

The Burston War Memorial

Thirty eight men from Burston served in the Great War between 1914 and 1918, eight did not return and they remain overseas. Of these eight only two have a known grave; the final resting place of the other six was lost to the war as the fighting moved back and forth.

This book documents details of all those from Burston who served in the Great War; there are two chapters:

1. The Eight who fell
2. The Thirty who returned

The book is a working project and as research continues it will be updated. The goal of this book and the memorial is primarily to commemorate the men that fell in the service of the country, but also to provide a resource for those interested in the history of the village and school children learning about the Great War.

Chapter 1: The Eight who fell

GEORGE WILLIAM SANDY, Private 16976 of 7th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment

WILLIAM EARNEST EAST, Private 26244 of 2nd Battalion, Essex Regiment

HERBERT GARNHAM, Lance-Sergeant 15571 of 9th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment

FREDERICK G BRYANT, Sergeant 2004 of 1st/6th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry

EDWARD KING POTTER, Private 7393 of 2nd Battalion, Norfolk Regiment

HERBERT WILLIAM JOHNSON, Private 45257 of 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers

GURNEY ROLAND SANDY, Private 33010 of 8th Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment

GEORGE WILLIAM DURBIDGE, Corporal 16721 of 12th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps

GEORGE WILLIAM SANDY (Private 16976)



Born: About 1894 in Burston, Norfolk

Regiment: Private 16976, 7th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment

Died: 13th October 1915.
Action at the Hohenzollern Redoubt (Battle of Loos)

Burial: George has no known grave

Commemorated: LOOS MEMORIAL, Pas de Calais, Panel 30/31
50.461°N 2.77173°E

The Actions of the Hohenzollern Redoubt took place from 13–19 October 1915, at the Hohenzollern Redoubt (Hohenzollernwerk) near Auchy-les-Mines in France (the Western Front). In the aftermath of the Battle of Loos (25 September – 8 October 1915), the 9th (Scottish) Division captured the strongpoint and then lost it to a German counter attack. The British attack on 13 October failed resulting in 3,643 casualties, mostly in the first few minutes. In the British Official History, JE Edmonds wrote that "The fighting [from 13–14 October] had not improved the general situation in any way and had brought nothing but useless slaughter of infantry".

Census – 1901 Living in Diss Heywood (exact location unknown) with parents Stephen and Florence, brothers Bertie and Henry and sisters Martha, Florence, Beatrice and Rachael.

Census – 1911 Living in Burston (exact location unknown) with parents Stephen and Florence, brothers Bertie and Henry and sisters Beatrice and Rachael.

1915 Stephen lived near Heywood Hall

WILLIAM ERNEST EAST (Private 26244)

Born: About 1896 in Bury St. Edmunds (Bradford District).
Regiment: Private 26244, 2nd Battalion, Essex Regiment
Died: 1st July 1916
Beaumont-Hamel (1 July 1916), Battle of Somme
Burial: SERRE ROAD CEMETERY No.1, Pas de Calais
Grave I C 17
50.09989°N 2.65729°E

The attack plan on paper was simple enough; an enormous artillery barrage was to destroy the German trenches, break the wire and enable the advancing troops to walk over 'No mans land.' Once in position the captured trenches would be consolidated and the following waves would continue the advance into enemy area. For an entire week the guns fired continually and over a million and a half shells headed towards the enemy line. Assembling troops were reassured by their superiors that it would be simple to walk over to the enemy lines.

At 07:28 on the morning of the 1st July 1916 powerful mines exploded at several places along the German line, however, at Hawthorn Ridge, where the 2nd Essex took part in the attack, the mine was blown at 07:20 thereby giving the German defenders early warning of the battle starting. The ridge made it difficult to observe enemy positions and by keeping large numbers of their guns silent these were hidden from the attacking force and with British artillery following the plan these were therefore free to fire unhindered.

The 11th Brigade attacked first and discovered the wire ahead of them had been cut. As the 12th Brigade, including the 2nd Essex, advanced they came under very heavy machine gun and artillery fire but pressed on. By 09:30 they were fifty yards from the German second line and some troops had penetrated 2000 yards into the German line reaching Pendant Copse. The Essex men were, however, using only shell holes for cover and suffered from heavy fire from both Serre on the left and Beaumont Hamel on the right until withdrawing partly at four in the afternoon. Here they spent their time in 'bombing fights' with attacking infantry until relieved during the night.

Census – 1901	Living with parents William and Lucy, at 65 Eastgate Street, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.
Census – 1911	Living with parents William and Lucy at 14 Barn Lane, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk. Occupation: errand boy.
Subsequent residence:	Audley End, Burston (exact location unknown)

HERBERT GARNHAM (Lance-Sergeant 15571)



Born:	1890 in Burston
Regiment:	Lance-Sergeant 15571, 9 th Battalion, Norfolk Regiment
Enlisted:	Norwich
Served:	France from 30 August 1915
Died:	15 th September 1916 The Quadrilateral, Ginchy - Battle of Flers– Courcellette (Battle of Somme)
Burial:	Herbert has no known grave.
Commemorated:	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL, Pier and Face 1 C and 1 D 50.0506°N, 2.6858°E Burston Church – family memorial Shimpling War Memorial

Just over a year later during the latter stages of the battle of the Somme the 9th Norfolks were ordered to move into trenches south of Trones Wood near Guillemont. On 14th September they moved into front line trenches with orders to capture the Quadrilateral dugout east of Ginchy. They attacked at 07:20 on the next morning. The attack was unsuccessful and the Norfolks lost 18 officers and 431 other ranks killed, wounded, captured or missing. Herbert was one of those killed.

Support for the Strike School and its teachers had, however, caused a family divide. On the internet there are two versions of events:

- a. Herbert supported the Strike School and had given a donation to the appeal, however, it appears that Herbert's father (Henry) was opposed to the Strike School and had been infuriated by Herbert's donation to the appeal. When news of Herbert's death reached his family it was his maternal uncle Robert Ford who had a memorial plaque made and placed in the church.
- b. Herbert's father, Henry, supported the Strike School teachers (Tom and Annie Higdon) and was opposed to a memorial to his son being erected in the church, as the rector (Rev. Charles Eland) was opposed to the strike and had evicted strike supporters from church land. Henry applied (through the church courts) to have the memorial removed, but without success.

Herbert's father was so enraged that he went to the church with a hammer and, with the assistance of his daughter Daisy, attempted to smash the memorial. He was restrained before he could do too much damage; in July 1917 he was convicted of irreparably damaging the memorial and was sentenced to one month in prison. Today, the memorial is still on the wall of the church and the repairs to the crack across the face can be seen.

Census – 1891 Living in Market Lane, Burston, with parents Henry and Sarah, brothers Walter, George, Charles, Arthur and Bertie and sisters Laura, Lily and Ethel.

Census – 1901 Living in Market Lane, Burston, with parents Henry and Sarah, brothers Walter, George, Charles, Arthur and Bertie and sisters Laura, Ethel, Daisy and Lavinia.

Census – 1911 Living in Market Lane, Burston, with parents Henry and Sarah, brother George, and sister Lavinia.

Occupation – Horseman

1915 Parents lived in Market Lane, Walter (brother) lived in Audley End

FREDERICK G. BRYANT (Sergeant 2004)

Born:	About 1895 in MURTON, Yorkshire
Regiment:	Sergeant 2004, 1 st / 6 th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry
Killed in Action:	18 th September 1916 Flers–Courcelette (15-22 September 1916), Battle of Somme
Burial:	Frederick has no known grave
Commemorated:	THIEPVAL MEMORIAL, Pier and Face 14 A and 15 C 50.0506°N, 2.6858°E

The Battle of Flers–Courcelette (15–22 September 1916) was fought during the Battle of the Somme in France, by the French 6th Army and the British 4th Army and Reserve Army, against the German 1st Army, during the First World War. The Anglo-French attack of 15 September began the third period of the Battle of the Somme but by its conclusion on 22 September, the strategic objective of a decisive victory had not been achieved. The infliction of many casualties on the German front divisions and the capture of the villages of Courcelette, Martinpuich and Flers had been a considerable tactical victory but the German defensive success on the British right flank, made exploitation and the use of cavalry impossible. Tanks were used in battle for the first time in history and the Canadian Corps and the New Zealand Division fought for the first time on the Somme. On 16 September, Jagdstaffel 2, a specialist fighter squadron, began operations with five new Albatros D.I fighters, which were capable of challenging British air supremacy for the first time since the beginning of the battle.

The attempt to advance deeply on the right and pivot on the left failed but the British gained about 2,500 yd (2,300 m) in general and captured High Wood, moving forward about 3,500 yd (3,200 m) in the centre, beyond Flers and Courcelette. The 4th Army crossed Bazentin Ridge, which exposed the German rear-slope defences beyond to ground observation and on 18 September, the Quadrilateral, where the British advance had been frustrated on the right flank, was captured. Arrangements were begun immediately to follow up the tactical success which, after supply and weather delays, began on 25 September at the Battle of Morval; continued by the Reserve Army next day at the Battle of Thiepval Ridge. September was the most costly month of the battle for the German armies which suffered about 130,000 casualties. Combined with the losses at Verdun and on the Eastern Front, the German Empire was brought closer to military collapse than at any time before the autumn of 1918.

Census – 1901	Living in Scole Road, Burston, with grandparents Jeremiah and Emily, aunt Jemima, uncle John and brother Arthur.
Census – 1911	Living at Hill Farm, Burston with grandfather Jeremiah, aunt Jemima and uncle John.
1915	Grandfather Jeremiah lived in Audley End; Uncle John in Back Lane

EDWARD KING POTTER (Private 7393)

Born: About 1888 in Burston, Norfolk

Regiment: Norfolk Regiment 2nd Battalion, Service No. 7393

Died: 26th March 1917
probably from fall of Baghdad (Iraq) 8-11 March 1917

Burial: Baghdad (North Gate) War cemetery, Iraq.

Commemorated: BAGHDAD (NORTH GATE) WAR CEMETERY Angora Memorial
131
33.35442°N, 44.38648°E

Census – 1891 Living at Bridge Green, Burston with parents John & Christianna, brothers William, Ezra, Sidney and Gordon and sisters Mildred, Lorina, Mabel, Gertrude, Edith and Alice

Census – 1901 Living at Bridge Green, Burston with parents John & Christianna, brothers Sidney and Gordon and sisters Gertrude and Alice and boarder Florence Pashler.

1915 Ezra (brother) lived Back Lane, John (father) lived “near Mill Green”

HERBERT WILLIAM JOHNSON (Private 45257)



Born:	About 1890 in Occold, Suffolk
Regiment:	South Wales Borderers, 2 nd Battalion, Service No. 45257
Died:	23rd April 1917 - Second battle of Scarpe, Arras
Burial:	Herbert has no known grave
Commemorated:	ARRAS MEMORIAL, Pas de Calais, Bay 6, 50.2874°N, 2.7598°E Burston church – family memorial

The Battle of Arras (also known as the Second Battle of Arras) was a British offensive on the Western Front during World War I. From 9 April to 16 May 1917, British troops attacked German defences near the French city of Arras on the Western Front. The British achieved the longest advance since trench warfare had begun, surpassing the record set by the French Sixth Army on 1 July 1916. The British advance slowed in the next few days and the German defence recovered. The battle became a costly stalemate for both sides and by the end of the battle, the British Third and First Army had suffered about 160,000 casualties and the German 6th Army about 125,000.

For much of the war, the opposing armies on the Western Front were at stalemate, with a continuous line of trenches from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border. The Allied objective from early 1915 was to break through the German defences into the open ground beyond and engage the numerically inferior German Army (Westheer) in a war of movement. The British attack at Arras was part of the French Nivelle Offensive, the main part of which was the Second Battle of the Aisne 50 miles (80 km) to the south. The aim of the French offensive was to break through the German defences in forty-eight hours. At Arras the Canadians were to re-capture Vimy Ridge, dominating the Douai Plain to the east, advance towards Cambrai and divert German reserves from the French front.

The British effort was an assault on a relatively broad front between Vimy in the north-west and Bullecourt to the south-east. After a long preparatory bombardment, the Canadian Corps of the First Army in the north fought the Battle of Vimy Ridge, capturing the ridge. The Third Army in the centre advanced astride the Scarpe River and in the south, the British Fifth Army attacked the Hindenburg Line (Siegfriedstellung) but made few gains. The British armies then conducted smaller attacks to consolidate the new positions. Although these

battles were generally successful in achieving limited aims, they came at considerable cost. When the battle officially ended on 16 May, the British had made significant advances but had been unable to achieve a breakthrough. New tactics and the equipment to exploit them had been used, showing that the British had absorbed the lessons of the Battle of the Somme and could mount set-piece attacks against fortified field defences. After the Second Battle of Bullecourt (3–17 May), the Arras sector became a quiet front, that typified most of the war in the west, except for attacks on the Hindenburg Line and around Lens, culminating in the Canadian Battle of Hill 70 (15–25 August).

Census – 1891	Living in Benningham Green, Occold, Suffolk, with parents Alfred (farmer and commission agent), mother Lucy, brothers Alfred and John, uncle Herbert and domestic servant Annie Harvey. Herbert was Lucy and Alfred’s third son.
Census – 1901	Living in Station Road, Burston (exact location unknown) with parents Alfred and Lucy, brothers Thomas and Horace, domestic servant Anne Johnson and employed shepherd James Hawes.
Census – 1911	Herbert <u>not</u> shown in this census but his family are living in Manor House Farm, Burston.
1915	Alfred (brother) lived “near the church”
Probate 1918	Effects of £101.16s.9d to his widow Mary Ann Johnson of South Harrow, Middlesex.

GURNEY ROLAND SANDY (Private 33010)

Born:	About 1895 in Burston, Norfolk
Regiment:	Lincolnshire Regiment 8 th Battalion, Service No. 33010
Enlisted:	Lowestoft
Died:	10 th September 1918 100 Days Offensive (Canal du Nord, Havrincourt, France)
Burial:	Gurney has no known grave.
Commemorated:	VIS-en-ARTOIS memorial (Panel 4) Pas-de-Calais, France (50.2463°N, 2.9631°E) St Margaret's Church (Lowestoft) war memorial

The 8th Lincolnshire (in brigade) left Beugny on the 4th, and on the 5th reached the north-western edge of Havrincourt Wood, where they occupied old trenches. Their brigade (the 63rd) then held the right sub-sector of the 37th Divisional front. The following afternoon patrols reached the western edge of the wood, and on the 7th the line was pushed forward into the wood to Clayton Cross along Hubert Avenue to Cheetham Switch. The enemy's machine-guns were busy, but his artillery was almost inactive. What shell-fire there was, however, was unpleasant, for the enemy was using gas and the Lincolnshire had seven casualties. The 8th saw one company of the battalion in Cheetham Switch, two other ranks being killed and four wounded during the day. On the 9th a post west of the Canal du Nord was established, and C Company moved to Yorkshire Bank : one other rank killed, five wounded and nine gassed were the casualties on that date. On the 10th three prisoners were captured, but heavy shell-fire was responsible for the loss of one officer (2nd Lieutenant G. Jones) and five other ranks killed, nine wounded and three gassed.

The next day, the 11th, the 63rd Brigade was relieved and the 8th Lincolnshire moved back to a camp west of Lebuquiere.

THE HISTORY of the LINCOLNSHIRE REGIMENT 1914-1918

Edited by MAJOR-GENERAL C. R. SIMPSON, C.B.

archive.org/stream/TheHistoryOfTheLincolnshireRegiment191...

Census – 1911	Living in Little Green, Thrandeston with father Herbert Bond Sandy, mother Bertha (nee Nunn), brother Arthur, sisters Ethel and Gertrude, employed labourer John Ling and housekeeper Elizabeth Tye.
Subsequent residence	At the time of Gurney's death his parent were living in Rose Villa, Burston

CORPORAL GEORGE WILLIAM DURBRIDGE (Corporal 16721)



Born: About 1898 in Diss, Norfolk.

Regiment: Machine Gun Corps, 12th Battalion, Service No. 16721

Died: 15th December 1918, Etapes, France

Burial: ETAPLES MILITARY CEMETERY, Pas de Calais, Grave XLVII. E.4
50.5353°N 1.6225°E

Census – 1901 Living in Back Heywood with father George, mother Harriet (nee Fulcher), brothers Harry and Hector and sister Ethel.

Census – 1911 Living in Burston (exact location unknown) with parents George and Harriet, brothers Harry, Hector, Frederick, Frank and sisters Ethel, Honor and Sabina.

Occupation: apprentice butcher

Chapter 2: The Thirty who returned

RICHARD BLOOMFIELD

DAVID H. CATTERMOLE

SYDNEY J. COLE

GEORGE COX

GEORGE W. DURBIDGE

ARTHUR J. C. ELAND

HERMAN J. FORD

STANLEY FORD

GEORGE W. GARNHAM

LEONARD H. GOTTS

GEORGE I. HEARNE

CHARLES HOLLIDAY

EDGAR HUGGINS

ROBERT H. JOHNSON

CECIL J. LING

ALBERT E. LEEDER

CHARLES ROBERT MOORE – Norfolk Regiment

GORDON S. POTTER

ALFRED RUST

FREDERICK RUST

ARCHIE SANDY

HENRY J. SANDY

WILLIAM S. SANDY

ARTHUR SHAW

VICTOR SITCH

WILLIAM J. STURMAN

BERTIE W. WILBY

CECIL J. WILBY

ROBERT E. WILBY

WALTER T. WHEELER