



## Herbert Samuel Chapman

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

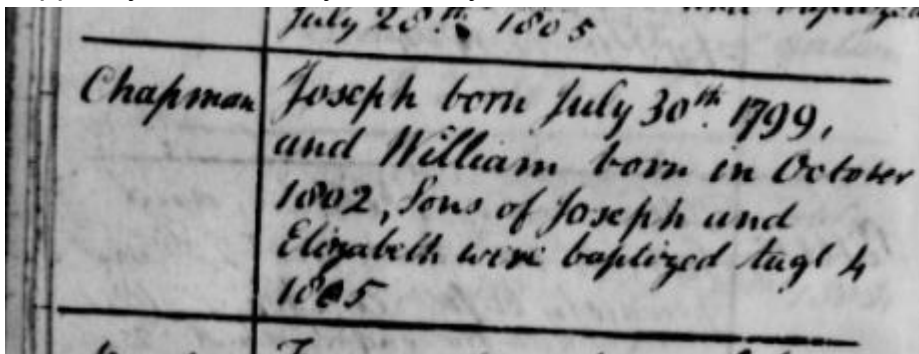
He died in Italy on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1944, aged 24.

Herbert is commemorated on the Cassino Memorial, Italy.

There are records of Chapmans in Harleston dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> C when Christopher Chapman, of Harleston, appeared before the Leet Court held there on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1656 and was fined 3s 4d for laying in half a barrel of strong beare(sic) (presumably as opposed to home brewed small beer) at an unlicensed house! In 1683 Elizabeth Chapman was buried at Redenhall although her being wrapped in a wool shroud (as was required at the time) was attested to by the Rector of Starston – links between Chapmans and Starston were to continue for many years. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, other than the odd isolated individual, Chapmans no longer appeared in Harleston.

Chapman is one of those 'trade names', such as Smith, Tailor, Farmer etc. Originally it referred to a dealer in the raw materials of weaving, so it is not too surprising that the Nicholas Chapman who died in Harleston in 1697 was a hosier. However, with the progress of industrialisation, the trade of chapman denigrated to being a pedlar or itinerant hawker of small items, often haberdashery.

The great-great-great-grandfather of our hero, Herbert Samuel Chapman, Joseph Chapman Snr and his wife Elizabeth baptised two of their sons, Joseph and William, at the Starston parish church in 1805, the family being granted settlement by the Starston Parish Overseers the following year, having probably come from Banham. To settle in a parish, you had to demonstrate your ability to support yourself and your family and not become a 'burden' on that parish! Joseph Snr and



Elizabeth appeared in Starston in the 1841 census, 10 years later and poor old widowed Joseph Snr was in the Pulham workhouse – aged 72, a life time of hard work and caught up with him and he was reduced to the level of a pauper, his son probably not able to support him

due to the large size of his own family.

In 1823, this son (also a Joseph, from Starston) had married Elizabeth Barber from Denton at Redenhall (both illiterate) and settled down to raise a largish family (8 children by 1841) in the Pulhams. Joseph Chapman was described as a Drillman – a skilled trade, rewarded by a slightly higher wage than that of an ordinary labourer.

Whilst his parents may have been illiterate, by the time Joseph and Elizabeth's oldest son Samuel Chapman, an agricultural labourer, married Elizabeth Cross in Harleston back in 1851, he (if not his

wife) could clearly write his name – unlike most of the rest of the protagonists. And yes – just to confuse matters three generations of Chapmans had all married Elizabeths!

1817. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Redenhall in the County of Norfolk								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
175	14 Nov	Samuel Chapman Elizabeth Cook	pub age	Bachelor Spinster	Labourer	Nackleton Nackleton	Joseph Chapman George Cook	Mill-man Labourer
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England by me, Thomas Brown								
This Marriage was solemnized between us, Samuel Chapman Elizabeth (nee & maid) Cook			in the Presence of us,		Zachariah (nee & maid) Reed Rector Maat (nee & maid) Beldwin			

There does seem to have been a streak of ambition in the family as Joseph Chapman Jnr, named his third son 'Strange' which may seem particularly odd until you realise that there was actually a rather well to do chap called Strange Chapman, an auctioneer and inhabitant of Starston, active in the early 19<sup>th</sup> C. This chap had moved to Starston by 1817, but originally came to Harleston from Yarmouth via Bungay running a grocery in Harleston before focussing on auctioneering– perhaps Joseph decided to snaffle some reflected glory by suggesting a family link that did not actually exist? The original Strange Chapman bore his mother's maiden name as his first name – the agricultural (and unrelated) Strange Chapmans perpetuated their pilfered name for several generations to come.

*Obituary of our Hero's Great Aunt Elizabeth  
Diss Express 17 Jun 1949*

**FUNERAL OF MISS CHAPMAN.**

The funeral took place at St. Margaret's Church, Starston on Friday of Miss Elizabeth Chapman, of Mill House, Starston. Miss Chapman who was 79, was held in high esteem in the village and neighbourhood. For a great many years she ran a laundry business and many of the older residents in the district will remember her collecting and delivering with a donkey and cart.

The funeral service was conducted by Canon B. M. Pickering (Rector of Redenhall with Harleston).

The family present were, Mr. and Mrs. W. Chapman, Mrs. Denny, Mr. Eaves, Mrs. Baker, Mrs. Nunn and Mr. J. Chapman.

Young Samuel and his bride Elizabeth Nee Cross settled down in Elizabeth's home village of Starston and by 1871 had produced at least 11 children, their second being Walter Snr, born in 1854, the grandfather of our hero. The 1911 census confirms that Samuel and Elizabeth had indeed had 11 children although by the time of the census two had died. Rather nicely widowed Elizabeth, then aged 80, was living with her second youngest child Elizabeth Jnr (running a laundry in Starston) and her youngest child Ellen Eaves and four of her 6 children. This was a family

that looked after their own and since by then Elizabeth was living in the 6 room (plus kitchens, hall way etc) Mill Villa (this seems to have been one of the family homes as Chapman's had been living there in the 1880's) she seems to have done quite well for herself. In later years villagers reminisced about Elizabeth collecting and delivering laundry in her donkey cart.

Whilst Walter Snr's father Samuel remained an agricultural labourer throughout his working life, Walter Chapman Snr got a trade as a shoemaker – still following this trade in the 20's although they had moved to Pulham by then. Born and raised in Starston, Walter Snr married a Pulham Mary lass on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec 1876 with the interesting name of Harriot Kezia Gardiner. The couple settled down in Starston and busily got on with creating their own large family – by the time of the 1881 census, 4 and a half years married they already had 3 children, the oldest of whom, Jessie was baptised on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1875, almost a year before her mother married. However Jessie Anne



Gardiner was quietly absorbed into the Chapman family sharing her (step?) father's name rather than using her mother's. The 1911 census reveals that the couple had 11 children together, all of whom had survived into adulthood. Quite a feat at any time but when infant death was so common and vaccinations against childhood illnesses non-existent, particularly impressive! It seems the family had good genes as reflected in this piece marking Harriet Kezia's death in 1935 when 8 of her children were able to attend the funeral.

**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

Finally, after 3 daughters, a son came along in 1882, Walter Samuel J Chapman – the father of our hero but not destined to follow in the boot making trade like his father, nor to work upon the land like the rest of his ancestors. Walter Samuel 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 a considerably longer time 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 – they had moved there by 1911 but his was not the family home for much of their child raising years! Walter's father, Walter Snr, had also been born in Starston!

Education continued to be valued in the Chapman family; in 1906 Walter's much younger sister, Beatrice, was one of 5 children from Starston School winning an award for 100% attendance over the last 3 years. Since she would have then been 13, her school time was to shortly finish. In 1911 she was in domestic service, one of the few routes of employment for even the most conscientious and diligent female students from a rural background.

Although they did not marry until 1905, Herbert's parents, Walter and Florence nee Cushing/Cushion aka Tann, would have known each other, even if only at a distance, by 1901. This census shows Walter was a billiard marker at the Magpie. Essentially a young man's job, this entailed keeping the scores of this very popular game and, more importantly for the landlord, keeping the players well supplied with drinks. The pay was not great; although the tips could be generous the hours were long and anti-social. Not really a job to raise a family on, especially a family the size Walter's was to be!

In the same census 1901 Florence was working as General Domestic in George Denny's household just across the way – yes G.Denny and Sons, Ironmongers, now Coopers. She would have had her work cut-out; George Denny 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 mother and daughter both originated from Tibenham, in 1887, when Florence was about 5 her mother had married George Tann and by 1891, they were all living out in Pulham, George's home parish, with a couple of legitimate babies added to the family. At this point Florence was, somewhat harshly, not only flying under the name of Cushion, but was described as

'wife's illegitimate Daughter'! I am glad to say that her stepfather eventually fully embraced her into the new family (or perhaps the earlier record was the work of a particularly picky census enumerator) as, in the 1901 census, Florence appeared in the Denny household under the name of Florence Tann – very much an echo of Walter's own family set up with his mother's oldest child having been quietly absorbed into the Chapman family.

By 1911, Walter had given up the slightly rickety job at the Magpie for a good, steady, skilled job as a chauffeur - not a car driver! Instead, he was working for one of the local Doctors, almost certainly Doctor Robinson, who had originally set up in practice with Dr Candler, son of the 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.

Living on Candler's Lane himself, 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 could 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 this lively 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 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.

*The Robinson Memorial Home marked by plaque over the door.*

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. It seems likely that Maidment took over Robinson's practice on his death and also took on Robinson's Chauffeur, Walter Chapman – he was certainly named as Walter Chapman's employer in the 1921 census.



After a bit of a slow start, Walter and Florence Chapman nee Cushing, seem to be doing their best to repopulate Harleston with Chapmans. Having no children in the first 3 years of their marriage, they made up for that by popping out three children in the next 3 years. As well as the three children that appeared in the 1911 census, by the 1921 census they had 8 children in the household, all



aged 13 and under. I have found baptism records of 11 children in all born to the couple between 1908 and 1927, this in spite of Walter serving during the WW1. We do have a picture of Walter in his uniform, it is tricky to determine his cap badge, but I suspected his valuable skill with vehicles would have put him into the Army Service Corps. In those days not many could drive and a man such as Walter would not have been sent to an infantry unit. Records do indeed prove that Walter had served as a private in the Army Service Corps and was awarded the Victory and British medals.



Walter Jnr's younger brother, Ernest Chapman, who having been born in 1897 was 14 years younger than Walter also served in the first world war but slightly surprisingly wound up in the Liverpool Rgt!

Another brother, Chapman Herbert 24219 (Starston) a member of the Norfolk Rgt was reported injured in August 1916, and again Chapman J 24219 (Starston) was reported injured in November 1917.

*Diss Express*  
4 Aug 1916

#### WAR CASUALTIES.

News has been received of the deaths of Privates Charles and Arthur Goldspink, sons of Mr. and Mrs. James Goldspink, formerly of Pulham St. Mary, and now of Norwich. They were killed in action in the recent advance. Mr. and Mrs. Goldspink have now lost all three of their sons. Private William Cutting, of the Norfolk Regiment, was also killed. His parents reside at Starston, having formerly lived at Pulham St. Mary.—Mr. and Mrs. Walter Chapman, of Pulham St. Mary, have received news that their son, Private Herbert Chapman, has been wounded, and is in hospital in France.

I strongly suspect that these are 2 and the same man, Herbert James Chapman. Chapman's brothers Victor B J Chapman, and Ernest (tho this could equally have been a cousin.) also served in the war so it seems that Walter and Kezia had at least four sons at the front and were very lucky that all survived. In

1911 Victor (a warehouse lad) and Herbert James (Boot Repairer), with a 6-year gap in age, were the only ones of the family still living with their parents Walter and Kezia.

Having survived the war, by the 1921 census Walter had added 5 more children to bring the total to 8. Our hero, Herbert Samuel Chapman had been born in Harleston on 27th April 1920 and baptised 4th July 1920. At this time his paternal grandfather was still making boots out in Pulham appearing there in a 1921 trade directory.

Ironically, in 1947, one of Walter's sons Desmond Ernest, who was working as a Roadman got into a bit of bother with some football boots - all a bit something and nothing. Desmond had gone to borrow the boots from a friend one evening when the skies opened, and he took shelter in an open barn by the Cherry Tree. Another chap, enjoying a bit of post booze banter and argy-bargy got the pair of football boots lobbed him and kicked Desmond. Desmond was about 24 at the time and the court decided it was all a bit 6 to one and half a dozen to the other and threw the case out!

This cadet branch of the Chapman clan 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 the age of voting in the household too whilst the 1939 register lists at least three of their then adult children. Walter carried on driving, when his son James Walter married in 1946, he gave his father's profession as chauffeur.

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 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.

Meanwhile the same 1939 register shows that our hero Herbert had left Harleston for life in London, appearing with 7 other young men at the same address in London – since all were Wholesale Drapery Clerks or Salesmen, I think we can assume they were either 'living over' the shop or in what was effectively a form of hostel. Bearing in mind Herbert was living in Paddington at the outbreak of war it is not too surprising that he wound up in a London Rifle Brigade

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.

The youngest of his siblings, Donald Chapman. – an 11-year-old schoolboy in 1939, submitted some of his reminiscences to the 'People's War' web site.<sup>1</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.

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<sup>1</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

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 Herbert 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 or interchanged over the years.



Herbert, having survived previous campaigns, finally met his end in Italy in 1944 although the details are vague. Reported missing in August 1944 it was not for some time that his death was finally confirmed. Unmarried, he left his estate to his father seen here in a portrait from his later years.

*Walter Chapman*

I was very intrigued what the lapel badge seen in this post war portrait represented – a bit of detective work from Terry Pegg came up with the answer – a WW1 RBL Members Lapel Badge! It

seems that when Walter returned from the war that had made such an impact on his family, he joined the organisation dedicated to the welfare of serving and ex-soldiers and to the preservation of the memory of the contribution to their country made by soldiers surviving and fallen. Hardly surprising bearing in mind, the sacrifices made by 2 generations of the Chapman family



In brief, the Chapman family were a steady going, respectable family, reliable and rarely if ever getting into trouble. I suspect if Herbert had survived the war, he too would have taken those traits into peacetime and been a good citizen of a country rebuilding itself in peace.