

*In Memory Of*

**WILLIAM NORMAN**

**Private g/23881  
4<sup>th</sup> Btn., Royal Sussex Regiment  
who died on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1918. Age 18**

**Born** Hyde

**Enlisted** Chester

**Died How** Killed in action

**Theatre of War** British Expeditionary Force

**Additional Inf.** Son of Edwin Norman, 7 Canal Street, Hyde.

**Commemorative Information**

**Cemetery:**

MESSINES RIDGE BRITISH CEMETERY, Mesen, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium  
III. B. 44.

**Grave Reference/  
Panel Number:**

**Location:**

Messines Ridge British Cemetery is located 9.5 kilometres south of Ieper town centre on the Nieuwkerkestraat, a road leading from the Rijselseweg, N365, which connects Ieper to Wijtschate, Mesen and on to Armentieres. From Ieper town centre the Rijselsestraat runs from the market square, through the Lille Gate (Rijselpoort) and directly over the crossroads with the Ieper ring road. The road name then changes to the Rijselseweg. Nieuwkerkestraat is a right hand turning from the N365 in the town of Mesen. The cemetery lies 250 metres after this right hand turning, on the left hand side of the road. Within the cemetery will be found the Messines Ridge (New Zealand) Memorial, which commemorates over 800 soldiers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who have no known grave. A short distance south-west of the village, on the road to Ploegsteert, stands The Battle Exploit Memorial which was erected by the New Zealand Government. This takes the form of a white stone obelisk surrounded by a small terrace and garden.

**Historical Information:**

Messines was captured by the German 26th Division from the 1st Cavalry Division on the 31st October-1st November, 1914; on the 6th and 7th November it was attacked unsuccessfully by French troops. It was taken by the New Zealand Division on the 7th June, 1917, in the Battle of Messines. It was retaken by the Germans on the 10th-11th April, 1918, after a stubborn defence by the South African Brigade; and it finally passed again into British hands on the 28th-29th September, 1918. It formed a strong position, not only from its height above the plain but from the extensive system of cellars under the convent known as the "Institution Royale". After the Armistice the British Cemetery was made by the concentration of graves from the battlefield. In the British Cemetery is the Memorial to 840 officers and men of New Zealand who fell in the neighbourhood and whose graves are not known. The dates of death of those buried in the British Cemetery range from October, 1914, to October, 1918, but the majority fell in 1917. The ground on which the cemetery stands belonged to the "Institution Royale", and the Cross of Sacrifice is erected on the site of the Institution's windmill. There are now over 1,500, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, nearly two-thirds are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 13 New Zealand soldiers, ten Australian, four United Kingdom and one South African, known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of 13 soldiers from the United Kingdom, buried in other cemeteries, whose graves were destroyed by shell fire. The cemetery covers an area of 6,183 square metres and is enclosed by a rubble wall. The following were among the burial grounds from which British graves were concentrated to this cemetery: BELL FARM CEMETERY, WYTSCHAETE, near the South side of the Messines-Kemmel road, where 32 soldiers of the 25th Division were buried in June, 1917.