

WILFRED GEORGE LAKE

Born: 1896, in Wood Norton¹

Enlisted: 1914² - Norfolk Yeomanry (Private 1520); transferred to the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment (Private 43355)³



Died: 10th September 1916 - killed in action, France and Flanders (the Somme)⁴

Age: 20

Memorial: Thiepval Memorial (Pier and Face 11A and 11D), France (the Somme)⁵

Medals: 1914-1915 Star; British War Medal; Victory Medal;⁶



Residence: the 1911 Census for Wood Norton records the family as living in a cottage with 5 rooms⁷

Wilfred George Lake was the youngest son of William and Mary Ann Lake, baptised on the 12th April 1896 at All Saints, Wood Norton (see Figure 1).

1896. 12 th April No. 659.	Wilfred George.	William & Mary Ann	Lake.	Wood Norton	Labourer.	Mary, C. Regno.
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Figure 1: Extract from the Baptism Register for 1896, Wood Norton

¹ FreeBMD, Quarter to March 1896, Aylsham Vol.4b p.90 (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptism Register, 1896, Wood Norton (www.ancestry.co.uk).

² It seems likely that Wilfred enlisted shortly after the declaration of war on the 4th August 1914. His Norfolk Yeomanry service number 1520 indicates an enlistment date between 16th January 1914 and 8th August 1914 - see <http://armyservicenumbers.blogspot.com/2014/06/norfolk-yeomanry-1908-1914.html>.

³ British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk); UK, Army of Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁴ CWGC commemoration (www.cwgc.org).

⁵ CWGC commemoration (www.cwgc.org).

⁶ British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁷ 1911 census, Wood Norton (Schedule 159) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

Whilst the British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920 do not appear to have survived for Wilfred, there are some extant records and it can be established that he enlisted at North Walsham and joined the Norfolk Yeomanry (Private 1520), but he was later transferred to the 1st Battalion, the Northamptonshire Regiment (Private 43355).⁸

The war diaries of the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment have survived, and the entry for the 9th September 1916 records a battle at High Wood, with B and D companies attacking at 4.45pm

'from the right edge of the Wood to Sap 4. A crater being blown on the right, on the site of the crater blown for the 1st B^{de} attack on the 3rd inst first taken by Black Watch & then lost. No artillery preparations within the wood, but a short Stokes mortar bombardment, which was ineffective, for the instant our men went over the parapet, the Germans opened a very heavy rifle and M[achine] G[un] fire. Our attack was unable to reach their objective except on the right, where the crater, (the debris of which injured several of our men) was occupied by 2/Lt. Clarke and his platoon. This platoon was supported by another under 2/Lt. Cooper and a Lewis Gun. The Germans counter-attacked strongly with bombs, put the Lewis gun out of action, and drove out our men. The majority of the men of these 2 platoons were killed, wounded or missing'.⁹

Total casualties recorded for that day were 4 officers and 135 other ranks. This is therefore likely to be the engagement in which Wilfred was killed. He was 20 years old. The war diary for the 10th September for High Wood also records the changeover of Companies in the front line, B and D Companies going down to Battalion HQ in Reserve, and new officers and men being drafted in.

The *Record of Soldier's Effects* (1917) for Wilfred record these as £5 15s 1d, with an additional War Gratuity of £9, paid in October 1919 to his mother, Mary Ann Lake. Mary Ann was a widow, Wilfred's father, William, having died in 1902.¹⁰

Wilfred's name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier and Face 11A and 11D), the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. It bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and, like Wilfred's, have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The dead of other Commonwealth countries who died on the Somme and have no known graves are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere.¹¹ Wilfred's name also appears on the *Battle of the Somme Roll of Honour* website¹² (which aims to remember the British, Canadian, New Zealand, South African and Indian soldiers who gave their lives during the Battle of the Somme in 1916), listed under the

⁸ British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk); UK, Army of Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁹ War Diary, 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment, September 1916 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1902, Aylsham Vol.4b p.50* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹¹ CWGC information for the Thiepval Memorial (www.cwgc.org).

¹² See www.somme-roll-of-honour.com/index.htm.

Roll of Honour, 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment section,¹³ just one of the 315 soldiers from this Battalion who died during the Somme conflict.

Wilfred was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal (see Figure 2).¹⁴ The 1914-15 Star was awarded to all those who served in a theatre of war against Germany between the 5th August 1914 and the 31st December 1915¹⁵; Wilfred's Medal Roll Index Card indicates a qualifying date of 23rd September 1915. The card records the *Theatre of War first served in* as 2B, which refers to the Balkans and specifically, Gallipoli (Dardanelles).¹⁶

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
LAKE	* Northamptonshire Regt	Pte	1520 43355
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	K/1101322	3679	
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	K/120	77	
Theatre of War first served in	2B		
Date of entry therein	23/9/15		

Figure 2: British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Card for Wilfred Lake

In April 1917 Wilfred's mother, Mary (aged 66), applied to the British Ministry for Pensions for a Dependant's Pension.¹⁷ Mary was granted a pension of 4s per week from the 8th May 1917, rising to 15s per week for the period 29th May 1919 to 14th July 1920 (see Figure 3).¹⁸

File returned to HQ Section, 16.10.20.
File returned to Region, 22.10.20.

DEPENDANT'S PENSION.

Name: Lake, Wilfred George
Regiment: Northants
Rank: Pte
Regimental No.: 43355

Documents received from Paymaster: 10-4-17

Date and cause of death: 10.9.16 France Killed in Action

Dependant: Mrs M. Lake
Address: Wood End, S. Dereham, Norfolk
Relationship to soldier: Brother

Pension: 4/- 15/- a week from 8.5.1917 to 14.7.20

Date awarded: 8.5.17

Papers: Oct. 21. (1) c 5/-

Figure 3: Dependant's Pension card in respect of Wilfred George Lake

¹³ See http://www.somme-roll-of-honour.com/Units/british/1st_Northamptonshire.htm.

¹⁴ British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁵ See <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm#star191415>.

¹⁶ See <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/places/ww1-theatres-of-war.htm>.

¹⁷ See <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/research/military-records/ww1-pension-records-cards.htm>;

<https://www.westernfrontassociation.com/ancestry-pension-records/>.

¹⁸ UK, WW1 Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

A memorial inscription to Wilfred is included on the headstone to his parents, who are buried Wood Norton churchyard: *And of Wilfred, their youngest son, Killed in Action in France in 1916, Aged 20 years.*

Further research into Wilfred's family reveals that Wilfred's father, William, was born in Wood Norton in 1848, and baptised on the 27 February 1848 in All Saints Church, the son of John and Susan(na) Lake (nee Massingham).¹⁹ John Lake and Susanna Massingham were married on the 2nd May 1844 in Wood Norton parish church; John was aged 30, and Susanna was aged 26.²⁰ William Lake married Mary Ann Howlett on the 19th December 1874 in Wood Norton parish church.²¹ Mary Ann was born in Foulde, Norfolk, c1857;²² she died on the 28th January 1931, aged 74.²³ William died on the 14 December 1902, aged 53.²⁴

The 1911 census for Wood Norton shows that the family were living in a cottage with 5 rooms, and that Wilfred was one of 10 children (six boys and four girls) born to William and Mary Ann, one of whom had died by the time the census was taken:

Name	Born	Died
Frances Sarah Anne	1875, Wood Norton. Baptised 1 st April 1876. ²⁵ She married Clare Fisher Girling on the 18 th December 1897. ²⁶	1918, aged 44. ²⁷
John William	1877, Wood Norton. ²⁸ He married Alice Alcock in 1901. ²⁹	
Ellis Henry *	1879, Wood Norton. Baptised 16 th May 1886. ³⁰ He married Anna Ebbs in 1912. ³¹	1954, aged 74. ³²

¹⁹ Baptism Register, 1848, Wood Norton (www.familysearch.org); FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1848, Aylsham Vol.13, p.13* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁰ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1844 (p.88).

²¹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1874, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.253* (www.freebmd.org.uk); *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1874 (p.95).

²² 1911 census, Wood Norton (Schedule 159) (www.ancestry.co.uk); Headstone in All Saints churchyard, Wood Norton, gives Mary Ann's age as 74.

²³ Headstone, All Saints churchyard, Wood Norton.

²⁴ Headstone, All Saints churchyard, Wood Norton.

²⁵ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1875, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.76* (www.freebmd.org.uk); *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1876 (p.37).

²⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1897, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.247* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Marriage Register, 1897, Foulsham (www.ancestry.co.uk).

²⁷ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1918, Hendon, Vol.3a, p.711* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁸ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1877, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.80* (www.freebmd.org.uk); 1901 census, Wood Norton (Page 9) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

²⁹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1901, Aylsham Vol.4B p.181* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1879, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.73* (www.freebmd.org.uk); *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1886 (p.38). The Register records *This child had been privately baptised by a Nonconformist Minister, 18 July 1879.*

³¹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1912, Wangford, Vol.4a, p.1373* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³² FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1954, Lothingland, Vol.4b, p.812* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

Frederick Joseph	7 th May 1881, Wood Norton. Baptised 15 th October 1882. ³³	1904 aged 23; buried in Wood Norton. ³⁴
Rosanna *	12 th March 1884, Wood Norton. Baptised 16 th May 1886. ³⁵ She married Ernest Edward Prior on the 27 th December 1909 in Wood Norton. ³⁶	1933, aged 59. ³⁷
Sidney *	16 th March 1886, Wood Norton. Baptised 16 th May 1886. ³⁸	1960 aged 74; buried in Wood Norton. ³⁹
Lily May	1891, Wood Norton. Baptised 7 th June 1891. ⁴⁰ She married Edward Dennis Bales on the 26 th October 1946 in Wood Norton; she was aged 55 and Edward was aged 68. ⁴¹	1967, aged 76; buried in Wood Norton. ⁴²
Alfred Ernest	1893, Wood Norton. Baptised 25 th December 1893. ⁴³	1919 aged 26; buried in Wood Norton. ⁴⁴
Wilfred George	1896, Wood Norton	10 th September 1916, France
Katherine Mary	Baptised 5 th October 1902. ⁴⁵ She married Albert Frederick Walker on the 29 th November 1930. ⁴⁶	

* Ellis Henry, Rosanna and Sidney were baptised at All Saints on the same day

³³ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1882 (p.38).

³⁴ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials, 1904 (p.130).

³⁵ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1886 (p.39).

³⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 19091, Aylsham, Vol.4b, p.260a (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1909 (p.101).

³⁷ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1933, Birkenhead, Vol.8a, p.483 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*.

³⁸ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1886 (p.39).

³⁹ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials, 1960 (p.133).

⁴⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1891, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.82 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1891 (p.39).

⁴¹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1946, Fakenham Vol. 4b, p.1059 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1946 (p.108).

⁴² FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1967, Fakenham, Vol.4b, p.574 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials, 1967 (p.133).

⁴³ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1893, Aylsham Vol.4b, p.86 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1891 (p.39).

⁴⁴ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials, 1919 (p.131).

⁴⁵ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Baptisms, 1902 (p.40).

⁴⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1930, Kensington, Vol.1a, p.256 (www.freebmd.org.uk)*; Marriage Register, 1930, St Barnabas Church, Kensington (www.ancestry.co.uk).

For Wilfred's surviving brothers there appear to be no extant WW1 Service Records, although there are many Medal Roll Index Cards bearing the names or initials of Wilfred's brothers (John, Ellis, Sidney and Alfred), but without a service number it is not possible to tell which, if any, are his brothers. None of Wilfred's brothers are listed on the Wood Norton war memorial which records all those men known to have served in WW1; it is therefore likely that it was only Wilfred who served.