

WFA SUFFOLK BRANCH

Branch Briefing

May 2023

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WFASuffolk

Tonight's talk

Ross Beadle : 10 decisions that decided
the Battle of the Marne



Welcome all to our May meeting.

We welcome our speaker Ross Beadle on a very topical talk on the Battle of the Marne. Topical because the Marne is where our Big Coach tour will be going in September. I have repeated details of the trip in the hope that Ross's talk might persuade some to join the tour. And pass the details on to friends and relatives who may be interested.

Next month we can look forward to Peter Hart visiting in what will be a lively presentation on the air war in 1915.

You may notice that Kelvin Dakin has once again saved my bacon by submitting two excellent articles for this Briefing. We really need a wider catchment of contributors so if you have an interest that inspires you to write a contribution please do so.

The Candler family of Bury St Edmunds Kelvin Dakin



The following obituary appeared in the Bury Free Press, 3rd April 1960:

LEGION LOSES A DEVOTED WORKER

Having spent nearly a lifetime fighting for the cause of the ex-serviceman, Mr Archie Candler died suddenly in his chair at his home, 40 Guildhall Street, Bury St Edmunds on Monday night.

Aged 70, he leaves a widow, two sons and a daughter.

A member of a military family – his father was a band sergeant in the Suffolk Regiment - Mr Candler was one of a number of brothers who served in the county regiment. As a regular soldier he went to France on the outbreak of the first world war with the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment as part of the Old Contemptibles.

LE CATEAU

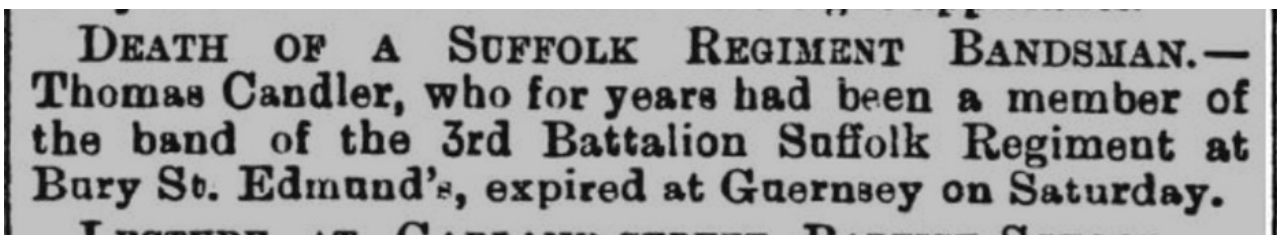
The Suffolks belonged to a small force, which fought a great rear-guard action against overwhelming German forces at the Battle of Le Cateau to cover the retreat of the main force. They fought in the open fields where the corn stooks were still standing without prepared entrenched positions. The battalion sustained 720 casualties. Historians believe that the Battle of Le Cateau thwarted the German descent on Paris.

Seriously wounded, Mr. Candler was invalided out of the Army and in 1917 he was one of an enthusiastic few who launched in Bury St Edmunds a branch of the first ex-Servicemen's organisation—the National Association of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors. When the various ex-service organisations were amalgamated into the British Legion, Mr. Candler continued his devoted work which earned him widespread regard.

GOLD BADGE

He was a trusted leader in the Bury St Edmunds branch. In the county branch, of which he had been vice-chairman and a committee man, Mr Candler served the Bury British Legion for 40 years to the time of his death as Hon Secretary, Chairman or Committee man.

He was presented with the British Legion Gold Badge for distinguished service.



Mr Candler was a Justice of the Peace sitting on the Bury St Edmunds bench.

The following additional information has been found about Archie and his brothers:

7715, Corporal Archibald [Archie] Candler, 2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment

Archie was born in Bury St Edmunds on 17th January 1889 – his father was Thomas Candler who, in the 1891 Census, was recorded as a “Drummer, Militia, Permanent Staff” living with his wife, Eliza, and family at the Suffolk Regiment Depot. The children listed were, Thomas (10), Kate (9), Beatrice (8), Harry (5), William (4), Bertie (3), Archibald (1).

Thomas (Snr) died in 1900, as reported in the Bury Free Post of 13th November

By the time of the 1901 Census the family, now consisting of Eliza with Bertie (13), Archie (12), Richard (11), Percy (8), Daisy (5) and Florrie (3), was living at 14 Garland Street, Bury St Edmunds.

Archie enlisted in the Coldstream Guards on the 15th August 1905 aged 15 years 7 months, as Drummer 6301 but in 1908 requested a transfer to the 2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment “for the purpose of serving in that unit with his elder brother”.

In 1911 he is with the Battalion at Aldershot.

Archie crossed to France with the Battalion on the 15th August 1914 alongside his brothers Thomas and Richard (see below). He was reported as wounded in a War Office Casualty list dated 11th October 1915.

Of the brothers, the record of their military service is as follows:

Thomas

Enlisted as Boy No 4198 in the 1st Battalion Suffolk Regiment on 4th April 1895 aged 14 years 8 months having previously served in the 3rd Battalion. He transferred to the 2nd Battalion on the 14th January 1896 and was appointed "Bandsman" on the 14th April 1897. He crossed to France on the 15th August 1914 as Lance Sergeant (His MIC incorrectly says 14/9/14) and he went missing after the Battle of Le Cateau on the 26th August 1914). Thomas was reported as a PoW in Germany at Doeberitz on 22nd October 1914 and transferred to Holland for internment on 22nd January 1918. He was repatriated on the 23rd October 1918 and admitted to King George Hospital, Stamford. He was discharged on 26th February 1919 after 23 years and 329 days service.

William (born 21st November 1886)

Attested as Boy, No 5030, aged 13 in the 3rd Battalion Suffolk Regiment on the 23rd November 1899. Appointed Drummer 1st March 1900. In 1901 he is with the battalion in Guernsey. He reengaged for 4 years on 23rd November 1905 and was appointed Lance Corporal 13th April 1908. Discharged 23rd November 1909.

In 1911 he was living with his widowed mother and siblings at 1 York Terrace, Bury St Edmunds. He is employed as an "Engineers Improved Turner".

In 1939 he is working as a metal turner living at 37 Cannon Street, Bury St Edmunds and living with his wife Susannah and family. The couple had married in 1916.

No evidence has been found of further military service during the war.

[James] Bertie (born 4th March 1889)

Bandsman, 7810, 2nd Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Enlisted c1904, crossed to France 19th December 1914 and then to Salonika December 1915.

Awarded Meritorious Service Medal on the Kings Birthday for "valuable services in Salonika" (London Gazette 3rd June 1918)

Awarded Greek Military Cross, 3rd Class, (London Gazette 3rd October 1919)

Richard

Born 1891. Private, 8813, B Company, 2nd Suffolk

He appears at Aldershot in 1911, age 19, with the 2nd Battalion.

He crossed to France on the 15th August 1914 and was wounded and captured at Le Cateau. He died of wounds as a Prisoner of War on 31st August 1914.

He is commemorated at La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing.

Percy

Percy was born on 10th March 1894 and in 1911 was a Bookstall Clerk. He married in 1931 and lived and worked in Bury St Edmunds until his death in 1960, aged 66. No records have been found of military service.

Tour Proposal -The Battlefields of Champagne 7-11 September 2023

Julian Whippy and Keith Cooper

This often-overlooked campaign lasted through the Summer of 1918 but commenced on 27 May with the ‘shock and awe’ of the German Blücher offensive, one that almost destroying three British divisions on the Chemin des Dames. The German advance to the Marne, directly threatened Paris but was held at Chateau Thierry by a mixed force of US Infantry and Marines, the first major intervention by the AEF on the Western Front.

What followed saw the ‘Rock of the Marne’ and the Mangin offensive, both of which events were acknowledged by the Germans as the turn of the tide of war, weeks before the 8 August attack to the north by BEF. Our tour will enable us study if that was in fact the case by exploring the British, French, Italian and American contribution to the Allied campaign. Based in Reims, there will also be chance to explore the Champagne Houses and vineyards, many of which had direct links to the Battle of the Marne.

7 September *Travel Day* Pick-up in Suffolk and Ebbsfleet for onward travel to Reims, a stop on-route on the Chemin des Dames to look at the opening phases of the battle and provide some context to the tour. – Overnight Reims

8 September *Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood* - A morning study of the battle for Belleau Wood including the advance into the wood, visits to a number of associated sites and the nearby ABMC and German Cemeteries. After lunch we look at one of the great what ifs of the war, the Battle of Chateau Thierry and the unmanned bridge spanning the town. We also visit the US Memorial and Visitors Centre that stands guard over the river Marne and offer commanding views of the battlefield. We end the day by studying the Rock of the Marne a true symbol of American resistance in 1918

9 September *The British in the Ardre Valley* - The day is spent touring the nearby Ardre Valley where the British fought two actions in the summer of 1918. Firstly, the defensive battle fought by the 19th (Western) Division that slows the German advance as they attempt to encircle Reims. We then consider the offensive actions of the 51st (Highland) and 62nd (West Riding) Divisions over the same ground as they fought their way through the dense forests and rolling vineyards before reaching the commanding Montagne de Bligny at the conclusion of an intense 9-day battle. We end the day in Epernay and tour the Avenue de Champagne, the mile long thoroughfare offers an unbroken boulevard of champagne houses and bars.

10 September *The battlefields of Reims* - We start the day with a visit to the nearby Fort de la Pompelle to consider the French battlefields prior to the British arrival in July 1918, after visiting a number of sites connected to the French fighting between 1915 and 1917, we end with a visit to a Reims Champagne House for a cellar tour & tasting.

11 September 2023 *Travel Day* – after some free-time in Reims to visit its magnificent Cathedral, we head home via Calais and to Suffolk.

Price- £710 per person £180 Single supplement. This includes Coach, Ferry, Guide and 4 nights in Hotel on B&B basis. This is based on minimum of 18 people booking. £100 deposit.

To register your interest please email Keith Cooper keith-cooper@hotmail.co.uk

Space here you're your article !!!

LEST WE FORGET Kelvin Dakin

17677, Private John George Langhorn Burrell, DCM, 11th Battalion Suffolk Regiment

John was born in 1889 in Cambridge, the son of George and Frances Burrell.

He married Dora Gravestock in Cambridge 1909 and in 1911 John (aka Jack), Dora and their son George are living with John's parents at 4 Parkers Terrace, Cambridge.

He crossed to France to join the 1st Battalion on the 1st June 1915 but had transferred to the 2nd Battalion when he was reported wounded in a War Office List dated 26th December 1915.

He was awarded the DCM in March 1916.

17677 Pte. J.G.L. BURRELL 2nd Bn.

For conspicuous bravery and devotion.
After an attack on an enemy trench, Private Burrell remained in the open, under heavy fire, collecting and bandaging the wounded and working so close to the enemy parapet that he was continually being bombed while doing so.
(11.3.16)

John was reported wounded again in a War Office List dated 14th December 1917. According to his medal records he also served at some point with the 8th Battalion.

John was killed in action on 2nd May 1918 while serving with the 11th Battalion, as reported in the Cambridge Daily News on the 15 May 1918.

PTE. J. G. BURRELL.—Mrs. D. Burrell, of 2, South-street, East-road, has received official information that her husband, Pte. J. G. Burrell, of the Suffolk Regiment, was killed in action on May 2nd, 1918. Pte. Burrell, who had been in the Army for over three years, had been wounded four times, and had only been out again for six weeks after recovering from the last wound, when he met his death. Previous to joining up he was employed by Mr. Swann, contractor, East-road, Mr. and Mrs. G. Burrell have another son still serving.

Private John G L Burrell is buried at White House Cemetery, St. Jean-les-Ypres and commemorated on the Cambridge Guildhall War Memorial.

John and Dora had three children:

George John Langhorn Burrell born 6th November 1910
Gwendolin Florence Burrell born 17th September 1914
Marjorie May Burrell born 26th June 1917

Dora remarried to Robert Frank Daynes in 1921.

THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD

**Talk at the Norwich Branch
Tuesday 6th June**

Andrew England – Sergeant Dunbabin, a Kings Lynn hero

**Our next month's talk
Wednesday 14th June**

Peter Hart: Air war on the Western Front 1915

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.