

Frank Ewart LAMBERT

Born	1894
Killed in Action or Died	26th September 1917, age 23
Buried	Grave XIII. D. 13, Hooze Crater Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	1 st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Sergeant, Service Number 325103
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Frank Ewart Lambert was the son of John Lambert (1858 Isleham) and his wife Rebecca (nee Houghton, 1858 Isleham). John was a wheelwright and he and his family had lived first in Isleham, where the three eldest boys Ernest (1882), Harold (1885) and Arthur (1889) were born. They then moved first to Coldham Lane in Cambridge, then to Waterside in Ely, where Fred (1891), Frank himself (1894), and Maud (1897) were born. In the 1901 Census Ernest and Harold were working in Waterside with their father as wheelwright's apprentices.

Following the death of Frank's father John in 1904, the family began to split up, and by the 1911 Census only Fred, Frank and Maud were still living at the house in Waterside. Frank had become a journeyman painter and plumber, and Fred was working as a brewer's clerk. Ernest had married and was still living in Ely and working as a carpenter, but Harold, who had also married, was a waterworks superintendent at Brandon in Norfolk, while Arthur was working as a letterpress compositor and living in Uxbridge.

Frank was a member of the City of Ely Band and played the euphonium—the photograph to the right shows him in the Band's group photograph of 1914. Five of the band members died in the War.

Frank worked as a painter and plumber for Mr George Ashby of St Mary's Street, Ely. He was "*respected by his employer and all who knew him*".



Frank was amongst the first young men of Ely to volunteer to fight in the War and enlisted with the local Cambridgeshire Regiment (originally service number 1212). Frank and the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment reached France on 14th February 1915. He fought on the Western Front for two and a half years, during which time he was promoted to Sergeant. The Battles in which the Battalion was engaged included: 1915 The action of St Eloi, The Second Battle of Ypres; 1916, The fighting on the Ancre, The Battle of Thiepval Ridge, The Battle of the Ancre heights, The Battle of the Ancre.; 1917 The Battle of Pilkem Ridge, The Battle of Langemarck, The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge. On the day Frank was killed the Cambridgeshires were attacking at Tower Hamlets Ridge, an area of flat ground pitted with shell holes which was still being shelled. When they advanced at 5.50 a.m. the German machine guns took a heavy toll and Frank died alongside Ely men Albert Prior and James Fitch who fell in the same attack. The brief newspaper report of his death states he was an acting sergeant-major when he died, although this does not appear on his medal card.



Frank's effects were divided amongst his family after his death, with his mother Rebecca receiving £17, and each of his siblings £3 11s 8d.

Frank was commemorated on the Holy Trinity Memorial and the Ely Market Place Memorial.

Stanley Diver LAMBERT

Born	1894
Killed in Action or Died	1st July 1916, age 22
Commemorated	Pier and Face 1 C and 2 A , Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Unit	11 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 16256
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Stanley Lambert was born in March, Cambridgeshire, in 1894.

In the 1901 Census Stanley can be found living with his uncle and aunt, James Brown (1849, Isleham) and Elizabeth (nee Lambert, 1852, Isleham), in a home on the River Bank, West Row, at Prickwillow. James Brown was a horsekeeper on one of the local farms. James and Elizabeth had lived in West Row for many years and raised their own sons James (1878) and Arthur (1881) here. Elizabeth came from a large family, and Stanley appears to be the son of her brother Matthew and his wife Clara Metcalf, whom she and James had agreed to raise.

By 1911 Stanley was also working as a farm labourer. He was living in the household of his employer, Josiah Ambrose (1858 Littleport) at Burnt Fen near Prickwillow. Stanley's aunt Elizabeth had died, but his uncle was still living in West Row with Ruth Pamment (1861 West Row).

Stanley was one of several young Ely men who enlisted with the 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, originally a Territorial Battalion, and was finally mobilised for War in January 1916. Stanley survived six months at the Front and was killed in action on the first day of the first major battle in which the 11th Battalion took part—the Battle of Albert—when his Battalion was part of the attack towards La Boisselle. This was in fact the first day of the great Battle of the Somme, and the day on which four Ely men fighting with the Suffolk Regiment perished together; the bodies of three of these men were not found, and this included Stanley Lambert.

Stanley is commemorated on the Prickwillow War Memorial as well as in Ely Market Place.

William LAVENDER

Born	1888
Killed in Action or Died	27th March 1918, age 30
Commemorated	Panel 25, Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France
Unit	7 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 325088
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

William Lavender was the second son of John Lavender (1856, Ely) and Eliza (nee Cross, 1856 Ely). He and his siblings were all born in Ely: Hannah (1875); Kate (1878); Harry (1879); Ethel (1881); William (1888); John (1890); and Joseph (1893).

John Lavender worked as a farm labourer (1881, 1891) and gardener's labourer (1901). The Lavender family lived permanently with four other families in the "Plough and Fleece" public house in St Mary's Street, Ely. In the 1901 Census, although William was at school, he also had his first job, as an errand boy for a fish salesman. His older brother Harry was then employed as a groom.

William's sister Kate died in 1895, his father John died in 1908 and finally his mother Eliza died in July 1910, all at the Plough and Fleece. William had moved out of the pub, as in 1907 he had married Florence Esther Rigden (1889 Kingston on Thames, Surrey) and they had a son William (1908). For a period William's brother Harry lived with the family in their home at 3 Barton Road, Ely. William



The Lavender brothers—William is on the left

worked as a brewer's labourer, and Harry was still a groom in 1911. In the end William worked for almost fifteen years in total for Messers Cutlack and Harlock's brewery.

At the outbreak of the War William was already a member of the Territorials which he had joined on 31st July 1914, and so he fought first with the Cambridgeshire Regiment (Service Number 1162). He went out to France for the first time in January 1917 and was then invalided out the following May with pneumonia and pleurisy. He was transferred to the Suffolk Regiment and returned to the Front with them in January of 1918. On 21st March 1918 there was chaos along the Western Front as the Germans drove the Allied Forces back over the Somme battlefield. William's unit were defending the Albert Bridge Head (on the Albert–Amiens Road) on 26th March; from here they were driven back about three hundred yards where they succeeded in holding the new position for a further two days. William fell in defence of the new position. The German tide was finally turned on 8th August, but during the intervening weeks over 14,000 were killed in action and their bodies "lost". These men are commemorated together on the Pozieres Memorial, including William Lavender. *"..news of his death occasioned widespread regret in the district where he was extremely well known.."*

William's widow Florence appears to have had a daughter, Joan, in 1920, two years after her husband's death.

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

Geoffrey LAWRENCE

Born	1893
Killed in Action or Died	24th November 1918, age 25
Buried	Grave 5. E. 13., Dar Es Salaam War Cemetery, Tanzania
Unit	1 st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment, attached to the 6 th Depot, King's African Rifles
Rank	Sergeant, Service Number 32503
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Geoffrey Lawrence (1893 Ely) was the illegitimate son of twenty year old Louisa Lawrence (1873 Ely). Louisa left her son with her parents and moved to work in London, where she married Alfred Willie Hobbs (1873 Ringwood, Hampshire) in Wandsworth in 1898, and settled first in South Wimbledon, then in Balham. Through his mother's marriage Geoffrey had a half sister called Elsie (1900 Wimbledon).

The 1901 Census shows Geoffrey was living on Back Drove, Middle Fen, with his grandparents William Lawrence (1847, Ely) and Harriet (1849, Stuntney). Grandfather William described himself as a small farmer. Further along the drove was the home of Geoffrey's uncle William Lawrence (1881 Stuntney) and his family; William was a horsekeeper. A couple of years later, in 1903 Geoffrey's grandmother died.

It is unsurprising that Geoffrey himself became a farm labourer; in the 1911 Census he was living in Queen Adelaide and boarding with his employer Charles Smith (1841 Ely) who was both a farmer and a publican. Geoffrey appears to have effectively been running the farm with his employer's son Fred Smith (1885 Queen Adelaide). Geoffrey's uncle William and aunt Rose continued to take a particular interest in their nephew and it appears that they are the ones who later had the unhappy task of arranging for him to be commemorated on the Queen Adelaide board in the cathedral and on the Ely (Market Place and Holy Trinity) Memorials—by this time they themselves were running the Plough Inn in Ely.

Geoffrey enlisted with the Cambridgeshire Regiment (originally Service Number 1485) and was wounded while serving on the Western Front. He subsequently took, and passed, an examination as a result of which he was attached as a sergeant to the King's African Rifles. He was with the KAR for a year in Europe before being sent to Africa in September of 1917. The KAR he joined was made up of white British officers and native troops, and was responsible for the security of the British colonial territories in Africa. With the outbreak of the War in Europe the KAR had been placed on a war footing against the German colonial troops under General von Lettow-Vorbeck and were in urgent need of reinforcements. Nearly 400,000 Allied soldiers, sailors, merchant marine crews, builders, bureaucrats, and support personnel participated in the East Africa campaign and these were assisted in the field by an additional 600,000 African bearers. It is estimated 9% of the British troops in action in this area died, but twice as many of these died of disease as were killed in action. This was what happened to Geoffrey—his aunt and uncle received a telegram on 20th November 1918 to say that he was dangerously ill with influenza / pneumonia.

The Germans in East Africa surrendered on 23rd November 1918, twelve days after the European Armistice, and Geoffrey died one day later of his pneumonia in Labora, Dar Es Salaam.

Geoffrey Lawrence was commemorated on both the Ely Market Place and Holy Trinity Memorials. He was also listed on the Roll of Honour in St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide—this church is now a private dwelling.



Harry LAWRENCE

Born	7th June 1897
Killed in Action or Died	23rd October 1917, age 20
Buried	Grave XII. E. 19., Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Westvleteren, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	8 th Battalion Norfolk Regiment
Rank	Lance Corporal, Service Number 20409
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Harry Lawrence (1897 Ely) was the fifth of the six children of Joseph Lawrence (1860 Ely) and Mary Day (1852, Ely). His older brothers and sisters were Joseph (1884 London), Emily (1886 Ely), Louise (1891 Ely) and James (1894 Ely) and his younger brother Frederick (1901 Ely).

Joseph and Mary had married and lived for a few years in West Ham, but returned to their home town of Ely where they lived in West End and Joseph worked as a carpenter. By 1901 the family had moved to Newnham Street and Joseph had his own carpentry and building business, employing several men. Including his eldest son Joseph. The 1911 Census shows that Emily and James also assisted in the family business, and this is probably what Harry also was originally destined to do once he left school. Harry was also an able singer, as he was a boy chorister at Ely Cathedral from 1905 to 1912.

The Lawrences moved away from Ely and Joseph and Mary farmed at Harrison Farm, East Tuddenham, East Dereham, Norfolk, then at Mill Farm, Elsing. Harry's sister Emily married George Curtis in 1912 and remained at Ely. Harry himself was living in Kings Lynn at the time he was called up, and he enlisted in the 3rd Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment on 20th June 1916, just a few days after his nineteenth birthday.

Harry was a well known athlete and a *"fine tall lad"*, so it is not surprising that when he trained at Felixstowe he was identified to be a gym instructor and made a Lance Corporal. As a result he did not go out to France until 7th August 1917, where he survived just two and a half months, fighting first with the 9th Battalion, then with the 8th Battalion. Harry was shot during the Battle of Passchendaele and died of wounds at one of the Casualty Clearing Stations which were posted at Dozinghem.

Joseph and Mary Lawrence ultimately returned to Ely and are buried in Ely Cemetery (in 1934 and 1943 respectively); Harry is remembered on their gravestone with the words "our dear son Harry who was killed in the Great War". It echoed the words they had had inscribed on his gravestone: "Dearly loved by us all—called away from us but not forgotten". Harry is commemorated on the Choristers' memorial in Ely Cathedral as well as on Ely Market Place and in St Mary's Church.

Walter LAWRENCE

Born	1892
Killed in Action or Died	13th February 1919, age 27
Buried	Grave O. B. "U." 185., Newark-Upon-Trent Cemetery, Nottinghamshire,
Unit	612 th Motor Transport Company., Royal Army Service Corps
Rank	Private, Service Number M2/156231
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Walter Lawrence was the youngest son of Abraham Lawrence (1853, Clayway, Ely) and his wife Hannah (nee Cross, 1855 Ely). The Lawrence children were all born in what was known as Clayway, Ely, which was part of the group of cottages which made up part of Queen Adelaide: Nathan (1874), Charlotte (1877), Henry (1878), George (1881), William (1884), Jane (1887), Ethel (1890), Walter (1892), Anna (1895) and Emily (1901). Abraham was a general labourer and also the sexton at St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide, and the family lived for many years in their cottage on Waterden Fen near Queen Adelaide. Walter was a member of the St Etheldreda's church choir.

By the time of the 1911 Census Walter was employed as a groom cum gardener in the household of Dr William George Dunwoody at 38 Lombard Street, Newark-upon-Trent, Nottinghamshire. Back in Queen Adelaide, only his youngest sisters Anna and Emily were still living with Abraham and Hannah.

Late in 1915 Walter married Mary Elizabeth Selby (1890 Stainby, Lincolnshire) at Newark. Mary was a cook who worked in Newark Hospital. The couple lived at 42 Hatton Gardens, Newark and Walter worked as a motor driver for a local brewer.

Walter enlisted in Royal Army service Corps where his driving skills were put to good use as a member of the 612th Motor Transport Company. The 612th MTC was an auxiliary company which formed in January 1916 and remained at York throughout the War as the 24th Local Auxiliary Company. Walter, however, was soon posted away to the Front, and spent almost three years in France.

Walter survived the War but died in Newark Military Hospital a few months later of pneumonia; Mary was at his side to the end. His employer has applied for him to be returned to work at the brewery, but, at Dunkirk, Walter caught a bad chill while enroute home (perhaps the influenza that was then sweeping through Europe) and was so anxious to continue his journey that he did not seek medical advice. He arrived home "in a bad way" and was rushed to the nearest military hospital, but by this time the pneumonia had progressed too far, and he passed away the following morning.

Walter is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial, the Holy Trinity Roll of Honour, and on the Memorial in St Mary's Church, Newark on Trent. He was also listed on the Roll of Honour in St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide—this church is now a private dwelling.

Alfred LAYTON

Born	1885
Killed in Action or Died	8th February 1915, age 29
Commemorated	Panel 21, Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 3/9442
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Alfred Layton was born in Ely in the autumn of 1885; almost exactly two years later his father John Joseph Layton (1846, Ely) died on August 23rd 1887. His mother Mary (nee Dewey, 1847, Witchford) was left with six children in the household and no steady income. John Layton had been a labourer with Great Eastern Railways. Alfred's five older siblings were Elizabeth (1867 Witchford), William (1871, Witchford), Walter (1875 Witchford), Frederick (1879, Witchford), and George (1881 Ely). Sadly a year after John's death, in 1888, the family also lost thirteen year old Walter.

In the 1891 Census the family had moved from Walpole Lane to Ely's Broad Street. Widowed Mary had her three youngest children at home; the only one of the family in work was fourteen year old Frederick who was a baker's assistant.

Late in 1894 Mary married farm worker John Frazer (1842, Barmer, Norfolk) who moved into the house on Broad Street with Mary, Frederick and Alfred. Mary worked as a washerwoman, Frederick became a builder's labourer and Alfred was a farm worker.

Alfred's mother Mary died just after the outbreak of the War, in late August 1914. Alfred volunteered to fight soon afterwards.

In October 1914 Alfred originally intended to enlist with the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, but was soon placed in the Suffolk Regiment. Alfred reached the Front early in 1915 but did not survive very long before he was killed in action in the area of Ypres. Alfred served with many other Ely men who wrote home to their families about his death. The letter from his friend Herbert Page was the one featured in the local newspaper: *"I'm sorry to say that my Sunday School chum who used to go to chapel with me in days gone by, poor old Alfred Layton, was filling a sandbag when a sniper spotted him."* Herbert Page himself was killed a year later.

Alfred's effects were divided amongst his siblings after his death. William received £3 in 1919 and the others all received £1 9s 4d in October of 1915. He did not leave anything for his stepfather John Frazer who actually died in February 1917.

Alfred is commemorated on both the Holy Trinity and Ely Market Place Memorials.



Thomas LAYTON

Born	6th November 1898
Killed in Action or Died	21st September 1918, age 19
Buried	Grave II. A. 7 , Meath Cemetery, Villers-Guislain, Nord, France
Unit	1 st Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
Rank	Private, Service Number G/25299
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Thomas Layton was born late in 1898 to Thomas Layton (1873 Ely) and Ann (nee Chapman 1867, Littleport).

In the 1901 Census Thomas and his mother Ann were living with his Chapman grandparents in Fieldside, Ely. His grandfather Thomas Chapman was a farm worker and his uncle Robert, who also lived in the house, was a bricklayer, while Ann was working as a washerwoman. Also in the household was Thomas' half brother John Chapman (1894 Bluntisham).

Thomas first attended the Ely Boys School in Silver Street and was then selected as one of the top boys of his year to be offered a free place at Needhams School on Back Hill, which he entered on 13th February 1911.

In the 1911 Census Thomas Layton senior and Ann were still living in Fieldside, Ely, with Thomas junior and two more children, Anne Rose (1902 Ely) and George Arthur (1909 Ely). Thomas senior was a chimney sweep and John Chapman had taken up farm work. Ann was pregnant, and four more young Laytons were to follow : John (1911), Dorothy (1912), Janet (1914) and Vera (1915).

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

In May 1915 Thomas was employed by Great Eastern Railways as a clerk at Ely Station.

On 20th January 1917 Thomas enlisted in the 29th Training Reserve Battalion at Newmarket and later went to France with the Queen's where he served for nearly twelve months. In 1918 his battalion took part in the Battle of Messines, the Battle of Hazebrouck, the Battle of Bailleul, the defence of Neuve Eglise, the First Battle for Kemmel Ridge, the fighting for and recapture of Ridge Wood and the Battle of the Epehy on the outposts of the German Hindenburg Line. He died in the fields between "Targelle Ravine" and "Pigeon Ravine" near the village of Meath, where he is buried. His Battalion had been engaged in attacking the enemy lines in the Tregelle Valley and suffered significant casualties from machine gun fire.



The local newspaper reported: " His death came as a great shock to his parents who were expecting him home on leave any day."

The family's choice of words to mark his gravestone was the simple message of regret and acceptance: "Thy Will be Done".

Thomas' effects of £3 13s were sent to his mother Ann.

Thomas is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and on the Memorial in St Mary's Church as well as at the Countess of Huntingdon's Free Church. As Thomas was an employee of Great Eastern Railways he is also commemorated on the GER Memorial which is situated in Liverpool Street Station, London.

Benjamin LEE

Born	1895
Killed in Action or Died	10th April 1915, age 20
Buried	Grave I. E. 8. La Clytte Military Cemetery, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 15507
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

George Lee (1864, Queen Adelaide, Ely) and his wife Eliza Day (1872, Ely) raised a family in Queen Adelaide (then known simply as "Adelaide"); Benjamin was their second son. The Lee children were: David (1892); **Benjamin** (1895); Emily (1897); George (1899); Ann (1903); John (1905); and Arthur (1908).

Benjamin's father, like most men living in the Fens, was a farm worker but Benjamin's widowed grandfather Thomas Lee (1841 Queen Adelaide) was working as a platelayer for Great Eastern Railway and living with the family in Prickwillow Road, aka Padnal Short Drove, at the time of the 1901 and 1911 Censuses. The latter census shows that Benjamin and his older brother followed their father onto the farms when they left school. Thomas was still working for GER, despite being 72 years old, and would have been a constant presence in Benjamin's life, as he outlived his grandson (died April 1925).

Benjamin was amongst the first to enlist (on 21st September 1914) and after a time stationed at Bury St Edmunds, and without the opportunity to have one last visit home, he was sent to France with the Suffolk Regiment on 17th February 1915, where he survived less than two months. The Cambridge Independent Press of 23rd April 1915 carried the news:

"The death has occurred at a hospital in France of Pte. B. Lee, the son of Mr and Mrs Lee, of Adelaide Fen, Ely. He was in the 2nd Suffolks, which he joined on September 21st as a recruit. In a letter which Mrs Lee has received from "H. Marshall, chaplain to the 8th Field Ambulance, 3rd Division, it is stated that Pte. Lee "came to the hospital on the morning of April 10th, with a wound in his head. He was unconscious all the time, and passed away about 11.00 a.m. I was able to be with him at the end, and say the last prayer for him. We buried him late in the afternoon in our little soldiers' cemetery. His grave will be marked with a cross, on which his name will be inscribed, and the soldiers will plant flowers there." the writer expressed his sympathy, and concluded with congratulations on such a heroic son."

Benjamin was killed in the lines at Vierstraat during a "quiet" time—the fact that he was killed by a shot to the head suggests he fell victim to an enemy sniper.

Benjamin's effects, sent to his father George, consisted of £4 5d in 1915 and £3 after the War.

Benjamin Lee was commemorated on the Holy Trinity and Market Place Memorials in Ely. He was also listed on the Roll of Honour in St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide—this church is now a private dwelling.

An "In Memoriam" notice for Benjamin in 1921 tells us that his brother David "died February 12th 1921, of illness contracted when serving his country, age 29 years".



Ernest LEE

Born	1895
Killed in Action or Died	4th August 1916, age 21
Buried	Grave I. B. 31., Flatiron Copse Cemetery, Mametz, Somme, France
Unit	11 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 15716
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Ernest Lee was the youngest of the three sons of Richard Lee (1859 Ely) and his wife Elizabeth Bailey (1859 Soham). Ernest was born in Ely in 1895, but his brothers were ten years older: James (1884 Soham) and Arthur (1886 Soham).

Richard and Elizabeth had married in Haringey (London) when Richard was working there, but came back to live with Elizabeth's father William Bailey (1835 Soham) in Brook Street, Soham, once they started their family. Richard Lee was working as a labourer at the time of his marriage, but on returning home found employment as a milkman aka cowman on a local farm.

By the 1901 Census the Lees were living in the aptly named Cow Lane, Ely (now West Fen Road) at Waterloo Cottages. Both Elizabeth's widowed father William Bailey and Richard's widowed father James Lee (1827, Ely) were then sharing the family home. Grandfather James Lee died a few days after the 1901 census, and grandfather William Bailey died in July 1906 in the workhouse .

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



In 1911 Ernest was the only son left living with his parents at their home in West Fen Road; he had left school and was working as a shepherd. James and Arthur had both enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment and were serving together in India; Arthur had been promoted to Corporal.

In the autumn of 1912 Ernest's mother Elizabeth died.

Ernest was one of the many young men who enlisted at Ely with the Isle of Ely Territorial Force Association, which mobilised for War as the 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, and reached France on 9th January 1916. The Suffolks fought in the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Bazentin Ridge and the Battle of Pozieres Ridge . During one of these engagements Ernest received a thigh wound.

Ernest was one of the thousands who perished in the long drawn out Battle of the Somme; he was injured during the Battle of Bazentin Ridge. He died of wounds at the nearby advanced dressing station at Mametz Wood.

Ernest is commemorated in St Mary's Church and on the Ely Market Place Memorial, as well as at the Countess of Huntingdon's Free Church.

George William LEE

Born	1885
Killed in Action or Died	13th November 1916, age 31
Buried	Grave 5, Luke Copse British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France
Unit	2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 6032
Awards	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

George William Lee (1885, Littleport) was the eldest son and second child of James Lee (1847 Prickwillow) and Sarah Cross (1856 Ely). Sarah Cross had been a young unmarried mother before James married her, and so George had three older half siblings, although their names suggest that they may have possibly been his full brother and sisters: Mary Lee Cross (1883, Ely); John James Cross (1887, Ely); and Jane Cross (1880, Ely). George's Lee siblings were: Florence (1883, Littleport); Hannah (1887, Prickwillow); Robert (1889, Prickwillow); Maude (1892, Prickwillow); and James (1895, Prickwillow). James Lee was a farm labourer who was living with his parents on their farm in Padnal Drove, (Branch Bank) Prickwillow, in 1881, while Sarah and her children were living in Deacons Lane, Ely. When the couple married in 1882 they appear to have moved into Littleport, where George was born, but by the 1891 Census they can be found back at Padnal Bank where James was listed as a farmer in his own right. As James' widowed mother Mary was also living with the family, it is clear that James Lee had in fact inherited the family farm. By this stage John and Jane Cross (who were still living with the family) had adopted the surname Lee.

In the 1901 Census George is the oldest child of the family still living on the farm, like his father did before him (and probably many generations before that had done), he was learning to farm by working for his father.

In 1911 just Robert, James and Maude were left on Padnal Bank Farm with their parents, and the young men were both learning farming by working with their father. In fact, when James Lee senior died, in May 1918, the probate records show that it was actually James Lee junior who finally ended up farming at Padnal Drove. George had decided to take up a very different career from farming and had become an agent for an insurance company. Working on the Isle of Wight, he had met and married Elsie Hilda Squire (1880 Newport, Isle of Wight) in 1910. In 1911 the couple were living with Elsie's widowed mother Rosa and sister Lilian at 17 Melbourne Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, which was where their son Stanley had been born just before the census. A daughter, Rosie, was born in 1912. George brought the family back to live at Lynton Terrace, Deacon's Lane, Ely later in 1912, where their third and final child, Bessie, was born in 1915. George became one of Ely's postmen in 1912.

Being a Reservist, George was called up at the outbreak of the War by the Suffolk Regiment. In 1916 his battalion was part of the Actions of the Bluff and St Eloi Craters, the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Bazentin, the Battle of Delville Wood, and the Battle of the Ancre. George was killed in action in the Battle of the Ancre, the last big attack by the British on the Somme before the onset of winter. His Battalion was part of the attack on Serre which failed miserably because British troops, who were ploughing through deep mud and thick fog, were accidentally fired on by their own artillery

George is buried in a small cemetery near to where he fell on the frontline between Serre and Hebuterne with sixteen other men of his regiment. The local newspaper recorded that he was the first of the G.P.O staff from Ely to be killed for his country.



George is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial

Henry James Sydney LEE

Born	1894
Killed in Action or Died	16th August 1916, age 22
Commemorated	Pier and Face 1 C and 2 A., Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Unit	2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 24875
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Henry James Sydney Lee was born in 1894 in Ely—the census records show that his family normally called him Sydney although he was registered at birth with the names of his father Henry and uncle James Lee. His father Henry Lee (1852 Ely) was a farmer at Branch Bank, Prickwillow, and had taken on the family farm when his father Joshua Lee (1823 Prickwillow) retired; Joshua continued to live with his family on the farm thereafter. Henry's wife was Alice Atkin (1866 Hornsey, Middlesex) who had an illegitimate son Richard Atkin (1888, Peterborough) who lived with the Lees. Sydney had a younger brother Arthur (1896, Ely) and a younger sister Amelia (1900, Prickwillow).

In the 1911 Census Henry and his sons Sydney and Arthur appear on the census form as a farmer and his two sons working on the Branch Bank farm.

Sydney Lee was a member of the City of Ely Band—the photograph shows him in 1914 in the official Band photograph, but, unlike the rest of the bandsmen, he clearly had not had time to change after work!

With the Derby Scheme, Sydney attested late in November 1915 and would have been called up early the following year with his group. Sydney enlisted in the Suffolk Regiment (under his proper name of Henry James Lee) when he was called up and fought and died with other young Ely men on the Somme. He died on the same day as Albert Covill with whom he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing. The Battalion had been engaged in an attack on Cochrane Alley as part of the Battle of Delville Wood.

Sydney's father Henry died a few months after his son, in December 1916.

Sydney is commemorated on both the Prickwillow Memorial and Ely Market Place Memorial where he is shown as J.H.S. Lee.



Thomas Richard LEE and William LEE

Brothers Thomas and William Lee served and died in the same regiment

Born <i>Thomas</i>	1890
Killed in Action or Died	23rd March 1918, age 27
Commemorated	Panel 16., Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France
Unit	7 th Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Rank	Lance Corporal, Service Number G/2579
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Born <i>William</i>	1888
Killed in Action or Died	3rd May 1917, age 29
Commemorated	Bay 2, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
Unit	7 th Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Rank	Corporal, Service Number G/2578
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

(John) William Lee (1854 Ely) and Caroline (nee Palmer, 1856 Ely) raised a family of seven children in Ely, but were to lose two of their four sons in the War. Their children were: William John (1877); Bertram (1885); Agnes (1882); **William** (1888); Charlotte (1891); **Thomas** (1890); and Madge (1895).

William senior was a gardener. The family lived in Walpole Lane (1881 –1901 Censuses). In 1911 the family was living at 29 Silver Street, which was to be their home throughout the War. Thomas, like his father, had become a gardener, while William was a house painter, working for Mr G. Bowsher.

The mother of the family, Caroline, died in June 1915. Her sons were already in training with the Army and would go out to France in a month. Lottie (Charlotte) died the same year.

It is clear from their consecutive service numbers that William and Thomas enlisted together in the same battalion of the Buffs and must have been together as much as possible until William was killed in action. (The Ely Standard of 11th September 1914 lists them as having volunteered during the preceding week.) Their battalion reached France in July 1915, and in 1916 was in action on The Somme in The Battle of Albert capturing their objectives near Montauban, The Battle of Bazentin Ridge including the capture of Trones Wood, The Battle of Delville Wood, The Battle of Thiepval Ridge, The Battle of the Ancre Heights playing a part in the capture of the Schwaben Redoubt and Regina Trench and The Battle of the Ancre. In 1917 they took part in the Operations on the Ancre including Miraumont and the capture of Irles, the fought during The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and in The Third Battle of the Scarpe which is where William was wounded during the attack on Cherisy.

Thomas wrote to his father that William had been wounded but that it did not seem to be serious. Unhappily he then had to write again the very next day to tell the family that his brother had died without ever regaining consciousness.

The battalion then moved on to Flanders. They were in action in The Battle of Pilkem Ridge, The Battle of Langemarck and The First and Second Battle of Passchendaele. In 1918 they saw action at Vendeuil during The Battle of St Quentin, which was when Thomas was killed in action. Thomas was

listed as missing in action after the engagement of 23rd March 1918 but his family did not receive the final confirmation of his death from the War Office until July of 1919.

Thomas and William won promotion to Lance Corporal and Corporal respectively and this speaks of the reliability and leadership qualities of the two brothers. William's platoon commander, Second Lieutenant Blandsmith wrote of William: *"(he is) missed not only as my corporal but as a damn fine fellow...(he was my senior corporal and without exception one of the best men in my platoon...we often had long chats about different matters and the more I saw of your son the more I thought what a fine fellow he was....on the morning of the third your son and another lance corporal did some very good work and helped me no end indeed."*

The brothers' final resting places are unknown, and both appear on one of the memorials to the missing. They are remembered together on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

Despite his age, Thomas and William's father served in the Labour Corps during the War, including time in France. His service left him weakened and he survived for just two years after his demobilisation.

World War One is famous for the outpouring of poetry from the trenches. William's poem on the first day of the Somme was published in the Ely Standard of 3rd September 1916:

The Great Advance

It was a foggy morning,
The first day of July,
When some of our brave Tommies
Advanced to do or die.

And to see them mount the parapet
Was simply a grand sight,
And not dreaming of the dangers,
As some were smoking pipes.

And others they were laughing,
For they seemed to enjoy the job;
But when the shells came whizzing by
They would walk along and bob.

And when the "Bosh" began to see
The lads in "No Man's Land",
They started with their rapid fire
To try and make a stand.

But when our lads kept going on,
Some soon threw down their arms,
And cried aloud for mercy,
Also throwing up their palms.

And when they arrived in the German line,
The first thing that they saw
Was the work of our trench mortars
And our grand artillery.

For the trenches they were levelled,
Their wire was strewn about;
There was not a stump a standing
To keep our brave lads out.



There is praise for our observers
Both in air and on the land,
As they showed our splendid gunners
Where every shell must land.

Altho' we lost some fine brave lads,
We kept them on the run;
And we reached our final objective
Which was shattered Montybon.

So we must ask all those at home
To try and do their best
To help the lads who're fighting
Along the Sunny West.

And when the war is over
Each one can bravely say,
"I have fought for King and country
And a bright and happy day."