
Ralph Ellis BOWELL (c. 1920-1942)

Lionel Frederick Syzling's connection to North Lopham is by birth and residency.

Ralph Ellis BOWELL, son of Oliver Edward BOWELL (c. 1893-c. 1977) and Florence WALLIS (c. 1897-c. 1978), was born circa 1920.¹

In the 1921 Census (19 Jun 1921) he appeared in North Lopham, Norfolk - 7m, living with parents John (51y 4m, farmer) and Florence (23y 6m), uncle and aunt Fred William (53y 10m, farmer) and Florence (41y 6m), cousins Oliver E (27y 8m, farm labourer) and Elsie W (8y 10m, full time scholar), and grandfather Robertt (91y 11m, old age pensioner).²

On 18 August 1933 there was a newspaper report in the Diss Express and Norfolk and Suffolk Journal:

**SOUTH LOPHAM.
CYCLIST INJURED.**

Master Ralph Bowell, the twelve-years-old son of Mr. and Mrs. O. Bowell, of Church Road, South Lopham, was involved in an accident with a motor car on the South Lopham-Garboldisham main road on Friday. After visiting his grandfather, the youth was cycling towards his home at about 12.0 p.m., when a collision occurred with a motor car proceeding in the same direction and driven by the daughter of Mr. R. H. Beecher, of Panshanger, Amersham. The lad was thrown violently and after being attended to by the motor car occupants and Mr. Smith of South Lopham, he was conveyed home. Dr. Carter of Kenninghall gave further attention to the lad's injuries and later he was conveyed to the Norwich Hospital in the Diss Ambulance and detained. Although suffering from a broken right leg, cuts and his nose and forehead and injuries to both arms. Ralph is progressing satisfactorily. The motor car went into a ditch but the occupants escaped with minor injuries. The bicycle was extensively damaged.

No record was found of Ralph being in the 1939 Registration so by that time he had probably signed up.

Ralph died on 12 February 1942 - died of wounds presumably at the 1941-1942 Battle of Malaya in which the 4th Battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment took part.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission grave registration entry for Ralph was "BOWELL, Pte. RALPH ELLIS, 5774995. 4th Bn. The Royal Norfolk Regt. 12th February, 1942. Age 21. Son of Oliver Edward and Florence Bowell, of South Lopham, Norfolk."

Ralph is commemorated at Kranji War Cemetery - Sp. Mem. 21. D. 18. (Singapore)

Sources

1. *CR Birth*. 1920 Q4 Thetford Norfolk Vol 4B Page 565. Cit. Date: Q4 1920.
2. *1921 Census*. RG15 Piece 09901 Schedule 138 RD 239 RS 2 ED 18. Cit. Date: 19 June 1921.