

# Stamford WW1 Centenary Commemoration Programme

## Oral Histories

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## Richard Henry Webb, 1896-1936

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#### Documentation:

O.S Map of Ypres and surrounding area  
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Illuminated Address from the Borough of Stamford

My grandfather came from a little place you've probably never heard of . . . Sculcoates, on the South Yorkshire coast, just east of Hull. Several generations of his family had been mariners, earning their living from the sea first directly by fishing, and then working commercially on the East Coast trade, between the Humber and Thames, from at least the mid eighteenth century.

But my grandfather's father died when he was a young boy, and then his mother died when he was 14, in 1910. He lived with his aunt's family and worked in a sweet factory in Hull, but on 7th November 1912, three weeks after his 16th birthday, he enlisted in the 4th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment. Some of his Army papers record his date of birth as 1895 rather than 1896, so we think he got away with a little deception there.

When the First World War broke out, Dick Webb was a motor-cycle despatch rider in the Fifth Cycle Corps. However he was not actually posted to France until he was 18 ½ years old, in the Spring of 1915.

The map of Ypres and its surroundings (which he probably shouldn't have brought back with him) has his notation, in pencil: 'Landed [in France] 17<sup>th</sup> April 1915', and 'Ypres 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle'. He also wrote on it, 'My best friend in France and Belgium 1915-1918'. That map probably saved his life on numerous occasions, as it showed him the towns and villages, rivers, roads and railways, factories and quarries, crossroads, hills, valleys and woods. By the time that edition was revised, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1916, many places had been given placenames from England, Canada, or other countries of the Empire, by the soldiers who had fought over these fields for more than two years. Even a quick glance shows where different units were stationed, or what was memorable about the place that had been their home, and became for many their final resting place. Piccadilly Circus is there, Regent Street, The Strand. But also Hellfire Corner, Sniper's Barn, Three Huns Farm. On the reverse of the map is a Glossary, a list of translated French words which would be useful to identify not only village or town place names, but also features in the landscape: quarries, factories, canals, bridges.

This map, creased and muddy, but still in excellent usable condition a hundred years later, shows how high the standards were both of the Ordnance Survey who prepared it and the printers who put it on to a high rag-content paper. You can see the threads of the fabric, and the finest of printed lines and tiniest letters, the individual squares that represent a farmhouse, or, often, 'Ruined farmhouse'.

Dick would have carried this map everywhere he went, to guide him safely around the battlefields. He managed to come through two and a half years of hell on earth, but in November 1917 at what my family always referred to as 'Third Ypres', more familiar to many as Passchendaele, his luck ran out. He was gassed, and although he survived, he like many others was sent back to England for treatment. His convalescence at the Stamford and

Rutland General Infirmary brought him into contact with the VAD (Volunteer Aid Detachment) nurses, who were Red Cross-trained to do various tasks on hospital wards which were overflowing with casualties in varying degrees of need.

My grandmother-to-be, Cathie Piggott, was a munitionette by day, working a 60-hour week at Blackstone's factory assembling 18-pounder shells for the Front. After work, she walked the few hundred yards along Ryhall Road to the hospital to work as a volunteer nurse for one or two hours each evening, and her journal for January 1918 records this entry: 'Walked up the road with a wounded from the Infirmary on the 21st'. Also 22<sup>nd</sup>. & 23<sup>rd</sup>.'

Sunday tea for a soldier was an accepted part of civilian support for the War, and matters proceeded from there. In May, Cathie writes: 'Dick left me at the top of Brazenose Lane, he said he had to go into town for some cigs [cigarettes] but really he went to get a ring for me. We have been to Beales this afternoon and had our photos taken together.' The engagement photograph, both of them in uniform, he still showing the strain of illness and she proudly showing the ring he had purchased just that morning, captures a moment of affirmation in an uncertain world.

Throughout that summer as Dick's health slowly recovered, they got to know each other through taking walks and going to tea-shops in town, the original 'walking out'. Dick went back into camp in the south of England, but spent every leave in Stamford except for one trip where he took Cathie up to Hull to meet his family. They were married in St George's Church, Stamford, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

Cathie records the Armistice in her journal: '11-11-18 The War is over. How glad I'm feeling now I know my Darling will not have to go to France for fighting any more. If everyone was as happy as I am today it would be a smiling world.'

Dick had applied for a job back home in Hull, and the letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1918 he received from the Corporation of Kingston upon Hull Electricity Department, asking him to get in touch with a view to offering a position when he was discharged from the Service, is another piece of memorabilia kept by my family. Dick was disembodied (rather than discharged) from the army on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1919, and these papers have also survived, showing part of his Service record. I am sure they were a source of pride and comfort to my Nan after Dick died at the relatively early age of 40, having never truly recovered from the effects of the War.

The Borough of Stamford produced a magnificent illuminated Address, 'A token of our Appreciation for services rendered to King and Country' which was presented to all those living in the town who had been on active service. This was kept carefully by Nan's family and passed down to my generation after my aunt Dorothy, the last of Dick's daughters living in Stamford, died in 1999. It still has its wonderful red wax seal, 'Burghi Stamfordiae'.

The campaign medals awarded to Dick Webb were the same as those of many thousands of other servicemen: the 1914-15 Star, the War Medal, the Victory Medal. There is also a Territorials medal, from the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment, which he joined when back in Stamford.

My grandparents' story will not differ from that of thousands of other young couples whose lives were changed by the events of the First World War. As a family, we are glad that these memorabilia have survived, to give us a glimpse of their lives. I hope that by seeing these papers and photographs, and reading their story, other people can also feel a connection with them, and the times they lived through, one hundred years ago.

AUTHOR: Kate Riley

## Sidney Hugh Robert Allen 1890-1969

Sidney Allen was born in Whitwell, Norfolk but moved to Stamford when he was 17. He was one of five brothers, Herbert who like Sidney served with the 1st Norfolks in France, John who served with the 3rd Norfolks and was killed at Salonika, Frederick who served with the 2/4th Lincolns, and Ernest who served in munitions at Woolwich Arsenal.

Sidney was a great animal lover and, before the War, he worked for the Great Northern Railway driving horse buses between the Great Northern Hotel and the George Hotel. His working day was from 7.00am to 9.00pm, after which he would groom and feed his horses and clean the coach interior.

Sidney enlisted as a Private in the 1st Norfolk Regiment on 20 August 1914 but transferred to D Coy, 21st Battn, the Machine Gun Corps on 26 December 1915. He rose through the ranks to Sergeant, First Class Machine Gunner whilst in the field.

While convalescing after being wounded in France Sidney married 1917 Gertrude Lane in Bourne Abbey Church. They lived at first in Grantham but, soon afterwards, he was sent back to France. There he took part in the Final Advance from August to November 1918 during which he was awarded a instant battlefield Distinguished Conduct Medal. A few months later he was paid a bounty of £20 for his award!

Shortly after demobilisation, Sidney and Gertrude took over the Vaults public house in Ironmonger Street, Stamford. Six years later they moved to the Star & Garter public house in Scotgate. In 1927, Sidney went to work for Martin's as a fitter for 26 years and in 1953 he joined Dow-Mac Ltd. They later moved to 5 Woodville Road, Stamford and Sidney retired in 1965, aged 75.

When the Second World War broke out, Sidney was one of the first to join the Auxiliary Fire Service in Stamford, and in 1939 he attended a Civil Defence Review attended by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. In 1940 the Home Guard was formed and Sidney left the AFS to form a Home Guard Section in Martin's.

Sidney died in 1965, leaving Gertrude, two sons and two daughters, and eight grandchildren.



Sidney and his brothers.



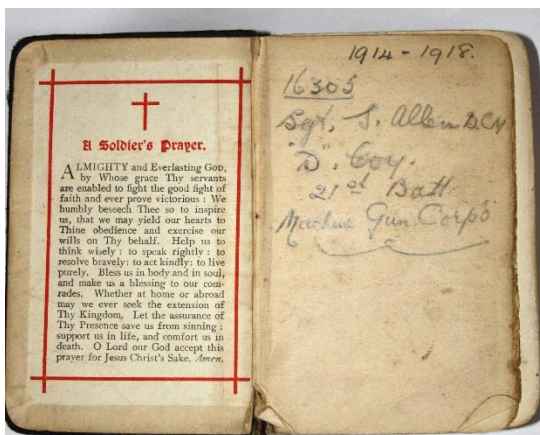
Sidney and Gertrude on their wedding day.



Sidney holding the reins of the horse, watched by Fred Clarke, Landlord of the Tap.



The DCM, on the left, with Sydney's other medals



Sidney's trench Bible



Stamford Auxiliary Fire Service 1939



## Plant family

Family members who served:

### DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE IN THE FAMILY, WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THIS COUNTRY.

<b>1914</b>	SGT	J.W. Swanson	1 <sup>st</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment
<b>1916</b>	PTE	H. Steele	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment
<b>1918</b>	PTE	J.W. Bentham	2/5 <sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regiment
<b>1944</b>	PTE	F. Steele	2 <sup>nd</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment

### AND THOSE WHO SERVED AND RETURNED

<b>W.W.I.</b>	PTE	G.H. Steele	21 <sup>st</sup> (Ontario) BN Canadian Army
<b>W.W.I.</b>	PTE	T. Steele	21 <sup>st</sup> (Ontario) BN Canadian Army
<b>W.W.I.</b>		Mary A. Plant	W.A.A.C.S (Easton)
<b>W.W.I.</b>	PTE	C.H. Sculthorpe	11 <sup>th</sup> Suffolk Regiment
<b>W.W.I.</b>	GNR	R. Peacock	Royal Artillary
<b>W.W.I.</b>	PTE	B. Cunnington	1/4 Northhamptons
<b>W.W.II.</b>	CPL	G. Woodruff	Homeguard (Stamford)
<b>W.W.II.</b>	L/CPL	H. Plant	Homeguard (Stamford)
<b>W.W.II.</b>	PTE	T. Plant	Homeguard (Stamford)
<b>W.W.II.</b>	MR	A. Steele	A.R.P (Barnack)
<b>1948/1949</b>	L/CPL	K. Plant	R.E.M.E (National Service)
<b>1956/1959</b>	C/FN	G. Steele	R.E.M.E (Regular)

**200798 PTE CUNNINGTON (BERT)**  
**1-4TH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE REGT-54TH**  
**EASTANGLIAN DIVISION**

**1914**

Joined up on 29.12.14, he was 18 years old. He had worked as a woodman on Burghley estate. His home was at The George Farm, London RD, Stamford.

**1915**

On the 23, July 1915, leaves camp for Devonport leaves on 30, July 1915 ~~on the~~ "Royal George". It is possible the ship docked at Le Havre France, before going onto Alexandria, Egypt.

**1916**

This year spent in Egypt, Became a groom in March. On 28.9.16 had a day pass to Suez (on duty).

**1917**

Day pass to El Ansh ? (on duty). Still a groom in July.1917. This year he could have been engaged in the fighting in Palestine, as he was in the occupation of Jerusalem, Dec 9TH 1917.

**1918**

This year he became a groom to the Military Governor. Being on the Staff of Government House he received an Xmas Card and went to the Xmas Dinner at the "Jerusalem Hotel" Dec 25TH 1918.

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**1919**

The year he was released from the army, he got a pass to Jerusalem 31.1.19, probably his last look round before coming home. On 11.2.19 he had a medical at a demob camp, Kantara, and received his documents to come home. Next day he was at No2 Infantry Base Depot, Helmich, Cairo. Came home to Shorncliffe-Wimbledon. Demobbed at Purfleet 6.3.19. Came home on 28 days leave.



# Sgt J.G.Swanson - Medals, service history, death notice

Memory Feb 1916

## World War1. Medals.



The Khedives

Sudan Medal.

**KILLED IN RETREAT FROM MONS.—**  
Sergt. John George Swanson, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Swanson, of Ryhall, and brother of Mrs. E. A. Laughton, of 1, Laxton's-court, Stamford, has this week been officially reported killed. Aged 40, he was at the outbreak of war, upon the completion of 21 years' service in the 1st Lincoln, sent to France with the first Expeditionary Force, and was reported wounded on or about August 26th, 1914, after the memorable retreat from Mons. Nothing, however, was heard of him until the following April, when he was reported wounded and missing. The gallant warrior saw service in the Egyptian campaign, gaining the Athara and Omdurman medals; he was at Malta for some time, and spent about 18 years of his military career in India. During the present year unofficial information had been received announcing his death, but it was not until this week that the hopes entertained for his safety by his aged parents were shattered. Sincere sympathy is extended the relatives in their sad bereavement.



Sudan Medal.

Campaign: B.E.F. 1914.				(A) Where decoration was earned.	
				(B) Present situation.	
Service	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Date of which included (if any)	
(A) SWANSON.	18th	Private	3934	= 1/3/138	
(B) John	1st	Sgt		retd. 26-8-14.	
Action taken				MEDAL	
Clasp 2/2643				VICTORIA	
				HUSH	
				1st STAR	
Disembarkation 13-8-14				F/1/3 138	
Died				F/1/3 138	

Died 13 days Later.





***Private HUGH STEELE***

*2nd Bn., Lincolnshire Regiment  
who died aged 26 on Saturday, 1st July 1916.*

*Private STEELE was the son of Francis and Harriet Steele,  
of Horn Farm, Exton, Oakham, Rutland.*

*Remembered with honour  
THIEPVAL MEMORIAL, Somme, France.*

## Mary Laughton service with the WAAC

### Intrepid Mary joins up – at 13!

IN the early years of this century when family allowance and income support were beyond the wildest expectations of politicians and public alike, it was common for children to go out to work when barely in their teens.

More often girls would go into "service", as domestic staff in the houses of the well-off in the community, or become shop assistants.

But Kenneth Plant's mother Mary had a remarkable story to tell his son.

She was the youngest of four sisters born to Arthur, a member of Stamford Town Band, and Elizabeth Laughton at their home in St Leonard's Street, Stamford.

When Mary was only a few months old, Arthur died leaving his widow with a growing family and insufficient income to support them.

Elizabeth worked in the kitchens at Burghley House, but the children also had to find jobs as soon as they had a rudimentary education, in this case at St George's School.

In 1916 at just 13 Mary, bold as brass, went and joined the WAAC, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps at what was then the aerodrome in the parish of Wittering.

"1916 was a time when boys barely in their teens were fighting and dying in the trenches. And with the need for workers so great, the powers-that-be probably didn't want to know how old she was and she just kept a straight face," said Mr Plant. "They asked her for her employment card and she just said it was in the post."

At that time, air operations were controlled by the army under the title of the Royal Flying Corps. The RAF was not formed until April 1, 1918.

Every morning a lorry would come and pick up the "Waacs" from outside the former Stamford Hotel in St Mary's Street to take them to the base.

Mary worked in the officers' mess.

"She used to say that on many occasions she would serve an offi-



Mary Laughton, aged 18, two years after leaving the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps which she had joined at 13. She is standing in Gooch's Court, Stamford, where her aunt lived.

cer his breakfast and never see him again. Their plane had crashed and they had been killed. The pilots were probably just a few years older than her."

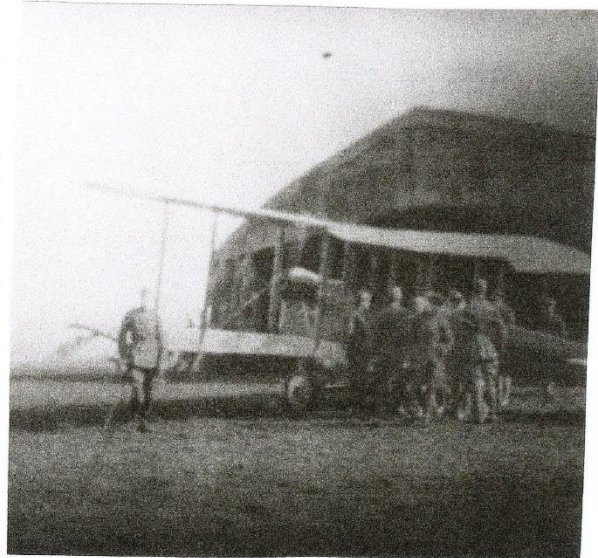
When Mary was still only 16 the war ended and she was demobbed, going on to work at the "skin factory" in Easton-on-the-Hill.

In 1926 she married Thomas Plant at Ketton Church and became a housewife, living in the village High Street.

Mr Plant was born in 1929 after the family had moved to Scotgate, Stamford. Three years later they moved to Austin Street, Mary's home until she died in 1988.

The family's association with Wittering continued briefly in World War II.

"In 1940, when I was 11, I went with my father to the base to deliver coke for heating. It was the day after it had been bombed. We'd heard them being dropped the night before and it had been knocked about quite a bit."



EASTON.  
AERODROME.



G R

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## Frank Newbon 1892-1975

Frank Newbon was born in Stamford, the eldest son of William Newbon in 1892. He had a brother Billy and a sister May.

He was an apprentice shoe maker to Henry Deer in Water Street, Stamford. In 1911 he moved in 50 Broad Street to start a business as a boot maker and shoe repairer with his brother, Billy. They shared the flat upstairs with their mother and sister.

In 1914 he joined as a Private in the 2/5 Lincolnshire Regiment. He was posted to Ypres where he was wounded. He was buried under tons of earth after a shell fell close to the trench. He was dug out by his comrades but suffered to his hearing.

He was posted to County Fermoy in 1916 to help to deal with the Irish uprising.

When he was demobbed he went back to the boot shop to help Billy who had kept the shop open. Frank played football locally and was a big supporter of the 'Daniels'. He supplied studs, free of charge, for the players' boots for many years. He kept the business going until ill health forced him to retire in 1961. 50 years of trading in the town had made him a well-known and respected man.

Frank's hearing failed slowly through his life until he lost all hearing in his late fifties. He attended North Street Chapel for many years until his hearing failed.

In 1922 he married Edith Smith from Market Deeping and they had a daughter, Audrey, who is 91 years old and is living in Whitefriars Care Home. Frank also had three granddaughters and five great grandchildren. He was always a quiet gentle man who loved animals and his family.



## Black Family

Lance-Corporal Charles Henry Read was born to my grandmother in 1892. (out of wedlock). He was a horse-keeper before joining up. He joined the 8th Lincoln regiment Sept 4th 1914 and went on to serve in France Sept.3rd 1915. He was in action at the battle of Loos and received gunshot wounds on right arm and chest on Oct 2nd 1915. After recovering he went out again and was again wounded March 1st 1916 on the left elbow. On leaving hospital he transferred to the 5th Royal Berks, and took part in the gaining of Thiepval Ridge where he was again wounded on Sept 25th 1916. His recovery took 3 months and then again to France and took part in the battle of Cambrai. He was recommended for gallantry on the field in the attack on Nov 20th 1917.

He was killed near Bleak Ridge on Nov 30 by a shell. The officer commanding his company wrote to his widow. " I can only partly realise the sorrow you must feel at the loss on one who will be missed so much, but at the same time must feel proud of his gallant deeds and splendid life. He was an excellent N.C.O. and would have gone far in promotion as he had been recommended for gallantry in the attack on Nov 20th". His name is on the Roll of Honour at Empingham, and Cambrai Memorial louveral Panel 8. I have a Photo in uniform.

Corp George Henry Hubbard D.C.M. was born 13th April 1894 at Alconbury Weston son of Mr & Mrs Charles Hubbard 12 Belton St, Stamford. A farm labourer before joining up 15th January 1913. He went to France with original British Expeditionary Force on 12th August 1914. He fought at Loos, Ypres, Mons, Aubers Ridge, Givenchy and several other engagements. He was awarded 2 distinctions the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and Russian Medal The Order of St George. on the 9th May. (I have more detail in a copy of a letter he sent home).

He was killed by a shell at the Battle of Givenchy 1st July 1917. He was married at Sherington Bucks Church to Miss Lucy Robinson, 19th August 1916. His name is on the Menin Gate and Tinwell Gates and Scroll of Honour. I have a copy of a postcard he sent to my mum (his little sister by the Field Post Office March 1917. He was mentioned in The Supplement to the London Gazette 11th March 1916. Also my son found out that his Medals were auctioned 2nd April 2004 Hammer price of £2800. I also have a photo of him.

AUTHOR: Marylyn Black



## Corporal George Henry Hubbard, DCM 1894-1917

George was born on 13 April 1894 at Alconbury Weston, the son of Mr & Mrs Charles Hubbard of 12 Belton Street, Stamford and younger half-brother of Charles Henry Read. He was a farm labourer before joining 1 Battalion, the Northamptonshire Regiment on 15 January 1913. He went to France with the British Expeditionary Force in August 1914 and fought at Loos, Ypres, Mons, Aubers Ridge, Givenchy and in several other engagements.

He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal on 9 May 1915 for bravery in the field. In a letter home Cpl Hubbard himself wrote:

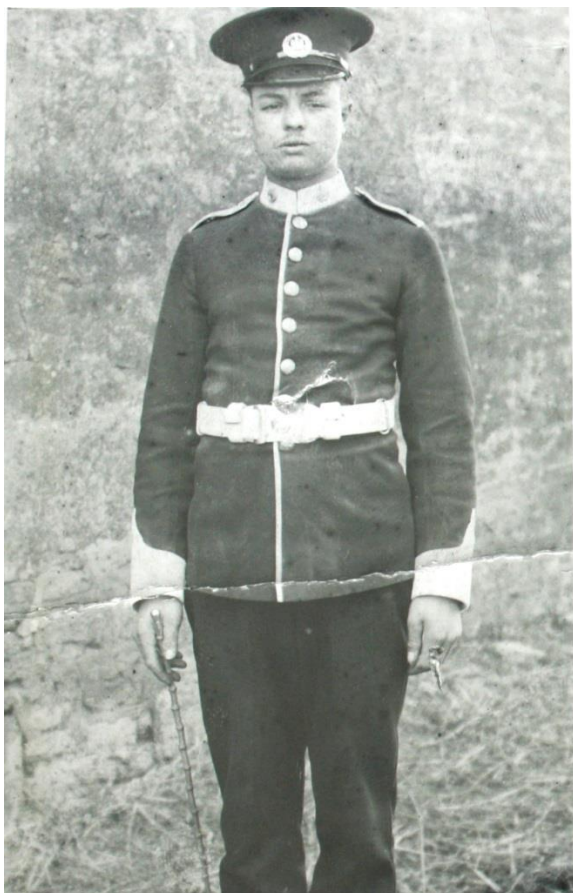
*"On the morning the 9<sup>th</sup> May, the regiment had orders to take the German trenches at Aubers Ridge. We arrived at the trenches on the 8<sup>th</sup> and had to carry several ladders and lots of other things for the purpose of getting out of the trenches. We had two companies in the front line of trenches and two in reserve. I was doing orderly to the adjutant when the first two companies went over, and the other two their place in the front line. While we were going along the communications trench Col. Dublin was hit with a hard piece of earth which was thrown by a burst of a shell, and we all thought he was wounded. I had a piece hit me at the same time but it did no damage.*

*The regiment tried to take the German trench but found that the barbed wire was not cut, and could not get through. The Colonel gave the adjutant a message to be taken to the officer out between our lines and the Germans, and he asked me to take it if I thought it was possible. I took it and when I reached the captain I found him and his servant dead' so I crawled about until I found another officer and I gave him the message, and as soon as he got it he was wounded in the foot. He sat up to cut his boot off and was shot in the chest, but he signed my messages and I crawled back again to the Colonel. While I was doing so, I bound up several of the wounded up and the Colonel saw me and said he would do what he could for me.*

*As soon as I got back again the adjutant asked me if I would try to take another one, and I told him that I didn't want to but I would try. I managed to find another officer and gave him the message and, coming back, brought a wounded man with me. And then, when I got into the trench, I helped to bind the wounded up. Then the Black Watch had a go at taking the trench we couldn't take and they found the same obstacle as us. That is how I got the medals."* The award was posted in the London Gazette on 11 March 1916.

Cpl Hubbard was also awarded the 1914 Star with clasp, the British War and Victory medals and the Russian Medal of the Order of Saint George, 4<sup>th</sup> Class. After major actions, Russian Liaison Officers would gather names from regimental commanders so that awards could be distributed to soldiers, nurses and members of the Red Cross.

Cpl Hubbard was married at All Saints' Church, Sherington, Bucks to Miss Lucy Robins on 19 August 1916. He was killed by a shell at Givenchy on 31 July 1917 – the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). His name is inscribed on the War Memorial at Tinwell and on the Menin Gate.



Pte Hubbard, No 9620, in dress uniform 1913



L/Cpl Hubbard with comrades in France



Postcard sent By Cpl Hubbard to his sister Dot in March 1917



Alfred Black

Born : 1876 at Maxey, Northamptonshire  
Residing: West Deeping, Lincolnshire

Age on Enlistment: 40 years 10 months  
Height: 5 ft 8 inches  
Chest : 36 inches – 2 inches expansion

Trade: General Farm Labourer  
Religion: Church of England  
Unmarried

Next of Kin: Walter Black (Brother) Town Gate, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire  
Stephen Black (No fixed abode ... 'Peterborough at present')

Enlisted 2 March 1916 for the Duration of the War  
Requested to join Northamptonshire Regiment

Medially Examined 25 April 1916, Lincoln  
Medical Category : B One

Called up for service 27 April 1916 Private  
Posted to A Reserve Class U  
18755 Army Service Corps Driver

Classified Medical Category : B II 4 December 1916

Recalled, Recruiting Office, Lincoln 22 February 1917

24 February 1917 joined Royal Flying Corps, as Air Mechanic 3<sup>rd</sup> Class at Bourne, Lincolnshire

2 March 1917 posted to Royal Flying Corps Recruit Depot, South Farnborough, Hampshire

RFC Service Number 60936

RFC Trade Classification: Miscellaneous (Labourer)

Posted to Milton Stores Depot, RFC

13 September 1917 re-mustered from Miscellaneous (Labourer) to Storeman

9 March 1918 posted to 683 Agricultural Company, (Peterborough) Labour Corps

12 March 1918, transferred to 683 Agricultural Company, (Peterborough) Labour Corps as Private (but on 3.AM. rate of pay)

Issued with new Service Number 534783 for the Labour Corps

Posted 15 March 1918

One entry on Regimental Conduct sheet, whilst serving with this unit

Special Medical Board 2 August 1918 – Medical Category BI

## Lance Corporal Charles Henry Read 1892-1917

Charles Read was born in 1892 out of wedlock, the oldest half-brother of George Henry Hubbard. He was a horse-keeper before enlisting in 8 Battalion, the Lincolnshire Regiment on 4 September 1914. He went to France on 3 September 1915 and saw action at the Battle of Loos before receiving gunshot wounds to his right arm and chest on 2 October 1915. After he recovered he returned to the front and was again wounded in the left elbow on 1 March 1916. He then transferred as 36391 L/Cpl Read to 5 Battalion, the Royal Berkshires, and took part in regaining the Thiepval Ridge on 25 September 1916 when he was again wounded.

Three months later he returned to France and was killed by a shell on 30 November 1917 near Bleak Ridge during the Battle of Cambrai. His commanding officer wrote to his widow: 'I can only partly realise the sorrow you must feel at the loss of one who will be missed so much, but at the same time must feel proud of his gallant deeds and splendid life. He was an excellent NCO and would have gone far in promotion as he had been recommended for gallantry in the attack on November 30th.'

Cpl Read's name is inscribed on the Roll of Honour at Empingham and at the Cambrai Memorial Louveral Panel 8. He left three small children.





## Private Edwin Black

Edwin Black was born on 5 June 1881 and was a married railway labourer, living in West Deeping, before he enlisted in the Royal Engineers on 4 December 1914. He served as a Private No 306682 in the Tank Corps.

After the war he returned to Lincolnshire where he founded the Deeping St Nicholas Branch of the Royal British Legion..

He is the father of Charled Edwin Black who then founded the Langtoft Branch of the Royal British Legion as a sub-Branch of Bourne Branch.



## Private Edward Henry Patrick

In 1895 a baby boy was born to John and Mary Patrick who lived in a 4 room cottage at 3 Protection Place, behind Frisby's buildings off Scotgate in Stamford. Despite its name, Protection Place offered scant protection to the Patrick family. The 1901 census described the house as consisting of 4 rooms, one of which was considered to be uninhabitable. There was no bath room, no toilet. The only running water was the damp that ran down its walls. There was a single pump in the courtyard outside where the Patrick family had to get their water along with their neighbours. The single toilet in the yard was also shared with other families.

The new baby boy was baptised Edward Henry, but became known to his family as Ted. When Ted was born he was the 7<sup>th</sup> child John and Mary had brought into their tiny home. Ted never saw his 5 older sisters and they never saw him as they had all died by the time Ted was born, the oldest, Beatrice being only 7 when she died.

The family was so poor that Mary was forced to steal clothes for her children and in 1896 she was fined 5 shillings by the town magistrates for the theft of a child's dress.

Ted did have an older brother who was 4 when he was born. Ted's big brother, Jack, would remain his best friend for the rest of Ted's life.

Ted's birth was followed by that of two more sisters and a brother. His younger sister Ellen would die aged 3 in 1901.

Ted's father, John, worked at Hunts brewery in Water Street. John was employed as a maltster.

If life was not hard enough for the Patrick family disaster struck in 1900 when after moving barrels at the brewery John complained of feeling unwell with pains in his chest. The following day he returned to work still feeling unwell. He returned home at 6.10 in the evening. He died about 4.00 the following morning, the coroner returning a verdict of natural causes. Mary was confined with their youngest child, Percy, at the time and was considered by the coroner to be "too ill" to attend the inquest. Ted's family had lost its bread winner. Without a wage coming in to pay its bills the family were faced with the prospect of being split up for ever by being sent to the work house or homelessness and starvation.

Mary Patrick, Ted's mother had to look for work and she found employment as a laundress at Stamford Infirmary. His older brother Jack took on the responsibility of man of the family even though he was only 9. He worked as an errand boy at Oates and Mussons, a large furniture, drapers and clothes shop, in Stamford High Street in the building that is now occupied by a clothing store and Discount Cards. If you stand in the High Street and look up at the building you will see that it has a third floor with smaller windows. In 1900 when Jack and Ted were boys many staff who worked at the shop lived in. Before Jack went to school he would go to work to clean the shoes of all the shop staff so that he could give his mother money to buy food so the family did not starve.

Jack was a bright boy and apart from his work he concentrated on his education and was successful in that he was offered a scholarship to Stamford School at the age of 11. The family could not however afford for Jack to continue his education so reluctantly he left

school; for a full time job aged 11, working at Williams and Cliff brick yard at Little Casterton Road where he packed clay into the brick presses to make the bricks. While working there when he was only 12 he got his right hand caught in a brick press and lost 2 fingers.

Whether it was because Jack was a bright hard working boy or whether it was because his employers were aware of the circumstances of the Patrick family we will never know, but once Jack had recovered enough from his injuries to work again the brick yard management offered him his old job back. This was despite his new disability. Throughout his life Jack viewed this as an act of kindness for which he was always grateful. Jack however wanted to better himself as much as his circumstances would allow, realising that he would always be poor if he remained, like his father, in unskilled work. He therefore sought a trade and successfully obtained employment at Blackstone's engineering works on Ryhall Road as an apprentice iron founder. This was a remarkable achievement considering that he had lost 2 fingers on his right hand when he was right handed and at a time when people with a disability were effectively written off in the job market.

Jack worked hard passing his apprenticeship and along with his mother he kept the family together. They were now in a slightly better financial position so Ted and the younger children could remain at school and the family moved into slightly better accommodation at 23 Elm Street. This house also has since been demolished, but it stood on land now occupied by the buildings of Stamford School.

Ted did well at School and the 1911 census shows that, supported by his older brother Jack, he too obtained work at Blackstone's as an apprentice iron founder, following in his brothers footsteps. The Patrick family's circumstances appeared to be improving with 4 incomes now coming into the family budget. 56 year old, Mary was still employed as a laundress at the infirmary, 19 year old Jack was an iron founder at Blackstone's, 16 year old Ted was an apprentice iron founder at Blackstone's, their 14 year old sister Cis was employed in domestic service and 10 year old Percy was at School.

This improvement in the families circumstances was not to last for long however. In 1913 Mary died and the 4 children faced eviction from their Elm Street home, as without Mary's wages Jack, Ted and Cis could not afford the rent. They rented a smaller, cheaper property at 12 Gas Street. This house too has been demolished but it was from here that Ted joined the Lincolnshire regiment on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1914 at the age of 17.

Ted's first army career was not to last long, as in the summer of 1915 he was medically discharged from the army as unfit for military service, being diagnosed as having acute heart disease. Returning home Ted was too unfit to return to the heavy work at Blackstone's (the factory was now producing shell cases for the war effort, where Jack still worked with his future wife, Evelyn Jane Laughton, in the manufacture of shells. They married in December 1917). Ted obtained employment with Young's the grocers in St Johns Street.

Despite having joined the army and receiving a full medical discharge Ted wanted to return to fight for his country. This, even though his country had done nothing for him and his family. Ted's sense of patriotism, along with most of Britain's population, was strong. As he had been medically discharged from the Lincolnshire Regiment he decided to enlist in another one and this time joined the Sherwood Foresters (Nottingham and Derby Regiment) in June 1916 where he served in A Company.

Ted went to the front and fought in the battle of Passchendaele. He was killed in the action around Polygon Wood on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1917. He was 22. Ted was initially posted as missing in action and it was not until July 1918 that his death was confirmed and notice of this fact was published in the Stamford Mercury. Ted is buried at Hooge Crater cemetery near Ieper in Belgium. His name is one of those that are listed on the Stamford war memorial in Broad Street.

#### *After the war*

Peace came to the battlefields of the First World War at 11.00pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the eleventh month 1918. Victory had cost the lives of 5,712,379 military personnel, 823,757 civilian casualties and a further 12,809,280 wounded. A generation of young men had all but been destroyed. For the first time the different social levels of British society had lived, fought and died side by side. The old divisions of the past were starting to be broken down. Those returning home could no longer be expected to live in the slums that Ted and his family had been born into. "Homes fit for Heroes" was the call. It was recognised that there was a national responsibility to provide decent homes for all. The governments of succeeding decades, ending in the 1980's, began a major slum clearance programme spearheaded by local authorities building millions of council houses. This would last for the next 50 years, with a 6 year pause for the Second World War. Ted was born into a slum but as a result of what he achieved none of his family would ever live in a slum again.

All families have ancestors who made sacrifice for their country in First World War. The following members of my family served their country in the First World War 1914 to 1918

- Sergeant John George Swanson, Lincolnshire Regiment. Killed retreat from Mons 26th August 1914. No known grave. Commemorated at Ryhall war memorial and LaFerte-Sous-Jouarre memorial France.
- Edward Henry Patrick, Private Lincolnshire Regiment and Sherwood Foresters. Killed at Passchendaele 27<sup>th</sup> September 1917. Buried at Hooge Crater cemetery Belgium. Commemorated at Stamford war memorial.
- George Kudlinski, Private Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Survived the war.
- Charles Henry Swanson, Rifleman, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales Own) Killed at Passchendaele 9<sup>th</sup> October 1917. No known grave. Commemorated Tyne Cot Memorial Belgium.
- Jane Laughton, Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse. Survived the war.

ALL remembered with love, respect, pride and appreciation

AUTHOR: J. Kudlinski