



Albert Frederick Daniels

1160552 Sergeant, 18th Squadron (Blenheims) Royal Air Force

He died on 5th November 1941, aged 21, shot down over the sea, near Malta.

Albert is commemorated on the Malta War Memorial, Valletta, Malta.



Albert Frederick Daniels

Way back in 1841, James Daniels, an unmarried labourer from Cratfield was lodging with a chap with the splendid name of Obadiah Emmerson out in Starston. By 1851, he had moved into Weybread and his wife, from Denham, and himself, already had 3 children, in 1861 the family had moved near the Weybread Brick Kiln and the family had expanded to 7, one child was to be added by 1871.

One of the younger children, labourer Robert, went on to marry Harriet Pulham in late 1880; very unusually Robert and Harriet Daniels only had two children, Alice, born in 1891 and Frederick born in 1887.

According to the 1911 census they had actually been married 6 years before they were blessed with Frederick, most unusual at the time. Freshly married in 1881, they had Robert's 'brother-in-law', a Stradbroke Whisken staying with them. Mysterious, as Harriet was nee Pulham although 'brother in law' may refer to a half or stepbrother. I have to say, far too many Harriets feature in Robert's history: Harriet Daniels, his mother, Harriet Daniels, his sister; Harriet Daniels his wife.

It was young Frederick who was to become the father of our Harleston Hero, Albert Frederick Daniels. He married a lass with the unusual name of Senor Florence May Daniels; the only other occasion when I came across the name Senor being used as a girls name was with one of The Buckingham girls living up on the Common; it may have been a corruption of the Spanish name Sonora or even Zenor – don't forget that Harleston was at the hub of international trade for centuries.

It may even (as appeared to be the case with Senor Buckingham) to have been a diminutive of Eleanor!

Senor Florence May Daniels was the oldest daughter of Albert and Hannah Daniels, Albert was the son of Ephraim Daniels, Ephraim Daniels was the much older brother of Robert Daniels, Robert Daniels was the father of Frederick Daniels and therefore Frederick Daniels must have married his uncle's granddaughter!

The Daniels were another of those families who just got on quietly with life and, until wartime, seem to have been lucky in avoiding major tragedies and crises. Although Frederick had served with the Suffolks during WW1, he had survived the experience to return and marry Senor Florence. They gave their son both his maternal grandfather's name and his father's name, but

this is as close as Albert Frederick's life echoed that of his forefathers. As far back as I could trace, the men of his family had all been agricultural workers of various sorts, however his parents gave him and his siblings a good grounding both educational and spiritual enabling him to take advantage of the opportunities available for such a lad during the inter war period. In 1931 when he was 10, Albert and his younger brother Aubrey, both won prizes at the Wesleyan Sunday School.

WESLEYAN PRIZE WINNERS.

A musical service arranged by Mr. H. T. Howard (superintendent) and Miss Page (hon. secretary) was held on Sunday on the occasion of the distribution of prizes to scholars attending the Wesleyan Church. Miss Anderson was at the organ. Mr. J. H. Gower, of Beccles, distributed the prizes to: Boys—Wilfred Adams, Edward Warden, Leonard Flatt (special), Walter Thurston, Geo. Havers, Albert Daniels, Walter Matthews, Eric Riches, Victor Birch, William Lovatt, Ronnie Havers, Aubrey Daniels. Girls—Dorothy Bussey, Daphne Riches, Lily Oxborough, Alice Oxborough (special), Edna Thurston, Olive Puttock, Eva Havers, Dorothy Havers, Irene Matthews, Kathleen Matthews, Joan Hewitt, Phyllis Cuthbert, Alma Francis, Dorothy Thurston, Hilda Matthews, Evelyn Matthews, Cissie Keable.

Diss Express
27 Mar 1931

LATE MR F. DANIELS

The funera. took place at Redenhall on Tuesday, of Mr. Frederick Daniels (aged 53), of Broad Stret, Harleston, who died on the previous Saturday, after a long illness. Mr. Daniels a native of Weybread, had been caretaker at the Congregational Church for some years. He served in the last war with the Suffolk Regiment. His eldest son was killed while serving with R.A.F. in 1941, and his youngest son is now serving with the army in Italy.

A short service was first held at the Congregational Church, Harleston, conducted by the Rev. H. W. Dickerson. The organist was Mr. A. W. Hill.

The interment followed at Redenhall and the family mourners included, the widow, Mr. Albert Daniels, Mrs. Pretty, Miss Pretty, Miss S. Burlingham, Mrs. Burlingham, Mrs. Góoch. Others present included Mr. F. G. Aldis (hon. sec. of the Congregational Church), Mrs. Matthews, Mrs. Gower, Mr. A. Paulin, Mr. W. Kelly, Mrs. Stone, Mrs. Cook, Miss Day, Mrs. Goffin, Miss Wittard, Mr. W. J. Harber, Miss Leslie, Curtis, Mrs. F. G. Aldis, Mrs. Hopgood, Mrs. W. Moore, Mr. H. Dickerson sen., Mrs. Jolley, Miss Rayner.

Among the wreaths was one from members of the Congregational Church

The family had close links with the local chapels; in later years Albert's father Frederick became the caretaker of the Congregational Church and it was there that his funeral was held when he died, aged only 57 in 1944. His father-in-law / cousin, Albert Daniels Snr attended the funeral as one of the chief mourners.

The Daniels family really did seem to be a family of two halves with the two older boys, Albert & Aubrey, being followed by three much younger sisters, Pamela (1932), Patricia (1934) and Margaret or Rita, (1939). In 1947, poor Margaret met a tragically young death that was essentially witnessed by two of the siblings. She and her sister Patricia shared a room with their, by then, widowed mother and were changing into night clothes warmed by a small bedroom fire. Rita's nightdress caught fire and in spite of the best efforts of her older brother Aubrey, who had survived fighting through Italy during WW2, little Rita died in the Jenny Lind Children's Hospital. Her death by fire is recorded in the URC Register, her funeral took place in the chapel before Rita's interment at Redenhall.

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7 Feb 1947

The girls attended the local schools, Pat getting her Netball colours at Redenhall Secondary 1949 as well as winning the girls' long jump. Albert Frederick took his eleven plus and like other bright lads of the town went to Bungay Grammar School. On leaving school Albert, like generations of young East Anglians before him, took his hopes and ambitions with him to London where he had gone into business – no lumps of clay on this lad's boots! The Grammar School seems to have been particularly hard hit, 30 of Albert's fellow pupils, including several others from Harleston who also perished in the war, are marked on the WW2 roll of Honour.

Having Volunteered for the RAF, and been posted to Malta, the reality of war may have been ameliorated by the comradeship and excitement of being in the sunny Mediterranean. However, when 'Aiden', a colleague of Albert (Sonny as the family knew him) died, this obviously shook the lad. He wrote a very touching letter to his family, and to Joan, to be sent in the event of his disappearance. Even then his thoughts were for his family, reminding them having disappeared he could have either been taken prisoner or be with sympathetic locals. His letter was both matter of fact and slightly humorous, he was determined to avoid mawkishness; his thoughts were with his much younger sisters, 'all their young friends' and their futures.

HARLESTON

INQUEST ON CHILD

An inquest on Margaret Jean Daniels, aged 7, of 4, Broad Street, Harleston, was held on Tuesday by Mr. L. G. Hill (Norwich City Coroner). The girl died in the Jenny Lind Hospital the previous Saturday.

Aubrey Robert Daniels said the deceased was his sister and lived at the same address. On January 28th, in the evening, he was seated downstairs when his sister Pat ran downstairs and said "There's a fire." Running up he saw Margaret standing there on a mat. Her nightdress had been completely burned off and her hair was alight. Putting out the flames on her hair with his hands, he pulled some of the blazing nightdress off her, wrapped her in bed clothes and put her to bed. He sent for Dr. Rainey, who arrived after five minutes. The two sisters had only just gone to bed. There was a fire in the bedroom as his mother had not been well. She shared the room with his two sisters.

Patricia Daniels, Margaret's 12-year-old sister, said that she and her sister undressed to get into bed. She suddenly noticed that her sister's nightdress was on fire. She had been undressing by the fire.

P.-c. Raymond Butty said the fireplace was an old type, the fire basket being flush with the fireplace. There was a small curb surrounding it.

Answering the Coroner, Mrs. Daniels, the child's mother, said there had once been a guard in front of the fire, but it had worn up, and at the time of the accident there was no guard.

The Coroner: I suggest that you get a guard; the same thing could happen again.

Describing the burns as the worst he had seen, Dr. Hardy said the girl's condition deteriorated in spite of the use of human serum and penicillin.

The Coroner recorded a verdict of "pneumonia, following accidental burns." He told the relatives that whilst no blame could be awarded one could not be too careful with children when there was a fire about.

HARLESTON

MISSING

News has just been received that Sergt. Air Gunner Albert Frederick Daniels (21), son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Daniels, of 4, Broad Street, Harleston, is missing as a result of air operations early this month. He joined the R.A.F. in July 1940, and was educated at Bungay Grammar School. Prior to joining the R.A.F. he was in business in London.

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