



# **WFA SUFFOLK BRANCH**

## **Branch Briefing**

**August 2023**

**Our Website :<https://suffolk-wfa.org.uk>**

**Our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/WFASuffolk>**

**WFA Suffolk**



## **Tonight's talk**



**Dr John Peaty: New Zealand Generalship**

### **NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE**

Sorry to advise that Chris Groom has died. Chris was a regular attender at our meetings and on our battlefield trips. The funeral takes place this coming Thursday 10 August at 1600. It will be at West Suffolk Crematorium, Risby, Bury St Edmunds IP28 6RR. Sorry for the short notice.

The Big Bus trip to the Marne region has had to be cancelled. There were just too many diary clashes for us to reach the required number. Undaunted, we've started work with Battle Honours on Big Bus 2024. The theme will be '20 things you did not know about Picardy'. The dates we have pencilled in are for three nights departing Stowmarket Saturday 29 June and returning Tuesday 2 July. Clive Harris is working on an itinerary and a price - more details as soon as I receive them. We have eight travellers to date so we're hopeful this will be the start of an excellent trip. We are likely to be based in Amiens.

We could do with a wider pool of contributors to the Briefing so please consider submitting an article.

And it's not too early to think about giving a short talk at the December meeting. By tradition we only have member's talking at the December meeting and we usually aim for three short talks so let Tom Mudd know if you want to give a talk.

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**ARTHUR LICENCE** Jean Licence

### **Sailor – Mercantile Marine**

I came across Arthur's name during one of our Spring Walks, visiting the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial. Wondering what his name was doing on the memorial I decided to 'dig' into his story.



Arthur was a crew member of the 'W C McKay, a Canadian schooner, which was attacked by U-156, captained by Konrad Gansser, off the Azores, Portugal, whilst en-route from Twillingate, Newfoundland to Gibraltar with a cargo of cod fish. Scuttled by the U-boat, all hands were lost. He is remembered on the Beaumont-Hamel (Newfoundland) Memorial, France.

Date of death was given as 10 January 1918. There is however some discrepancy as to the date of the sinking - some sites give January 1918 but the date given in U-boat records is December 1917.

The only information given is Arthur's home address, 25 Station Street, Stoke, Ipswich, Suffolk. Wife: Mrs A Licence. [After a lot of digging I still can't find either Arthur or his wife.]

The 'W C McKay' was built in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, Canada in 1912. Canadian sailing wooden fishing schooner; 147 tons. Scuttled date given at 7 December 1917, casualties 6.

W. C. MCKAY was a Canadian sailing vessel of 147 tons. On the 7th December 1917 when Ne of the Azores she was sunk by German submarine U-156 (Konrad Gansser). There were no survivors. Read more at wrecksite: <https://wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?147339>

General: nationality: Canadian. purpose: fishing type: schooner. propulsion: sailing ship. date built: 1912

Details: tonnage: 147 grt material: wood. about the loss: cause lost: scuttled. date lost: 07/12/1917 [dd/mm/yyyy] casualties: † max.7rank: 734 list of people about people Read more at wrecksite: <https://wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?147339>

name: Arthur Licence age: unknown date of death: 10/01/1918 [dd/mm/yyyy] date of birth: type: crew rank: Sailor regiment: Newfoundland Mercantile Marine wreck: W. C. McKay Deal, William cause lost: scuttled remarks: Husband of Mrs. A. Licence, of 25, Station St., Stoke, Ipswich, England. country: United Kingdom references: Commonwealth War Graves Commission - Cwgc entered by: Jan Lettens entered: 04/02/2017 Read more at wrecksite: <https://wrecksite.eu/peopleView.aspx?8311>

Crew:

DOOLEY, Michael	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918	Mr and Mrs Patrick Dooley	57 New Gower Street, St John's
EVANS, Hubert	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918		
LICENCE, Arthur	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918	Husband of Mrs A Licence	25 Station Street, Stoke, Ipswich, England
McMANUS, Clem	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918	Son of Joseph McManus	12 Sebastian, Street St John's
O'NEILL, William	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918	Husband of Mrs William O'Neill	Battery Road, St John's
STEWART, John	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918	Husband of Mrs John Stewart	North Strand, Drogheda, Ireland
TORRES, Jose De La Cruz	Schooner "W C McKay"	10 Jan 1918	Son of Mrs Maria Avela Torres	15 Santo Marie Street Chancho, Chile

## **SUFFOLK AT WAR** Kin Smith

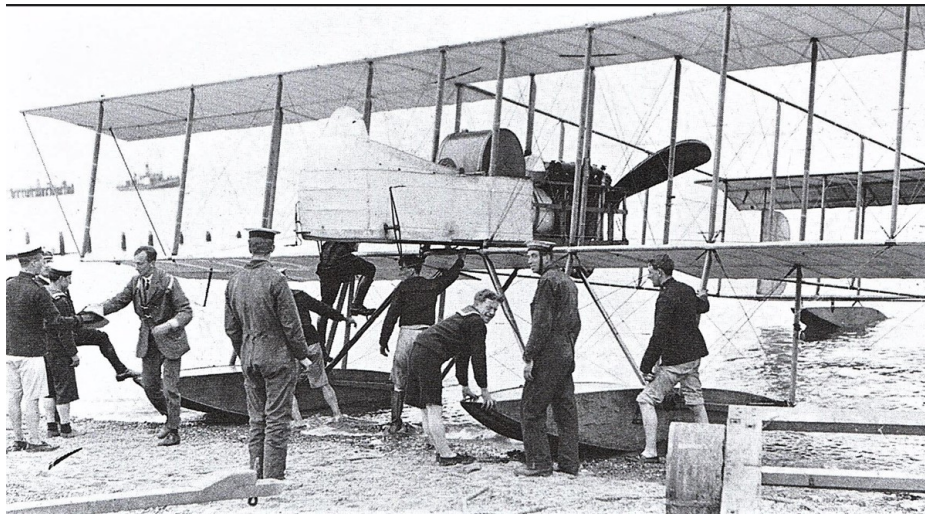
The Home Front is often overlooked as we study the minutiae of battle. However, as these images prove, Suffolk also suffered carnage on its doorstep. I came across them in a collection of archive press photographs and postcards. Although some will be familiar, such as the Zeppelin wreckage at Theberton, some are lesser known. Together, they provide a fascinating pictorial record of the Great War from start to end.



Orford 1914: New recruits set off from Market Square, no doubt anticipating a great adventure.



Pic 2 Bury St Edmunds 30 April 1915: Shops in Buttermarket lay in ruins after an airship raid.



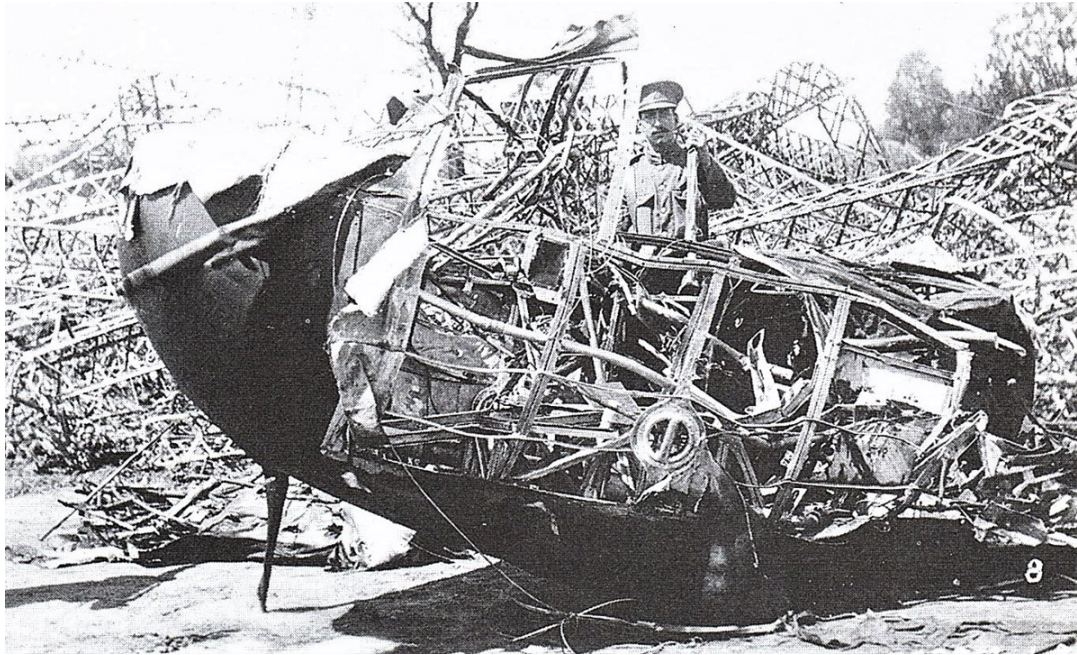
Shotley 1916: A seaplane lands at the Royal Naval Air Service base at HMS Ganges. The RNAS and the Royal Flying Corps were combined in 1918 to form the RAF.



Lowestoft Esplanade 25 April 1916: Two German battle cruisers launch a 20-minute attack from the North Sea, killing four, injuring 21 and damaging 200 homes and businesses.



Woodbridge 12 August 1916: Seven die in a Zeppelin raid on St John's Hill.



Theberton 17 June 1917: Zeppelin L48 is shot down and only one of the 17 crew survives. They are buried in the local churchyard until the 1960s, when they are relocated to a German cemetery in Staffs.



Sudbury 1918: Mounted troops parade in North Street, providing a morale-boosting spectacle for locals.



Clare 1919: A street procession is staged to celebrate the official end of the war.



1919 Kirton: Lord Allenby unveils the new war memorial. He was from a prominent Felixstowe family.

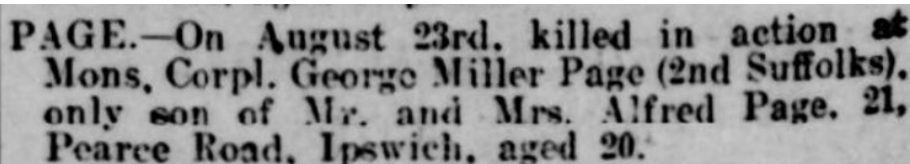
## **LEST WE FORGET** Kelvin Dakin

### **8302, Corporal George Miller Page, 2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment**

The History of the Suffolk Regiment 1914 – 1927 (CRR Murphy) describes the action on the 23rd August 1914 and includes the names of “*the first representatives of the Suffolk Regiment to give their lives in the Great War*” – Corporal G M Page, Private W Flack and Private S G Goddard.

However, on checking the Commonwealth War Graves database only Private William Flack and Private Sidney George Goddard are recorded as being killed in action that day. Both are commemorated on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial. Corporal Page is not recorded among the early casualties in the first few weeks of the war.

A War Office list released in September 1914 has him as being killed in action and the “Soldiers Effects” records also gives a date of the 23rd August. Pay owed, of £4 -18s -11d, was sent to his family on the 8th December 1914. The Evening Star of the 22nd September 1914 carried the following family notice in the “Deaths” column:



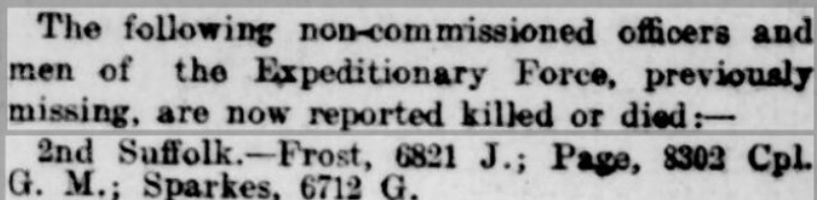
**PAGE.—On August 23rd, killed in action at Mons, Corpl. George Miller Page (2nd Suffolks), only son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Page, 21, Pearce Road, Ipswich, aged 20.**

Records were later amended when it was discovered that Corporal Page was alive but a prisoner of war. Unfortunately, he succumbed to his wounds and died on the 9th April 1915 at Hainin, Belgium (just west of Mons) and is buried in Hautrage Military Cemetery.

An official report of his death was issued on 15th December 1915 - as reproduced in the Evening Star on the 22nd December 1915:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission describes the origins of the cemetery:

*“The village of Hautrage was in German hands during almost the whole of the First World War. The military cemetery was begun by the Germans in August and September 1914, and in the summer of 1918 they brought into it a large number of British graves of 1914, mostly of the 2nd Cavalry and 5th Infantry Divisions, from the surrounding battlefields and local cemeteries.”*



**The following non-commissioned officers and men of the Expeditionary Force, previously missing, are now reported killed or died:—  
2nd Suffolk.—Frost, 6821 J.; Page, 8302 Cpl. G. M.; Sparkes, 6712 G.**

George Miller Page was born in Wherstead in 1893 but by 1901 the family are living in White Elm Street, Ipswich. George appears, age 17, in the 1911 Census at the Depot in Bury St Edmunds with the 3rd (Special Reserve) Battalion. His occupation was as a Bolt and Rivet driller at an iron foundry.

George is commemorated on the Ipswich Memorial. <https://www.ipswichwarmemorial.co.uk/george-miller-page/>

## **THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD ....**

**Talk at the Norwich Branch  
Tuesday 5th September**

**KATE WILLS : 'THE FALLEN CHORISTERS OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL CAMBRIDGE**

**Our next month's talk  
Wednesday 13th September**

**Steve Smith : Zeppelins over Norfolk and the East Coast**

Please send any contributions for the *Branch Briefing* to:  
David Hedges, 99 Cliff Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9SA  
telephone: 01394 272677 and email:david.j.hedges@btopenworld.com  
Next Committee meeting: tba  
Approach a committee member if you want any issue raised.