



Francis Edwin Barnes

17146 Lance Corporal, 7th Battalion Norfolk Regiment

He was killed in action on 13th October 1915 in France, age 28

Francis is remembered with Honour at the Loos Memorial in France

<i>Robert Barnes</i>	of <i>this</i> Parish
and <i>Elizabeth Pigg</i>	of <i>this</i> Parish
were married in this <i>Church</i> by <i>Barnes</i>	with Consent of this <i>twenty sixth</i> Day of <i>December</i> in the Year One thousand eight hundred and <i>Twenty four</i>
By me <i>B Poring Curate</i>	
This Marriage was solemnized between us {	<i>Robert Barnes X his Mark</i> <i>Elizabeth Pigg X her Mark</i>
In the Prefence of {	<i>Mark Codlin X his Mark</i> <i>Francis Codlin X her Mark</i>
No. 153.	<i>29 Aug</i>

The Barnes family were a mobile crew. Way back in 1841, Yard Man Robert Barnes I and his wife Elizabeth nee Pigg were busy raising 7 children, between the ages of 7 months and 14 years of age, at Holley Farm Briston although their oldest son, 14 years old James Barnes, already a Labourer was born in Aylsham.

The couple had married in Aylsham on Christmas day 1824, both they and their witnesses were all illiterate although, in later years, education was to be highly valued by this family. Elizabeth's assumed elderly mother, Elizabeth Pigg Snr, aged 65-70, was also in the household.

Barely two years after this census, in 1843, Elizabeth died, aged only 43. Unusually, and helpfully, this vicar entered causes of death in his burial register so we know that she died of consumption, an all-too-common event at the time and one against which the poor had little or no protection.

<i>Elizabeth Barnes</i>	<i>Briston</i>	<i>Aug 20</i>	<i>32</i>
No. 516.	<i>married woman</i>		<i>37</i>

Although I have not been able to track down the widowed Robert Barnes I after this, by 1851 his oldest son James Barnes was living in Sall with his uncle Richard Barnes I, a Farm Steward who had originally come from North Blickling. Also, in the house hold, were James' youngest siblings, the then 10 years old Susan(nah) and 12 years old Richard Barnes II, who would have been just 2 years old and 4 years old when their mother died. Although it was common practice to remarry when your wife died, in this case it seems that Robert Barnes' children had been scattered about the rest of the family! Richard I and his wife Martha would have been in their mid-50's when their sister-in-law died but as was the way at the time they stepped into the breach to care for their orphaned nephews and niece.

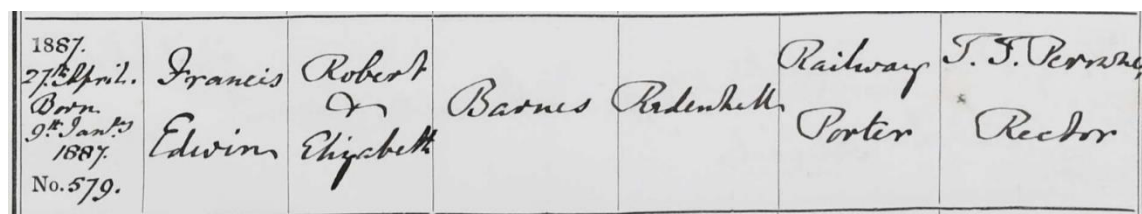
Between 1851 and 1856, James got married to a Norfolk lass with his two oldest children being born, in 1856 and 1859 in Sall. Shortly after the birth of this second child, the family decamped to Okehampton in Devon, just in time for another son to be born, 11 weeks old at the time of the 1861 census. Rather touchingly, James Barnes named his oldest son Robert II (after his father) and his next two children Susan II and Richard III after the siblings who were raised with him in his uncle's house. Intriguingly, James' brother Richard Barnes II had also come down to Okehampton and was one of 5 lodgers living with a coffee house owner / mine agent and his family.

10 years on and the brother Richard Barnes II had migrated back to Norfolk and was (still in lodgings) a Railway Porter in Wymondham – this becomes more relevant as this story unfolds! It was in Wymondham he found himself a wife; by 1877 he had drifted his way into Beccles Market Place, Suffolk where he raised his family although by 1891, he had become the Gate Keeper and Pointsman on the London Road Gatehouse.

His brother James had firmly set his roots down in Devon and there he stayed, appearing with his family of four children aged between 8 and 15 in 1871. However, his oldest son, Robert Barnes II, perhaps inspired by his Uncle Richard Barnes II, decided to leave the land where he had been working and also joined the railways.

By 1881, Robert Barnes II was living on Broad Street with his wife Elizabeth nee Ward whom he had married only a few months previously. Elizabeth, the daughter of an agricultural labourer from Bramerton, had, by the age of 12 in 1871, already been sent out to work, living in as a general servant in the house of a tea-dealers assistant in Heigham. I can't imagine she was terribly useful but doubtless she was cheap and brought in some much-needed money for her family.

The family obviously settled in happily in Harleston and reappeared there 10 years later in the 1891 census although by then they had moved out to the Factory Cottages by which time they had



completed their family of just 3 children, the youngest of whom, Francis Edwin Barnes,

born and baptised in Redenhall in 1897, we could claim as another of our Harleston Heroes although he spent little time in the town.

The family had also been joined by a niece, Evelyn Ward. This little girl had been born in Redenhall a year previously and was the daughter of Elizabeth's unmarried sister, Sarah Ann Ward, 7 years her junior. It seems strange that when Elizabeth was already out of the house and working away, her little sister, only 7 years younger than her was but 5; they should have been playing together. Not too surprisingly, young Sarah Ann was also out in the world as a live-in servant by the 1881 census, appearing in Haddenham, aged 16, as a 'Nurse' to the 11-month-old son of a doctor. Many servant girls gave birth to illegitimate children at this time but since 'base born' children were fairly rife in Norfolk at the time I don't suppose the world crashed too hard around Sarah Ann's ears although losing her income could have caused hardship. Luckily, big sister Elizabeth and husband Robert Barnes II stepped into help.

I am glad to say that Sarah was able to reclaim her daughter, I am not sure if it was after her first marriage, in 1894, to Arthur Brock a labourer in Yarmouth or after her second marriage, as a widow in 1900, to William Rowland, a quay side labourer, but either way Sarah and her daughter Evelyn appeared together in the rows in Yarmouth in 1901 where Sarah was still living in 1911.

Meanwhile, after a stint of at least 10 years in Harleston, by 1901 the Barnes family had, like Uncle Richard, also drifted to Suffolk. Robert Barnes II was the railway gate keeper in Brandon, his wife was running a shop and his children were getting a good education. It would have been this good

education that would have enabled Francis Edwin to have been able to achieve his employment in the drapery trade. These aspiring young men, hoping for better lives than their fathers were on occasions dismissed as 'counter jumpers' i.e young men who did not intend to stay in their place. Good for them, as one of the first generations to whom free education was both available and accepted, they were able to choose whether to follow in the footsteps of their fathers or whether to hope for more. Francis Edwin was not an exception amongst his brothers, perhaps with only 3 children and a steady income coming in their parents were able to help them achieve more than many of their peers.

In 1911, the oldest son, Herbert James Barnes was a 29 years old married head teacher in Happisburgh, their second son was at age 27, the senior member of a household of 8 shopmen and two servants at the Tunbridge Wells branch of Sainsbury's!

Meanwhile. Francis Edwin was one of 7 young unmarried men from all over the south east and London, living and working on the premises of David Diamond, drapers, in Eastbourne. There was a single female servant from Farnborough also living on the premises as well as, on the night of the census at least, the manager whose home address was Croydon.

Francis' parents, Robert and Elizabeth Barnes were, by 1911, with their 3 children scattered over the country, following their various careers, set up in a 5-room-house back in Norfolk; to be precise, much like his uncle Richard in Beccles, at a Crossing Gate House in Twyford.



The couple were still living in Twyford when their son's name was added to that of over 20,000 others at the memorial at Loos for those who had no known grave. Whilst it is unlikely, they ever saw their son's memorial in Loos, a plaque was erected to his memory on the font cover in Twyford Church, presumably by his parents as, although he is the only casualty from WWI commemorated in Twyford Church, the service of another 20 men who returned is marked on the roll-of-honour there surmounted by the details of the death

of Francis.

Francis Edwin Barnes' grandfather had been orphaned young but taken in by relatives and kept close to his younger siblings. That grandfather and great uncle had moved to the opposite side of the country, from Norfolk to Devon, but both great uncle and his nephew (father of our hero) had, via the railways, re-established themselves in Norfolk. Whilst Francis' great-grandparents were illiterate, he and his brothers had made the most of the education offered to them and were making their way in a word that did not rely on manual labour. We don't know how old Francis was when he and his family left Harleston, but we do know he was born here and are proud to recognise his sacrifice amongst that of other sons of Harleston.