

WFA SUFFOLK BRANCH

Branch Briefing

November 2023

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

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



Tonight's talk

Dr Graham Kemp : German commerce raiders 1914-15

REMEMBRANCE Kim Smith



Just in time for Remembrance Sunday, Maureen Hatton of Stowmarket Art Club has produced this pen and watercolour image of Stowmarket's Memorial Gates. As they will be the focus of this weekend's commemorations in the town, I thought it was worth sharing.

DECEMBER MEETING Dave Hedges

At the December meeting we will have our AGM, but please do not be put off attending by this. We will hold the AGM after the three 'Cameos' ie three twenty minute talks from our own members

David Hedges -- "Radar was invented in my back bedroom" -- a passing mention of WW1 but almost off-subject, but it is Christmas

Ed Erbes -- "Haber & Bosch" -- apparently not trying to sell washing machines

Roger Mason -- "From Douglas the Dummy to Charles the butcher" (Oh What a Lovely War)?" all about Roger's grandfather

I hope most will stay for the AGM. If we use the time efficiently it should not take too long. And, if you all cross your fingers and say you believe in Father Christmas, we might persuade our Treasurer, Brian (Scrooge) Davies to let us have a mince pie each in the buffet.

The December edition will include an agenda and a financial report

If you want any issues raised please let our Chairman Colin know beforehand.

BIG BUS 2024 Keith Cooper

Seventeen people have registered interest in the big bus trip which is very promising.

The location will be Picardy and our likely base will be in Amiens. Clive Harris and Julian Whippy are working on the itinerary and pricing. We'll bring these to branch members as soon as they become available.

The dates of the trip will be from **Saturday 29 June returning 2 July 2024**

If you're interested in joining us please talk to me or David Hedges.

FROM THE WORKHOUSE TO WAR Kelvin Dakin

3336, Private Cornelius Cronin, 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment

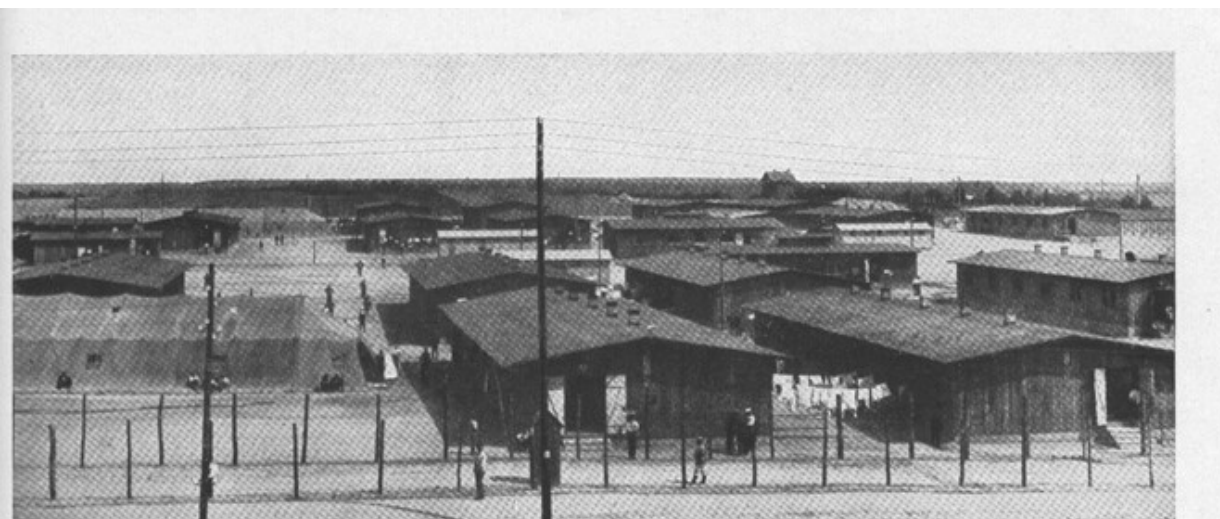
Cornelius was born about 1877 in Deptford, London but it is difficult to trace his early life with any great certainty. However, a person of this name and year of birth appears in Workhouse admissions in the early 1880's in Greenwich and is likely to be our man. The records give a few clues to why his formative years were spent in such institutions, especially as one entry carries the information that his father was dead and mother in prison.

In 1891 Cornelius is a scholar at the South Metropolitan District School for Orphan and Deserted Children* in Hatfield Road, Witham, Essex. Fortunately, his service record has survived, and we know that he enlisted as a Boy in the Suffolk Regiment on the 29th August 1892 at Colchester. He was aged 15 years, 5 months and his "Trade or Calling" was "musician". His next of kin was a brother in Upper Norwood.

On the 6th September 1893 he was posted abroad, now a Private. He was appointed as Bandsman on 1st October 1894 and Lance Corporal on 1st February 1902. Back home from December 1907, he passed a course in ambulance duties in 1909.

Not everything in his career was spotless though as on the 20th December 1899 he was fined 5 shillings for being drunk in barracks "when playing at the Regimental Theatre" (Quetta). Another 5 shilling fine with 7 days confined to barracks, was imposed in 1911 for returning drunk to barracks at Aldershot.

He crossed to France with the Battalion on the 15th August 1914 and was posted "Missing" after the Battle of Le Cateau - later posted as Prisoner of War in a casualty list issued by the



20. Döberitz. Teilansicht des Lagers. — Vue partielle du camp. — View of part of camp. — Vista parcial del campamento. — Частичный вид лагеря „Доберниц“.

Imprisoned at Doberitz he was later repatriated via Switzerland (Chateau d'Oex) where living conditions were very much better and *“there were even Germans to taunt and vast amounts of beer to drink”* – this according to John Lewis-Stemple in his book, *The War Behind the Wire*.

Cornelius took good advantage of the latter as he was jailed for 7 days by the Swiss Military Authorities for being drunk and absent in February 1917. He eventually returned to the UK on 14th September 1917.

Cornelius was discharged with a Silver War Badge due to “debility” on 18th March 1919 age 41. One record indicates that he had married but no details have been found. His post war address was in Hoxton and a possible death recorded in 1924 in Hendon.

Picture of Doberitz Camp: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wwi_pow_camps/940/



General view at Chateau d'Oex in Switzerland where British and commonwealth troops were interned during the First World War © IWM Q 54698

*The South Metropolitan School District was founded in 1849 by the Poor Law Unions of Bermondsey, Camberwell, Greenwich and Saint Olave's. In 1882 the District purchased an old workhouse in Witham, Essex. Children were taught the basics of a useful trade which, it was hoped, would provide them with better prospects in future.

LEST WE FORGET Kelvin Dakin

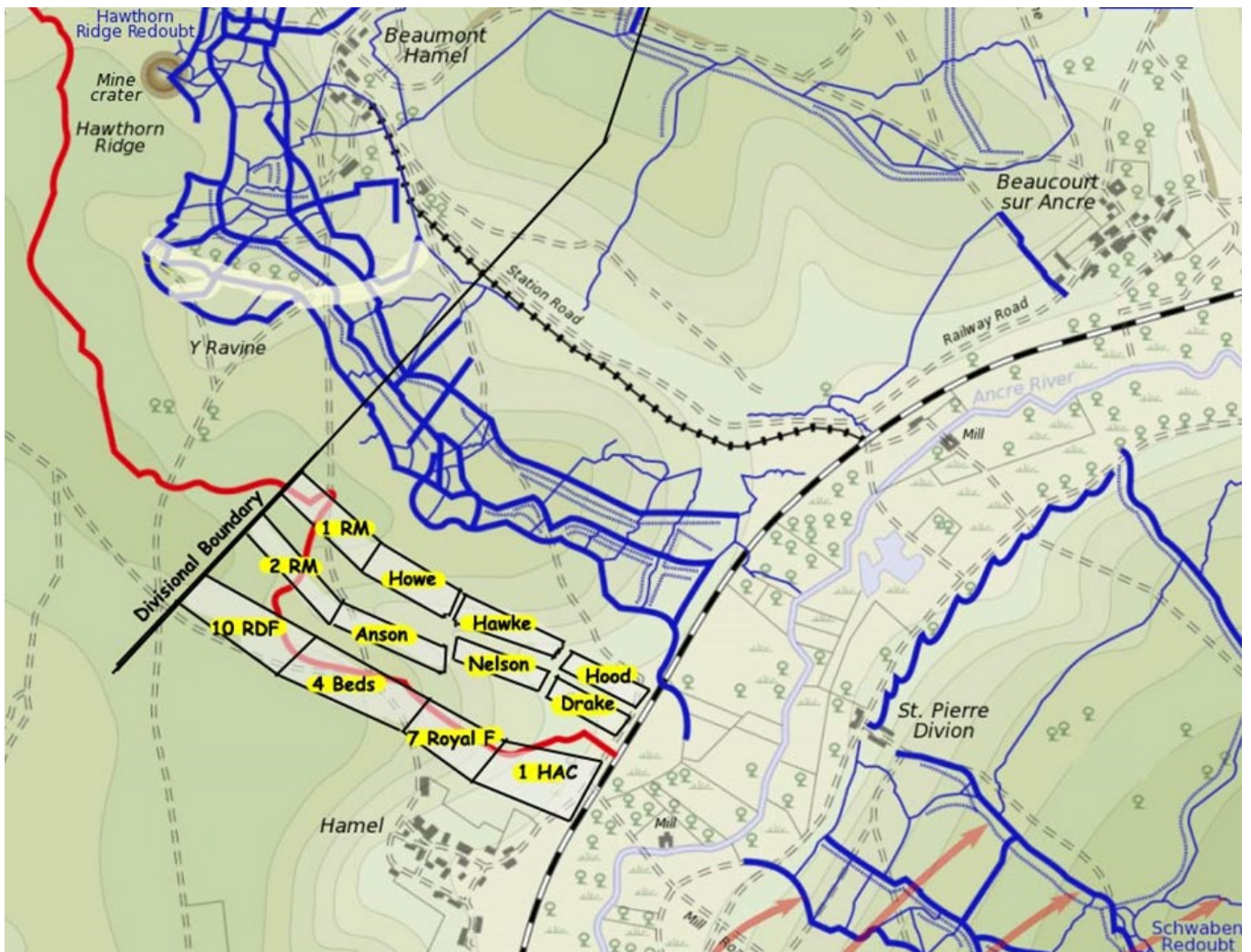
GS/10160, Lance Sergeant Arthur William Hall, 7th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)

Arthur was born in Stonham Aspal in 1895 – the son of Ernest and Charlotte Hall. In 1911 Arthur was living with his parents in Mickfield Road and employed as a Boy Gardener.

He married Ethel Mary Keeble¹ on the 15th February 1915 at the parish church of St Marylebone, London - at the time he was employed as a Footman. Ethel was born in Ipswich but living at 28 Upper Baker Street, London – presumably working in service there but no occupation was given on the marriage certificate. Arthur's address was 61 Union Road, Buckland, Dover.

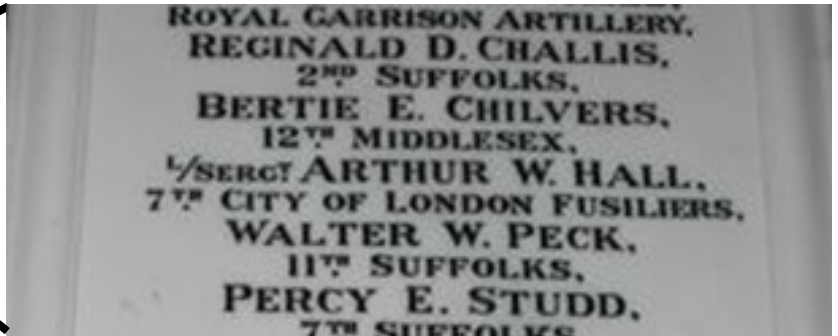
Arthur enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers at Cockspur Street, London² and after training he crossed to France with the 7th (Extra Reserve) Battalion on the 23rd July 1916. The 7th was in 190th Brigade of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division.

After further training and a few weeks of manning trenches, the Brigade was moved to Hamel in October 1916 in preparation for the planned attack on the Ancre.



(Map from www.dublin-fusiliers.com/battalions/10-batt/10th-war-diary/1916-11a-battle.html)

Arthur was killed in action on the 13th November 1916 and is buried at the Ancre British Cemetery. He is commemorated on the village war memorial in Stonham Aspal church.



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Footnotes:

1 Ethel was my grandmother's half-sister. The couple had a daughter – Doris Ethel Hall - born on the 27th August 1915. Ethel remarried in 1919 to Arthur Augustus Frost who had served as a Gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery.

2 Soldiers Died in the Great War database.

“Cockspur Street” was the former London headquarters of the German owned Hamburg-Amerika shipping line and commandeered by the government for use as a recruiting centre.

THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD

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

Stephen Barker : Hardit Singh Malik known as the flying Sikh

**Our next month's talk
Wednesday 13th December
AGM and Branch Cameos**

Please send any contributions for the *Branch Briefing* to:
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telephone: 01394 272677 and email:david.j.hedges@btopenworld.com
Next Committee meeting: tba
Approach a committee member if you want any issue raised.