

Wilfred Newman

693, Hunts Cyclist Battn: 307679, 1/8th Battn Royal Warwickshire Regiment: KIA 27th Aug. 1916

Arthur Wilfred Newman, known as Wilfred, was born in Warboys in 1893 the son of Alfred and Mary (nee Balls) one of 6 children. His father kept the Rose and Crown Inn in the High Street and was also a coal merchant. The family later moved to Ramsey Road next door to Hankin's draper's shop which was near the chemist's. Their neighbours were other families whose son's names would also be on the War Memorial; **Gerald Newton, Charles Wilderspin, Wilfred Titman** and **John Mills**. Alfred was now a farm labourer and Mary a charwoman. Wilfred worked in the brickyard, making bricks.



On 21st October 1914 Wilfred enlisted to serve for 4 years in the Territorial Army. He joined The Hunts Cyclist Battalion as did many Warboys lads, 15 of whom are on the War Memorial. He was 21 years old, 5 feet 5 inches tall and with a chest measurement of 35 inches. The Hunts Cyclists were a home battalion who patrolled the East Coast using their bikes to cycle the coastal paths in all weathers against the threat of invasion. Wilfred served there for nearly two years then the decision came to transfer over 600 hundred of The Hunts Cyclists to active service on The Western Front. Accordingly on the 28th July 1916 they left by train from Scarborough and embarked from Southampton on 29th July 1916 on the SS Alexandria arriving at Le Havre/Rouen the next day.. The men were then transferred into different fighting

battalions. Wilfred, along with many others, including **Alfred Redgrave** and **George Richardson**, joined the 1/8th Battalion of The Royal Warwickshire Regiment on the 7th August.

This Regiment had suffered major losses on the first day of the Battle of The Somme and needed rebuilding. The new recruits spent time being trained in the basics of active warfare and engaged in their first major battle near Ovillers on the 27th August 1916. This was part of an ongoing attempt to capture Pozieres and Mouquet Farm.



Road to Pozieres Aug 1916

The attack did not go well as the troops lost direction as there were no landmarks to guide them and ran into their own barrage sustaining many casualties. Thus less than a month after landing in France, Wilfred and 15 others from The Hunts Cyclist Battalion were killed in action on 27th August 1916.

Alfred Redgrave (also on the War Memorial) was another of the casualties at the same time. Both men were initially posted as missing but were finally regarded for official purposes as having died on 27th August. Neither have a known grave both being listed on The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of The Somme.

In December 1917 the War Office ordered the return of Wilfred's belongings to his parents. Wilfred's parents did not stay in Warboys. By November 1919 they had moved to Tydd St. Giles near his mother's birth place