

# Ashford Grammar School



## Second World War 1939 – 1945

On 13 December 1946, a Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for Old Boys who died in the War was held at Ashford, Kent (St. Mary's) Parish Church. The service was conducted by the Vicar of Ashford, Canon H. Duncan Bowen, who did much for education in Ashford, and was at the time Chairman of the Ashford Grammar School Governors. One Master, Alan Bastow, and sixty two former pupils who had lost their lives were remembered. In 1949 the Book of Remembrance was completed. This was produced by Mr. W. M. Gardner, who later made similar books for the Brigade of Guards, and those Members of the House of Commons who died in the Second World War. On the 7 October 1951 a Service of Dedication of the Book of Remembrance and of the War Memorial, which had at last been erected in front of the School, was held. The Memorial was unveiled by Mr. W. P. Garner, an Old Boy and parent, and the Book of Remembrance by Mr. Peter Woodworth. Both were then

dedicated by the Vicar of Ashford. The Memorial had been designed and constructed by Old Ashfordian, Percy Norman.

**ALKIN, HORACE VERRIER.** Apprentice.

Merchant Navy. Motor Vessel 'Silverpalm' (London).

Died at sea 9 June 1941. Aged 18.

Son of Mrs Alkin of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 97, also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial. It is possible that Horace died three days before the 9000 ton cargo ship Silverpalm was sunk by two torpedoes fired from the German submarine U-371, which was commanded by Oberleutnant zur See, Heinrich Driver at 0326 hours on 12 June 1941 in the North Atlantic. It might be that the date of death recorded for Horace was originally an E.D.D. (Estimated Date of Death) which of necessity was, albeit rarely, sometimes the best method used due to, and resulting from prevailing wartime conditions. All 68 people onboard perished when the ship sunk, consisting of the Master 44 year old Richard Leng Pallett, of Surbiton, Surrey, 53 crewmen, 11 D.E.M.S. gunners and 3 passengers. M.V. Silverpalm was last positively sighted on 1 June 1941 in the North Atlantic, but was later reported as missing on 15 July 1941. The British trawler 'Cave' spotted a lifeboat with 8 bodies, in the assumed area of the Silverpalm sinking. Heinrich Driver had left Kiel on 5 June 1941 taking the U-371 on its first war patrol, Horace's ship being the first vessel sunk during the Second World War by the submarine. Prior to finishing his first patrol at the port of Brest with the U-371 on 1 July 1941, Heinrich Driver also attacked the convoy HX-133 on 24 June, and sank the Norwegian ship 'Vigrid.' Born on 10 July 1912 at Sonderburg, in the Prussian province of Schleswig-Holstein, on the coast of the island of Alsen, Germany, Heinrich Driver, having relinquished command of the U-371 on 5 April 1942, was promoted to Kapitänleutnant on 1 April 1943.

**ALLARD, WILLIAM STANLEY.** Flying Officer, 186359.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 353 Squadron Royal Air Force.

Died 22 June 1946.

Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. Column 459

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1933-1938.

353 Squadron Royal Air Force, was formed on 1 June 1942 at Dum Dum near Calcutta, India from elements of No 62 Squadron, R.A.F. and No 103 (Coast Defence) Flight, Indian Air Force. It commenced patrolling the Bay of Bengal using Hudsons on 13 July 1942, and continued on these until 8 August 1943. In August 1943 the squadron moved to R.A.F. Palam where it took over the mail flights of No. 194 Squadron, R.A.F. and Dakotas were added to its equipment during April 1944, to form 'D' Flight, and by October Dakotas had replaced the squadrons Hudsons completely. Avro Anson aircraft arrived at the squadron in August 1944 to undertake short range communications duties, these being replaced by Expeditors in January 1945. William, who was Mentioned in Despatches, is also commemorated on the Second World War memorial plaque located in the porch of Wye, Ashford, Kent, (SS Gregory and Martin) parish church. At the time of William's demise, 353 Squadron, R.A.F. was engaged on transport duties equipped with Dakotas prior to the squadron being disbanded due to the massive peacetime cutbacks, On 22 June 1946 William's aircraft was lost during a flight off the coast of Burma.

**ALLCHIN, JAMES (Jimmie) CECIL ALCUIN.** Pilot Officer, 106364.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 102 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 8 November 1941. Aged 21.

Son of Alfred Ernest and Violet Ethel Allchin of Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

“Jimmie” Allchin had been a pupil at Ashford Grammar School between 1931 and 1938. Commemorated on Ashford, Kent civic war memorial, also the Kennington, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial, and the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey. Panel 31. James Allchin Gardens, on the Little Burton Farm Estate, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, is named in his honour and remembrance. His sister Avis Allchin who resided in Church Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, had prior to her retirement been the Principal of Ashford Girls School, East Hill. When the 26 houses in James Allchin Gardens were completed, Avis Allchin very kindly sent each of the families a photograph of her late brother, and provided them with details about his R.A.F. (V.R.) service during the Second World War. James was the co-pilot of Whitley bomber Z9128 DY-? which was flown by 19 year old Sergeant, Thomas H. Thorley R.A.F.(V.R.), of Doveridge, Derbyshire. The aircraft took off from R.A.F. Topcliff, North Yorkshire at 2207 hours on 7 November 1941 in a mixed bomber force of 169 aircraft to take part in a bombing mission to Berlin, Germany. At 0642 hours the next morning James aircraft was contacted in response to a request for a bearing, at which time it was thought to be approximately 100 kilometres north of the Island of Borkum in the North Sea, and heading for the East Coast of England. The exact fate of the aircraft is still unclear but it is thought to have run out of fuel, possibly resultant of having strayed off course and using up the allocated fuel supply. Within the space of about an hour, two other Whitley's of 102 Squadron, R.A.F. that had also been returning from the same mission requested similar assistance, sadly all three aircraft and crews were lost and are presumed to have crashed at different locations in the North Sea. All the fifteen airmen lost are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey. Cloud cover over the chosen target area had thwarted the bombers efforts to achieve a concentrated bombing pattern, and they also suffered a mauling by both flak gun batteries and enemy fighters, which resulted in 21 of the aircraft, they being 10 Wellingtons, 9 Whitleys and 2 Stirlings failing to return, amounting to about a twelve and a half percent loss rate. On the night of 7/8 November 1941, a raid to Köln (Cologne) was carried out by 75 bombers, and another 55 to Mannheim. Resulting from the three raids on the night, a total of 37 aircraft failed to return. As it was apparent that no airforce could sustain this amount of losses for any length of time, and in an attempt to rebuild the Bomber Command confidence throughout its ranks, less well-defended targets were then chosen for future attacks. In just four months Bomber Command had lost the equivalent of its entire frontline strength, 526 aircraft, and morale amongst all the squadrons at that time was low. The raids that were carried out on the night of 7/8 November 1941, and the losses of aircraft and crews, was probably a major factor in the decision by Bomber Command planners to rethink the target strategy.

**ASHDOWN, CHARLES ALFRED.**

Died Sunday 15 September 1940. Aged 18.

Son of Mr and Mrs Alfred Ashdown of Oxley Cottage, Fir Toll, Pluckley, Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated at Staplehurst, Kent, Railway Station.

Charles, who had attended Ashford Grammar School 1933-1938, was a Southern Railway employee, and he was killed on duty whilst working as a Ticket Clerk at the Railway Station, Station Approach, Staplehurst, Kent. Hurricane N2537 flown by Belgian national, Pilot Officer, Georges Doutrepoint of 229 Squadron, R.A.F. one of two of the squadrons aircraft that were shot down by Luftwaffe Messerschmitt Bf 109's pilots over the Sevenoaks, Kent area on Sunday 15 September 1940. Shortly before midday, Georges Doutrepoint aircraft was shot up badly and he was killed as his aircraft flew for several miles out of control and eventually crashed on Staplehurst Railway Station, killing Charles Ashdown. Another member of the squadron, Pilot Officer R. Smith managed to bale out of his bullet riddled aircraft over Sevenoaks, and fortunately survived but he suffered severe leg injuries. On Monday 15 September 2003, sixty three years to the day after Charles and Georges died at Staplehurst Railway Station, Eric Doutrepoint, Georges son, who was just one when his father died, came to Kent to unveil a new plaque at the station. He said: "I am proud and moved. I did not know my father because I was just one year old, but my mother has some memories and some letters. She cannot come because she is ill but she asked me to tell how it is." Also at the unveiling ceremony, and service of remembrance and dedication, was one of Charles's work colleagues, Jack Wood, who reflected that it could so easily have been him that died and not Charles, his fate determined by a tossed coin to decide who was working that day. Mr Wood explained: "I said to Charlie there's one thing to do with it – there's no trains to get us here, we'll have to toss a coin. Yeah, fair enough, Jack he said, so we tossed a coin and I won the toss. It's unbelievable and I still can't believe to this day that I'm still here because of a toss of a coin. Aircraft from the Belgian Air Force performed an impressive fly-past during the ceremony, whilst Mr Doutrepoint unveiled the memorial plaque commemorating the deaths of his father and Charles Ashdown. Sunday 15 September 1940 was not only the turning point of the Battle of Britain, it was effectively the turning point of the whole Second World War. Every Fighter Command aerodrome in 11 Group was in some way involved, every squadron within 11 Group participated, as well as the Duxford Wing from 12 Group, and in addition to which a number of squadrons in 10 Group were called upon to protect areas in the south west. Each year 15 September is of course now celebrated in Great Britain and the Commonwealth countries as 'Battle of Britain Day,' when those 'Few' who paid the ultimate price in the summer of 1940 are remembered. We should also from time to time reflect on those who died on the ground, as the result of the aerial combatants.

**BASTOW, ALAN.** Captain 145907.

Royal Artillery. Attached to Intelligence Corps (MI 10).

Died 16 October 1944. Aged 30.

Born Bradford, Yorkshire. Resided Chester, Cheshire.

Son of John Henry and Ruth Mary Bastow.

Husband of Beryl Bastow (née Hughes) of Hoole, Cheshire.

Buried Calais Canadian War Cemetery, Leubringhen, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: 3. B. 11.

Alan was a School Master at Ashford Grammar School 1938-1939. M.A. (Leeds).

A pre war territorial member of the Royal Artillery, As the 386 Battery, 97 (The Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, (Territorial Army) was based at the Drill Hall, Newtown, Ashford, Kent, it would seem likely that Alan had been a pre war member of the battery.

**BAYLEY, GEORGE CORBETT.** D.F.C. Pilot Officer (Pilot), 113343.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 1651 Conversion Unit, Royal Air Force.

Died 29 July 1942. Aged 23.

Son of Herbert Bell Bayley and Nancy Bayley.

Buried Becklingen War Cemetery, Soltau, Niedersachsen, Germany.

Grave Ref: 26. J. 3.

George had been a pupil at Ashford Grammar School 1929-1935 where he is commemorated in the school Book of Remembrance.

George was the pilot of Stirling bomber N3655 ?-T which took off from R.A.F. Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire at 2330 hours on the night of 28/29 July 1942 on a mission to bomb Hamburg, Germany. 256 aircraft made up of 165 from 3 Group and 91 Operational Training Unit aircraft were dispatched on the raid. A much larger force had been detailed for this raid but bad weather over the bases of 1, 4 and 5 Groups prevented their participation. The force which took off comprised 161 Wellingtons, 71 Stirlings and 24 Whitleys. The weather worsened and the OTU aircraft were recalled, although 3 of them went on to bomb Hamburg. The remaining bomber force became very scattered; many more aircraft turned back and only 68 bombed in the target area. Hamburg suffered 13 people killed and 48 injured with 56 fires, 15 of them large. Bomber casualties on this raid were heavy, 16 Wellingtons and 9 Stirlings were lost from 3 Group, they being over 15 percent of those dispatched by the group. 4 OTU Wellingtons were lost and a Whitley crashed in the sea. George's aircraft crashed in the Oslebhausen district of Bremen, Germany on the west bank of the river Weser, killing all the crew of seven who are all buried in the same cemetery. The London Gazette entry for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to George Bayley, is dated Friday 23 January 1942, which shows that it was awarded for making several attacks on the German Battleships "Gneisenau" and "Scharnhorst" at Brest whilst he was a pilot serving in 7 Squadron, Royal Air Force. Six days after their deaths, the London Gazette published details of the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal to 20 year old Flight Sergeant (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner), Edwin C. Glenwright, of Victoria, London. who was one of the bombers crew, who died with George.

**BENTON, GEORGE KENYON.** Lieutenant, 235219.  
2nd Lothians and Border Horse, Royal Armoured Corps.  
Died 11 January 1943. Aged 33.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Son of George Kenyon Benton and Elsie Dora Benton.  
Husband of Edna May Benton of Maidstone, Kent.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School 1917-1921.  
Commemorated Medjez-el-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia. Special Memorial 15. H. 20.  
George's Yeomanry was based at Ladybank, Scotland at the start of the Second World War, during which time in the 26th Armoured Brigade, the regiment fought in North Africa and Italy as an Armoured Regiment equipped with Sherman tanks

**BODY, JAMES HOWARD.** Sergeant (Pilot), 658465.  
78 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 13 May 1943. Aged 21.  
Son of Charles and Mary Ellen Body of Frittenden, Kent.  
Buried Haastrode Churchyard, Oud-Haverlee, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium.  
Grave Ref: 2.  
James attended Ashford Grammar School 1932-1935, where the Second World War Book of Remembrance records James as having been killed over Bochum, Germany which is erroneous, as his aircraft was shot down over Belgium, and was number 9 of the 121 credited kills to the Luftwaffe night-fighter 'ace' Leutnant, Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer. British and German data accessed show very slight variations i.e. time and place etcetera relevant to the destruction of James aircraft. James was the co-pilot of Halifax bomber JB873 EY-J which was flown by 20 year old Pilot Officer (Pilot), Gerald H. Dane, of Belvedere, Kent. The aircraft took off from R.A.F. Linton-on-Ouse, North Yorkshire at 2339 hours in a mixed bomber force of 442 aircraft, comprised of 135 Halifaxes, 104 Wellingtons, 98 Lancasters, 95 Stirlings, and 10 Mosquitos, that were taking part in a raid on Bochum, in the North Rhine area of Germany. In the Second World War the city was heavily bombed by British and American bombers, resulting in virtually the whole inner circle of the city being destroyed, and many thousand of its citizens being killed. Luftwaffe records accessed show that Leutnant (later Major), Schnauffer shot the Halifax down near Blanden, south east of Louvain, Belgium, at 0307 hours on 14 May 1943, which means that the CWGC commemoration date for James death is also probably an error, albeit by only a few hours. A total of 24 aircraft were lost on the raid which included two other aircraft from James's squadron. Also numbered amongst those lost on the same raid on Bochum was a Stirling bomber of 204 Squadron, which British data shows as a victory of Leutnant Schon of I./NGJ1, but German records show it as being Leutnant Schnauffer's eight kill. Six of James's aircrafts eight crew survived the crash, one of whom Sergeant R.G. Goddard evaded capture, and was subsequently awarded the D.F.M. for his brave exploits, and which was posted in the London Gazette dated Gazetted 17August 1943. Of James five comrades who were captured, A. Beatson, PoW No.1231 was interned in Camps L1, L6, and L4, as was Sergeant A.C.P. Minnit, PoW No.1260, and Sergeant J.W. Pople, PoW No.1264. Sergeant L. Adams was in Camps 9C, L6, and 357, PoW No.42750, and Sergeant F.W. Webb in Camps 9C, L6, and L4, PoW No.42765. Kent casualty, Pilot Officer (Pilot), Gerald H. Dane who had been Mentioned in Despatches, is buried next to James at Haastrode Churchyard. His brother 23 year old Flying Officer (Navigator), Eric J Dane R.A.F.(V.R.) was killed on 4 May 1944 serving in 103 Squadron, R.A.F. and is at rest in Villers-le-Château

Churchyard, Châlons-en-Champagne, Marne, France. Their parents were Herbert Victor and Beryl Florence Dane, of Belvedere, Kent. Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer eventually became the highest scoring night-fighter pilot in history, and by virtue of how aerial combat has evolved since the Second World War he probably always will be. Credited with 121 victories plus a number of others unconfirmed or not credited, resulting from the 164 night operations that he flew. For his outstanding war time achievements and bravery, he was eventually awarded the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds of which a mere 27 were ever awarded during the Second World War, only two of which were to night-fighters. Allied aircrews who both feared and respected him, nick-named Schnauffer the "Night Ghost of St Trond," St Trond being his Belgium main base of operations. Having survived the Second World War Heinz-Wolfgang Schnauffer died in hospital on 15 July 1950, as the result on a crash between his Mercedes car and a Renault lorry near Bordeaux, south-west France. He is buried in the cemetery of his home town of Calw, Stuttgart, Germany.

**BROTHERS, JOHN AMEDEE.** Trooper, 7957276.

Died 19 August 1943. Aged 20.

1st King's Dragoon Guards, Royal Armoured Corps.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Ranger John Brothers and Jeanne Adele Clemence Brothers of Ashford, Kent.

John attended Ashford Grammar School 1934-1939.

Buried Tripoli War Cemetery, Libya. Grave Ref: Grave 7. C. 3.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

John died in an armoured car accident in Tripoli, Libya, his father had served as a Private in The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), and the Labour Corps during the Great War.

**BRUNDRETT, JAMES EDWARD.** Lieutenant, 180924.

647 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery.

Attached to 9th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

Died 30 September 1944. Aged 23.

Born Bournemouth, Hampshire. Resided Hampshire.

The only son of Frederick and Enid Brundrett (né James) of Emsworth, Hampshire.

(Later Sir Frederick Brundrett K.C.B., K.B.E. and Lady Enid Brundrett).

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1931-1940.

Buried Gradara War Cemetery, Italy. Grave I. E. 76.

James aunt, Miss Dorothy Brundrett, who was a sister of his father became the School Secretary in 1956, and remained so until 1980. Unit details are as accessed from James CWGC commemoration which H.A.A Regiment he was serving with, which combined with time restrictions afforded to each entry on this website has precluded more detailed information being obtained for the purpose of this brief commemoration. All in stark contrast to James's father served in the Great War as a Lieutenant RNVR (Wireless Branch) (Intelligence), and joined the Admiralty as a civilian in 1919, as well as service with MI5. He was also a brilliant military scientist of international repute, and at various times held several important post including being the first Director of Royal Naval Scientific Service, Chairman of the Defence Research Policy Committee, Director of Scientific Intelligence, Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) to the Ministry of Defence. Sir Frederick's spare time passion for over thirty years was the study of Unidentified Flying Objects, which due to his

international renown and status as a Scientist gave the subject an element of credence by people and organisations who were sceptical.

**BRUNDRETT, ROBERT.** Lance Corporal, VX85959.  
2/5th Australian Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Force.  
Killed in action at Gartha, Libya on 3 January 1941. Aged 33.  
Born Ebbw Vale, Monmouthshire, Wales 27 October 1907.  
Enlisted Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 1 December 1939.  
Resided Court Lodge, Hinxhill, Ashford, Kent.  
Sixth son of Walter and Ada Brundrett of Rolvenden, Kent, who also resided at Court Lodge, Hinxhill, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery, Egypt. Grave Ref: 18. E. 1.  
Robert, who attended Ashford Grammar School 1918-1922, is commemorated on the Australian National War Memorial, Canberra, Australian Capital Territories, Australia. Panel 31, and on the Melbourne, Victoria, Australia civic war memorial, he is also commemorated on the headstone of his parents grave in Hinxhill, Ashford, Kent, (St Mary) Churchyard, as is his cousin James Edward Brundrett, who is the casualty commemorated above. Two other cousins of Robert and James, died in the Great War, they being Walter who was killed at Vimy Ridge serving in the 10th Battalion, Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regiment), and George of the Cheshire Regiment, attached to the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, who died of wounds at Rouen. Although Robert's parents did not die until 1945 and 1951 respectively, his sister Florence Brundrett of Court Lodge, Hinxhill is shown as being one of his Next of Kin along with his father on the Australian data which has been accessed.

**BULEY, GEORGE ROWLEY MERRIMAN.** Pilot Officer (Pilot) 60064.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.  
Died 28 February 1941.  
George was killed during a night flying exercise, probably whilst based at 54 Operational Training Unit, R.A.F. Church Fenton, Tadcaster, Yorkshire. which was based at the airfield between August 1940 and May 1942.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School 1924.  
Buried Kirkby Wharfe (St John The Baptist) Churchyard Extension, the extension is the final resting place of 44 servicemen most of whom lost their lives whilst serving at R.A.F. Church Fenton.

**CANDLER, ALAN FRANCIS.** Signalman, 6299850.  
1st Air Formation Signals, Royal Corps of Signals.  
Died 20 April 1943. Aged 20.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Son of Ernest Francis and Nellie Candler of Ashford, Kent.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School 1934-1939 where he is commemorated in the school Book of Remembrance, also commemorated on the Second World War General Post Office memorial plaque located in the Ashford Sorting Office, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Le Petit Lac Cemetery, Algeria. Grave Ref: Plot E. Row E. Grave 38.  
Originally enlisted in The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment), probably as a Territorial and had been employed by the General Post Office, based at Ashford prior to the Second World War. Possibly Alan served as a despatch rider (Don R) as his death was resultant of a motor cycle accident in Algeria, North Africa.

**Addenda.** A service was held in the Millennium Chapel of Peace at the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 9 May 2004, to complete the dedication of a crescent of nine copper beech trees planted as a tribute to all those who served as Air Formation Signallers. In the congregation were members of the Air Formation Signals Association, 19th Signal Regiment Association and serving members of the Royal Corps of Signals, representing 21st Signal Regiment and the Cyprus Communications Unit.

**CANDLER, CECIL GEORGE R.** Sergeant, 1264286.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 227 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 14 November 1942. Aged 30.

Son of Cecil George and Annie Eliza Cantler.

Husband of Doris Eileen Cantler of Ashford, Kent.

Cecil was a pupil at Ashford Grammar School 1923-1929 where he is commemorated in the school Book of Remembrance, and is also commemorated on the Malta Memorial. Panel 3. Column 2.

227 Squadron, Royal Air Force was reformed at R.A.F. Luqa, Malta, on 20 August 1942, when No. 235 Squadron equipped with Beaufighters was re-numbered No. 227. Cecil's squadron had long-range fighter role and was mainly employed on offensive sweeps and convoy escort duties in the Mediterranean and Aegean areas.

Brother of the next man commemorated.

**CANDLER, PETER THORNE.** Flight Lieutenant (Wireless Op/Air Gunner) 77270.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 142 Squadron Royal Air Force.

Died 30 May 1942. Aged 26.

Son of Cecil George and Annie Eliza Candler of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Rheinberg War Cemetery, Kamp Lintfort, Nordrhein-Westfal, Germany.

Grave Ref: 6. C. 18.

Peter Candler Way on the Little Burton Farm Estate, Kennington, Ashford is named in his honour, he is also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial. Peter was a crew member of Wellington bomber Z1208 QT-S, which was flown by 24 year old Sergeant (Pilot), Noël A. Lowden, of Palmers Green, Middlesex, that took off from R.A.F. Grimsby, Lincolnshire at 2306 hours on 29 May 1942. The aircraft was taking part in the now famous 1000 bomber raid on Köln (Cologne), Germany. Although remembered and named in history as the "1000 Bomber Raid on Cologne," an even greater number of aircraft actually took part, totalling 1,047. Numbering 602, the Wellington bombers that were engaged on the 30/31 May 1942 being the most prolific of the bombers, but of the 41 aircraft lost on the raid 29 were Wellington's. Crews that submitted reports claiming to have bombed the city numbered 898, at which time a staggering 1,455 tons of bombs were dropped, of which two-thirds were incendiaries resulting in approximately 2,500 separate fires, including about 1,700 of them being classified as serious. Nearly 13,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed and almost 500 citizens of the city of Cologne died, just over 5,000 were injured and 45,132 bombed out, although the exact fate of all on the ground is not fully known. Similarly to the city's populace fate not being clear, the exact fate of Peter's aircraft is also still unclear; all five of the Wellington's crew are buried in the same cemetery. Having been Mentioned in Despatches, Peter was 142 Squadrons, Gunnery Leader standing-in for this operation.

**CAPELING, WILLIAM KEITH.** Sub-Lieutenant (A).

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. H.M.S. Saker.

Died 30 April 1944. Aged 20.

Son of William Frederick and Jessie Alice Capeling of Ashford, Kent.

William is commemorated in the Ashford Grammar School Book of Remembrance where he was a pupil between 1934 and 1939.

Buried Portsmouth Naval Cemetery, New Hampshire, U.S.A. Grave Ref: Lot 162.

At the time of William's demise, H.M.S. Saker was a Fleet Air Arm accounting base in Washington D.C., U.S.A., having been commissioned on 1 October 1941 and remained as such until 1948. William died in an aircraft accident which occurred at Bar Harbour, Maine, U.S.A.

**CHARD, PETER.** Captain, 105888.

C Troop, No. 2 Battery, 1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery.

1st Airborne Division.

Died 9 October 1944. Aged 24.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Richard Harmer Chard and Mary Annie Rachel Chard of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands. Grave 24. A. 14.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial. Attended Ashford Grammar School 1930-1938. Officer Commanding, C Troop, No. 2 Battery, 1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery. Peter died of wounds during the Western Europe Campaign resulting from "Operation Market Garden," at Arnhem, Holland, and was Mentioned in Despatches for the action briefly described below. 1st Air Landing Light Regiment, Royal Artillery was in the second lift of aircraft which took off from R.A.F. Manston, Kent on Monday 18 September 1944, and had come under fire on reaching the landing zone near Arnhem, Holland, despite which they successfully evacuated the immediate area. At which time Peter and his Observation Party were attached to the H.Q. of the 4th Parachute Brigade. During the initial hours following the landing, Captain Chard was attached to Headquarters 4th Parachute Brigade with his Observation Post party. He left briefly, however, when his commander, Major James 'Jeff' E.F. Linton D.S.O., commanding No.2 Battery asked him to return to No.2 Battery's position, then located around the landing zones, to collect 'Jeff' Linton's, Jeep carrying a Type 22 radio set. Following a difficult journey, Peter returned to Brigade HQ with the Jeep at about 2300 hours on Monday night. The following day, Tuesday 19 September, when the Brigades attack was launched, Peter Chard and 'Jeff' Linton were with the 156th Battalion, Parachute Regiment, so that they could direct the fire of No.2 Battery's guns, but unfortunately the close terrain prevented adequate observation, and therefore artillery support was not possible. When the order was given for the Brigade to withdraw, 'Jeff' Linton and Peter Chard attempted to locate Brigade H.Q. in the hope of providing support should targets become apparent. Unfortunately they were neither able to locate either targets or the Headquarters, and 'Jeff' Linton returned to No.2 Battery. Having been held up by heavy enemy opposition at dusk, the 156th Battalion, Parachute Regiment made ready to assault the German positions along the Dreijenseweg at first light. Peter was attached to the battalion in the hope of supporting their advance by directing the fire of his Battery's guns, however, due to the densely wooded terrain, observation of the enemy positions was impossible and so no fire could be brought to bear. The 4th Parachute Brigade lost much of its strength attacking this blocking line, and when they fell back, Peter Chard, together with Major 'Jeff' Linton and Lieutenant Halliday

of B Troop, decided to return to Brigade H.Q. in the hope of calling artillery support down upon any enemy targets that presented themselves. Not only were they unable to observe any enemy movement to accomplish this, but they also could not discover where Brigade H.Q. had been relocated. It was whilst making his way to Brigadier John Hackett's H.Q. after returning from No 2 Battery H.Q., Peter bravely tried to knock out a captured French Renault flame-thrower tank, near the Koude Herberg area of Oosterbeek with a PIAT, that unfortunately misfired. Peter then ran round the back of the tank with the view to dropping hand-grenades through the turret, but before able to do so he was hit by the tanks flame-thrower and set alight. He then ran back along the road pleading with somebody to shoot him and end his agony, but instead he was rolled in sand to extinguish the flames. Despite the best efforts to save him, sadly Peter succumbed to his wounds three weeks later in the nearby Apeldoorn Hospital. The tank that Peter had single headedly attempted to knock out, was eventually put out of action by an anti-tank gun of the 1st (Airborne) Battalion, Border Regiment. Several commentators have made reference to the fact that being Mentioned in Despatches was the only form of recognition, or award at the time which could have been given to Peter posthumously, other than the Victoria Cross. Perhaps in the fullness of time Peter's gallantry might be also recognised if more local (Ashford) roads or places are named after the local fallen. Peter had served in the 122nd Officer Cadet Training Unit, prior being commissioned into the Royal Artillery on 9 December 1939, with regimental seniority from 4 November 1939, he was promoted to Lieutenant on 4 May 1940, but as a Temporary Captain from 18 December 1940 to 13 May 1943. Commanding the 1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery, during "Operation Market Garden," was Lieutenant Colonel William F.K.T. (Sheriff) Thompson, M.B.E., who after the Second World War became the well respected military correspondent of the Daily Telegraph.

**CLARK, WILLIAM JOHN CRANFORD.** Petty Officer (Supply), C/MX 45481.  
Royal Navy, H.M.S. Wryneck (D21).  
Died 27 April 1941.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 48. Column 3.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1919-1923.

Built by Palmers Shipbuilding & Iron Co Ltd of Jarrow-on-Tyne, H.M.S. Wryneck was 1188 ton V&W class destroyer that was commissioned on (Armistice Day) 11 November 1918. At the time of her loss she was commanded by 45 year old Commander Robert Henry Douglas Lane, R.N. of Westward Ho, Devon. William was lost when his ship was sunk during the evacuation of Crete east of Cape Melea by German Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers, as was H.M.S. Diamond both ships had onboard survivors from the Dutch liner Slamet. At the time of the sinking, only 1 officer, 14 ratings and 8 soldiers were saved, about 950 sailors and soldiers were lost.

**COOKE, JOHN EDWARD.** Lieutenant, 289850.

Royal Army Service Corps. Attached to Royal Indian Army Service Corps.

Died 27 June 1945. Aged 26.

Born Sussex. Resided Kent.

Son of Edward Davis Cooke and Laura Gertrude Cooke.

Husband of Mabel Cooke of Horsmonden, Kent.

Commemorated on Horsmonden, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1931-1935.

Buried Rawalpindi War Cemetery, Pakistan. Grave Ref: 2. E. 7.

**CROUCH, ROBERT HENRY.** Private, 6347194.  
7th Battalion, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.  
Died 21 May 1940. Aged 21.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Buried Ville-Sur-Ancre Communal Cemetery, Somme, France.  
Grave Ref: Row A. Collective grave 1-4.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School 1930-1935.

Only four casualties of the Second World War are interred in the small cemetery, all buried in the same collective grave, one of whom is unidentified, the other three including Robert all belonged to the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. Robert's battalion fought in and around the town of Albert near the Somme on the day he died. The town of Albert is probably mainly remembered for the events there during the Great War, but the Brigade to which Robert's battalion belonged had losses that equated to those of the earlier conflict, almost 1,000 men of the 6th and 7th Battalions of his regiment were killed or captured in the fighting at Albert and Doullens, during the fighting British Expeditionary Force withdrawal, including both the respective battalion commanding officers.

**CRUST, HILLYAR ROBERT.** Flight Sergeant, 1253122.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.160 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 26 October 1943. Aged 21.  
Son of Thomas and Isabel Crust of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.  
Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. Column 425, and Ashford, Kent civic war memorial. Between 1932 and 1938 Hillyar had been a pupil at Ashford Grammar School Hillyar had been amongst the crew of eight aboard a Liberator IIIA, FL926 "J," which took off from its Ceylon airbase at 0544 hours on 26 October 1943, engaged on a long range photographic reconnaissance flight over Car Nicobar Islands. Estimated Time over the assigned area was set at about 1100 hours, only nine minutes after the E.T. the aircrafts call sign transmission was picked up, from which it was deduced that the Liberator's position was 'spot on' over the right area of Nicobar Island. Despite a series of repeated attempts to contact the aircraft, the initial transmission was the only contact that was made. With the loss of Hillyar's aircraft it was then suspected that there was probably some type of Japanese fighter aircraft presence in the area, as 160 Squadron, Royal Air Force had lost another of its aircraft in the same area only three days previously. Later investigations revealed that there were indeed Japanese fighter formations in the area where the Liberators had been lost, including aircraft which were based at Car aerodrome. Hillyar was initially posted as missing in action after taking part in an action off the Nicobar Islands, but later was accepted as died. During the Second World War, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were occupied by the Japanese forces for a period of three years, from 1942 to 1945. Japanese interest in the islands is known to have been there for several years prior to the Second World War. During the nineteen thirties, a detailed survey of the islands and its inhabitants had been carried out by Japanese, who took on the guise of visiting licensed fishermen and shell-collectors. On 23 March 1942, the Andaman Islands were taken into possession by Imperial Japanese forces without any form of resistance being entered into, and without the firing a single bullet by anybody. The situation in the Nicobar Islands had been the same, and prior to the arrival of the Japanese at Port Blair in March 1942, the British administration, sent a small vessel to Car Nicobar the month before to evacuate the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Scott, and the wireless operator, Mr. Ghosh. Four months later on 4 July 1942, the Japanese

forces had arrived on Car Nicobar, and surveyed the island for any weapons or hiding Commonwealth troops. Satisfied that there were no enemy forces of any kind, they returned the same day, after installing a post with an inscription in Japanese to officially mark the day of the occupation of the island.

**DADDS, BERNARD GEORGE.** Aircraftman 2nd Class, 1272037.

Royal Air Force.

Died 27 September 1944. Aged 33.

Son of William and Priscilla Dadds.

Husband of Irene May Dadds of Hackney, London.

Bernard attended Ashford Grammar School 1922-1927, at which time he resided at Chilham, Kent, and is commemorated on Chilham, Kent civic war memorial and the Singapore Memorial. Column 441.

Bernard was amongst the allied prisoners of war aboard the 6,374 ton Japanese transport ship Ural Maru, which was sailing from Singapore to Japan when it was attacked and sunk by several torpedoes fired from the American Gato class Submarine U.S.S. Flasher SS249, commanded by Commander R.T. Whitaker which cost the lives of an estimated 2000 of the 2340 onboard. The sinking of the Ural Maru occurred about 150 miles off Masinlik, Philippines, and was the 13th ship of the 21 sunk by the submarine. U.S.S. Flasher sank more enemy tonnage than any other U.S. submarine during the Second World War.

**DAVIES, SYDNEY JOHN.** Staff Sergeant, 7623092.

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Died 4 October 1943. Aged 28.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Sydney Robert Barlow Davies and Edith Jane Davies.

Buried Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand.

Grave 2. K. 12.

Also commemorated on the Bethersden, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1926-1931.

Originally enlisted in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, and was probably transferred to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers on its formation on 1 October 1942. Sydney was one of the allied prisoners of war and natives who died whilst working on the infamous Burma-Siam Railway, 'The Railway of Death.' During its construction, approximately 13,000 prisoners of war died and were buried along the railway. An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 civilians also died in the course of the project, chiefly forced labour brought from Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, or conscripted in Siam (Thailand) and Burma (Myanmar). Two labour forces, one based in Siam and the other in Burma worked from opposite ends of the line towards the centre. Kanchanaburi War Cemetery is only a short distance from the site of the former Kanburi, the prisoner of war base camp through which most of the prisoners passed on their way to other camps. It was created by the Army Graves Service who transferred to it all graves along the southern section of railway, from Bangkok to Nieke.

**DAY, PETER JOHN.** Flying Officer (Navigator), 164090  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 15 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 9 February 1945. Aged 21.

Son of John H Day and Marion Day of Sidcup, Kent.

Also commemorated in Christchurch Church South Ashford, Kent, and on the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial.

Buried Brussels Town Cemetery, Belgium. Grave Ref: Grave X. 28. 17.

Peter was one of the (enlarged) crew of nine which had included two pilots and three air gunners, aboard Lancaster bomber HK620 LS-W, which was flown by 22 year old Flight Lieutenant (Pilot), James H. Cowie, of New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, that took off from R.A.F. Mildenhall, Suffolk at 0313 hours on the morning of the 9 February 1945. The aircraft was in a bomber force comprised of 151 Lancaster's of Number 3 Group, and Peter's aircraft was on a mission to bomb Krefeld near Düsseldorf, Germany, with the primarily objective being to attack the Hohenbudberg railway yards. Following the raid, photographic reconnaissance showed no obvious extra damage had been caused during the Lancaster's bombing which had resulted in the loss of two aircraft, the other Lancaster being of 186 Squadron, R.A.F. Despite making the usual lines of enquiry, the exact fate of Peter's aircraft is still unclear, but all nine onboard the aircraft died, 23 year old Sergeant Alan T. Dobson from Southall, Middlesex is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, but the other eight crew who died are all interred in the same cemetery as Peter. Lancaster bomber HK620 was delivered to 15 Squadron, R.A.F. on 31 August 1944, and had survived numerous raids over enemy held territory prior to being lost. Unusually the crew on the mission with Peter had amongst them two Pilots and three Air Gunners.

**DRAKE, ALBERT HENRY WILLIAM.** Supply Assistant, C/MX56335.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Phoebe. (C43).

Died 26 August 1942. Aged 23.

Son of William Francis and Elizabeth Frances Drake of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Albert is also commemorated on the H.M.S. Phoebe Association Memorial, Bournemouth, Dorset, which was erected in 2003, and the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial, also commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 64. Column 1. Albert had been a pupil at the Ashford Grammar School between 1930 and 1937. He was last seen alive on deck aboard the 5600 ton Dido class (anti-aircraft) cruiser just before midnight on 26 August 1942, but could not be located the next morning. Despite an extensive search having been made for him, sadly he was never found. Initially posted as 'Missing at Sea,' but it was later officially accepted that Albert had died on 26 August 1942. Prior to joining H.M.S. Phoebe on 13 May 1942, Albert had served aboard H.M.S. St. Mary's from 12 September 1940 to 9 July 1941, and on H.M.S. Holderness. H.M.S. Phoebe was commissioned on 30 September 1940, and survived the Second World War, she was paid off in March 1951, and was eventually broken up by Hughes Bolckow, of Blyth in 1956.

**FULLER, RAYMOND CHARLES EDWARD.** Private, 14218221.

1/6th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment.

Died 23 April 1944. Aged 20.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of C. A. and Lillian B. Fuller of Ashford, Kent.

Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1935 and 1940.

Raymond Fuller Way on the Little Burton Estate, Kennington, Ashford, Kent is named in Raymond's honour and remembrance, he is also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Buried Cassino War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: VIII. G. 12.

Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps.

**GARNER, WILLIAM JOHN.** Lieutenant, 276439.

1st Battalion, The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey).

Died 24 May 1945. Aged 21.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of William Percival and Florence Ellen Garner of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Rangoon War Cemetery, Myanmar. Grave Ref: 1. C. 18.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1934-1941.

**HAMILTON, JOHN PAKENHAM.** Lieutenant, 287511.

44th Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.

Died 2 March 1945. Aged 24.

Born Derbyshire. Resided Nottinghamshire.

Son of Edward Pakenham Hamilton and Gladys Hamilton of Oswestry, Shropshire.

Buried Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Kleve, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Grave Ref: 46. B. 4.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1930-1934

**HARDEN, PERCY JOSEPH.** Private, 97003963.

Non Combatant Corps.

Died 6 April 1941. Aged 21.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Joseph and Elsie Margaret Harden of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Ashford (Bybrook) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section 21. Grave 07.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1930-1938.

In view of the raft of misconceptions that still abound regarding the Non Combatants Corps of the Second World War, a very brief and abridged explanation seems called for to help (or hinder) researchers and/or relatives of N.C.C. members. During the Second World War the corps consisted of 14 Companies with a total of 6,766 personnel passing through its ranks, of their number 465 volunteered to work in Bomb Disposal Units. After the corps reformation in August 1940, it became an accepted (but unofficial) policy to post men away from their home areas, to ensure that they were deprived the luxury of 'home comforts' in much the same way that those serving as combatants were. Although consisting of Conscientious Objectors, the corps had men from several religious and non-religious persuasions, as opposed to a long held misconception which still persists to this day, that all were of a particular

denomination or faith. Of the 23 members of the corps who died on, or of war related service, all died within the United Kingdom, despite which members of the corps also served abroad, which is counter to yet another of the erroneous 'facts' bandied about by *experts* in that all service was in the United Kingdom. As with their forerunners during the Great War, a lot of the Non Combatants Corps members were subjected to abuse in various forms, but unlike the men of the Great War, they were not labelled as being in the "Non Courage Corps," progress indeed. It has not thus far (February 2003) been possible to ascertain Percy's reason for membership of his corps, which would have involved attending tribunals etcetera but suspect that it was on religious grounds, he died in hospital at Liverpool, Lancashire.

**HARE, HERBERT.** Pilot Officer, 157317.

Royal Air Force, 47 Squadron.

Died 10 January 1944. Aged 25.

Son of Herbert and Lena Hare of Polegate, Sussex.

Buried Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. Grave 6. B. 4.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1929-1936.

At the time of Herbert's demise his squadron were flying Beaufighters on "Armed Rover" operations, attacking the enemy over part of the eastern Mediterranean from their bases in Egypt.

**HARRIS, ALAN WILLIAM.** Trooper, 7947020.

12th Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.

Died 27 April 1943. Aged 20.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of William Henry and Harriet Harris of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Massicault War Cemetery, Tunisia. Grave Ref: II. C. 3.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1933-1939.

**HAYWARD, DENNIS CLAUDE.** Sergeant (Air Gunner), 923694.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 104 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 29 August 1941.

Buried Rheinberg War Cemetery, Kamp Lintfort, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Grave Ref: 6. B. 19.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1930-1937.

The exact fate of Dennis's aircraft, Wellington bomber W5595 EP-E which was flown by 21 year old Sergeant (Pilot), George H. Spickett, of Forest Gate, Essex, is still unclear, having taken off from R.A.F. Drifffield, East Yorkshire at 2340 hours on 28 August 1941, as part of a mixed bomber force assigned to attack Duisburg, Germany. What is sadly clear however is that all six crew of the aircraft were killed when the aircraft was lost and now are at rest in the same cemetery. Eight other aircraft were also lost during the raid. Dennis served with Kennington, Ashford, Kent resident James Haney (please see commemoration).

**HEMMINGS. FRANK.** Warrant Officer (Pilot), 1334168.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 78 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 12 June 1943. Aged 22.

Son of Frank and Annie Hemmings of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands.

Grave Ref: Plot JJB. Collective grave 76-79.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1932-1938, where his death is recorded as being over Düsseldorf, Germany, which was in fact the night's target but not where he in fact died, as can be seen below.

Frank was the pilot of Halifax Bomber W7932 EY-? which took off from R.A.F. Linton-on-Ouse, North Yorkshire at 2223 hours on 11 June 1943, on a bombing mission to Düsseldorf, Germany. 783 aircraft took part on the raid, which was comprised of 326 Lancasters, 202 Halifaxes, 143 Wellingtons, 99 Stirlings, and 13 Mosquitos. The Pathfinder marking plan proceeded excellently until an Oboe Mosquito inadvertently released a load of target indicators 14 miles north-east of the target area. This caused part of the Main Force to waste its bombs on open country. But the main bombing caused extensive damage in the centre of Düsseldorf, where 130 acres were claimed as destroyed, and this proved to be the most damaging raid of the war for this city. 38 aircraft - 14 Lancasters, 12 Halifaxes, 10 Wellingtons, 2 Stirlings were lost on the raid. At approximately 0215 hours, Frank and his crew had the misfortune to encounter the Luftwaffe "ace" Night-Fighter pilot, Major Werner Streib the Commanding Officer of the elite I/NJG1 based at Venlo, Holland who was flying a Heinkel He-219 for the first time. After a short engagement between the two aircraft, the Halifax crashed on farmland near Sambeek, Holland at 0222 hours killing all seven crew who now lie in the same cemetery. Werner Streib nicknamed the "Father of night-fighters," shot down another four Royal Air Force bombers on the night of 11/12 June 1943, he then survived both a crash on the runway on his return to Venlo following his "test" flight, and miraculously also survived the Second World War. Werner Streib died on 15 June 1986 two days after his seventy fifth birthday, and is buried in Munich, Germany.

**HENDIN, DOUGLAS WELSH..** M.C. Lieutenant Colonel.

Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1906-1917, where he is commemorated in the Second World War Book of Remembrance as having been killed in France in June 1940. For a whole raft of reasons those members of the British armed forces who sadly died in or as the result of the Second World War, are far harder to access details regarding their military, family or personal details, than those who died in or resultant of the Great War. With the late Lieutenant Colonel, Douglas Welsh Hendin apparently being a Second World War recorded casualty who falls into the above category, he initially appeared to perfectly illustrate the problems (and frustration) often encountered during researches. His basic, but easily accessible Great War data shows that he enlisted as Sapper 22837 Douglas Welsh Hendin in the Royal Engineers, and also that he was later commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), and was awarded the Military Cross, prior to being promoted to a Lieutenant. Douglas was awarded the Military Cross for going forward at great personal risk under heavy machine gun fire during an attack near Vaux Andigny, France on 17 October 1918, by the 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), in which he was serving. Under heavy enemy fire he had cut the wire

entanglements which were holding up the advance of his platoon. "The report of my death was an exaggeration" said Mark Twain in 1897, (died 1910), it would also have been a very apt comment, had he uttered it, for the former officer Douglas Welsh Hendin who is commemorated in the Ashford Grammar School, Second World War Book of Remembrance. The reason being is that Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Douglas Welsh Hendin M.C., Croix de Guerre (France), died on 18 November 1965, aged 75, twenty five years later than as commemorated at his former school. At the time of his demise he resided at 25 High Street, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent. As an 18 year old Douglas had enlisted in the fledgling Territorial Force in March 1909, three years later enlisting in the Regular Army, and remained so until he resigned his commission in 1928, at which time he was placed on the Regular Army Reserve of Officers. In October 1939 he was mobilised into the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps as a Lieutenant, but was quite quickly promoted to the rank of Major, and commanded 60 Company, A.M.P.C., working closely with his former corps, the Royal Engineers. Later Douglas became the Commanding Officer of 5, Company, A.M.P.C., then Second in Command of 46 Group A.M.P.C. In 1941 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and placed in command of 61 Group, A.M.P.C. In 1943 he reverted to the rank of Major, and became the Commanding Officer of 47 Group, then in 1944 the Commanding Officer of 29 Group, A.M.P.C. During the Second World War, Douglas was Mentioned in Despatches (January 1944) and had taken part in several operations with the British Expeditionary Force, he later served in the Middle East, and also in the United Kingdom prior his final departure from the army in October 1945. It came as no surprise to not find (thus far) Douglas commemorated on any form of remembrance as a casualty of war. Without the kind help of Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps expert Norman Brown of Northampton, Northamptonshire, the bulk of the above details appertaining to the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps would not have been possible to add here, needless to say sincere thanks are due to Norman, for his invaluable help and expertise.

**HEYMAN, JOHN FREDERICK.** Sergeant (Pilot), 1358984.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

D Flight, 20 Operational Training Unit, Royal Air Force.

Died 5 August 1942. Aged 26.

Son of William Frederick and Annie Hilda Heyman of Ashford, Kent.

Husband of Christine Heyman of Ashford.

Buried Ashford (Bybrook) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section 4. Grave 57.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

John attended Ashford Grammar School 1931-1935, where his death is recorded in the Second World War Book of Remembrance as being the result of an aircraft accident at Elgin.

At 2315 hours on 4 August 1942, John was the pilot of Wellington bomber T2966 -C which took off from R.A.F. Elgin, Scotland to take part on a night exercise. On returning to the airfield at approximately 0230 hours on 5 August, John's aircraft overshot the airfield and came down in Quarry Wood on the western edge of Elgin. All five injured crew members were taken to Dr. Gray's Hospital, where John died of his burns. Although the other four crew recovered from the crash, but on his recovery from the crash, and just prior to the completion of his aircrew training, 21 year old Flight Sergeant (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner), Beverly D. Crane, R.C.A.F., of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, lost his life on 29 September 1942. Beverly is at rest in Lossiemouth Burial Ground. Following the loss of John's Wellington and the

investigation into same, it was deduced that the failure of the aircrafts port engine was a contributory factor into the crash. R.A.F. Elgin, was/is often referred to as Bogs O'Mayne, and was situated three miles to the south west of Elgin, it was built as a satellite to R.A.F. Lossiemouth, and was completed in early June 1940. As an early wartime airfield it had no hard runways, but otherwise had all of the facilities and dispersed sites of similar later stations in other parts of the United Kingdom. Twenty circular hard-standings were spaced around the perimeter track, with some connected to it, whilst others were simply circles on the grass. Upon its completion, due to the threat of invasion, the airfield was obstructed by the Royal Engineers to prevent enemy landings taking place. As John's unit based at R.A.F. Lossiemouth expanded, it was cleared and became available for use on 30 June 1940.

**HOLMWOOD, DERRICK NORMAN.** Private, 5504554.

2nd Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.

Died 3 December 1942. Aged 25.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Norman Mercer Homewood and Nellie Elizabeth Homewood of Egerton, Ashford, Kent.

Commemorated on Egerton, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial, and on the Medjez-el-Bab Memorial, Tunisia. Face 22.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1929-1932.

**JEFFERY, HERBERT JACK GUSTAVE.** Sergeant (Observer), 1253155.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 148 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 13 November 1941. Aged 20.

Son of John and Edith Maud Jeffery of Ashford.

Buried Benghazi War Cemetery, Libya. Grave Ref: 3. B. 10.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Herbert attended Ashford Grammar School 1932-1938.

Resultant of Italy going to war on 10 June 1940 three Royal Air Force bomber detachments from 38, 99 and 115 squadrons were sent to Malta to carry out attacks on North Africa. On 14 December 1940 the detached bombers were formed into 148 Squadron and based at R.A.F. Luqa, Malta from where attacks were launched against various enemy held Mediterranean locations. In March 1941 148 Squadron R.A.F. moved to Kabrit near the Suez Canal, Egypt, from where it played a vital role in support of the British 8th Army, flying Wellington bombers from several desert air strips on raids to attack and harass the Afrika Korps. Flown by 21 year old Sergeant (Pilot), Raymond E. Shears, of Stapenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, Wellington bomber Z8340 C, took off from Landing Ground 104 to bomb the harbour and enemy shipping at Benghazi, Libya. The exact fate of the Wellington is unclear, and half of the aircrafts crew are commemorated on the Alamein Memorial, Egypt, the other three, including Herbert are at rest in the Benghazi War Cemetery, Libya. Another of 148 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Wellington bombers was lost on the same raid, and was thought to have been shot down over the sea.

**KING, JOHN JAMES.** Sergeant, 1395486.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 622 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 11 April 1944.

Also commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. Panel 232, and the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1925-1929.

John was a crew member of Lancaster bomber ED808 GI-U, flown by 29 year old Pilot Officer (Pilot), Frank R. Burrows, of Mile End, South Australia, which took off from R.A.F. Mildenhall, Suffolk at 0125 hours as part of a force of 15 Mosquito and 142 Lancaster bombers, to attack the railway infrastructure at Laon, Aisne, France. Of the 157 bombers engaged on the raid John's aircraft was the sole loss when it crashed (cause unknown) about 23 miles north of Le Harve, killing all seven crew, four of whom are at rest in St-Marie Cemetery, Le Harve. Both of the aircrafts Air Gunners are at rest in St-Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France, and only John is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. The wreckage of John's Lancaster appears to have been identified by the German authorities, who reported its destruction in KE8268, a document which eventually fell into Allied hands. Lancaster ED808 was delivered to 1660 Conversion Unit, R.A.F. in April 1943, joining 622 Squadron, R.A.F., which was formerly No.15 Squadron, R.A.F on 10 February 1944. The aircraft was damaged and repaired three times whilst serving with the 1660 Conversion Unit, R.A.F. Wore the IDs GI-R/U but undertook no operations with No.15 Squadron, R.A.F. With No.622 Squadron, R.A.F. as GI-R, and took part in the raids on Leipzig 19/20 February 1944; Schweinfurt 24/25 February 1944; Berlin 24/25 March 1944; As GI-U, to Nuremburg 30/31 March 1944; Laon 10/11 April 1944 when she was lost, by which time the aircraft had amassed a total of 509 flying hours.

**KNELL, EDWARD CHARLES EUGENE.** Apprentice.

Merchant Navy. SS Empire Impala (London).

Drowned 11 March 1943. Aged 19.

Born 17 March 1924.

Son of Bertie Edward and Hetty Knell of Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 42., and the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1935-1940.

Edward's ship which was run by the Sun Shipping Co, was a 6,116 ton steam freighter that was built in 1920 and initially named 'Boshbish,' then renamed 'Clement C Morse', and later the 'Oakman,' and finally in 1941 she was again renamed as the 'SS Empire Impala.' When she was sunk whilst a convoy straggler Edward's ship was commanded by 46 year old Captain Henry Munford, the SS Empire Impala left New York, U.S.A. on 23 February 1943, in convoy SC-121 which was initially comprised of 59 ships with Hull as her final destination, prior to which she was expected to dock at Loch Ewe on 13 March 1943. During the Second World War years SC was indicative of all the convoys that sailed from Halifax (Slow) to the United Kingdom. As the convoy crossed the Atlantic it initially managed to avoid two of the u-boat Wolf pack's, they being 'Burggraf' and 'Wildfang,' but was later spotted by the German submarine, U-405 which was in the seventeen u-boat Wolfpack 'Westmark.' Following the sighting of Edward's ship, nine u-boats, of Wolfpack 'Ostmark' they took up positions to attack the convoy. The 'SS Empire Impala' was torpedoed and sunk in the North Atlantic on 11 March 1943 by the

German submarine U-591 of Wolfpack Westmark, the submarine was commanded by 28 year old Kapitänleutnant, Hans-Jurgen Zetzsche. At the time of the attack 'SS Empire Impala' had stopped to search for, and pick up survivors from the smaller 2,868 ton vessel Egyptian, that was in the same convoy, and which had also been a straggler. She had been torpedoed and sunk by the U-230 the previous night and was the first of the 15 ships in the convoy to be sunk. Ultimately only three of the Egyptians crew survived both sinkings. The following day Kapitänleutnant Zetzsche again attacked the convoy and sank the Yugoslavian ship "Vojvoda Putnik" which was a former British vessel. Hans-Jurgen Zetzsche, a native of Annaberg, Erzgebirge, Germany, survived the Second World War, and died on 21 October 1991 aged 76.

**LAW, JOHN HENRY.** Flight Sergeant (Wireless Op/Air Gunner),1811071.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 640 Squadron Royal Air Force.

Died 4 March 1945. Aged 20.

Son of Henry Frederick and Adeline Law of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Ashford (Bybrook) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section 42. Grave 78.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

John attended the Ashford Grammar School 1935-1941, where he is erroneously commemorated in the school Second World War, Book of Remembrance as being killed in operations over Germany, but his aircraft were actually lost at Suffolk, England, as can be seen below. Prior to enlisting, John had been the Patrol Leader of 10th Ashford (Kent) Troop, Boy Scouts. John was a crew member of Halifax bomber NP931 C8-J, which was a former aircraft on the strength of 466 Squadron, R.A.F. that was flown by 22 year old Pilot Officer, Paul B. Manton, R.A.A.F. of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Their aircraft took off from R.A.F. Leaconfield, Yorkshire at 1812 hours on 3 March 1945, as part of a mixed bomber force of 234 aircraft of which 204 were Halifax aircraft, on a mission to bomb Kamen near Dortmund, Germany. A significant result of the raid was the damage inflicted on the synthetic oil plant and refinery at Bergkamen, which ceased production there for the remainder of the Second World War. On the return leg of the journey, Paul Manton attempted to land at R.A.F. Woodbridge, Suffolk. At about 0020 hours, the aircraft crashed into a wooded area known locally as 'The Thicks' near the village of Butley, approximately six miles to the east of Woodbridge whilst approaching the runway. Later investigation crash data show that it is thought that the loss of NP931 C8-J was probably the result of intervention by an enemy aircraft. It is perhaps of relevance that the crash occurred when the Luftwaffe mounted the daring Unternehmen Gisela attacks, which involved German night-fighters intermingling with the returning Royal Air Force bombers, usually as they crossed the North Sea. Whilst carrying out those intruder missions, a disproportionate number of Luftwaffe aircraft and aircrew were lost. Only one crew member of the Halifax, Sergeant E. J. V. Thompson, who had been injured in the crash survived, six of the crew are interred in their respective home towns and Paul Manton was laid to rest in Cambridge City Cemetery. Sergeant (Air Gunner) James B. Pridding, of Holt, Norfolk, survived the initial crash, but sadly succumbed to his injuries two days later and is at rest at Holt cemetery.

**MACFADDEN, AUBREY.** Flight Lieutenant, 42510.

258 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died Saturday 5 April 1942. Aged 42.

Son of Francis and Lucy McFadden.

Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. Column 412, and on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1929-1933.

Based at the Ratmalana and Colombo Racecourses, Ceylon, 258 Squadron, R.A.F. had precious little time in getting their Hawker Hurricanes airborne during the carrier based attack led by Japanese 'Zero' fighters on 5 April 1942, when the first bombs were dropped on the island at 0700 hours. All the squadron's aircraft actually managed to take off, and along with pilots of 30 Squadron R.A.F. gave a good account of themselves, despite being outnumbered about six to one. As on that Easter Sunday morning the Royal Air Force had only about 30 aircraft against that of 125 planes of the enemy, which was comprised of 36 Zero fighters, escorting 53 Kate attack bombers, and 36 Val dive bombers.. Although only three Japanese aircraft were shot down near Colombo, it would appear that about seventy actually failed to rejoin the aircraft carriers of Admiral Nagumo. Some of the enemy aircraft having been damaged by the R.A.F. fighters, and those which were hit by the guns of the Ceylon Garrison Artillery, and of the Royal Artillery. In addition to those losses were others known to have been lost in Colombo harbour during the attacks there, which were hit by ships gunners, but not admitted by the Japanese. Although Ceylon had been ill prepared to deal with an enemy attack, the invaluable information sent by Squadron Leader (later Air Commodore) Leonard Birchall, of 413 Squadron, R.A.F. the day before the attacks, doubtless saved lives. He took off on a reconnaissance mission from Koggala in a Catalina flying boat, when he sighted the Japanese fleet some 350 nautical miles off the land towards the south. No sooner had he radioed the news of his findings back to Colombo, than his plane was shot down by a Zero fighter from the aircraft carrier Hiryū, and he was taken prisoner by the Japanese.

**MARSH, VICTOR STEPHEN.** Sergeant, 574642.

120 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 12 August 1942. Aged 20.

Son of Stephen Francis and Adelaide Marsh of Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. Panel 89, and on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1933-1938.

At the time of Victor's demise his squadron were part of 15 Group, Coastal Command based at Ballykelly, Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and equipped with B24 long range Liberators. Whilst engaged on anti-submarine patrols and on convoy protection duties over the Atlantic Ocean the squadron sunk fourteen U-boats, the first being the U-597 which was sunk off south west Iceland on 12 October 1942 with the loss of all 49 hands. When the squadron had its first uboat success it was exactly two months after Victor lost his life over the Atlantic on a convoy protection operation. Ultimately 120 Squadron, Royal Air Force, ended the Second World War with the highest number of U-boat kills, attributed to any of the Coastal Command, Royal Air Force squadrons.

**MELLOR, RUPERT EDWARD.** Flying Officer (Navigator), 181354.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 151 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 1 October 1945. Aged 30.

Son of Fred and Ellora Pamela Mellor.

Husband of Margaret Esme Mellor of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Ashford (Bybrook) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section 2. Grave 93.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1927-1933.

Rupert's squadron, having played prominent role during the 'Battle of Britain, it was decided in November 1940 to transfer the squadron to a night fighting role, and it was moved to R.A.F. Bramcote, Warwickshire, where it also received Boulton and Paul Defiant aircraft. Night operations were commenced in February 1941 from its base at R.A.F. Wittering and a detachment at R.A.F. Coltishall. In April 1942, Mosquitos began to arrive and the squadrons remaining Hurricanes were immediately retired although it was July before the Defiant's left, leaving the squadron solely equipped with the Mosquito. From April 1943, as a result of the declining night interceptions being made, the squadron moved to R.A.F. Colerne, from where it began intruder operations. In October 1944, a move to R.A.F. Castle Camps led to it adopting the bomber support role, and these were continued from East Anglia until the end of the war. A few days later the squadron moved back to the West Country, where Rupert was killed during a night-flying exercise flying over Cornwall. 151 Squadron, Royal Air Force disbanded at Weston Zoyland, Somerset on 10 October 1946.

**OETZMANN, HARDY CLIFT.** Sergeant, 1465221.

Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Died at sea 16 February 1943. Aged 38.

Born New Zealand. Resided Kent.

Son of George Clift Oetzmann and Winifred Oetzmann.

Husband of Edith Isabel Oetzmann of Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on the Brookwood Memorial, Surrey. Panel 19. Column 3, and on memorial plaque located in Hinxhill, Ashford, Kent, (St. Mary's) parish church.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1920-1922.

Pre war member of the Royal Artillery.

**OXSPRING, EDWARD WILLIAM.** Apprentice.

Merchant Navy. SS Domala (Glasgow).

Died Saturday 2 March 1940. Aged 18.

Son of Major George Ernest Oxspring, Royal Army Veterinary Corps and Mabel Bernice Oxspring.

Nephew of Mrs J Atchley of Hampstead, London.

Also commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 35, and the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1937.

Launched in 1921, Edward's ship was built by Barclay, Curle & Co, as a 8441 ton passenger and cargo vessel, and named the SS Magnava. Renamed the SS Domala, and owned by the British Indian Steam Navigation Company and was en-route from London to Calcutta via Antwerp on Saturday 2 March 1940. At Antwerp 143 British Indian subjects that had been repatriated by Germany joined the ship. 108 people died from the total of 295 onboard, when a Heinkel bomber flew in low and scored four direct hits on the ship, after which for good measure, despite the vessel being ablaze

the aircraft sprayed the ship with machine gun fire. Of the 100 people lost as the result of the attack, 36 were crew including 54 year old Captain William Fitt from Ilford, Essex who was the ships Master. Eventually the ship was successfully beached in the Solent, off the Isle of Wight. She was later rebuilt, and re-named Empire Attendant. On 15 July 1942 the ship and all the crew of 59 perished when she was part of Convoy OS-33, she was sunk by the German submarine U-582 commanded by 29 year old, Kapitanleutnant, Werner Schulte, who entered the sinking in his log with the name Domala. U-582 was sunk with the loss of all its crew of 46 off Iceland, on 5 October 1942. The loss of Edward's ship on Saturday 2 March 1940 is often referred to by Naval Historians and the like, as being the first Second World War naval action to take place in the English Channel.

**PAYNE, JACK REDMAN.** Sergeant (Flight Engineer), 1896652.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 298 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died Monday 27 March 1945. Aged 20.

Son of William Redman Payne and Bertha Payne of Egerton, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Egerton, Ashford, Kent, (St James) Churchyard.

Also commemorated on the Egerton, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1936 and 1942.

Jack was the Flight Engineer of Halifax bomber NA-664 which took off from R.A.F. Tarrant Rushton, Dorset on the evening of Sunday 26 March 1945 to conduct a night-time navigation exercise. On making his landing approach, the pilot 21 year old Flying Officer, Paul Williams, of Villa Valeria, Argentina. radioed flying control that he was going round again, but just after mid-night the aircraft stalled, crashed and burst into flames at South Farm, Spetisbury, Blandford Forum, Dorset, whilst coming in on the down-wind leg of the airfield circuit. As with many other casualty cases accessed, there is a slight discrepancy regarding the actual time of the crash occurring. Ministry of Defence date records the time of crash as being 0003 hours, but Casualty List entry for the bulk of the crew shows the time as being 0030 hours. Possibly the difference in the records was due to the fact that the rear gunner 24 year old Sergeant (Air Gunner) Albert Stinson, of Liverpool, Lancashire had survived the initial impact but sadly died of his injuries about three quarters of an hour later. Like numerous other ground impact crashes, Albert's tail turret had broken free of the main body of the bomber on impacting. The Halifax crew had only arrived a few days earlier at R.A.F. Tarrant Rushton, having been posted there from RAF Tillstock, Whitchurch, Shropshire. On D-Day 298 Squadron, R.A.F. had towed 6 Horsa Gliders to attack the bridges across the Orne river, and later played a significant part during both "Operation Market Garden" at Arnhem and also the "Rhine Crossing," but the crew of Jack's Halifax would probably not have been of their number having only joined the squadron a few days prior to the fatal crash.

**PEARSON, ALEC WILLIAM.** Flying Officer, 166433.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 99 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 1 September 1945. Aged 21.  
Son of Walter John and Rosetta May Pearson of Egerton, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Jakarta War Cemetery, Indonesia. Grave Ref: Collective grave 6. J 4-6. K.3.  
Also commemorated on the Egerton, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1935 and 1942.  
At the time of Alec's demise, after the end of hostilities in the Far East, his squadron were based in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, as part of South East Asia Command equipped with Liberator Bombers, at which the squadron was being primarily engaged in relief operations, such as transporting much needed food, medicines and equipment across the region. Alec was amongst the seven crew of Liberator KL491 who all lost their lives whilst dropping urgently needed food and medical supplies to former Allied prisoners of war, near Palembang, Sumatra. When flying in low to make the air-drop, the aircraft crashed into the ground. All the crew are now at rest in the same cemetery. Their Liberator had been transferred to the Royal Air Force in February 1945, having formerly been in service with the United States Army Air Force, at which time it had the serial number 49097.

**ROMER, SIDNEY CECIL.** Flight Lieutenant (Pilot), 40752.  
Royal Air Force, 202 Squadron, Coastal Command.  
Died 21 January 1942. Aged 25.  
Son of Cecil Aubrey and Ruby Romer.  
Husband of Beatrice Maud Romer of Greyshott, Hampshire.  
Buried Gibraltar (North Front) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Plot 2. Row B. Joint grave 1.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1926 and 1934.  
Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, 202 Squadron, R.A.F. moved to Gibraltar to patrol the approaches to the Mediterranean. In September 1940 Swordfish float-planes were added for local patrol duties, but 1941 saw the arrival of the Catalina and Sunderland flying boats, but the squadron still retained a few Swordfish float-planes on loan from the Fleet Air Arm. The Squadron then moved to Northern Ireland in September 1944, operating from Castle Archdale on Lough Erne, for U-boat patrols off the west coast, prior to disbanding on 12 June 1945.

**ROOTS, WILLIAM CHARLES.** Lance Corporal, 79179646.  
44th Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.  
Died of wounds at El Duda, Egypt 27 November 1941. Aged 22.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Son of William George and Gertrude Lilian Roots of Bethersden, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery, Egypt. Grave Ref: 20. D. 3.  
Also commemorated on the Bethersden, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.  
Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1931 and 1936.  
In view of William's date and place of death, it would appear that he was wounded during a particularly hard fought action by both sides. It seems likely that William had possibly been amongst the tank crews of 'A' Squadron, as the 44th Royal Tank Regiment had rallied between Zaafran and Belhamed, and was in action again the 26 November 1941, at which time 'A' Squadron had four of its tanks destroyed. A Night attack on Ed Duda supported by infantry, resulted in joining up with the 1st and 4th

Tank Battalions. The 44th Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps went to the Middle East in April 1941, and by the time of 'Operation Crusader,' November 1941, in the 1st Army Tank Brigade, had been equipped with Valentine Tanks, along with 8th and 42nd Royal Tank Regiments, supporting 2nd New Zealand Division. Part of the Official New Zealand history of the Second World War, when partially describing the action where William died, reads:- "The Bersaglieri Regiment fought with much greater determination than is usually found among the Italian troops, and the numbers of their dead, and the positions in which they lay showed that they had kept their guns in action to the last." Needless to say their allies of the Afrika Corps had also fought stoically and tenaciously.

**SIMMONDS, EDWIN HARVEY.** Second Officer.

Merchant Navy. SS Empire Oil (Middlesbrough).

Died 13 September 1942. Aged 24.

Also commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 44, and on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1931 and 1934.

Kapitänleutnant, Joachim Deecke commanding the German submarine U-584 first sighted the 32 ship convoy ON-127 (Codename "Rapture") on 9 September 1942, including Edwin's ship whilst the submarine was in the 12 u-boat Wolfpack 'Vorwärts.' Convoy ON-127 consisting of vessels of several nations left Liverpool, Lancashire on 4 September 1942, and those ships which were not lost during the crossing of the Atlantic arrived in New York, U.S.A. sixteen days later. During the war years the letters ON was indicative of the convoys which sailed from Liverpool to New York. On the following day the German submarine U-659 commanded by Kapitänleutnant, Hans Stock attacked and damaged the SS Empire Oil leaving her particularly vulnerable to further submarine attacks. On 11 September Edwin's ship was eventually sunk by Kapitänleutnant, Joachim Deecke in the U-584, who on the same day, he also sunk the 4885 ton Norwegian ship M/V 'Hindanger,' thankfully only one of her crew, Georg Monson was lost. As Edwin was one of the 18 members of the ships crew of 53 who died, but as he lost his life two days after his ship was sunk it is assumed that he died of injuries inflicted during one of the u-boat attacks. Hans Stock and his crew were lost on 4 May 1943, after his craft collided with the U-439 in the North Atlantic. Joachim Deecke also went down with his u-boat and crew in the north Atlantic on 31 October 1943, when the submarine was sunk by a Fido homing torpedo from one of three VC-9 Avenger aircraft, from the escort carrier U.S.S. Card, which in turn was sunk by enemy frogmen in Saigon Harbour 2 May 1964 during the Vietnam war.

**SKINNER, JACK.** D.F.C. Warrant Officer (Pilot), 1332584.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Died 19 March 1945. Aged 21.

Born 1923 Little Chart, Ashford, Kent.

Son of Frank and Mary Skinner of Westwell, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Oxford (Botley) Cemetery, Oxfordshire. Grave Ref: Plot H/1. Grave 226.

Also commemorated on Second World War memorial plaque located in Westwell, Ashford, Kent (St. Mary) parish church.

Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1934 and 1939

At the time of his demise Jack was an instructor based at R.A.F. Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, training other pilots to tow aircraft and died resultant of an accident

towing a glider. R.A.F. Brize Norton, was used for various forms of flying training until July 1942, when it became the home of the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit (H.G.C.U.), later being renamed No. 21 H.G.C.U., which remained at R.A.F. Brize Norton until 31 December 1945.

**STAPLEY, ROY STUART.** Sergeant (Air Gunner), 1896761.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 101 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 4 November 1944. Aged 19.

Son of Stuart and Dorothy Annie Stapley of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Kleve, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

Grave 28. B. 6.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial.

Roy had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School from 1936 to 1937, and at the Ashford Grammar School between 1937 and 1941

Roy was an Air Gunner on Lancaster bomber NF936 SR-F, which was flown by 23 year old Flying Officer (Pilot), John T. Edwards, of Abertridwr, Glamorgan, Wales. The aircraft took off from R.A.F. Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire at 1709 hours on ABC duties over Bochum, Essen, Germany on 4 November 1944. The large scale raid was carried out by a mixed bomber force of 749 aircraft, comprised of 384 Halifaxes, 336 Lancasters, and 29 Mosquitos, of Numbers 1, 4, 6 and 8 Groups. A total of 23 Halifaxes and 5 Lancasters were lost on the raid, with most of those falling foul of Luftwaffe night-fighters. No 346 (Free French) Squadron, R.A.F. (French Groupe 2/23 'Guyenne') based at Elvington, Yorkshire, lost 5 out of its 16 Halifaxes on the raid. This was a particularly successful attack based upon standard Pathfinder marking techniques. Severe damage was caused to the centre of Bochum. More than 4,000 buildings were destroyed or seriously damaged, and of probably more significance Bochum's industrial areas were also severely damaged, particularly the important steelworks. It was the last major raid carried out on Bochum by R.A.F. Bomber Command during the Second World War. The exact cause of the aircrafts loss is unclear, all eight onboard the bomber were killed, and are buried in the same cemetery. Roy' squadron was unique in having the addition task of operating the ABC radio jamming device in addition to its bombing operations, which necessitated in an extra specialist German speaking crew member being carried on those aircraft so engaged. In the case of Roy's Lancaster, the specialist operator was 20 year old Flying Officer Bernard Zimring, R.C.A.F. from Montreal, Canada, also amongst the aircrafts crew, was 19 year old Sergeant (Navigator) Claud Terriere from Beau Bassin, Mauritius who was one of the youngest Bomber Command Navigators to die in 1944. Lancaster bomber NF936 was delivered to 101 Squadron, R.A.F. fully ABC equipped on 16 August 1944. Prior to being lost, the aircraft also took part in the Key Operation against Essen on 25 October 1944. When lost Roy's aircraft had a total of 142 hours, and was one of two of his squadrons Lancasters lost on this operation.

**STONE, ANTHONY JOHN.**

Died 24 March 1943. Aged 18

Son of Chief Yeoman of Signals, Samuel Stone (Royal Navy) and Mrs. S. E. Stone of Hill View, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent.

Attended Ashford, Kent Grammar School from 1935 to 1938.

Anthony was injured at Haywards Garage, New Street, Ashford, Kent, where he was employed, and died later the same day whilst a patient at Ashford, Kent Hospital.

**VICARY, DENNIS ALEXANDER.** Gunner, 895579.

143 (The Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Died 1 November 1943. Aged 22.

Son of William Alexander and Ellen May Vicary of Ashford, Kent.

Buried Ashford (Bybrook) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section 5. Grave 25.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial.

Attended Ashford, Kent Grammar School from 1932-1937.

Dennis died of Tuberculosis at the Grosvenor Sanatorium, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, having contracted the disease whilst with his unit when it was based in Iceland.

At the time of the 143 (The Kent Yeomanry) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery being posted in Iceland, it was in the 49th Division, as part of 'Alabaster Force' between October 1940 and April 1942. Initially the regiment in Iceland was comprised of 386th Battery, in support of 70th Brigade based near Reykjavik, and 388th Battery based in the North West Sector with B.H.Q. located at Borganes, with the remaining sections located at Blondos and Reykjaskoli. During the time that the regiment was in Iceland, prior handing over its duties to American troops, two of its members died, both of whom are at rest in Fossvogur Cemetery, Reykjavik, they being 25 year old Bombardier Eric C. Mathews, and Gunner Jack T. Russell.

**WAITT, JIMMIE THOMAS.** Third Officer.

SS San Gerardo (London). Merchant Navy.

Died Tuesday 31 March 1942. Aged 21.

Born 6 October 1920. Merchant Navy Discharge number: 3219379.

Son of James and Helena Waitt.

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1931-1936.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 92.

Unlike some British and German data accessed in the construction of tributes to the fallen, which at times show slight differences regarding the time of a variety of incidents etcetera, primarily due to Continental Time variances, the sinking of Jimmie's ship is shown with a discrepancy of several hours. In British records it is shown as the attack taking place at 1545 hours, German records however state 2222 hours but position and cause of the ships sinking match. Commanded by 33 year old Kapitänleutnant, Walter Flachsenberg, the German submarine U-71 left St Nazaire on 23 February 1942 to carry out an eight week active patrol, before completion of same and arrival at La Pallice on 20 April 1942, the U-boat had sunk five ships including the 12,915 ton Eagle Oil steam tanker SS Gerardo. On 23 March 1942 sailing alone the tanker left Curacao bound for Halifax with a cargo of 17,000 tons of fuel oil. When the tanker was approximately 700 nautical miles off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, U.S.A. two torpedoes fired from the U-71 struck the tanker and she sank almost immediately, resulting in it being impossible to launch life rafts. Only 7 of the tankers crew got safely away on a raft from the debris of the sinking, one of whom was Jimmie Waitt. After an eventful 40 hours adrift, 6 survivors were picked up

between 1030 and 1100 hours on Thursday 2 April, by the “MV Regent Panther.” Sadly Jimmie Waitt had died of exposure only two hours before the rescue of his 6 shipmates, who all reported independently that they had made concerted efforts to care for him, the survivors were eventually landed safely at Halifax, Nova Scotia.. Understandably but regrettably, the date of Jimmie’s demise as shown on his commemoration by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is wrong, as it is the same date as the actual loss of the SS San Gerardo. The U-71 was scuttled on 2 May 1945 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Walter Flachsenberg who was born on 26 October 1908 at Mönchen-Gladbach, Germany, and was the commander of the submarine U-71 became a Korvettenkapitän on 1 July 1942, and survived the Second World War, he died on 3 November 1994 aged 87.

### **WEBB, HECTOR.**

Subject to spending a lot more time and money on more detailed research, on Hector Webb, it is with a high degree of confidence that he is commemorated on this website as set out below. As it is certain that the man commemorated in the school Book of Remembrance as shot down over France May 1940, is in fact Hector Garmen Webb. Hector was killed during what in modern day parlance would be termed, a ‘friendly fire’ incident, over NORWAY not France, as is recorded in the Ashford Grammar School Book of Remembrance.

Hector Garmen Webb, Pilot Officer 43154, of 224 Squadron, Royal Air Force Coastal Command died on Tuesday 23 April 1940.

Commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey. Panel 10.

Hector was a pupil at Ashford Grammar School between 1926 and 1928.

Approximately fifty miles from the Arctic Circle, in centre of Rauma lies Åndalsnes, called “The Alp town by the fjord,” it is in fact a picturesque village in the province of More Og Romsdal, Norway, where five Commonwealth servicemen from the Second World War are buried in the churchyard. Only one of those at rest in the Åndalsnes churchyard is identified, he being Serjeant, Henry E.A. Truss, of Birstall, Leicestershire. The other four are purported to be unidentified casualties, including the grave with the headstone engraved AN AIRMAN OF THE 1939-1945 WAR, but which is the grave of the above IDENTIFIED R.A.F. Pilot, Hector Garmen Webb. We are very much indebted to Oslo resident Glenn Murray, for his help in providing us with a lot of the following information; we have now also ‘joined forces’ with Glenn in his ongoing efforts to have the Commonwealth war grave officially accepted as being the final resting place of ex the Ashford Grammar School boy Hector Garman Webb.

At the start of the Second World War, 224 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Coastal Command was based at R.A.F. Leuchars, Fife, Scotland, but the three Hudson bomber which took part in the operation that cost Hector his life was a detachment based at R.A.F. Wick, Caithness, Scotland. Hector was the pilot of the 224 Squadron, Royal Air Force, Coastal Command, Hudson bomber N7249 QX-, it being the second of the three which took off from Wick, on Tuesday 23 April 1940 on a mission to Romsdal, Norway, to help provide air-cover during the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force in the area. As the aircraft flew above Romsdalsfjord on their approach to Åndalsnes, they were subjected to ‘friendly fire’ from the 4,200 ton ‘Ceres’ class light cruiser H.M.S. Curacoa, the lead aircraft flown by Hugh O’Neill was hit, but managed to reach the United Kingdom with the help of his co-pilot, Pilot Officer Trevor Rothwell, who in later life wrote scripts for the ‘Carry On’ series of films. In the book, ‘Volume 1, Royal Air Force, Coastal Command Losses of the Second World

War, 1939-1941', by Ross McNeill, it clearly shows an exact match in all respects with the findings of Glenn Murray, in Norway, which in turn matches our own findings, prior to making contact with Glenn, or purchasing the definitive work on the subject by Ross. Whilst obviously not wanting to cause any embarrassment to Ross, it has to be said that he is definitely the accepted, and much respected specialist regarding anything concerning Royal Air Force, Coastal Command during the Second World War, and as such it was encouraging to note what was in his excellent book. The book clearly shows that Hector and Pilot Officer A.G.J Pearson took off from R.A.F. Wick, shot down by H.M.S. Curacoa, and that the blame for the shooting was as the result of the shore batteries not being in possession of recognition signals and had no prior knowledge of the intended operation. It would clearly be superfluous to write more details concerning the of war time necessity for the intricate elaborate official 'cover up' regarding the loss of Hectors aircraft, and the reasons behind same, but with the passage of over sixty years since the cessation of the hostilities of the Second World War, it is well past the time that Hector Garman Webb had his true identity revealed, and his headstone suitably inscribed. The Nazi German propaganda machine has long since gone, consigned to history, but Hector death should not be, he deserves far more. For more details of Hectors crash etcetera, please see the posting by Glenn Murray at [www.murray.as/hudson](http://www.murray.as/hudson) and having done so please offer your support, which would be both very helpful and much appreciated, as we are all fighting what seems like an uphill battle, in our ongoing efforts to have Hector Garman Webb correctly commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In view of the amount of war time effort that was put in to covering up Hector's 'friendly fire' death, the though occurred that his entry might have been missing from the books of the Royal Air Force, Second World War, Overseas Deaths, held at the General Registry Office, but were both surprised and pleased to note that Hector is recorded in Book 1940-Volume 14-Page 144, with correct number, rank and name, in addition to correct date of death, and squadron. In view of the fact that Hector is commemorated in the Ashford Grammar School Book of Remembrance, as having been killed over France as opposed to Norway, it should not be seen as collusion on the part of the school, as the book like many similar forms of commemoration of the fallen has other errors, e.g. Douglas Welsh Hendin.

**WHITE, HENRY.** Trooper, 7917737.

10th Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales' Own), Royal Armoured Corps.

Died Friday 23 January 1942. Aged 29.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of William T. and Maud White.

Husband of Constance White of Leeds, Yorkshire.

Buried Benghazi War Cemetery, Libya. Grave Ref: 2. C. 16.

Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1925 and 1930.

On Wednesday 21 January 1942, General Erwin Rommel stopped his forces in the Western Desert after approximately 500 miles of retreating, and put into effect the old adage that the best form of defence is attack, and counterattacked the allied troops in force. With two Panzer Divisions, a German Motorized Division, and two Italian Corps, at 0830 hours his troops launched their attacks, taking their opponents outposts by surprise. The ferocity of the well executed Axis surprise offensive, then necessitated an allied withdrawal. "Our opponents are getting out as though they'd been stung," wrote Erwin Rommel at the time. The following day Rommel's forces capture the Libyan locations of Agedabia, Antelat, and Saunnu, and pressed on

relentlessly towards Benghazi. At 1100 hours on Thursday 22 January 1942, Henry's Brigade moved off with his regiments Crusader tanks, and had soon reached the forward area, and in view of where they were located just after dusk, at the time they were surprised to hear unexpected gunfire and shelling. The enemy ordnance was coming from an Italian convoy which has passed close to them and opened fire. After engaging the enemy, the Brigade H.Q. managed to take some of their assailants prisoner, and at that time, Henry's Squadron Sergeant Major captured a German Despatch Rider. Following the action, Henry's Brigade moved on for approximately three miles then close leaguered. On Friday 23 January 1942, the 10th Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales' Own), Royal Armoured Corps, fought with distinction at Saunnu, Libya, for which the regiment was awarded a Battle Honour. During the action fought at Saunnu, Henry was one of sixteen who lost their lives, as did the officer with him, 20 year old Second Lieutenant Julian J.O. Hutchison, the son of Lieutenant-General Balfour Oliphant Hutchison, C.B., C.B.E., and Audrey Hutchison of Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

**WILDE, CHARLES.**

Attended Ashford Grammar School 1912-1918, where Charles is commemorated in the school Book of Remembrance as being a member of the Royal Air Force, Meteorological Department, and as having died "On service in Iraq, November 1940." Despite the very precise details as seen above, which of course may or may not be correct, it has proved impossible at this point in time to locate any supporting data appertaining to the demise of Charles. General Record Office, Overseas Deaths (Royal Air Force), Second World War books record only a single entry for a Charles Wilde, who is recorded in the 1943 Volume 15, page 114. He being L.A.C. 975433 of the 161 Maintenance Unit R.A.F. CWGC data also show the same matching entry less his unit details, but show family details etcetera, and that he is at rest in Israel. After checking 2630 applicable Royal Air Force 'wildcard' entries, plus civilian (attached specialists) with nil return, it might be indicative that Charles is in fact another serviceman who like Douglas Haldin (please see entry) actually survived the Second World War.

**WOOD, WILLIAM GEORGE.** Flight Lieutenant, 128447.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Command. 105 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 22 October 1943.

Son of George Eric and Ethel Mildred Wood of Sheldwich, Faversham, Kent.

Attended Ashford Grammar School between 1932 and 1934.

William was the other crew member of Mosquito DZ591 GB-?, which was flown by 27 year old Flight Lieutenant, Gordon Sweeney D.F.C., R.A.A.F. of McMahons Point, New South Wales, Australia, who was also a Captain in the Salvation Army. Their aircraft took off from R.A.F. Markham, Norfolk, at 1942 hours on Friday 22 October 1943 to take part in a mission by twelve Mosquito's to attack the huge and important Knapsack power station, located at the southern most end of the River Ruhr near Köln (Cologne), Germany, which during the course of the Second World War was bombed several times. Of the twelve aircraft which took part on the raid William's was the only one that was lost. It is still unclear how, why or where it was actually lost, but it is thought to have been over the sea, at which time William and Gordon became the first losses to the squadron since joining 8 Group, Pathfinder Force. Mosquito bomber DZ591 had been delivered new by the De Havilland Aircraft

Company of Hatfield, to William's squadron, and flew its first operation on 16 May 1943, and was a fully Oboe-equipped Pathfinder Force aircraft..

