

ROBERT CECIL BURLINGHAM

Born: 3rd April 1896, Neatishead¹
Enlisted: 24th September 1914 - Private (240688),
1/5th Battalion the Norfolk Regiment²



Died: 2nd November 1917 – killed in action, Palestine (Egyptian Theatre)³

Age: 21

Memorial: Gaza War Cemetery, Gaza (XXIV.C.15)⁴

Medals: British War Medal; Victory Medal⁵



Residence: Hoveton St Peter, Wroxham in 1911; Wood Norton in 1914⁶

Robert Cecil Burlingham was born on the 3rd April 1896, the middle of three children of Charles and Elizabeth Burlingham. He was baptised on the 14th June 1896, in Neatishead parish church (see Figure 1).

April and 1896	1896 June 14 th No. 434.	Robert Cecil son of	Charles & Elizabeth	Burlingham	Neatishead Grove	R. W. J. Tomball Curate
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Figure 1: From the Baptisms Register, Neatishead, 1896

The British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920 survive for Robert. His service papers record that he was living in Wood Norton when he enlisted at East Dereham on the 24th September 1914. He gave his age as 18 years 5 months, height as 5' 5¼", and chest 35½".

¹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1896, Smallburgh, Vol.4b, p.50* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptisms Register, Neatishead, 1896 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

² British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

³ CWGC commemoration (www.cwgc.org).

⁴ CWGC *Commonwealth Graves Registration records* (www.cwgc.org).

⁵ British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁶ 1911 census, Hoveton St Peter (Schedule 44) (www.ancestry.co.uk); British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

At the end of March 1917, Gaza was attacked and surrounded by the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in the First Battle of Gaza, but the attack was broken off when Turkish reinforcements appeared. The Second Battle of Gaza, 17th-19th April 1917, left the Turks in possession. The Third Battle of Gaza, begun on 27th October 1917, and a series of determined night-time assaults mounted against the Gaza defences on the night of the 1st/2nd November 1917, culminated with the capture of the ruined and deserted city on the 7th November 1917.

Robert is buried in the Gaza War Cemetery, which contains 3,217 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 781 of them unidentified.⁷ He is one of 41 men from the Norfolk Regiment (25 from the 1/5th Battalion, and 16 from the 1/4th Battalion) who were killed on the 2nd November 1917, and are buried in the cemetery.⁸ Robert's family selected the wording for this headstone, which bears a cross and the inscription *Rest in Peace*.⁹ Robert's *Register of Soldiers' Effects*¹⁰ show that an amount of £12 1s was paid to Robert's mother, Elizabeth Burlingham, as sole legatee, on the 14th March 1918, together with a War Gratuity of £14 on the 27th November 1919.

In January 1918 Robert's mother, Elizabeth, applied to the British Ministry for Pensions for a Dependant's Pension,¹¹ and was awarded a pension of 5s per week in April 1919, which appears to have been backdated to the 6th November 1918 (see Figure 4).¹²

SN: A183

DEPENDANT'S PENSION.

Name *Burlingham Robert Cecil* Regimental No. *240.688* Rank *Pte.*

Regiment *1/5 Norfolk*

Documents received from Paymaster *10.1.18.*

Date and cause of death *2.11.17 Killed in action.*

Dependant *Mrs Elizabeth Burlingham*

Address *Wood Norton East Dereham Norfolk.*

Relationship *Mother*

Pension *5/-* a week from *6.11.18. (21.1.19)*

Date awarded *4.4.19.* If refused *NR*

Papers reason

F6496 18149/875 50m (12) 2/18 J.P. Gp. 159
F7622 4115/1043 100m (12) 5/18

Figure 4: Dependant's Pension card in respect of Robert Cecil Burlingham

Further research into Robert's family reveals that his father, Charles Burlingham, was born on the 31st October 1864 and baptised on the 30th July 1865 in Snetterton parish church, the son of George and Eliza Burlingham.¹³ Charles married Elizabeth Doughty on the 6th November 1890 in Hoe, Norfolk.¹⁴ The 1911 Census for Hoveton St Peter, Wroxham, gives Charles as aged 46 and a 'groom gardener' on a farm. He died in 1931, aged 66, and is buried in Wood

⁷ CWGC information for the Gaza War Cemetery (www.cwgc.org).

⁸ From the CWGC database (www.cwgc.org).

⁹ CWGC headstone schedule and inscription records (www.cwgc.org).

¹⁰ UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹¹ See <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/research/military-records/ww1-pension-records-cards.htm>;
<https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/ancestry-pension-records/>.

¹² UK, WW1 Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹³ Baptism Register 1865, Snetterton (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁴ Marriage Register 1890, Hoe (www.ancestry.co.uk).

Norton. Elizabeth Doughty was born in 1868 in Hoe, Norfolk;¹⁵ she died in 1950, aged 82, and is buried in Wood Norton.

The 1911 census reveals that Charles and Elizabeth had been married for twenty years, and had three children (all sons):

Name	Born	Died
Charles William	1892, in Marlingford. ¹⁶ In the 1911 census, Charles is aged 18, and a farm labourer. He married Elizabeth Seely Balls in 1922. ¹⁷	1965, aged 72 ¹⁸
<i>Robert Cecil</i>	<i>1896, Neatishead.</i> <i>In the 1911 census, Robert is aged 15, and an underkeeper.</i>	<i>2nd November 1917, Gaza</i>
Frederic George	1901, in Flemingham. ¹⁹ In the 1911 census, Frederick is aged 9, and at school.	1971, aged 70. ²⁰

Robert's brother, Charles William Burlingham is also recorded on the Wood Norton war memorial, as he served in WW1 (with the 1/5th Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment) – he survived the conflict.

¹⁵ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1868, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.90* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1892, Forehoe Vol.4b, p.193* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁷ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1922, Loddon, Vol.4b, p.498* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁸ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1965, Depwade Vol.4b, p.177* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1901, Smallburgh Vol.4b, p.70* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1971, Depwade Vol.4b, p.1214* (www.freebmd.org.uk).