



George Albert Love

7644990 Corporal, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

& Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers.

He was killed on active service in Italy on 9th July 1944, aged 32.

George is buried at Arezzo War Cemetery, Italy.

He was mentioned in dispatches, awarded five medals, including the Africa Star with oak leaf clasp.

George Albert Love (also on Wortwell memorial) was born 23rd July 1911 at Fressingfield, the second son of farmworker Albert Edward Love and Alice Pamela nee Miller. Albert's family may have had its own challenges. The 1901 census shows his widowed father, was living at the foot of Trunch Hill on the Norwich road and, aged only 39, was head of a family of 3, the oldest of whom, 17 years old Mary, was acting as housekeeper to her father. However, living next door were Mr and Mrs Miller and their youngest child Alice Pamela. It looks like Albert literally married the girl next door!

A slightly earlier Albert Love was living in Wortwell in the 1880's and may have been the chap after whom our Albert was named – although probably before he somewhat blotted his copy book. A George Skinner II of Wortwell (a member of a heavy drinking, brawling family) did do a good deed in 1889 when he helped cut down a neighbour, Albert Love¹, who was trying to hang himself from a tree in his father-in-law's garden using a pair of reins. Along with another chap they cut down the unconscious Love and carried him indoors where it took Love about an hour to recover consciousness. The moment he came around, Love took out his knife to cut his throat. The poor chap was ex-military, dismissed seven years earlier on account of suffering from epileptic fits. He was the worse for drink in spite of having been out in the colonies and not being able to stand any drink. PTSD or a classic military syndrome of the time, alcoholism and syphilis both brought on by the lack of other diversions?² If that was the case it could be argued that this Albert was also a victim of the military processes of the time. Love was bailed on his own recognisances, to a sum of £100 before he finally wound up in the Norfolk and Norwich Assizes and pled guilty to attempted suicide,

¹ 2 years earlier, Albert Love, Wortwell, late of London, was fined 13s 6d in total or 10 days hard labour for being drunk and disorderly in Harleston. The Ipswich Journal 18 Nov 1887

² Norfolk News 4 May 1889

His Lordship addressed some kindly words to (*the*) prisoner. He was discharged on entering recognisances to be of good behaviour for twelve months.³

Whilst the attempted suicide took place in early 1889, in August 1889 a 29 years old Albert Love, plumber's mate was sentenced to 6 calendar months hard labour for indecently assaulting Harriet Page in Homersfield. I cannot imagine that there were too many Albert Loves in the area at the time, 'our' Albert was born in 1886, 3 years before the wayward/lost Albert Love(s) wound up in court.

George's birth in Fressingfield, was entirely an accident due to his father's employment; the 1911 census shows his parents and an older brother, Stanley, living at Nunnery Farm, Fressingfeild where his Alburgh born father was a horseman. 1 years old Stanley had also been born in Alburgh (while his mother was Denton born) and there were numbers of Loves dotted around Alburgh at the time.

In early 1909, at the time his wife would either have still been pregnant or newly delivered of their first son, Albert made a discovery equally chilling and pathetic and, in light of his own wife's condition, horribly poignant. Presumably on his way to work, he discovered a bundle in a pond at Redenhall from which protruded the hand of a new-born baby boy. In the handkerchief that bound the bundle were three stones and the initials M.S. There was also evidence that the child had been delivered adjacent to the pond.

It transpired that M.S. were the initials of Marshall Sillet, a labourer from Alburgh. He had been 'keeping company' with Phoebe Wooltorton and had suspected she might have been with child, a condition she flatly denied. The couple had met in the evening when Phoebe claimed not to feel well, not too surprisingly as she was in labour. Events took their course although Mr Sillett abandoned his woman during the crucial time (different time, different ways – men had nothing to do with childbirth) and when he returned the baby was dead upon the ground. The pair disposed of the unfortunate infant and then they 'went off home' Sillett getting Wooltorton some brandy from the Yew Tree as they passed. It was claimed the child never moved or cried out, whether this claim was true or not, what a sad tale. Not too surprisingly, the couple did not marry each other. Phoebe put her past behind her and married a Yorkshireman in 1916 and Marshall married in 1924.

During the inter-war period the family were very much living a life typical of their village at this period. Albert entered, and did rather well at, ploughing matches – a past time which continued through the war years and was on the Wortwell Bell dart team. Members of the family participated in whist drives, his children attended the Providence Baptist Sunday School – Gilbert winning a book prize, although he missed out on the Full Attendance Certificate, in 1933. Gilbert also came second in a Sport's Day race in 1935. We even know the family read the Yarmouth Journal as one of the brothers, Gilbert, was awarded a highly commended in Children's Club's competitions in 1935 and 1936 whilst young Fred got his award in 1932!

Not all was sunshine and jollies though, in 1942 George's father, Albert Edward Love, 56-year-old farm worker (horseman to be more precise) summoned (Sidney) Herbert Reeve, both of High Road Wortwell, for assault whilst Reeve retaliated with a charge of cruelty to Reeve's 13 years old son.

Reeve's case was heard first. He had been plucking chickens (this was his profession and apparently one conducted outdoors) and saw his son in company with 2 or 3 others go down to a

³ Diss Express 19 Jul 1889

bridge about 30 yards from where he was working to drop lines for eels. He alleged that Love came along, grabbed his son and punched and kicked him. When Love released his grip, the lad fell to the ground where Love kicked him several times, twice on the back, once on the shoulder and once on the leg. The bruising did not prevent the lad from attending school the next morning, but he could not sit down. When questioned, Reeve said that he thought the boys had been given permission by the land owner (who had rented the ground the boys had to cross, to Love) to fish in the stream and did not know that his son had been warned on the previous Saturday and Sunday not to. In addition, Reeve said he did not go to assist his son as he did not want to trespass on Love's property and he also had a train to catch! HmMMMM.

As it turned out there was a technical issue in the charge that prevented the case from being heard although Reeve was advised he could re-apply.

Love's evidence was that he had hired the land and had on two previous occasions asked Reeve's boy to shift, the lad had refused, and Love had put him off the property. Subsequent to the original fracas, Love was making a statement about the event to Special Constable Ship, outside the Bell (a lot used to go on outdoors in our villages) when Reeve came up and walloped Love in the eye. Love fell to the ground and got tangled in the bike he was holding. Reeve threatened Love with more blows, stated that if he saw Love on the meadow again, he would kill him and throw him in the stream. When Ship tried to move Reeve on, Reeve threatened to 'serve him the same'. Subsequently Love lost three days' work being completely blind in one eye and not able to see properly with the other. Reeve was fined £1 with 15s costs.

I suspect the Love boys, along with almost all their peer group, had received the odd wallop when growing up – normal for the times and we should not judge too harshly from our perspective almost a hundred years on.

Caning was the norm at school and when a case was brought, in 1932, against a mother who walloped the Wortwell teacher for excessive caning of her children it was stated that the punishment (of caning) was proper and reasonable and necessary for the discipline for the discipline and in the interests of the school. The mother of Hilda Farrow felt that she and her siblings (there were 10 children in the family in all) were being picked on unfairly after being struck on their hands by a cane 18" long and not as thick as a finger – ouch! Anyway, up to the school she went to express her feelings, the school marm (who had 6 standards to deal with in one class and only an assistant to support her) gave her short shrift, Mrs Farrow followed her into the class and, in her frustration, walloped her from behind across her ear and neck. George's brother, Frederick John Love, was one of two children called to give evidence in the case – must have been high excitement in the playground that day!

George's older brother, Stanley, (named for his paternal uncle, Albert's younger brother) worked for E S Bond & Co, Alburgh. His younger brother, Frederick, served in Burma as a corporal and his other brother, Gilbert served in the Coldstream Guards. His sister, Doris, was married and moved to Edgeware in London, where she was employed making aircrew goggles.

George lived at Fressingfield, Harleston and Alburgh before his family moved to Wortwell in 1931.

In 1929 George's brother Stanley Edward was involved in a very costly road accident which could have ended fatally for himself and another lad with him but, as it happened, the two were unscathed and a Rolls Royce took an almighty hammering! Love and a chum, both on bicycles, came flying down a hill by the Dove Public house and crossed in front of a car that was being driven from London to its owner's home in Ilketshall. Swerving violently to avoid the boys, the Roller still managed to strike one of the lads who was

carried on the bonnet before being thrown clear just as the car mounted a step leading into the station and crashed into a wall. The front springs were embedded into the wall for a depth of about six inches, but by great good luck the car did not overturn although the passengers were slightly cut by broken glass. The boy who was struck by the car was uninjured.

The car had just come from the Rolls Royce company's works at Derby, where it had been reconditioned, and following the accident it was sent back there again by train, after it had been pulled away from the wall by two horses. The front of the car was completely smashed.

The railway line is long closed, but the station buildings remain by the Dove – now being used as a garage as indeed, cars replaced railways throughout Britain, culminating in the infamous Beeching cuts of the 1950s.

The next year, 1930, when the family were still in Alburgh, the father, Albert Edward Love gave evidence in a case of slow-motion road rage. He had been a passenger in a lorry driven by a local poultry dealer, Arthur Leist, a cattle truck, possibly impatient at the steady 12mph the poultry lorry was travelling at decided to overtake it on a bend near Lush Bush. As it did so it clipped Leist's lorry which then ricocheted across the footpath towards a fence, a matter of 6' from the edge of the road. What makes this more interesting is that the witnesses, other than those riding in the various vehicles, consisted of a man driving a horse and tumbrel and a roadman pushing a barrow, neither of which you are likely to find on Britain's roads today!

Despite (or perhaps because of) all these vehicular mishaps, Albert's son, George, went on to become a Lorry Driver and mechanic himself, working at Goodswens Garage until joining the Army. Other than, as was normal at the time, a bit of casual agricultural work as a lad or young man, I suspect he would have gone almost straight into driving as a career. Way back in 1934, aged 23, he was up in court – essentially for doing a neighbour a favour (albeit on company time). Pigs were meant to be transported in suitable vehicles and with proper records of their movements, partly for the welfare of the creatures and partly to manage any outbreaks of disease. Vehicles could be, and often were, stopped for checks and (as in this case) plain clothes police would lurk at auction marts. Love had been carting stone in a netted open vehicle with 10" high sides and a 7" high back board when asked to move some pigs by a neighbour. Not too surprisingly there was neither accompanying paperwork or ramp and Love was seen lifting the pigs out manually – he must have been a strong lad, even a young pig wriggling about is a bit of a handful. The magistrates rather felt it was his ignorance rather than a willingness to flout the law that led to his breaking the regulations but still fined him a total of 6s 6d including costs.

It was whilst lorry driving that he was again called in front of the magistrates in November 1939. In brief, it was early on a slightly misty morning when Love's lorry collided with a herd of 38 cows that were being moved along the Harleston Bungay Road. The herdsman was not having a good morning, he had already had to retrieve the cows from a beet field that they had diverted into en route. Just as he got the herd moving again, and only 50 yards from their destination the lorry approached and in spite of slamming on his brakes, leading to a 35-foot skid George managed to hit two of the cows, a third one finding unknown athletic prowess as it leaped over (through?) a hedge in it's fear. One of the cows subsequently died. This accident occurred when the wartime blackout restrictions were in place, so Love's vision was limited by his lights being shielded and the magistrates concluded he had no case to answer to. However, the case did rather backfire on the plaintiffs who needed Love to be convicted of dangerous driving so they could claim damages for the injured cow. Instead the owner of the cows and his employee who was driving them were charged 7s 6d each for doing so in blackout hours without a light before and behind!

Cows and cars are not a good combination as George's younger brother Fred had already discovered 7 years earlier when, aged 12 he was helping an 11 years old girl drive her father's cattle through Wortwell. In this case two cars were approaching, one from Bungay and one from Harleston. The one from Harleston was traveling at the dizzying speed of 40 to 50 miles an hour when, in spite of a local, George Calver, putting up his hand in warning, he carried on regardless until at the last minute he slammed on his brakes and slid into the cow. The cow went down to its knees, only being prevented from totally going over by falling against another cow as it did so. Another two locals, Arthur Pearce and Thomas Aldous backed up Calver's testimony. It is probably no coincidence this event was witnessed from outside the Bell, at least two of the witnesses were well known to enjoy a drink or three. On this occasion it was decided the driver was clearly at fault, total to pay (including 4s for not reporting an accident) £3 11s 6d. I find this story quite interesting, not just in itself, but how it reveals how even quite young children were given a degree of responsibility that I suspect most modern children would balk at – and this was accepted as perfectly normal by the magistrates.

WORTWELL

A stone tablet erected on the Village Hall in memory of the five men of the parish who lost their lives in the war was unveiled and dedicated during a united service on Sunday afternoon, conducted by Canon B. M. Pickering, Rector of Redenhall with Harleston and Wortwell, and the Rev. J. C. Read, Pastor at Wortwell Congregational Church. An address was given by Lt. Col. L. Rushworth Ward, president of the Harleston British Legion. The memorial tablet was unveiled by Mr. F. Love, an ex-Serviceman who served

in the Burma campaign, and whose brother lost his life in the fighting in Italy. Wreaths were placed on the memorial by Mr. N. Sillett, representing the ex-Servicemen of the 1914-18 war, by a representative of the Harleston Legion, and by relatives of the fallen. The Last Post and Reveille were sounded by young buglers of the Harleston Cadet Platoon. There was a large attendance of parishioners and a contingent of members of Harleston Legion also present.

Wortwell

Relatives of the fallen attended the unveiling of the Redenhall with Harleston and Wortwell memorial tablet at Harleston on Sunday and afterwards Mrs. Duffy and Mrs. Love (widows) Messrs. Love, Loombe, Farrow and Calver (parents) placed floral tributes on the memorial. Mr. W. Foster (chairman) and Messrs. J. Hadingham and H. Jordon, parish councillors, represented the people of Wortwell at this solemn ceremony.

It was this lad who grew up to become Cpl Frederick Love serving in Burma, a far cry from the Waveney marshes; unlike his brother, Fred returned from war and was in fact the man chosen to unveil the Wortwell War Memorial, which hung in the old village hall at that time. This took place on Remembrance Sunday 1948

George was reported missing, believed killed, on active service and was buried at Arezzo War Cemetery, Italy. George was Mentioned in Dispatches, awarded five medals, including the Africa Star with leaf clasp

Two years previously George's widow, Dorothy Marion nee Curson and his bereaved parents had attended the unveiling of the Harleston Memorial Tablet on Remembrance Sunday 1946.

The couple had married in early 1941 when he was 29 and she was 25, Dorothy also came from a farming background. A year after the wedding, when they had set up home as Broadwash, Wortwell, their daughter Joy was born. Joy, who would not have been old enough to remember her father, assuming he managed a brief leave after she was born, died at the tragically young age of 11 from a brain tumour, and is buried at Denton St. Mary's churchyard.

Albert Edward Love survived WW1 but next door but one to Albert Love's home in 1901 were the Marshall household, including 8 years old Charles Russell

Baldwin. Although he was 6 years younger than Albert and Pamela (who in turn was living next to Albert in 1901) they would have known each other well. Pte Baldwin did not survive WW1 and his name is upon the same Redenhall and Harleston monument that Albert's son George Love was to later feature on.

