

In Memory of

## Violet Meal

Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps

Died 3 April 1920 age 31.



No image  
currently  
available

Remembered with honour:

Nowhere

Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

# The Story of Violet Meal

Violet Meal was born in 1889 to Joseph and Frances Meal. Her father was born in the U.S.A. but was a British subject. When Violet was young, she and her three siblings lived at Bluestone Railway Station between Corpusty and Aylsham where her father was the station master.

Each census records Violet living in a different place. At two she was in Heydon, at twelve she was living with her widowed father in Caister-on-Sea and at twenty two she was working as a domestic servant for the wealthy Fane family in Fulbeck near Grantham.

Violet's brothers joined the Royal Navy before the war and worked in signals. Both were killed at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. Percy served on HMS Champion and Norman served on HMS Southampton. Percy is commemorated on Caister war memorial and Norman is commemorated on Chatham Naval Memorial.

As part of a railway family Violet would have been experienced in the workings of a railway station. So it is no surprise that she worked as a railway porter for the Midland & Great Northern Railway from May 1917 to April 1919 in Norfolk, taking this on as the men went off on active service.

Violet did not join the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) until 23 June 1919, her service number was 53144. She joined the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in Calais to work as a store checker at Audruicq ammunition depot. (Pictured right: an ammunition depot in Rouen 1919. (Q7954))



Violet had had bronchitis as a child and while in France, she developed a cough. On 10 November 1919 she was transferred to No. 35 General Hospital in Calais. On 18 November Violet was sent back to England to the QMAAC Hospital in Isleworth. Her condition worsened and she was discharged from QMAAC on 19 January 1920. On that day she returned to her family at The Railway Station, Caister while a place in a sanatorium was arranged. A few days later she was admitted to the Brompton Hospital, Fulham Road, London.

Violet was not only seriously ill but also had financial difficulties. This could be quite a problem for those discharged from service for health reasons as they were expected to meet medical costs such as sanatorium fees. In Calais sick pay of 33s 6d a week had been agreed for three months, but in December Violet had to write to QMAAC asking for £4, stating she had had no money since November. They sent back £2. Such were her financial difficulties that Brompton Hospital wrote to QMAAC saying "I think it advisable to send her a further advance, say £5 0s 0d as when I saw her yesterday she had only a few shillings left, it would prevent her borrowing off her people."

Violet died of pulmonary tuberculosis on 3 April 1920 age 31 and was buried at Caister-on-Sea cemetery. While her records state that her illness was not attributable to her work abroad, she does have a Commonwealth war grave. However, her name does not appear on any war memorial or Roll of Honour.