

**Private Norman Harold MARKS 5445309 Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry.
Trooper Norman Harold MARKS 5445309 Royal Armoured Corps,
Reconnaissance Corps.**



Norman H Marks is one of seven named on this Second World War Memorial at Burraton Methodist Chapel, Liskeard Road, Saltash.

However, unlike the other six named on this WW2 Memorial Norman Harold MARKS is not Commemorated in perpetuity' by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), and his name is not recorded on the Borough of Saltash WW2 War Memorial.

At the end of the 1914-1918 Great World War (WW1), the Army Camp at Wearde, St. Stephens-by-Saltash, *consisting of wooden huts*, became a Ministry of Pensions Convalescent Hospital. A Miss Ellen Maud Marks who was working there became pregnant, it's thought by a soldier. She would not, maybe she could not, say who was responsible for her condition: if she did know she would not reveal who it was.

Ellen Maud's father William disowned her. He said, "*she was a disgrace to the Marks family and was not welcome in the family home anymore*" and that "*no other members of the family were to have anything-what-so-ever to do with her.*"

The 1901 and 1911 Census shows Ellen Maud Marks (age 2 and 12) living at 3 Albert Villas, Burraton, St. Stephens, Saltash with her parents William and Sophia and her six siblings including an older brother William Marks and a younger sister Elsie Alberta Marks.

The 1920 England & Wales Birth Transcription and Service records show Norman Harold Marks was born on 8th September 1920.

The 1921 Census shows that Ellen Maud Marks (age 22) and her son Norman Harold Marks (age 1) were living in the St. Germans Poor Law Institution at Torpoint. (*The Workhouse?*)

However, unknown to their father, William, Ellen Maud's younger sister Elise Alberta Marks remained in touch with her older sister and her older sister's son Norman Harold Marks.

In 1932 Ellen Maud Marks younger sister, Elsie A. Marks, married Reginald G. Matthews.

In 1934 Norman Harold Marks, now age 14, was no longer the responsibility of the Local Authority. Norman's Aunt and Uncle, Elsie A and Reginald G. Matthews, agreed with the Local Authority that Norman should live with them.

Norman's uncle Reginald G Matthews worked for J. F. Ashton, a local firm of builders; he asked Jack Ashton to take Norman on as an apprentice bricklayer.

In 1935 Ellen Maud Marks died age 36 and was buried in St. Stephens-by-Saltash Churchyard on the 22nd October 1935.

In 1939 Elsie and Richard Matthews had a son of their own, William Reginald Matthews. (*William compiled a family record that provides much of the family information used in this article.*)

The 1939 Register shows Norman H. Marks. Occupation Bricklayer Apprentice living at 3 Albert Villas, Burraton, Saltash with Reginald G. and Elsie A Matthews.

In 1939 World War Two was declared. Family and Service records show that Norman Harold Marks was 'called up' to serve his King and Country.

The Family records say that he was conscripted into a Tank Regiment, but his Service and National Archive records show Norman Harold Marks initially served as a Private in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry in Africa. Later transferring to the Royal Army Corps, Reconnaissance Corps and then serving as a Trooper in Italy.

At some time whilst Norman served in Africa, a Warrant Officer, Colour Sergeant, Corporals, Lance Corporals, and several Privates (*including Norman*) were recorded as 'Missing' - then 'Missing believed Prisoner of War' - then 'Not Missing'. During this very confusing time they had all been taken prisoner and then subsequently miss-identified by 'friendly forces' who attacked and bombed them. The friendly forces then 'liberated' them. (*a blue-on-blue incident?*) Norman was 'wounded' and came home on leave.

The Family record allege that whilst home on leave he said "He was not going to return to his Unit": and had every intention of deserting. His uncle Richard Matthews, also then a serviceman home on leave, persuaded Norman to return to his unit, and not actually desert. (*There's no mention of any 'talk of desertion' in Norman's service record.*)

Service records show that he then served as N. H. Marks. Trooper, 5445309, (*same service number*), Royal Armoured Corps, Reconnaissance Corps, in Italy - and, with his fellow soldiers, fought his way up through Italy to the border with Austria.

There, Trooper Norman Harold Marks did go 'Absent Without Leave' (AWOL): but was quickly found and, though considered physically sound, he was completely mentally deranged. (*At that time, probably seen as Lacking Moral Fibre (LMF) - but now would be diagnosed as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?*) Service Records show that, prior to this, he had an 'Excellent Character' write-up from his Commanding Officer.

From the family and service records he was sent to an Army Psychiatric Hospital in or near London. A relative who was in the Royal Marines, who Norman should have known well, visited him in that Hospital but Norman did not recognise him.

Norman was transferred to St. Lawrence Mental Hospital at Bodmin: to be closer to his Saltash family; but when his aunt and uncle, Elsie A and Reginald G. Matthews, visited him there he did not recognise them.

Service records show that on the 20th November 1946 he was considered "Permanently unfit for any form of further military service and discharged".

His prognosis was poor, his physical and mental health further deteriorated. He died in St. Lawrence Hospital on 11th December 1946.

He's buried at St. Stephens-by-Saltash Churchyard in his mother's older brother William Marks grave.



“In Loving Memory of William, the beloved husband of Lilly Marks who died Oct 4th, 1925, aged 42 years also of Norman Harold Marks Nephew of the above died 11th December 1946 aged 26. “At rest.”

Norman Harold Marks Death Certificate dated 11 December 1946 shows that he died at Cornwall Mental Hospital. It records his cause of death as “Bilateral cavernous pulmonary T.B. and Dementia Praecox. P.M.” and his occupation as “No fixed abode. Trooper”.

There is sufficient information to show his death was caused by, attributable to, or aggravated by his WW2 service. An application has been made to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission requesting that he be ‘Commemorated in perpetuity’ and that his grave in St. Stephens-by-Saltash Churchyard is recognised as a serviceman’s War Grave. The application with supporting evidence has been accepted by the CWGC and forwarded to his relevant Service Authority for adjudication and decision.

Peter Clements.