



## Herbert Samuel Chapman

7017985 Lance Corporal, 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Rifle Brigade,  
(formerly 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, The Tower Hamlet Rifles).

He died in Italy on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1944, aged 24.

Herbert is commemorated on the Cassino Memorial, Italy.

There is a record of a Christopher Chapman of Harleston dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Christopher Chapman, of Harleston, appeared before the Leet Court held at Harleston on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1656 and was charged 3s 4d for laying in half a barrel of strong beare(sic) at an unlicensed house! By the mi-19<sup>th</sup> Century, other than the odd isolated individual, Chapmans no longer appeared in Harleston.

Our hero, Herbert Samuel Chapman was born in Harleston on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1920 and baptised 4<sup>th</sup> July 1920. His parents, Walter and Florence Chapman nee Cushing, seem to be doing their best to repopulate Harleston with Chapmans. They were living on Candler's Lane in 1911 and had popped out three children in the last 3 years of their 6 year marriage. Walter was himself was one of eleven children, all of whom survived to adult hood and he seem to have been determined to emulate his father. As well as the three children that appeared in the 1911 census I have found baptism records of a further 8 children born to the couple between 1913 and 1927!<sup>1</sup>

### THE LATE MRS. H. K. CHAPMAN.

An unique family circle has been broken up by the passing of Mrs. Harriet Kezia Chapman, who died on Saturday at the age of 81. Mrs. Chapman lived with her husband, Mr. Walter Chapman, who is aged 81 and her sister, aged 87. Thus the combined aged of this household of three members was 249 years. Apart from a period spent at Starston, Mr. and Mrs. Chapman have lived in Pulham St. Mary all their lives and they were married from the house in which she died, 59 years ago. Mrs. Chapman is survived by eleven children.

The funeral took place in the Parish Church on Thursday week, the Rector, the Rev. E. Rhodes, officiating. The hymn "Abide with me" was sung, Miss F. O'Shea, being at the organ.

The family mourners were: the widower; Mrs. J. Simmons, daughter; Mrs. E. W. Osborne, daughter; Mrs. J. Saunders, daughter; Mrs. B. Shreeve, daughter; Mrs. S. Chapman, daughter; Mr. W. Chapman, son; Mr. V. Chapman, son; Mr. E. Chapman, son; Mr. B. Shreeve, son-in-law; Mr. J. Saunders, son-in-law; Mrs. V. Chapman, daughter-in-law; Mrs. H. Chapman, daughter-in-law; Miss D. Saunders, grand-daughter; Mr. G. Chapman, grand-son; Mr. J. Chapman, grandson; Mrs. A. Chenery, niece; Mr. A. Chapman, nephew.

*The funeral notice of Herbert Chapman's Grandmother.*

*Diss Express  
27 Dec 1935*

Walter was born in Pulham, the only one of his 10 siblings who was, all the rest having born in Starston during a span of at least 26 years. This is considerably more than one might assume looking at the piece in the Diss Express marking the funeral of Walter's mother which rather indicated the family belonged to Pulham Mary!. His father, Walter Snr, had also been born in Starston!

This cadet branch of the Chapman family stayed happily settled in Harleston; of the 5 known brothers and 5 known sisters, two, James Walter and Jack ( proper name, John Harry), were shown in the 1938 Electoral Roll still living with their parents at Duke William Lane (the alternative and interchangeable name for Candler's Lane). There were undoubtedly some younger siblings below

<sup>1</sup> There may have been 12 children in all – I have found a transcribed record for a Gerturde E Chapman born in 1913, mothers maiden name 'Cutting' – possible misreading of Cushing.

the age of voting in the household too. The youngest of these other siblings, Donald Chapman submitted some of his reminiscences to the 'People's War' web site.<sup>2</sup>

I was born in Harleston, Norfolk on 1/8/1927. On leaving school in 1941, I was employed by Alfa Electrical Company installing the electricity fitting in the building and aircraft hangars at Metfield, Suffolk, airfield which was built for the use of the American aircraft. On wiring the hangars, we used to have to climb along the girders of the hangar roofs to fit the metal pipes for the electric wires no worry about health and safety in the war years.

The American Air force took over the airfield and Thunder Bolt fighter-bomber aircraft were stationed there. Sadly, many aircraft did not return back off their raids. I can recall seeing many aircraft return damaged and had been shot at.

I can recall one late evening in the summer time, which was double summer time during the war, when the USA Liberator bombers were returning from the bomb air raids over Germany, to land their aircraft at Flixton airfield which was a few miles from Harleston in Norfolk. The German aircraft followed the USA Liberator aircraft home and they shot down several of the Liberator aircraft which crashed in the surrounding area of Harleston, sadly with the loss of aircrew and aircraft.

I worked at Metfield airfield in Suffolk up to 1945 when I was 18 years old then I was called up for Army service from 1945 to 1948.

Sadly, I lost one of my brothers, Herbert Samuel Chapman who served in the Army infantry during the 39-45 war, he served in Africa, and was killed in action in Italy, with no known grave, his name is on the war memorial in Italy and my home town of Harleston Norfolk. I have his medals, The Africa Star, The Italy Star, The 1939-1945 Star and a Silver Medal 1939-1945. Army Service L/CPL H S Chapman served with The Royal Ulster Regiment.

History does indeed show that Chapman's Battalion served in North Africa and then moved to Italy, joining the Eighth Army in the advance to take Rome. There is no evidence of Samuel having served with the Royal Ulsters but, since all 5 of Donald's older brothers were old enough to be conscripted, when Donald was looking back 60 years after his brother's death, some of the details may have become blurred over the years.

Herbert, possibly along with others of his brothers, might have attended Bungay Grammar School (now Bungay High School) as many other bright lads from Harleston did. The name H S Chapman appears on the School Roll of Honour although, as yet, we have not confirmed this to be our Herbert Samuel.

Although they did not marry until 1905, Herbert's parents, Walter and Florence, would have known each other back in 1901 when Walter was a billiard marker at the Magpie. Very much a young man's job, this entailed keeping the score of this very popular game and, more importantly for the landlord, keeping the players well supplied with drinks. The pay was not great, the tips could be generous, however not really a job to raise a family on, especially a family the size of Walter's!

In the same census Florence was working as General Domestic in George Denny's household just across the way – yes G.Denny and Sons, Ironmongers. She would have had her work cut-out;

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<sup>2</sup> This story was submitted to the People's War site by Rosemary Hamilton of the BBC Radio Shropshire CSV Action Desk on behalf of D. Chapman

George was a cheery and social alcoholic, his wife was a chronic invalid and there were four children and a very elderly uncle also in the household.

Walter's wife to be, Florence Louisa nee Cushing/ Cushion was the illegitimate daughter of Mary Cushion/Cushing and although they both originated from Tibenham, by the time Florence was 5 her mother had married George Tann and they were all living out in Pulham, George's home parish, with a couple of legitimate babies added to the family. I am glad to say that her stepfather had fully embraced her into the new family as, in the 1901 census, Florence appeared in the Denny household under his name as Florence Tann.

In 1911, Walter had a good, steady, skilled job as a chauffeur - not a hire car driver! Instead he was working for one of the local Doctors, almost certainly Doctor Robinson, who had set up in practice with Dr Candler, son of Doctor Candler after whom Candler's Lane was named! By 1911, Dr Candler had retired to Devon and Robinson had taken over both the Harleston practice and the Candler's house at the foot of Candler's Lane, also known as Duke William Lane.

Walter would not have had to travel far to his workplace which would have been a blessing. Then as now, Doctors could be called out at all hours so his driver would also need to be ready to go at short notice! This particular job might have come to a sudden end following the accidental death of Dr Robinson in 1913. As a Major attached to the R.A.M.C in the 1<sup>st</sup> East Anglian Royal Field Artillery Candler had joined a training camp in Kent for a fortnight's exercises. He was seen regaining control of a skittish horse which he then allowed to have its head, presumably to let it burn off some of its high spirits. Unfortunately, as the pair approached a bend in the road the horse took a jump over an invisible obstacle, lost its footing and, turning an entire somersault, left Robinson unconscious on the ground. With severe concussion of the brain Robinson never regained consciousness. Although he had ridden the horse previously, it was normally equipped with a martingale bridle, designed to stop a horse from tossing or rearing its head too high.

—Mrs. Hazard suggested that funds be collected for a cottage hospital. If it were impossible to get a hospital they might get a home for the nurse, with an emergency room annexed. A room of that sort might expand into a cottage hospital.—The Chairman said nothing was more desirable, but it was a question of ways and means.—Mr. Hazard said the figures which had been submitted to the committee showed that it was impossible to adopt the suggestion of a cottage hospital.—After further discussion the acceptance of the committee's recommendations, with the addition of the provision of an emergency room at the nurse's home was agreed to.

*The Robinson Memorial Home*

*Plaque over the front door marks this.*

Robinson's orphaned daughter, Bertha, went on to marry Dr Maidment who had been working as assistant to her father and it was this Dr Maidment who was associated with the Red Cross Hospitals in Harleston during WW1 Perhaps when Maidment took over Robinson's practice and married his daughter, he also took on Robinson's Chauffeur, Walter Chapman. Walter himself served in WW1 as a private in the Army Service Corps and was awarded the Victory and British medals.

In late 1939, the Chapman family other things to worry as well as a world war. James Walter Chapman, Walter's oldest son, having partially followed in his father's footsteps as a baker's delivery

The grieving family helped raise funds for the Robinson's Memorial Home which, now converted to residential use, still stands on London Rd opposite Wilderness Lane.



driver, managed to slide his vehicle gently into another. It was decided that the combination of poor weather, a blind bend, his wet welly boots sliding on the brake pedal and the chance that the other driver was going faster than claimed gave him sufficient leeway to not have his license endorsed but to merely be levied a total of 41s 6d fine and costs.

However, in spite of things carrying on at the home front and Herbert having survived previous campaigns, he finally met his end in Italy in 1944. Unmarried, he left his estate to his father.