

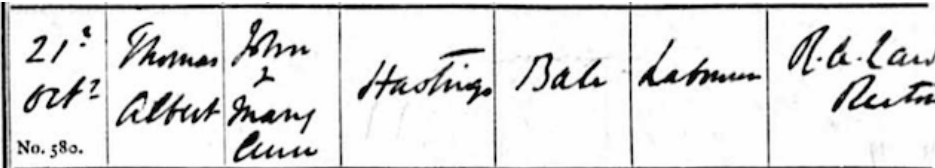
THOMAS ALBERT HASTINGS (*Albert Thomas Hastings*)

Born: 1883, Hindringham¹

Enlisted: Not known

Medals: Not known²

Whilst the name recorded on the War Memorial in Wood Norton church is *Albert Thomas Hastings*, his birth and baptism records show that he was born *Thomas Albert Hastings*. He was born in 1883 and baptised on the 21st October 1883 in Bale parish church, the son of John and Mary Hastings (see Figure 1).



The image shows a handwritten baptism record on a form with several columns. The first column contains the date '21st Oct^r'. The second column contains the name 'Thomas Albert'. The third column contains the name 'Ann Mary'. The fourth column contains the name 'Hastings'. The fifth column contains the name 'Bale'. The sixth column contains the name 'Latham'. The seventh column contains the name 'A. G. Law'. The eighth column contains the name 'Pastor'. The number 'No. 580.' is written in the bottom left corner of the form.

Figure 1: Extract from the Bale Baptisms, 1883

Thomas was known throughout his life by his middle name *Albert*,³ and is referred to as *Albert* in the 1891 and 1901 census returns. His mother, Mary Eliza, is referred to as *Mary Ann* in the baptism registers for Albert and for his brother, George Francis.

Albert enlisted in the Prince of Wales's Norfolk Royal Garrison Artillery (Militia) on the 20th April 1903, under the name *Albert* rather than *Thomas Albert Hastings*, service number 3018, as a Gunner. He was aged 19 years and 6 months, 6' ½" tall, with blue eyes and brown hair. Although he attested for a period of six years he was discharged 'free' from the service at the end of 1907 and came out of it in April the following year. He subsequently joined the Police Force (Norfolk Constabulary).⁴

Although Albert appears on the Wood Norton War Memorial, it has not yet been possible to identify the details of his war service (and many of the WW1 British Army Service Records were destroyed in the London Blitz). The Medal Roll index cards for the period have survived, but there are several men named Albert Thomas and Thomas Albert Hastings, so it is not possible to identify him with any certainty. We do, however, know something of his life before and after the war and there is a photograph of Albert (see Figure 2)⁵ with his wife Ethel and their two sons, which appears to date from c.1915, and shows Albert in uniform. He appears

¹ FreeBMD, Quarter to December 1883, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.297 (www.freebmd.org.uk).

² Without Albert's service record, it is not possible to tell if he was awarded any medals. If he served in a theatre of war abroad, he would have received at least the British War Medal and Victory Medal; service at Home, unfortunately, did not necessarily qualify for the award of a medal. There are several men named Albert Hastings and Thomas Albert Hastings listed on the Medal Roll Index Cards, but without a service number it is impossible to tell, which if any, is this Albert.

³ Information kindly supplied by Albert's family.

⁴ Information kindly supplied by Albert's family.

⁵ With the kind permission of Albert's family.

to have three chevron stripes on his lower right sleeve (which may be good conduct chevrons) and a stripe around the lower left sleeve (which may be a wound stripe). It is not possible to make out the insignia worn on the right shoulder, so the regiment with which Albert served is unknown.



Figure 2: Photograph of Albert with Ethel and their two sons, c.1915

Further research indicates that Albert's father, John Hastings, was born in Wighton in 1854, the son of Benjamin and Frances Hastings.⁶ He married Mary Eliza Moy on the 27th March 1875.⁷ Mary Eliza was born in Thursford in 1805, the daughter of George and Mary Ann Moy.⁸ Mary Eliza died in 1922, aged 72, and is buried in Wood Norton.⁹ John died in 1942, aged 88.¹⁰

In the 1911 census John (aged 60, a farm steward), is living in Wood Norton with his wife Mary (aged 64), in a large house with 13 rooms (the 1913 Electoral Roll records that this was Manor House (Manor Farm)).¹¹ The census return records that they had been married for 29 years

⁶ 1911 census, Wood Norton (Schedule 162) (www.ancestry.co.uk); FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1854, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.272* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptism Register, Wighton, 1854 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁷ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1875, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.453* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Marriage Register, Thursford, 1875 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁸ 1911 census, Wood Norton (Schedule 162) (www.ancestry.co.uk); FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1850, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.339*; Baptism Register, Thursford, 1850 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁹ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Burials, 1922 (p.131).

¹⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1942, Depwade, Vol.4b, p.426* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹¹ Norfolk, England, Register of Electors, 1832-1915 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

and had five children (all of whom had survived), and recorded with them are their son, George Hastings (aged 24, and a soldier), and grandson, Wilfred Neale (aged 9).¹²

The 1891 and 1901 censuses give Albert's siblings as:

John Christopher	Born 1876, baptised 4 th June 1876, Hindringham. ¹³ In the 1911 census, John is aged 35, a farm labourer, and living in Great Snoring with his wife and young family. ¹⁴ He married Mary Ann Francis in 1904. ¹⁵ He died in 1937, aged 61, and is buried in North Barsham. ¹⁶
Mary Ann	Born 30 th November 1877, baptised 17 th February 1878, Colkirk. ¹⁷ In the 1911 census, Mary is living with her husband and family in Little Ryburgh. ¹⁸ She married Arthur Herbert Neale in 1898. ¹⁹ She died in 1949, aged 71, and is buried in Little Ryburgh. ²⁰
Benjamin George	Born 1880, baptised 10 th December 1880, Hindringham. ²¹ In the 1911 census, Benjamin is aged 30, unmarried, and a police constable in Shildon, Durham. ²² He married Elizabeth Ann Flowerdew later that year. ²³ He died in 1953, aged 72. ²⁴
George Francis	Born 1887, baptised 23 rd January 1887, Hindringham. ²⁵ In the 1911 census, George is aged 24, a soldier, and living in Wood Norton. ²⁶ He married Ethel Maud Wilkins on the 22 nd September 1920, in Wood Norton parish church; the marriage register notes that he was an army pensioner. ²⁷ He was discharged from the 2 nd battalion, Grenadier Guards in December 1914, having been badly wounded at Ypres, ²⁸ and was awarded the Silver War Badge, the 1914 Star (qualifying date 22 nd August 1914), British War Medal and Victory Medal. ²⁹ He died in 1934, aged 47. ³⁰

In the 1911 census, Albert is newly married and living with his wife, Ethel, in West Field, Tilney Fen End, Wisbech.³¹ Albert is aged 27, and a police constable employed by Norfolk County

¹² 1911 census, Wood Norton (Schedule 162) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹³ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1876, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.290* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptism Register, Hindringham, 1876 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁴ 1911 census, Great Snoring (Schedule 4) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁵ FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1904, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.536* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁶ Burial Register, North Barsham, 1937 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁷ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1877, Mitford, Vol.4b, p.282* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptism Register, Colkirk, 1878 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁸ 1911 census, Little Ryburgh (Schedule 138) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1898, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.573* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1949, Norwich, Vol.4b, p.655* (www.ancestry.co.uk).

²¹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1880, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.296* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptism Register, Hindringham, 1880 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

²² 1911 census, Shildon (Schedule 119) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

²³ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1911, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.569* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁴ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1953, Northallerton, Vol.1b, p.607* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁵ Baptism Register, 1887, Hindringham (www.ancestry.co.uk); FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1887, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.305* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

²⁶ 1911 census, Wood Norton (Schedule 162) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

²⁷ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1920 (p.103).

²⁸ Information kindly supplied Albert's family.

²⁹ British Army WW1 Medal Roll Index Cards, 1914-1920 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

³⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1934, Mitford, Vol.4b, p.321* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³¹ 1911 census, Tilney St Lawrence (Schedule 37) (www.ancestry.co.uk).

Council, and Ethel is aged 20. Albert had married Ethel Flatman in early 1911,³² and they went on to have two sons, Richard John (born 16th November 1911; baptised in Wood Norton parish church 22nd June 1913),³³ and George Arthur Kitchener (born 1915).³⁴ Albert is recorded as living in The Street, Wood Norton in the Electoral Roll for 1915.³⁵ Ethel died in Booton in 1918, aged 27.³⁶

Albert remarried on the 24th July 1920, Charlotte Anna Watts, in Wood Norton parish church,³⁷ and they went on to have four more children: Leonard (born 1920),³⁸ Ruby (born 1924),³⁹ Pearl (born 1933),⁴⁰ and Barbara (born 1935).⁴¹ Sadly, Charlotte died shortly after giving birth to Barbara at the age of 35.⁴² Her sister was Dora Watts, who had married Edward Wright in 1921, another of the Wood Norton serviceman who survived WW1 and is recorded on the War Memorial in Wood Norton church.

In the 1921 census, Albert is living in East Barsham with his wife Charlotte and their baby son Leonard, aged 7 months. Albert, aged 37, gives his occupation as 'horseman', and is working for Mr J.A Keith, a farmer at North Barsham.⁴³

In the 1939 Register, Albert is recorded as living in Old Walsingham, a widower and farm labourer (incapacitated).⁴⁴

Albert died in 1945, aged 63, and is buried in Little Ryburgh.⁴⁵

³² FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1911, St.Faiths, Vol.4b, p.155* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³³ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1911, Wisbech, Vol.3b, p.960* (www.freebmd.org.uk); Baptism Register, Wood Norton, 1913 (www.familysearch.org).

³⁴ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1915, St.Faiths, Vol.4b, p.148* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³⁵ Norfolk, England, Register of Electors, 1832-1915 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

³⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1918, St.Faiths, Vol.4b, p.182* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³⁷ *Transcript and Index to Wood Norton, Norfolk, Parish Registers*, compiled by Keith and Shirley Howell (February 2000), Marriages, 1920 (p.103).

³⁸ FreeBMD *Quarter to December 1920, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.443* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³⁹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to March 1924, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.388* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁴⁰ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1933, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.299* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁴¹ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1935, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.313* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁴² FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1935, Walsingham, Vol.4b, p.299* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁴³ 1921 census, East Barsham (Schedule 58) (www.findmypast.co.uk).

⁴⁴ 1939 England and Wales Register, Walsingham RD, Enumeration District TSCN, Schedule 75 (www.ancesry.co.uk).

⁴⁵ Burial Register, Little Ryburgh, 1945 (www.ancestry.co.uk); FreeBMD, *Quarter to June 1945, Fakenham, Vol.4b, p.233* (www.freebmd.org.uk).