

Private Sidney Edward Panther[©]
Regimental number: 37038
16th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers

born: 1898–died: 8 August 1917

Sidney Edward Panther was part of a large family that included 11 children, though his youngest sister was born after his death. His father, Ernest Samuel Panther, was born in 1873¹ in Irthlingborough, a village in the Wellingborough district of eastern Northamptonshire, which at the time was a centre for the production of shoes and boots.² The 1881 Census described young Ernest's father as a shoe maker;³ in the census a decade later, Ernest himself was working as a shoe riveter.⁴

Ernest married Annie Maria Dines in Wellingborough in 1892.⁵ Their first child, John William Godfrey, was born in 1893⁶ and was followed by Albert Ernest (b. 1896)⁷; Sidney Edward (b. 1898),⁸ Florence Kate (b. 1901),⁹ Lilian Alice (b. 1903),¹⁰ Leonard Samuel (b. 1905),¹¹ Wilfred Richard (b. 1907),¹² Frances Grace (b. 1909),¹³ Horace Arthur (b. 1913),¹⁴ Frank Douglas (b. 1916),¹⁵ and lastly Gladys Irene (b. 1918).¹⁶ Although all the births were registered in Wellingborough, census data suggest that the family lived in the village of Finedon, about six kilometres away.

Sidney joined the British Expeditionary Force in Northampton¹⁷ around August 1916, based on the war gratuity awarded his mother (as his next of kin) after his death.¹⁸ At first a member of the Northamptonshire Regiment, he was subsequently transferred to the 16th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers.¹⁹

At the beginning of August 1917, the battalion was in trenches near the coastal town of Oostduinkerke, Belgium. On 7 August, "D" Company and a platoon of "A" Company were preparing for a raid on the German trenches in front of them when heavy shelling resulted in about 40 casualties, mostly in the "A" Company platoon.²⁰

Sidney was admitted that day to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with wounds to his right hip and his abdomen. He died on 8 August 1917 and was buried in the Adinkerke Military Cemetery on 10 August 1917.²¹

Sidney was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²²

Two of Sidney's brothers, John and Albert, also served during World War I. According to 1920 enlistment papers when John joined the Northamptonshire Regiment as a Band Master, he had previously served with a Field Company of the Royal Engineers (East Anglian T. A.) and with the Royal Corps of Signals from 1 November 1915 until 24 February 1919.²³ Albert joined the Royal



Grave marker for Private Sidney Edward Panther

Source: "Global, Find a Grave Index for Burials at Sea and Other Select Burial Locations, 1300s–Current," *Ancestry.com*

Navy on 13 October 1914 for one year and renewed his enlistment on 2 August 1915 for the remainder of hostilities.²⁴ Albert was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918).²⁵

Sidney's parents, **Ernest** and **Annie**, died in 1946 and 1958, respectively.^{26 27}

His older brother **John** married Sarah Snow in April 1916²⁸ and had a son, Arthur, born in 1921.²⁹ John died in 1964;³⁰ his wife outlived him by 24 years, passing away in 1988 at the age of 91.³¹

Albert Panther married Lily Mary Rose in 1920;³² they too had only one child, a son, Donald, born in 1922.³³ Lily passed away in April 1980 at the age of 84;³⁴ Albert died one year later, in April 1981, at the age of 85.³⁵

Sidney's sister **Florence** immigrated to New Zealand³⁶ where she married Charles Donald McKay in 1929.³⁷ Charles served as a rifleman in World War I, embarking for England with reinforcements for H Company of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade on 14 March 1917.³⁸ Florence and Donald had two sons: John Charles (b. 1931)^{39 40} and Allan Godfrey, who died in 1936 before his first birthday.⁴¹ Charles passed away in 1966⁴² and Florence in 1976.⁴³

Lilian Panther married Frederick James Murdin in the summer of 1932⁴⁴ and had a son, John, in 1939.⁴⁵ Frederick's death was registered in Northampton in 1981;⁴⁶ Lilian's death in 1996 was registered in Wellingborough,⁴⁷ so it seems that as a widow, Lilian moved closer to her roots.

It is not clear whether Sidney's brother **Leonard** ever married: there is a record that a Leonard S. Panther married Florence M. Sly in Leicestershire in 1950⁴⁸ when, if this Leonard was Sidney's brother, he would have been almost forty-five and Florence would have been about sixty-five.⁴⁹ Florence died in Leicestershire in 1963;⁵⁰ Leonard Samuel Panther's death in 1988 was registered in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire.⁵¹

The next sibling, **Wilfred**, married Doris Dicks in nearby Thrapston in 1935.⁵² Doris and Wilfred had two children: Michael in 1936⁵³ and Maureen in 1938.⁵⁴ Doris died in January 1996;⁵⁵ Wilfred died in July 2000,⁵⁶ two days after celebrating his ninety-third birthday.

Sidney's younger sister **Frances** married Lionel Parker in 1934⁵⁷ and they also had two children, both boys: Brian (born 1935)⁵⁸ and Lionel (b. 1944).⁵⁹ Frances' death was registered in Wellingborough in 1978.⁶⁰ Lionel appears to have died in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, in 1987⁶¹ but was cremated in Northamptonshire.⁶²

Horace Panther married Winifred Bellamy in 1940⁶³ and had three daughters: Muriel (b. 1945);⁶⁴ Marguerite (b. 1948);⁶⁵ and Susan (b. 1951).⁶⁶ Horace passed away in 1997;⁶⁷ Winifred died in 2006.⁶⁸

Sidney's youngest brother **Frank** married Marjory Mabutt in Thrapston in the summer of 1939;⁶⁹ Marjory and Frank's son, David, was born in 1940.⁷⁰ Marjory died in 1968⁷¹ and Frank in 1973.⁷²

The last of the Panther children, **Gladys**, married Edward Arthur Braines in 1942.⁷³ Gladys and Edward had two sons and a daughter: Philip (b. 1944),⁷⁴ Pamela (b. 1947)⁷⁵ and Martin (b. 1949).⁷⁶ Edward passed away in 1978⁷⁷ and Gladys two years later, in 1980.⁷⁸

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- ² "Wellingborough," *Northamptonshire Boot and Shoe* (www.northamptonshirebootandshoe.org.uk/: accessed 5 August 2020)
- ³ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 3 August 2020), entry for Ernest Panther, Registration district: Wellingborough, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 1570, Folio: 12, Page: 20
- ⁴ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 3 August 2020), entry for Ernest Panter, Registration district: Northampton, Sub-registration district: St. Giles; Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 8, Piece: 1194, Folio: 153
- ⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 5 August 2020), entry for Ernest Samuel Panther, Registration district: Wellingborough, Inferred county: Northamptonshire, Volume: 3b, Page: 269
- ⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, John William Godfrey, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 151
- ⁷ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Albert Ernest, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 158
- ⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Sidney Edward, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 158
- ⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Florence Kate, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 169
- ¹⁰ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Lilian Alice, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 137
- ¹¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Leonard Samuel, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 112
- ¹² "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Wilfred Richard, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 112
- ¹³ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Frances Grace, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 113
- ¹⁴ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Horace Arthur, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 247
- ¹⁵ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Frank Douglas, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 231
- ¹⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 4 August 2020), entry for Panther, Gladys Irene, Registration district: Wellingborough, Volume 03B, Page 188
- ¹⁷ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 3 August 2020), entry for Sidney Edward Panther
- ¹⁸ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 4 August 2020)
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- ²⁶ "GRO online index–death," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 7 August 2020) entry for Panther, Ernest Samuel, Volume 03B, Page 510
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- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 3 August 2020), entry for Leonard Samuel Panther, Registration district: Wellingborough, Inferred county: Northamptonshire, Volume: 7, Page: 2807
- ⁵² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 3 August 2020), entry for Wilfred R Panther, Registration district: Thrapston, Inferred county: Northamptonshire, Volume: 3b, Page: 589
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