was not breathing and went to fetch a doctor. Captain A. Wilson arrived at about 10.00 p.m. and pronounced life extinct.”* It was assumed that the pneumonia had been brought on by the conditions in which he had been working. He was buried at the



nearby British Cemetery at Hazebrouck.

Reginald's Commanding Officer wrote to Alice: "He had been at the battery all day, apparently in the best of health and good spirits. On returning to our rest billets he made no complaint to anyone but about six o'clock laid down and went down to sleep.....Your brother was one of the best men in the section, and one the battery cannot afford to lose."

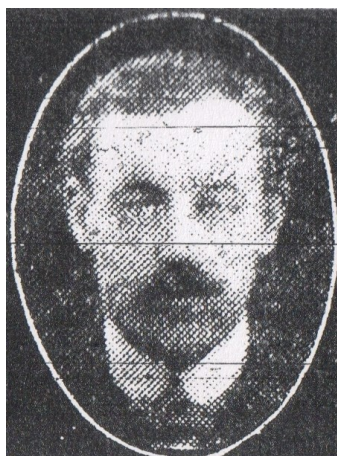
One wonders whether this description of Reginald's death is an indicator that he was one of the early victims of the influenza pandemic which would soon sweep throughout Europe.

On both the Ely Market Place Memorial and Holy Trinity Memorial Alice asked for her brother's name to be recorded as R A J Hall, although in all official documentation a third given name does not appear. He appears on the Kenny Hill Memorials as "Reginald Halls".

The 1921 list of names for the county memorial shows this soldier as "R Albert John Hall" which suggest that in fact he was Reginald for official purposes and "Albert" to his family and friends!

## James Thomas HAMEY

<b>Born</b>	1887
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	1st September 1918, age 30
<b>Buried</b>	Grave I.D.1., Honourable Artillery Company Cemetery, Ecoust-St. Mein, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, The King's (Liverpool Regiment)
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 87764
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



**James Hamey** was the eldest son of John Edward Hamey (1865 Coveney, Cambridgeshire) and his wife Sarah Ann (nee Blowfield 1867 St Neots, Huntingdonshire); his father John was a carter. The Hameys first lived together in Broughton in Huntingdonshire where Millicent was born in 1884, they then moved to Ely where they married in 1887, and where James and his brother Theodore were born in 1887 and 1889 respectively. In 1891 they were living in a cottage on Newnham Street in Ely. More brothers and sisters followed: Frank (1892); Lilian (1895); Margaret (1897); Edward (1900); Harold (1903); and Ellen (1906). By 1911 the family had moved out to West Fen Road and John Hamey described himself not just as an hackney carter, but also as a farmer. In later years his designation was "carter and contractor".

The family attended St Peters Mission Church in Broad Street, and here James was part of Harold Arthur's Confirmation Class. After the War

Harold Arthur paid for a memorial in the church for the young men from the St Peters Class, although on it he remembered James as "John Hamey" - his father's name.

James was apprenticed as a carpenter at the brewery of A & B Hall Ltd on Fore Hill in Ely and worked for them until he enlisted. He was also a member of the Fore Hill Brewery's Ambulance Team. He married Olive Evelyn Whetstone (1891 Witchford, Cambridgeshire) in 1910 and they set up home in Vineyards Lane, Ely, although they later moved to 3 Prickwillow Road. They had two children; Edward (1911) and Gwendoline (1915).

When James was called up to fight in 1916 his employer attempted to gain him exemption from serving. The local newspaper of 16th June 1916 recorded: *"Mr C.H. Trimmer applied for the following employees of Messers. A. and B. Hall Ltd.....James Thos. Hamey (27), carpenter and joiner....applicant presented a list showing that over 24 men had gone to join the colours, and the firm had nothing but the skeleton left...the men he appealed for were absolutely indispensable if the firm were to keep on. He also stated that Messers. A. and B. Hall paid many thousands to the Government every year in duties, taxes and licences...Mr Stockdale, in the course of some discussion, said the breweries would be of no use if the Germans came here.....the Tribunal granted it (exemption) in the following cases.... James Thos. Hamey 3 months.."*

With so many men already at the Front, James was promoted to be yard foreman at the brewery. When his three months exemption was up his employers appealed again to keep him in Ely, but this time the application was refused. James was enlisted in the Royal Engineers (Service Number 217648),

James rose to the rank of corporal with the Royal Engineers, although he was later transferred into the Liverpool Regiment as a private.. He reached France on 12th September 1917. James' battalion took part in battles such as St Quentin, Bapaume, Arras 1918, Estaires, Hazebrouck, Bethune and Albert. James was then killed in action in the Second Battle of Bapaume, a battle which is often regarded as the turning point of the War on the Western Front and the beginning of a great one hundred days offensive. His Battalion had made an attack on Ecoust which was successfully, but with heavy casualties; for James, and forty-five other members of his regiment, 1st September 1918

was not a beginning but the end.

James Hamey was commemorated on both the Holy Trinity Memorial and the Ely Market Place Memorial as well as in St Peter's Church.

### Markham HAMMOND

<b>Born</b>	1873
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	9th December 1914, age 41
<b>Buried</b>	Grave III.F.1., Dranouter Churchyard, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 3/8155
<b>Awards</b>	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Markham aka Mark Hammond** was born in Ely in 1873; he was the son of George Hammond (1842 Wilburton) and his wife Ann (nee Bent 1845 Stretham). Markham was the second of the couple's four sons and there was also a younger sister: his siblings were George (1872 Ely); Walter (1879 Ely); William (1881 Ely); and Mary Ann (1884 Ely). Markham was named after his grandfather and uncle; Markham senior died when his grandson was five years old. The Hammond family lived in New Barns Road, Ely, and Markham's father was an agricultural labourer. George junior and William followed their father into farm work, but the 1891 Census shows that Markham himself was apprenticed to a local basketmaker.

In the 1901 Census only Walter and Mary Ann were left living with their parents and Walter had become a shunter with Great Eastern Railways. George was living a little further down the road with his wife and child and had found employment at one of the local breweries as a drayman. Markham was not with the rest of the family, as on 13th February 1900 he had attested with the Suffolk Regiment (12th Foot) and served for about seven years in India, joining them at Quetta on the North West Frontier until 1902, moving to Karachi and Hyderabad ( now in Pakistan) until 1905, followed by Madras (now Chennai) in Southern India until 1907. "Enroute" home his battalion spent a year in Aden and finally returned to Southampton in 1908; this was the point at which Markham's seven year service period came to an end. He would then have been placed in the Reserve.

In the 1911 Census Markham can be found back in Ely, living with his married brother George, his wife Elizabeth (1872) and their two children in Paradise Cottages, New Barns Road, George was still working as a brewer's drayman, and Markham was back to making baskets. Parents George and Ann Hammond had moved into the Almshouses in St Mary's Street and were cathedral bedesmen, in other words lived in charity sponsored accommodation in return for simple duties and attendance at the cathedral.

With the outbreak of the War the reservists were recalled to the colours and Markham reached France on 23rd November 1914 with the Bedfordshire Regiment. He survived just over a fortnight until he was severely injured and died of wounds at the 15th Field Ambulance Station in the area of Ypres. His Battalion had just reached the Front at Wolverghem and it was actually a "quiet" day except for the occasional sniping and shellfire.....

Markham's effects of £2 7s 5d were sent to his father. He was commemorated on the St Mary's and Holy Trinity Rolls of Honour and the Ely Market Place Memorial. Markham's parents Ann and George died in December 1917 and October 1919 respectively.

## Herbert Reginald Spencer HARRIS and Sydney HARRIS

*Just four men commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial served with Imperial (Commonwealth), rather than British, Regiments; two of them are the Harris brothers who were both born in Ely and were sons of local doctor Spencer Clabon Harris.*

<b>Born</b> <i>Herbert</i>	1885
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	15th August 1916,    age 31
<b>Buried</b>	Grave F. 25, Thistle Dump Cemetery, High Wood, Longueval., Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	45 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Australian Infantry
<b>Rank</b>	Private,    Service Number 394
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

<b>Born</b> <i>Sydney</i>	3rd December 1889
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	26th September 1916,    age 27
<b>Commemorated</b>	Vimy Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	"B" Company, 8th Battalion, Manitoba Regiment, Canadian Infantry
<b>Rank</b>	Sergeant,    Service Number 208
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Spencer Clabon Harris (1854 Mildenhall) and his wife Annie Charlotte Fanny Blatchley (1862 Pimlico, London) had five sons and one daughter: Spencer Frederick (1882 West Ham); Mary Jane (1884 Ely); **Herbert Reginald Spencer aka Reggie** (1885 Ely); Claude (1887 Ely); **Sydney** (1889 Ely); and Arthur Cyril Spencer (1896 Ely). In 1883 Spencer set up a medical practice at the dispensary in St Mary's Street, Ely. Dr Spencer Clabon Harris was a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries (1872), a Licentiate of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (1882) and a Licentiate of Midwifery. He was a member of the Cambridge Medical Society, Medical Officer for the Ely Trinity District, and Public Vaccinator of the Ely Union. He was also Medical Officer of Health for Ely Union District and Medical Referee for several assurance companies.

The family remained residents of Ely until Dr Harris' retirement, when Spencer and Annie moved to Broadwater in Sussex. The censuses show there were usually at least two servants living in their Ely household, and in 1901 there was also a nurse from the hospital and a boarder in residence, while in 1911 there were four servants, a boarder and Annie's mother in the house.

Although Mary remained at home with her parents until her marriage in 1911, her brothers were sent away for their schooling. Claude and Sydney became boarders at Framlingham College in Suffolk. It is recorded that Sydney was at the College from 1902 to 1906 and became a prefect, a member of the Cadet Corps, and won a cap for shooting. (For reasons now unknown, Sydney's name was omitted from the College's War Memorial but his name was placed on an additional plaque added to the memorial in 2008.) The 1901 Census shows that Reggie was a cadet on the floating Thames Nautical Training College H.M.S. Worcester. Eldest brother Spencer followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps and became a medical student at the Middlesex Hospital in London. Claude also ended up in London, as an engineer.

In the end Reggie did not follow a nautical career, although he did make several long sea voyages: the first was on 11th March 1909 when he left Liverpool on the Suevic for Sydney, Australia. The passenger manifest stated that Herbert / Reggie was a draper, but, in common with many young

immigrants in Australia, he ended up working as a labourer.

Meanwhile Sydney worked as a bank clerk, but after four years of service with the Capital and Counties Bank, Limited, in Great Yarmouth, (where he boarded with the Penders at 5 Britannia Terrace) he emigrated to Canada and joined the staff of the Bank of Montreal, working first in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and then later in Winnipeg. At Great Yarmouth he also served for four years with the 6th Battalion of the Norfolk Cyclists and also volunteered with the Canadian Militia after he emigrated.

At the outbreak of the Great War the Harris brothers enlisted in their local expeditionary forces.

Reggie was associated at Sydney in Australia and he and his fellow soldiers of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Australian Imperial Force embarked at Melbourne on 22nd December 1914 on HMAT Ulysses A38. The battalion reached Egypt in February 1915 and from there were amongst the first troops to land on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 25th April 1915. For the first four months, between May and August, the Anzacs attempted to establish themselves on the narrow beachhead that had been captured on the Peninsula. On 8th August, and then 27th August, 1915 the battalion took part in two costly attempts to break out from their position. After this hammering the 13th Battalion was mainly used in a defensive role until the final evacuation of troops from Gallipoli in December 1915. A period of recuperation followed in Egypt, during which the remnants of the battalion were split to form two new battalions along with reinforcements from Australia and New Zealand. Reggie went on to fight on the Western Front with the 45th Battalion and, having survived the horrors of Gallipoli, he was killed in the first major battle in which he took part there—the Battle of Pozieres on the Somme. The ANZACS lost about 23,000 men in this two week battle and Reggie himself was killed in the early stages of the Battle of Mouquet Farm. Sydney was aware of Reggie's death and he wrote home to his parents that his brother had been killed instantly by a shell explosion. He wrote; "Reggie was always fearless in face of danger. Only one week before he died he rescued a wounded Australian who was lying out in No Man's Land under very heavy shell fire."

Sydney himself had enlisted in August 1914, as a Private in the Canadian Infantry, and arrived in France with the First Canadian Contingent in February 1915. His paperwork describes him as 5ft 9 1/2in tall, with a fair complexion, brown hair and blue eyes.

*S. Harris*

Sydney took part in all the operations in which his battalion was engaged in 1915 and 1916 including Ypres, Festubert and the Somme. During the severe fighting on the Somme he was wounded at Courcellette on September 26th, 1916, while advancing to the enemy trenches, and a few hours later he was instantly and tragically killed by shell-fire while waiting to be taken back to the dressing station. He had outlived his brother Reggie by only six weeks.

Reggie is commemorated on Panel 139 of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Sydney is commemorated in the Memorial Room of the Peace Tower in Ottawa's Parliament Buildings. Both brothers are remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and on the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

Their younger brother Arthur survived the War—he had served as a Marconi radio operator.

Herbert "Reggie" Harris



## Zachariah HARRISON

<b>Born</b>	1882
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	28th March 1918, age 35
<b>Commemorated</b>	Bay 4, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 19977
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Zachariah Harrison** was born in Hockwold, Norfolk, in 1882. He was the son of the village's grocer, butcher and draper Grainger Harrison (1845 Little Downham) and his first wife Ellen (nee Pearce, 1855 Walsoken, Norfolk) and had two older brothers William (1875) and Walter (1879). Following the death of Ellen in 1884, in 1885, Grainger remarried and took a much younger wife Sallie (nee Willett 1868 Methwold) with whom he started a second family: Francis (1886); Ernest (1887); Eva (1889); Alfred (1890); Ida (1892); Elsie (1893); Florence (1895); Roger (1896); Edgar (1897); Ethel (1899); Leila (1901); Hilda (1903); Grainger (1905); and Fred (1907), all born in Hockwold.

By 1901 Grainger had given up his shop and was farming, so the family was living at Clouds Farm on Hockwold Fen. All of his sons, including Zachariah, were assisting on the farm. Grainger's widowed mother Maria had come to live with her family. Grainger died early in 1910, so in the 1911 Census it is Sallie who is shown as the farmer at Clouds Farm. Ten of her fourteen children were still living on the farm and assisting her. Zachariah was the only one of her three stepsons who was still with the family, but he is shown as working on his "own account" rather than for his stepmother. Sallie went on to marry William Cox in 1917.

Zachariah moved on from Hockwold to Queen Adelaide to work on the Fenland farms. When called up came he enlisted at Ely with the Suffolk Regiment and fought with the 4th, 9th and finally the 7th Battalions. He was killed in action in the Battle of Arras in which the Germans made an all out attack to break the Allied Line on a ten mile front defending the town of Arras. His Battalion was in the trenches overlooking Wancourt and after three hours of heavy bombardment had to fall back to a new position following the German assault. This battle is generally thought of as a defensive victory for the British, as ultimately the line held, but at the end of the day there were 1,375 soldiers who were killed in action and whose bodies were not later located, and these included Zachariah Harrison.

Usually a soldier designated that his effects should be sent to close relative after his death (most often a parent). Unusually, Zachariah asked that his effects should be divided amongst his family members and the register shows that brothers William, Walter and half brothers Francis, Ernest, Harry, Roger, Edgar, half sisters Eva, Ida, Elsie, Florie, Ethel, Lilia each received six shillings and three pence, while eighteen shillings and six pence went to his stepmother Sallie Cox.

Zachariah is commemorated on the Market Place Memorial. He was also listed on the Roll of Honour in St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide—this church is now a private dwelling.



## Charles HAYLOCK

<b>Born</b>	1879
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	23rd March 1918, age 39
<b>Commemorated</b>	Bay 2, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number T/207003
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Charles Haylock** was born in Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane), Ely, late in 1879 to one of Ely's basket makers William Haylock (1841 Cambridge) and his wife Mary Ann (nee Shilling, 1843 Chatteris). He was one of a large family, his siblings being: Edward (1865); Mary Ann (1867); Sarah Jane (1869); George (1874); Ellen (1876); William (1878); Elizabeth (1881); and Rebecca (1882).

In the 1881 Census Charles' brother Edward was shown apprenticed to his father as a basket maker. In 1891 the family can be found at Crown Point, Ely, with the five youngest children still living with their parents and a new grandson, Albert Haylock (1890 Ely) was also one of the family. At this stage Charles was still at school.

It appears that Charles did not wish to be a basketmaker, as ten years later, in 1901, he was in Leeds, Yorkshire, working as a railway porter. He was living in a boarding house at 86 Wellington Street which was run by Abraham Oddy and his wife, and which was also a hairdressing business.

Charles' father William died in March 1904 in the family home on Waterside.

In 1907 Charles returned to Ely to marry Bertha Cross (1886 Queen Adelaide), and the couple lived for a period in Leeds, while Charles worked for the Great Northern Railway. Here the Haylock's daughter Florence was born in 1909. However, by 1911 they were back in Ely, living in Harlock Lane, and Charles was working as a warehouse porter at a furniture factory or shop. Two sons were then born in Ely, these were Charles (1912) and Frederick (1916). The family were members of Ely Methodist Church.

Charles' mother Mary Ann died in July 1913 in Waterside.

When Charles was called up to serve he enlisted initially in the local Suffolk Regiment (Service Number 299764) on 10th July 1916, although he was later transferred to the Royal West Surrey Regiment. Charles went to France in May of 1917 and, depending at which point he transferred to the Queens, he may have seen service in Italy between November 1917 and March 1918. He was killed in action at the Battle of St Quentin, the Queens' first major battle in France after their return from Italy. His Battalion was dug in north of Beugny but the trenches were subject to a heavy



bombardment followed by an infantry attack in the afternoon. The Germans broke a forty mile section of the British Line on the Somme in this battle and then broke the Reserve Line; as the British troops pulled back to regroup many casualties were left dead in the field and these "missing" men are now commemorated together on the Arras Memorial. One of these was Charles Haylock of Ely.

Bertha received £10 9s from the Army on Charles' death, and a further £6 in 1919. In 1920 Charles' widow Bertha married Charles Walter Porter and with her new husband had a further three children, Gladys (1921), Phyllis (1924) and Eric (1928). Sadly Charles and Bertha's daughter Florence then died, aged thirteen, in April 1922 in the Porters' home at 26 Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane).

Charles was commemorated on the Holy Trinity Memorial as well as the Ely Market Place Memorial. and on the Memorial Plaque in Ely Methodist Church.

## Charles HILLS

<b>Born</b>	1880
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	13th December 1916, age 36
<b>Buried</b>	Grave VIII. E. 9., Australian Imperial Force Burial Ground, Flers, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	5th Battalion, Special Company, Royal Engineers
<b>Rank</b>	Gunner or Pioneer, Service Number 130053
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Charles Hills** (1880 Ely) was one of the younger children of Matthew Hitch Hills (1842 Ely) and his wife Mary Ann (nee Fenn, 1844 Ely). His siblings, also all born in Ely, were: Alice (1866); Mabel (1868); Sarah Ann (1868); Rebecca (1870); Ann (1872); Matthew (1876); William (1878-1884); Russell (1882); and Susan (1884).

In the 1881 Census the Hills family was living in Cow Lane, Ely, (now West Fen Road) and father Matthew was working as a farm labourer.

Mary Ann died in 1898. The family gradually dispersed and in 1901 Matthew was living in West Fen Road with just Mabel, Charles and Russell. Charles was working as a journeyman plumber.

In 1904 Charles married Susan Pope, they had three children called Charles Henry (1906), John (1907), and Frances Olive (1910). The family home was at 13 Hills Lane, Ely and Charles was working as a house painter as well as a plumber for Mr G. Ashby of St Mary's Street—in fact he ended up working for Mr Ashby for over twenty years.



It may be because of his plumbing expertise that during the War Charles was placed in a Special Company or Special Brigade of the Royal Engineers, as these specialists handled poison gas discharges from cylinders and gas shells, as well as mortars and flame throwers. His officer wrote to Susan: *"Your husband had the good word of all. In camp he was always fair and wanted fairness and he worked hard and unselfishly. In the field he was cool and brave, only a few weeks ago he performed an act of heroism that we all knew and admired him for."* The letter was signed by nineteen NCOs.

Charles perished on a day of heavy bombardment all along the Somme. He was killed instantaneously by a shell and buried in one of the small Somme graveyards; his body was later moved to Flers.

Susan was granted Charles' effects of £13 6s 3d after his death.

Charles is remembered on the St Mary's Memorial and the Ely Market Place Memorial.

## Albert Matthew HITCH

<b>Born</b>	1899
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	8th April 1918, age 19
<b>Buried</b>	Grave V.D.7., Bucquoy Road Cemetery, Ficheux, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 20698
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Albert Matthew Hitch** was born in the summer of 1899 at 3 Millers Square off Broad Street, Ely. His father Matthew Hitch (1851 Ely) was a carman working for Great Eastern Railways and his mother was Eliza (nee Watts, 1865 Lakenheath). Albert was the couple's oldest son and had a younger brother Henry Clifford (1900 Ely) and younger sister Ivy (1908 Ely), as well as an older half sister on his mother's side, Blanche Watts (1894 Welney Bridge).

Eliza was Matthew's second wife, as his first wife, Sarah Hutchinson (1850 Ely) had died in 1897. From this first marriage Albert had ten half brothers and sisters, although none of them appear to have lived with Matthew and Eliza after Albert's birth. This first family consisted of Ann (1870), John (1870-1910), Louisa (1871), William (1872), Susan (1873), Robert (1881), Ellen (1883), John (1885), George (1890) and Edward (1892).

The 1911 Census shows that the family had moved a couple of streets away to Potters Lane and that Matthew was at this point unemployed, although he showed his trade as agricultural labourer and could perhaps have been dependent on seasonal work on the farms. Albert was still at school, but was also bringing in a small income for the family as a baker's errand boy. Later Matthew did gain a farming job with accommodation, and the family moved to Common Road Farm, Ely, however, he then died in April 1914. Blanche had moved out of the family home by 1911 and was a live in servant in the home of the Snells who were florists in Board Street.

The family attended St Peters Mission Church in Broad Street, and here Albert was part of Harold Arthur's Confirmation Class. They were then living in Winfarthing Lane.

Albert worked for a period for newsagents W. H. Smith and Son, and then, in November 1915, followed his father on to the railways and worked as a greaser at Ely. He had a fiancée—Elsie.

When he was of age, Albert enlisted in the Coldstream Guards at Newmarket in November 1917. His enlistment followed shortly after the death of his mother Eliza, at the family home in Ship Lane, in September 1917. Albert was at the Front for four months and in 1918 his battalion fought in the Battle of St Quentin, the Battle of Bapaume, and the First Battle of Arras. He was killed in action on a day of heavy bombardment by the Germans along most of the line of the Front.

Albert's effects were granted to the support of his sister Ivy (who was then only ten years old and now an orphan) and consisted of £11 16s 11d on his death and a further £5 10s in 1919.

Albert is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial, the Memorial in St Peter's Church and, as he was an employee of Great Eastern Railways, he is also commemorated on the GER Memorial which is now situated in Liverpool Street Station, London.



## Herbert James HOLLIDAY

<b>Born</b>	1898
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	31st December 1917, age 19
<b>Buried</b>	Grave F174 Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt
<b>Unit</b>	Machine Gun Corps
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 100371
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Herbert James Holliday** was born in Bluntisham, Huntingdonshire, to Herbert Gibson Holliday (1873 Stonea, Cambridgeshire) and Annie Elizabeth (nee Carter, 1870 Sutton, Cambridgeshire). Herbert had three younger brothers including Ernest Daniel ( Bluntisham 1901) and Horace (1905 Bluntisham). The family lived in Little London, off Station Road, in Bluntisham and Herbert senior worked as a shepherd.

In 1906-1907 the family moved to Bradford Farm, Soham Road, Stuntney, near Ely, where Herbert senior was employed as a shepherd. Here Albert was born in 1908. When he left school Herbert joined his father as an assistant shepherd, working for Mr Cole Ambrose. The farm on which he worked was described as “a conglomeration, consisting of market gardening, agriculture, horse breeding, seed business, cauliflower picking etc”. This was probably Bradford Farm at Stuntney, as this was where his parents were living when he was killed.

When conscription was introduced Herbert's employer, petitioned the Local Appeals Tribunal for conditional exemption from service for several of his key employees, including Herbert in his role as assistant shepherd. In January 1917 Herbert received three months exemption from service until 30th April and was ordered to join the Volunteer Force (service number 3724) . Both the Military and Herbert's employer appealed against the result of the tribunal and the case was retried early in March—the original decision was confirmed, so in May 1917 Herbert enlisted at Newmarket and was placed in the Machine Gun Corps (Egyptian Expeditionary Force).

On 30th December 1917 the troopship SS Aragon arrived at the Egyptian harbour of Alexandria with 2,700 troops on board, bound for the conflict in Palestine; she was forced to lay off shore as there was no room to berth, and here she was torpedoed by a German submarine. Just as the hunt for survivors of the sinking was being called off, fleet auxiliary craft HMS Osmanieh was hit by a mine in the same area and went down taking 197 soldiers and nurses with her. Herbert was on board the Osmanieh. It is probable that Herbert had not seen any fighting since he enlisted and was actually part of a group of reinforcements heading for their first posting with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. Coincidentally, another Ely man, Herbert Beamiss, had died in those same waters the day before with the sinking of the Aragon.



After the War Herbert's name was placed on the memorial in Stuntney's Holy Cross Church as well as on the main Ely War Memorial. A book of photographs called “Stuntney Heroes” was also created and kept initially in the church and included the photograph shown here of Herbert James Holliday. His parents had moved to The Gravel Farm, Stretham, Ely, by the time of the construction of the War Memorials.



## George Dixon HOWLETT

<b>Born</b>	1896
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	31st October 1917, age 21
<b>Buried</b>	Grave M 67, Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel
<b>Unit</b>	15th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 3/8848 later 320780
<b>Awards</b>	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**George Dixon Howlett** (1896 Ely) was the youngest son of John Nixon Howlett (1862 Wicken, Cambridgeshire) and Ellen Simpkin (1862 Wicken). His older siblings were: James (1884 Swaffham Prior); John (1884 Swaffham Prior); Sarah (1886 Upware, Cambridgeshire); Arthur (1890 Ely); Alley aka Alice Victoria (1891 Ely); and Edith (1893 Ely).

George's father John was originally an agricultural labourer, although in his youth he had also served with the local militia. By the time of George's birth the family was residing in Ely's Waterside and John was working as a gas stoker for the local Gas Company. In the next census, that of 1901, they can be found in West Fen Road and John's employment is listed as bricklayer's labourer.

George's mother Ellen died in March 1908 in the family home in Broad Street.

In the 1911 Census John and his children can be seen to have moved home again and were living in Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane), Ely. Yet again John had changed his employment and was then working as a gardener's labourer. George himself had left school and was working as a farm labourer and his brother James was also working on a farm, as a horsekeeper. George's brother Arthur was on leave from the army and with his family on census night.



George also decided to enlist for a period in the Regular Army, and when the War broke out he was stationed with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment at the Curragh in Ireland. His battalion was immediately mobilised for France and George quickly reached the Front on 22nd September 1914. George fought at the Battle of Le Cateau where the 2nd Battalion suffered heavy casualties. Throughout 1915 and 1916 George and the Suffolks were in action around Ypres, Loos, the Eloi Craters and on the Somme. George served alongside his older brother James and, by coincidence, the two were wounded on the same day and at the same time in September 1916—George was shot through the neck and shoulder while James was wounded in the left hand.

George spent time in hospital in Manchester and then at home recovering. When the time came to return to active service George was transferred into the 15th Battalion of the Suffolks which was formed up in January 1917 to fight in the Middle East under Sir

George Allenby. He was sent out to the Middle East in February. Here George was badly injured during the capture of Beersheba, in the Third Battle of Gaza, and died of his wounds.

George's father John was sent his effects of £5 17s 6 upon his death, and a further £14 10s in 1919.

George was the brother-in-law of James Dalton who also appears on the Ely Market Place Memorial. He was also in the same battalion as Percy Fox, who survived the same battle in which George died, only to perish later a few miles from Jerusalem.

## Henry James HUDSON

<b>Born</b>	1886
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	7th October 1917, age 31
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 85 to 86, Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	2nd Battalion, Border Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 23089
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Henry James Hudson** was born to the north of Norwich in the small village of Booton, St Faiths, in 1886. His father was a farm labourer called James Hudson (1847 Booton, Norfolk) and his mother Harriet Ann Coxford (1851) was from nearby Corpusty. The family lived in Norwich Road, Booton, where Henry and his siblings Edith (1883), Robert (1889) and Ida (1893) were born. Although Henry is shown as Henry James Hudson on his military papers, he was registered as Henry John at birth. The 1901 Census shows that Henry had followed his father's trade and had become a farm labourer.

Henry's ten year old sister Ida died in 1903.

Henry moved away from Booton into Mid-Norfolk where he married Phoebe Bessie King (1886) in her home village of Brisley on May 29th 1909. Later the couple moved to the Norfolk / Suffolk border where their son Reginald George was born at West Lowestoft in 1910. Soon after Reginald's birth they moved to Ely, where Olive May was born early in 1911. Two more children followed, these were Muriel in 1912 and Edward James in 1914. The 1911 Census shows the family resided in Cambridge Road, Ely, and Henry described his trade as Jobbing Gardener.

On 28th January 1915 Henry enlisted at Ely in the 3rd Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment (Service Number 18792) and joined his regiment at Norwich on 2nd February. His forms show he was 5 feet 7 inches tall, weighed 115 lbs and that his physical development was good. He trained with the regiment at Felixstowe until 7th May 1915. In the period while Henry was training with the Norfolks his one year old son Edward died back in Ely on 15th March 1915.

Henry is one of the few soldiers whose medical records survive and these clearly show the dangers faced by all soldiers. The records begin when Henry was temporarily hospitalised in mid February 1916 with first a gunshot wound in the back, then again soon afterwards with a "trivial" contusion of the chest. A fortnight later, on 13th March, he was accidentally wounded and in hospital for a fortnight—an event investigated by the authorities. On 19th May 1916 he was treated at the 20th General Hospital for a gunshot wound to the face and was back in the same hospital on 26th May again with a gunshot wound to the face—it is not clear from the record if this was a second unlucky wound, or problems with the first injury. On 28th June 1916 Henry was wounded in the thigh by shrapnel and the record shows he did not reach the 21st Field Ambulance Hospital until 1st July; a fortnight later he was transferred to the General Hospital at Rouen.

Henry was transferred to the 8th Battalion of the Border Regiment when he was released from hospital on 29th July 1916. On 8th September Henry was admitted to the local Field Hospital suffering from enteritis, no doubt brought on by the unhygienic conditions in the trenches. He was hospitalised at Boulogne and was not fit to rejoin his battalion until 6th October.

On 27th October 1916 he was back in hospital again, having been wounded on the 25th, and this time his wounds were serious enough for him to be transferred back to England, to the Red Cross Hospital at Christchurch in Hampshire. Henry had serious



gunshot injuries in his left thigh and back and was not finally discharged from hospital until 20th February 1917; he was then sent for a further month to the Convalescent Hospital at Woodcote Park, Epsom. Finally he was granted three days furlough back home in Ely before returning to the Front at the end of March 1917; this may have been the last time he saw his family.

Henry was finally killed in action fighting with the 2nd Battalion of the Border Regiment as the Germans attacked in the area around Ypres in what was to be known as the Battle of Passchendaele. Henry's Battalion was east of Zonnebeke on the line from the Menin Road to Ypres Staden Railway. Henry was at this point a batman to the regimental chaplain the Rev'd E. E. Acton, and, as the battalion was short of men, the batmen were being used to run with messages. He was only a few yards behind the front line with a message and was lying down taking cover when he was hit by a piece of shrapnel and killed outright. The chaplain told Phoebe that she would be sent Henry's possessions once his body was buried but "of course burying him at the moment is impossible, as it would risk lives". In fact, after the fighting moved on, Henry's body was one of the many which was not identified or recovered. He is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing.

Rev'd Acton wrote to Phoebe: "*I chose him three months ago for my servant, and always found him a brick. He was an honest, outspoken, Christian and his influence with the other servants was a good one. I feel quite desolate now he is gone...I feel sure he was ready to lay down his life, although his thoughts were always with you and the children,*" The chaplain also asked for the names of the couple's three children, as he wished to make some provision for them.

Phoebe received Henry's pay of 3s 6d until 21st April 1918, when it was terminated, she was also granted a "separation allowance" following his death of £1 4s 6d. Early in 1921 Henry's widow Phoebe married Abel Coates.

Henry is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and on the Memorial in St Mary's Church.