

George Albert NEAL

Born	1891
Killed in Action or Died	19th March 1917, age 26
Buried	Grave AA. 12., Dickebusch New Military Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	10 th Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)
Rank	Private, Service Number G/13471
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

George Albert Neal was born in Littleport in 1891; his parents were Daniel Neal (1847 Sedge Fen, Lakenheath) and Edith Bidwell (1851 Littleport). At the time George was born the family were in tied accommodation on Letter F Farm, Littleport, where Daniel was working. George was the seventh child of the family and his two oldest sisters Melinda (1870) and Elizabeth (1872) had been born on Sedge Fen before the family moved to Littleport. Following the family's move John (1874), Sarah (1875), Mary Jane (1886) and William (1878) were born, followed by George himself and finally Edith (1895).

By the 1901 Census Daniel and Edith had moved to Burnt Fen Common, Littleport. George was then the only son left at home, along with the two youngest girls, Mary Jane and Edith.

The family moved to Riverside, near Prickwillow, here George's father Daniel died in the Summer of 1906. In the 1911 Census the Neal household was made up of widowed mother Edith, sons Daniel and George, and daughters Mary Jane and Edith. Mary Jane was working as a charwoman, Daniel as a ploughman, George was a horsekeeper, and even Edith was working on the farm with her brothers. There was also a six month old baby in the household, Charlie Flat Neal, was this Mary Jane's child? The Neals later moved to Crossbank, Prickwillow.

George Neal enlisted in Newmarket to serve in the Royal West Kent Regiment during the War. His unit reached France in May of 1916; later in 1916 the battalion fought in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette and the Battle of the Transloy Ridges. They spent the winter in and out of the thick mud of the trenches in the Reninghelst sector where George was killed in action, quite possibly by a sniper or shelling, as the Germans prepared to launch their first Spring attacks of 1917.

George Albert Neal is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial but, perhaps surprisingly, not on the Prickwillow Memorial.

(Herbert) John NEGUS

Born	28th August 1889
Killed in Action or Died	20th July 1916, age 26
Commemorated	Pier and Face 1 C and 2 A., Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Unit	B Company 2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 3/9423
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal



Herbert John Negus was the fifth and youngest child of Thomas Negus (1846 Ely) and Melinda Eaton (1855 Ely). He had an older brother Frederick (1877) and three sisters called Sarah (1874), Ann (1880) and Kate aka Maud (1882). There had been an older child in this family called Herbert John (1883), but he had died in 1887, and so Herbert was the second to bear the name.

All the family members were born in Ely and the family lived for many years at 11 Waterside. Thomas Negus was a blacksmith and may have originally worked with his father-in-law, Weldon Eaton, who at the age of seventy-eight was still listed as a blacksmith in the 1891 Census and living with his daughter's family.

In the 1901 Census it is clear that the family usually called their youngest son by his middle name of John, rather than Herbert.

Just (Herbert) John and Kate were then still living with their parents at this point as Sarah had married Walter Stamford, Thomas was working for Great Eastern Railways and had moved to East Ham, while Ann had become a servant in the house of William Ellis who owned a draper's shop on Ely's High Street. John's eldest brother Frederick had emigrated to America.

John first attended Broad Street Infants School and was then selected as one of the top scholars to be admitted to Needhams School as a "free boy" rather than a fee paying pupil. He joined the school on Back Hill on 11th June 1896 and left the school on 21st June 1907 to join the militia.

John joined the local militia in Ely (the 4th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment), and then, once he was eighteen, he attested into the Royal Garrison Artillery on 10th September 1906. His papers describe him as 5 feet 8 inches tall, with a fresh complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, and with a small scar over his right eye. However, his papers for the RGA also show that he was discharged just five days after his attestation for being irregularly enlisted. John continued to serve with the militia itself and was placed on the Special Reserve. He won prizes as the best shot on the Militia.

John was employed as a horsekeeper at the local brewery of A and B Hall Limited (1911 Census) and went on with them to become a motor lorry driver.

As a reservist, on the outbreak of the War, John transferred across to the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in order to be able to fight. He reached France on 15th August 1914. His battalion was engaged in action at the Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, followed by the Battle of Le Cateau, where the Battalion suffered over 700 casualties. They took part in the Winter Operations of 1914-15, the First Attack on Bellewaarde, the Actions of Hooge and the Second Attack on Bellewaarde.

In June of 1915 John wrote home to let his parents know that he had been shot in the wrist. This tells us that he was working as an officer's orderly, carrying his kit between billets—his officer had sent him back to collect a candlestick left behind. While John was in hospital his mess mate and

close friend Arthur Page of Ely wrote to thank the Negus family for a parcel they had sent John and which he, at John's request, had shared amongst his friends. Unhappily the mess mates Arthur and John were also to appear together on the Ely War Memorial. At some other point John was also wounded in the ear.

Fighting on in 1916, the Suffolks were at the Actions of the Bluff and St Eloi Craters, the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Bazentin, and the Battle of Delville Wood. It was in the Battle of Delville Wood, one of the great Battles of the Somme, that John finally fell and as his body was not later found and identified, he is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, alongside the other 887 missing soldiers who perished on the same day.

It was more than a year before John's death was officially confirmed:

"Pte. H. J. Negus of the Suffolks, son of Mr and Mrs Negus, Waterside, Ely, posted as missing since July 1916, is now reported to have been killed in action. Pte. Negus, who was in the employ of Messers. A. and B. Hall, Ltd., as a motor lorry driver for several years, was a member of the old Militia and was afterwards in the special reserve. He won many prizes for being the best shot in his regiment, and when war broke out, was one of the first to volunteer for active service. He went out to France in October, 1914, and was twice wounded, being shot through the wrist and in the ear."
(Cambridge Daily News 31st August 1917)

John's effects amounted to £18 11s 6d and a further £8 10s in 1919; the money was sent to his father Thomas.

Herbert John Negus is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial. It appears he may also have been recorded twice on the county memorial in Ely Cathedral as H J Negus and as J Negus.

Arthur James NEWELL

Born	1888
Killed in Action or Died	10th November 1917, age 28
Commemorated	Panel 65 to 66., Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	1 st Battalion South Wales Borderers,
Rank	Private, Service Number 45696
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Arthur James Newell was born in Bedwell Hay, Ely and was baptised in the church at Little Thetford on 16th September 1888. Arthur's father was a labourer, William Thomas Newell (1854 Haddenham), and his mother Elizabeth Ann (nee Greaves, 1852, Ely);

On 6th March 1893 Arthur entered Market Street Infants School; the register shows that the family home was then in Waterloo Place, Ely; surprisingly, the school register gives Arthur's birthdate as 6th November 1889, although his birth was registered over a year earlier. In the 1891 Census the family was still living in Bedwell Hay, and in the family home were Arthur's sisters Mary (1875), Emily (1877), Rose (1879), Laura (1881), Elizabeth (1883), Mary Ann (1884) and three month old Eleanor Mabel (1891). Arthur does not appear with his family on this occasion, but, as he cannot be located elsewhere, it is possible that he just got missed out amongst all those other children!

In the 1901 Census the Newells can be found living in Cow Lane, Ely, (now West Fen Road) William was working as a yardman on a local farm and there were just Arthur and three younger children in the household. His sister Eleanor and two younger brothers, Herbert (1894) and Harold (1901).

Arthur worked locally as a gardener, first for the Reverend J F Barber and then for the Keenlysides. He then moved away from Ely, and in the 1911 Census he is living in a farmhouse at Thorney, near Peterborough. with farmer William Speed Smith and working as his groom. His parents meanwhile, still in West Fen Road, had just Herbert and Eleanor at home. They were later to move to Mill Cottage, 7, St. John's Rd., Ely.



Arthur did not stay in the Peterborough area either, as he went on to work for Vickers at Ipswich and when he enlisted in the Army Service Corps (service number M/289362), he was living in Weybridge in Surrey. He had already attempted to enlist three times, but each time was rejected as unfit for service, until he was finally called upon 13th February 1917. He went to France in May 1917.

Arthur was later transferred into the South Wales Borderers and was killed in the closing stages of the Battle of Passchendaele, a three month battle which resulted in over 200,000 Allied casualties. His battalion was in the area of Irish Farm, where the ground conditions were appallingly bad, and probably added to the high number of casualties.

Arthur is commemorated with the other Missing in the Tyne Cot Memorial, as well as on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

Arthur nominated his sister Eleanor (whom the family always called Mabel) to receive his effects if he should be killed; she received £4 11s 11d and then a further £3 in 1919.

Charles Henry NEWMAN

Born	1889
Killed in Action or Died	12th September 1917, age 28
Buried	Grave IV. D. 1., Mendinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	2 nd /4 th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)
Rank	Private, Service Number 295264
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Joseph Newman (1855 Ely) and his wife Anna Maria Day (1868 Cambridge) had six children: William Butcher (1886 Ely); Emily (1888 Cambridge); **Charles Henry** (1889 Ely); Florence Annie (1891 Ely); Lily (1893); and Joseph (1895 Ely).

In 1891 the family were living in Broad Street and Joseph worked as a fish hawkker. On 1901 they were in Harlock Lane and Charles' older brother William was working as a boot machine minder.

Charles' father Joseph died just before Christmas 1905 and so, in 1906, his mother married Charles Fisher (1862 Ely); Charles Fisher was a laundryman and Annie joined him in this business, working as a laundress. In 1911 only Joseph was still living with his mother and stepfather in their home in Waterside and he had become a labourer at a local agricultural engineers. Charles' brother William was in Bedford working as a labourer and living in the Cock Inn Lodging House. Florence was in service in Mill Road, Cambridge and Lily was also in service in Cambridge in the home of a retired clergyman. Charles himself was even further from home than his brothers and sisters, as he was a footman to Charles Leyshon Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn (who was later a baronet) at Llysdynam Hall in Newbridge-on-Wye, Brecknockshire, Wales. He was one of ten servants, and the other footman, Joseph Flinders, also happened to be from Cambridgeshire (Yelling). Charles' employer had been a Member of Parliament for Radnorshire in 1910 and would go on to be Lord-Lieutenant of the county.

By the time the War broke out Charles was living and working in Godmanchester in Huntingdonshire and he enlisted in Huntingdon with the Huntingdonshire Cyclists Battalion (no. 290121). The Cyclists Battalion was a battalion of runners which served as coastal patrols along the East Anglian coast but in 1915 the battalions were broken up to reinforce depleted regiments at the Front. Charles then fought with the Royal Fusiliers (London Regiment) and was badly wounded near Poperinge. This may have been when his battalion's transport line came under heavy shell fire at the beginning of September. Charles died in a casualty clearing station.

Charles' effects amounted to £9 4s 4d and a further £14 in 1919; the money was sent to his mother Annie. She requested that his grave should carry the message "Dearly Loved And Never Forgotten—Mother".

Charles is commemorated on the Ely Market Place memorial and also on War Memorial in Godmanchester.

For a period Charles Newman worked as a footman at Llysdynam Hall



George Alfred NICHOLAS

Born	1883
Killed in Action or Died	15th February 1917, age 34
Buried	Grave I. E. 13., Ovillers Military Cemetery, Somme, France
Unit	23 rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers
Rank	Private, Service Number G/61747
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Alfred Nicholas (1847) from the hamlet of Oxlode (near Pymoor) and his wife Rebecca Dewsbury (1851? Little Thetford) moved into Ely where they raised their family consisting of Frederick (1874), Minnie Ann (1876), Georgiana (1878), Rose Emma (1879), and **George Alfred** (1883). Alfred worked as a steam saw operator and the family lived in Raby's Yard, Ely.

George's father Alfred died at the age of thirty-eight in 1885. The family moved to Cow Lane (West Fen Road) on the outskirts of Ely and Rebecca worked as a charwoman. In the 1891 Census George's eldest brother Frederick is shown helping support his brothers and sisters working on the local farms, while Georgiana is a nursemaid. There is also a new baby in the household called Mabel who obviously cannot be Alfred's daughter.

George and Frederick stayed together with their mother for more than thirty years. In about 1900 Alfred was employed as a labourer by Messers A. and B. Hall, local brewers, and worked for them for sixteen years. Mabel was living with her family at the time of the 1901 Census, but by the 1911 Census was working as a housemaid to the manager of a tobacco factory in Nottingham.

In the 1911 Census George and his brother Frederick were still living with their mother Rebecca although they had moved to Chapel Street. Rebecca was still working as a charwoman and Frederick as a farm labourer, George was still working as a labourer at the brewery.

If it had not be for the War it is probable that Rebecca and he sons would have stayed together for many more years, instead, when conscription was put in place Alfred joined up in March 1916. He went to the Front in November and survived just three cold winter months on the Somme. He served first with the Suffolk Regiment (service number 26473), and was then placed in the Royal Fusiliers. The 23rd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers was one of the "Sportsmen's Battalions", so called because they were "Pals Battalions" which included more than the usual number of men who had made their name in sport, and so it is possible Alfred fought side by side with some of the sports stars of the time. 15th February 1917 was a day of German raids along the Somme and particularly on the Front near Loos, west of Messines, and north-east of Ypres; the battalion was in the part of the line on the Albert-Bapaume road. George was killed in action and buried in the dressing station's graveyard at Ovillers; his mother was first told that he had been wounded, so it appears he reached the dressing station (barely) alive.

George's effects amounted to £2 12s 6d and a further £3 in 1919 and these were sent to his mother Rebecca. He is commemorated on Ely Market Place.

Harry Arthur NORDEN

Born	30th May 1893
Killed in Action or Died	19th September 1916, age 23
Buried	Grave A.1., Hem Communal Cemetery, Somme, France
Unit	D Company, 1 st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 2648
Awards	1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Harry Arthur Norden was born in Stuntney in 1893. His father William James Norden (1866) was originally from Bottisham in Cambridgeshire and his mother Susan Cook (1867) from Wickhambrook in Suffolk. The couple lived first at Cowlinge in Suffolk, where their first child, Jessie, was born in 1899. They then moved to "Kiln Houses" in Stuntney where they married in 1890 and where Harry and his siblings William James aka Willie (1890), Ann Elizabeth Annie (1892), and George (1895) were all born. William senior was a journeyman blacksmith.

On 24th June 1896 Harry entered Stuntney Junior Middle and Infants School, one day before Thomas Parker McGee. He left the school on 15th June 1906.

The 1901 Census shows the Nordens living next door to the Parker McGee family in Stuntney, they were the family which was worse affected by the War in the Ely area, and Harry must have known them all well, gone to school with them, and worked with them too.

By the time of the 1911 Census all three Norden sons were working as farm labourers. Harry was working as a labourer for Mr Cole Ambrose in Stuntney. In March 1914 he was a witness at the inquest into the suicide of fellow worker James Paynton whom Harry had found hanging in a barn. It emerged at the inquest that Harry was aware his co-worker was stealing bags of potatoes from their employer and had "turned a blind eye".



Harry and his brother Willie were amongst the first of the young men of the area to enlist with the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment after the outbreak of the War, and their names are in the "Roll of Honour" published in the local newspaper of 18th September 1914. They reached France in February of 1915 and fought together in battles such as the action of St Eloi, the Second Battle of Ypres, and the Battles on the Ancre. At one point in October 1915 Harry was wounded and was hospitalised in New Brighton on the Wirral. He was later hospitalised with shell shock and, the local newspaper reported, "returned to the trenches while still unfit for duty".

However Harry was not to be killed in action on the Somme like so many Ely men who died in 1916, instead he perished of cerebro-spinal meningitis. One of the biggest problems with meningitis is that it can develop very quickly and someone can seem perfectly well and then, just a few hours later, be extremely ill with the disease and even die. Harry was rushed to the 2/1st South Midland Casualty Clearing Station, but did not survive. He appears to be the first burial made in the clearing station's cemetery.

On Harry's grave his family asked for the additional words carved to read simply "Rest in Peace". He is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial (unfortunately as "Norder") and on the Stuntney Memorial. He was also listed on the Holy Trinity Memorial but with his brother's (and father's) initial as "W. Norden" - in fact his brother Willie Norden survived the War (he actually died in 1946), although he was wounded in the last stages of the conflict.

Walter NORMAN

Born	1895
Killed in Action or Died	1st December 1917, age 22
Commemorated	Panel 3, Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, Nord, France
Unit	1 st Battalion Welsh Guards
Rank	Private, Service Number 3347
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Walter Norman was born in Soham early in 1895 but spent most of his life in Ely. His father was a coal carter, George Norman (1892 Soham), and his mother Anna Cullum (1870 Pulham Mary, Diss, Norfolk). Walter was the oldest child of the family, and a brother and two sisters were born in Soham after him: William (1896), Agnes Grace (1898) and Lizzie (1900).

The Normans then moved to Broad Street in Ely (1901 Census), followed by Victoria Street (1911 Census) and finally 25, Station Rd., Ely. More children were born: Elsie (1902); Ivy (1904); Percy (1907); Marjorie May (1909); and Henry (1913).

In the 1911 Census Walter appears away from the family home at 8 Timberhill, Norwich, where, although he is listed as a visitor, he appears to be working as an errand boy for the householder, Charles Williams, who was a yeast agent. He then came back to Ely where he worked for Mr J F Burrows and then for the Yeast Company.

Walter enlisted with the Welsh Guards at Newmarket following the introduction of conscription in 1916. and was in the army for thirteen months, seven of them in France. He served alongside his friend Fisher Webster. The Welsh Guards fought in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, the Battle of Morval, the Battle of Pilkem, the Battle of the Menin Road, the Battle of Poelkapelle, the First Battle of Passchendaele, and the 1917 Battle of Cambrai. The Operations at Cambrai lasted from 20th November to 30th December and was the first battle in which tanks were used, so it is probable that Walter saw them. After initial successful attacks along the Hindenberg Line, the Battle of Cambrai became a series of foot by foot advances until on the 1st December the Germans counterattacked in force. Walter and Fisher Webster were both killed by machine gun fire as they attacked the German trenches at Gonnelleu. Walter was one of 55 Welsh Guardsmen to die on that day and whose bodies were not recovered; they are commemorated together on the Cambrai Memorial. Walter is also remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial. Fisher's body was recovered.

News of Walter's death reached Ely on a letter from his good friend Private J Hills back to his wife in Broad Street; *"We had been in the trenches for a long time and had a very rough time of it. I am sorry to say that Walter Norman is killed, also Mr Webster."*

Walter's effects of £7 14s 4d were sent to his father George, with a further £4 in 1919.



(John) Charles OSBORNE

Born	1887
Killed in Action or Died	4th May 1915, age 27
Commemorated	Panel 21, Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	1 st Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 16887
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

This soldier's name is spelt in a variety of ways in different records, as he is OSBORNE on his enlistment papers and grave, as well as local newspaper reports and his official birth registration, but he can be found as OSBOURNE and also OSBORN elsewhere. He is OSBOURNE on the Ely War Memorial.

John Charles Osborne was the son of Charles Osborne (1850 Isleham) and Charlotte Fretwell (1864 Stuntney). Charles was a journeyman blacksmith. The family settled in Mile End, Prickwillow, where Samuel was born in 1885, moved into Burnt Fen where John himself was born in 1887, and then back into Prickwillow where Beatrice was born in 1892. In the 1891 Census it appears that family were also looking after an eight year old local girl who is shown as their boarder, Florence Brooks.

The family moved to Stuntney where Maud was born in 1889 and Daisy in 1907. John was using his middle name of Charles (the family called him Charlie), and he appears as Charles on the 1901 and 1911 Censuses. From the time he left school Charlie worked for Mr Cole Ambrose of Stuntney on his farm. He was a strong man, capable of carrying 18 stone bags of corn up the steps into the



granary loft. He is also remembered as a man who liked his drink and who would perform stunts when inebriated—there is a story that he bought a live chicken in Ely and when he reached a bridge on the way home walked along the parapet with the chicken still flapping away wildly!

Charlie's older brother Samuel was also a farm worker, probably also for Mr Cole Ambrose. In 1911 the family had a widowed blacksmith boarding with them, Charles Steadman.

Charlie's parents moved the family to 41 West Fen Road, Ely. From here Charlie enlisted in the 1st Suffolks after the outbreak of the War and reached the Front in March 1915. His mother and grandmother were desperate to stop him enlisting and hurried after him to the recruitment centre to try and bring him back. However, when Charlie's family arrived they were too late not only to prevent his enlisting, but in fact too late to ever see him alive again.

Charlie was killed in action in his first major battle—Second Ypres—a battle which lasted over a month and which is particularly remembered for the first use of poisoned gas by the Germans. His battalion was near the village of Frezenburd at the time.

It was a month before Charles and Charlotte heard the news of their son's death, probably because he was one

of the hundreds whose body was not recovered or identified. He is remembered on the Menin Gate as one of the missing, as well as on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Stuntney Memorial. With the other Stuntney dead he is remembered in the photo album of "Stuntney Heroes" created after the War; he was the first of the Stuntney Heroes to die.