ARCHER, Harold Claude



2615899, Guardsman
3rd Battalion, Grenadier Guards
Place of Birth: Haverhill
Date of Death: Thursday 5th August 1943
Killed on active service
Cemetery: Medjez-El-Bab War Cemetery
Aged: 23 years

Harold Claude Archer was born in Haverhill in 1920, the son of Richard John and Beatrice Clara Archer (née Rudd). Richard John was a baker and pastry cook.

Harold's parents were both from Great Yarmouth and after their marriage, which was registered in Smallburgh in 1902, the first four of their nine children, Henry, Elsie, Richard and Beatrice Mary were born in North Walsham. Sadly, Henry and Beatrice Mary died within months of each other in 1909. In 1911, the family home was at Gladstone Terrace, Beccles. The birth of their fifth child, Eric, was registered in Wangford in 1912 but he too died before he was four years old. The following year another daughter, Beatrice Clara was born and shortly after her birth the family moved to Haverhill.



It was here that Harold was born followed by a sister Kathleen in 1922 and a brother Victor in 1924.
There was obviously a family interest in sport as sister, Beatrice Clara, was the Council Schools Sports Champion in 1930.

In 1934, the Council School football team were winners of the West Suffolk Schools Cup. Harold played in this team and is pictured back row 2nd from right, standing beside Mr W B Gurteen.

Harold was also a member of the Haverhill Scouts.

There may have been another sibling as indicated by a closed record on the 1939 Register for the family. The family home was 17 Mill Road and father, Richard, recorded his occupation as Baker and Confectioner, Cake Maker. Also living at at this address were his wife, daughters Elsie and Kathleen and son Victor. Elsie was

employed as a Brusher Off and Folder (Clothiers), Kathleen was a Clothiers Sewing Machinist and Victor now aged 15 was working as a Grocer's Storekeeper.

It is not known when Harold enlisted but he served as a Guardsman with the 3rd Grenadier Guards. In June 1940, the battalion was evacuated from Dunkirk and returned to the UK. Two years later it was serving in the UK as part of the 78 Infantry Division. In the summer of 1942, Harold married Georgina E Thorn from Louth, Lincolnshire and by November he had been posted to Tunisia, North Africa.

In February 1943 the Battalion had transferred to 6 Armoured Division. The Tunisian campaign had begun on 8th November 1942, when Commonwealth and American troops made a series of landings in Algeria and Morocco. The Germans responded immediately by sending a force from Sicily to northern Tunisia, which checked the Allied advance east in early December. In the south, the Axis forces defeated at El Alamein withdrew into Tunisia along the coast through Libya, pursued by the Allied Eighth Army. By mid-April 1943, the combined Axis force was hemmed into a small corner of north-eastern Tunisia and the Allies were grouped for their final offensive. The campaign ended with the surrender of the Germans in May 1943 to a combined Allied force.

The Bury Free Press published on 28th August 1943 included a report about the death of Harold. The news had reached his wife in Louth in a letter from his Captain. Harold, along with some colleagues, had been killed on 5th August as the result of an accident. No details about the accident are known.

The CWGC information lists three other 3rd Battalion men who lost their lives in the same accident.



HAVERHILL MAN'S DEATH IN NORTH AFRICA.

Intimation has been received that Guardsman Harold C. Archer, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Archer, of Mill Hill, Haverhill, has been killed in North Africa as the result of an accident in which several men lost their lives, on August 5th. The news reached his wife, now living at Louth, in a letter from her husband's Captain.

They were all buried in Baharine Cemetery and moved to their final resting place at Medjez-el-Bab on 17th June 1944.

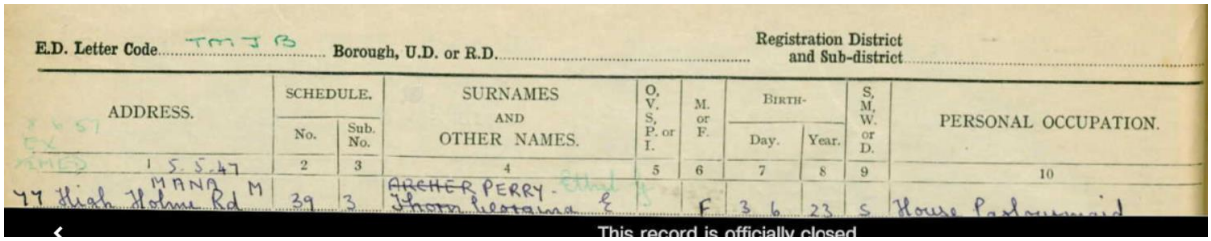
3/Gren Gds.	2621903.	Crossley	R.C.	Gdsm. L/Cpl.	5.8.43.	Baharine	I-Q-4.	448.	17.6.44.	3.	G.	8.
"	2619971.	Walsh	A.	~~L/Cpl~~	5.8.43.	"	I-Q-6.	449.	"	3.	G.	9.
"	2615958.	Tomlinson	H.	L/Cpl	5.8.43.	"	I-Q-6?	450.	"	3.	G.	10.
"	2615899.	Archer	H.	Gdsm.	5.8.43.	"	I-Q-5.	451.	"	3.	G.	11.





photos: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The entry for Georgina Thorn in the 1939 register indicates that she remarried, her surname becoming Perry.



E.D. Letter Code TMJB Borough, U.D. or R.D. Registration District and Sub-district

ADDRESS.	SCHEDULE. No.	SCHEDULE. Sub. No.	SURNAMES AND OTHER NAMES.	O, V, S, P, or I.	M. or F.	BIRTH- Day.	BIRTH- Year.	S, M, W, or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION.
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
77 High Holme Rd MANA M	39	3	~~ARCHER~~ PERRY Thorn Georgina E		F	3	6	23	S House Parlourmaid

This record is officially closed