

In Memory of
Barbara Ellen Goodwin (née Harvey)

Women's Royal Air Force
Died 4 November 1918 age 24.



Remembered with honour:
The Women's National Memorial Screen in York Minster
Great Massingham War Memorial

The Story of Barbara Ellen Goodwin



Barbara Ellen Harvey was born in 1894 to Samuel and Elizabeth Harvey in Stow Bedon near Attleborough. By 1911 the family were living at The Swan Inn at Great Massingham, her father being a well-known innkeeper and horse trader.

Barbara was one of eight children. Her eldest brother Arthur worked for the Midland Railway in Derbyshire and it is believed this connection led to her working there as a barmaid. While there Barbara met Walter Goodwin who she married in December 1916. Walter was a dairyman. He enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery and when he was called up, Barbara returned to her family at Great Massingham.

Barbara (pictured above and right) enrolled in the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) on 2 April 1918, service no 611. Her application stated she was only prepared to work if she could travel from King's Lynn Station. She was appointed to the 7th Wing Headquarters, Royal Air Force, King's Lynn and went to work in the aeroplane repair shops at Narborough Aerodrome. Apart from four Royal Naval Air Stations, Narborough was the biggest aerodrome in the country and many women from Kings Lynn and the surrounding area went to work there.



Barbara's sister Mary also joined the WRAF later that year. She worked alongside Barbara in the aeroplane repair shops. Brothers Richard and Fred also served in the war. Richard served with the 12 Lancers, Household Cavalry, we do not know where Fred served. Both survived the war.

Barbara died of influenza on 4 November 1918 age 24. She died at The Crown Public House in Great Massingham, the home of her sister Florence and in the presence of her sister Mary. It took some time to notify her husband Walter of her death. Walter was serving in Egypt and his war records include a memo requesting his whereabouts so that he could be informed. He was not demobbed until 1919.

Barbara was buried at St Mary's Church in Great Massingham. Her funeral was reported in the press. It was attended by many from Narborough Aerodrome including Captain Howarth, Walter's parents came from Derby and brother Richard came home from France to attend the funeral. Her coffin was draped with the Union Jack. WRAF women from Narborough formed a guard of honour.



About 600 women who died in service were issued with memorial plaques which were commonly known as Death Pennies. Barbara was one of those. Her memorial plaque remains with the family.

