

St Martin's Church, Welton Stories

Arthur William Meadows was Acting Corporal in the 2nd Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment. Arthur was born on 11th October 1891 in Banbury, Oxfordshire. He was the son of Jethro (Jim) and Nettie Meadows (Rainbow)

His mother died in 1905

In 1911 Arthur was at the South Raglan Barracks, Devonport

On 9th May 1915, the 2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment suffered devastating casualties during the opening phase of the Battle of Aubers Ridge. Tasked with an assault near Festubert on the Western Front, the Battalion was pinned down by heavy machine-gun and artillery fire in No Man's Land. Arthur was reported missing presumed dead on 9th May 1915 and is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

Charles William Benjamin was a Driver in the 13th Pontoon Park Company, Royal Engineers. Charles was born in July 1892 in Welton, Northamptonshire. He was the son of Ephraim Eli and Emily Benjamin. Both his parents were born in Welton.

In 1911 Charles was living with his parents, brothers Frank, Herbert and Dennis and sisters Annie and Mabel. His father was a carpenter, and Charles was a waggoner on a farm.

He enlisted in Rugby, Warwickshire in the Royal Engineers.

In October 1918, the 13th Pontoon Park Company (Royal Engineers) was serving primarily in the Middle East as part of the XXI Corps in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. They were responsible for essential bridging logistics, such as during the River Jordan crossings, and operated at depots in areas like Haifa.

The 13th October 1918 fell during the height of the devastating global Spanish Flu pandemic and also saw ongoing challenges with malaria in the region. Several sappers and drivers from the unit tragically lost their lives to these illnesses around this exact date. Charles died on 13th October 1918, possibly from disease and is remembered on the Cairo War Memorial, Egypt.

Herbert Leslie Benjamin was a private in the 11th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Herbert was born in Welton, Northamptonshire and was baptised on 1st April 1897. He was the son of Ephraim Eli and Emily Benjamin. Both his parents were born in Welton.

In 1911 Herbert was living with his parents, brothers Frank, Charles and Dennis and sisters Annie and Mabel. His father was a carpenter, and Herbert was a farm labourer.

Herbert enlisted in Rugby, Warwickshire in the 11th (Service) Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment. They were formed at Warwick in September 1914

On 11th July 1916, the 11th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment was positioned in the Tara-Usna Line on the Somme. Attached to the 34th Division, they were holding and consolidating the front lines during the intense, gruelling phases of the Battle of the Somme. Herbert died on 11th July 1916.

Percy Benjamin MM was a private in the 6th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment. Percy Benjamin was born in 1895 and was baptised on 15th April 1895 in Welton, Northamptonshire. He was the son of Ephraim Eli and Emily Benjamin. Both his parents were born in Welton.

In 1911 Percy was living with Sidney and Eliza Schachridge in Clifton, Rugby, Warwickshire. He was sixteen and a domestic helper.

On 5th September 1914 Percy enlisted in the 6th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment in Northampton.

On 14th July 1916, the 6th (Service) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment served as the assault battalion tasked with capturing Trônes Wood during the Battle of Bazentin Ridge (part of the Battle of the Somme). Facing intense hand-to-hand combat in dense undergrowth, they successfully took the wood but suffered devastating casualties from shellfire and machine guns. Percy was reported missing, then killed in action on 14th July 1916, at the age of 21 and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. He received the military medal for his actions.

Thomas Frederick Surridge was a private in the 8th Battalion Canadian Infantry. Thomas was born on 22nd March 1885 in Welton and was baptised on 24th May 1885 at Welton, Northamptonshire. He was the son of Thomas and Emma Surridge (Healy). His father was a coachman born in Norton, Northamptonshire and his mother was born in Ravensthorpe, Northamptonshire.

In 1891 Thomas was living with his parents, brothers Francis, Bertrand and Basil and sister Elizabeth at 2 Stockwell Green, Welton. His father was a coachman.

In 1901 Thomas was a servant in the home of Alice Gifford at Churchill House, Welton. He was helping in the stables.

In 1911 Thomas sailed to St John in New Brunswick, Canada arriving on 11th April. In November of that year, he sailed to Port Huron, Michigan, United States to become a farm labourer.

He enlisted on 2nd June 1916 in Canada in the Canadian Infantry having previously served in the 1st Northamptonshire Volunteers. His address at the time was the Iroquois Hotel, Winnipeg, Manitoba. He was attached to the 8th Battalion and was soon dispatched to the Western Front.

On 9th August 1918, the 8th Canadian Infantry Battalion (90th Winnipeg Rifles) spearheaded an assault during the Battle of Amiens near Caix, France. Pushing through heavy resistance and machine-gun fire, their immense bravery during this operation resulted in two members - Alexander Picton Brereton and Frederick George Coppins - earning the Victoria Cross. Advancing over the Caix-les-Quesnel Road, the battalion encountered intense German machine-gun nests and artillery fire. Thomas was killed in the action of 9th August 1918 and is remembered in the Manitoba Cemetery, Caix.

Thomas Wootton was a private in the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment. Thomas was born in 1880 in Crowfield, Northamptonshire and was baptised on 21st June 1880 in Syresham, Northamptonshire. He was the son of Frederick Francis and Rhoda Wootton. His father was a labourer, and his mother was born in Syresham.

In 1901 Thomas was living with his mother and brothers George and Sydney at Middlemore Cottages, Daventry. Thomas was a shepherd.

In 1911 Thomas was living with William and Ellen Stevenson at Welton, Northamptonshire. He was a labourer on a farm.

In 1915 Thomas married Ellen Webb in Peterborough.

During World War One Thomas enlisted in the 1st Battalion Northampton Regiment. The 1st Battalion was a Regular Army unit that served on the Western Front throughout World War I. Landing in France on 13th August 1914, they saw action in nearly every major conflict, including Mons, the Somme, and the Hindenburg Line, before joining the occupation of Germany.

Thomas died in No.2 General Hospital, Manchester of acute Nephritis on 19th July 1917 and was buried at St Martin's Churchyard, Welton.