

AN EMOTIVE GREAT WAR 1916 M.M. AWARDED TO AN NCO OF THE 9TH SUFFOLK REGIMENT WHO AFTER BEING RECOMMENDED FOR COMMISSION, COMMITTED SUICIDE AT OFFICERS TRAINING CAMP IN MARCH 1918. HE HAD BEEN WOUNDED IN THE HEAD AND SEVERELY GASSED WHILST IN FRANCE



MILITARY MEDAL GV '15142. SJT: H. C. GEDNEY. 9/SUFF: R.'

M.M. *London Gazette* 27 October 1916

Hubert Chaston Gedney, son of Benjamin Chaston Gedney and Julia Roberta of Stradbroke, Diss, Norfolk. Having enlisted into the Ranks of the 9th Battalion Suffolk Regiment, he served in France from 30 August 1915. Having attained the rank of Sergeant by 1916 and also having been awarded the Military Medal, he was recommended for Commission and was sent to 20th Officers Training Company at Crookham Camp for training in early March 1918. During two weeks of training, his mood changed and it was reported he was suffering from the effects of being gassed and had wished to return to his unit. Sadly he committed suicide on the 26 March 1918, his body being found in the Basingstoke Canal. His obituary records that whilst serving on the Western Front, he served at the front for two years, nine months, during which time he had been wounded in the head and severely gassed. M.I.C. notes 'Suicide during temporary insanity'. Sergeant Gedney was 26 years old at the time of his death.

Condition VF. On of 34 M.M.'s to 9th Suffolk's during the Great War

CADET'S SAD SUICIDE.

A HERO'S FEAR OF CONSUMPTION.

There were exceptionally sad circumstances connected with the suicide of Herbert Godney, 26 years of age, a cadet attached to the 20th Officers' Training Coy., at Crookham Camp, whose dead body was found in the Basingstoke Canal early on Tuesday morning near the Fox Inn. A young man of considerable promise, single, and whose home was at Eye, Suffolk, he seems to have been a victim to depression due entirely to his experience whilst serving his country in France. Originally he was a sergeant in the 9th Bn. Suffolk Regt., and so pronounced were his abilities and so fair his prospects of making a good officer that facilities had readily been placed in his way to join the Officers' Training Coy., in England. As a matter of fact, however, he had only been in training for a fortnight, but he had soldiered for a period of two years and nine months. During his service at the Front he had been wounded in the head and he had been severely gassed. He had, previous to that, acquitted himself with signal bravery, so much so that he had been awarded the Military Medal for distinguished conduct in the field. At first he seemed to take his duties very seriously, but a week ago he developed a most despondent temperament and had said on one or two occasions to his friends that he feared that the gas which he had imbibed was working through his system, with the result that he was becoming consumptive.

That this was preying on his mind is evident from the fact that he had spoken to his superior officer as to his position. He had said that he did not think that he should be able to carry on his duties and that he wished, as a result, to be returned to his unit. Seeing, however, that he had been for such a short period in the company, the officer urged him to make a further trial and carry on, nothing more was said about his going back to his regiment. On Monday night he was seen writing a letter in his room, which letter was in all probability posted, but a small piece of paper was subsequently discovered upon which the words "In the event of my death, hand my property to my mother" had been written. It was on the following morning that his body was discovered in the canal as stated.

The inquest was held on Wednesday afternoon at the Fox Inn by Mr. J. T. Coggins, Deputy-Coroner, and Mr. Farnell was chosen foreman of the jury, who were made acquainted with the above particulars by the Coroner.

Mr. Weston was then called, and said that whilst passing along the canal bank about 150 yards from the Fox Inn he had, in the clear water, seen the body of a man. It was fully dressed, and he at once ran and informed Police-Constable Savage of what he had seen. The constable returned with him, and the body was got out of the water and conveyed to the mortuary, the police officer forming the opinion that it must have been in the water for ten or twelve hours.

The next witness was Dr. Spechley, who said that he had been called by the police to see the body of the deceased. He had made a superficial examination of the same, and he had discovered no external marks of violence. Death had been due to drowning, and he should say that the body had been in the water for twelve hours before discovery.

The Coroner briefly summed up, and the jury, without any disagreement, returned a verdict that deceased committed suicide by drowning himself whilst of unsound mind.