

Biddenden

Second World War

1939 – 1945

BEECH, WALTER VIVIAN. Gunner, 1592694.

234 Battery, 89 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Died 2 September 1941. Aged 21.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of William and Ellen Louisa Beech of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Phaleron War Cemetery, Greece. Grave Ref: 16. A. 7.

Walter is commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission with his surname spelt BEACH.

BENNETT, ARTHUR KEITH. Leading Seaman C/J, 109679.

Royal Navy, H.M. Submarine Triton,

Died 18 December 1940. Aged 32.

Son of Arthur William and Ada Mary Bennett.

Husband of Irene Gladys Bennett of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on Second World War memorial plaque located in Tenterden (St. Mildred's) parish church and on the Chatham Naval Memorial.

Panel 34. Column 3.

The exact cause of the loss of Arthur's submarine (Pennant N15) is still unclear as she was originally thought to have struck a mine, whilst later Italian claims of her destruction add to the confusion as two Motor Torpedo Boats of the Italian Regina Marina, and an Italian aircraft claimed to have sunk her.

BOAKES, THOMAS. Sergeant, 6339924.

1st Battalion, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

Died 21 October 1944. Aged 34.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Mr and Mrs John Boakes.

Husband of Maude Louise Boakes of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Cesena War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: II. A. 11.

Pre war member of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

CARVER, JOHN G. Not yet traced.

COLLISON, GEORGE ALEC. Sergeant (Wireless Op/Air Gunner), 1233362.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 106 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 28 June 1944. Aged 22.

Son of Robert B Collinson and Elizabeth Collinson of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Bransles Communal Cemetery, Seine-et-Marne, France.

Grave Ref: Collective grave.

George was a crew member of Lancaster bomber JB664 ZN-N, which was flown by 25 year old Pilot Officer (Pilot), Norman W. Easby of Chapel Allerton, Leeds, Yorkshire. The aircraft took off at 2255 hours on 27 June 1944 from R.A.F.

Metheringham, Lincolnshire, to attack the railway facilities at Vitry-le-Francois, Champagne, France. A total of 214 Lancasters and 9 Mosquitos of Nos. 1, 5 and 8 Groups attacked both the Vaires and Vitry railway yards. The No. 8 Group raid on Vaires was particularly accurate, but the yards at Vitry were hit only at the western end. 4 Lancasters were lost, 2 from each raid. George's aircraft crashed near Bransles, Seine-et-Marne, France about 12 miles south east of Nemours killing all seven crew on board who are at rest together at Bransles. Lancaster bomber JB664 ZN-N, was delivered to George's squadron on 15 November 1943, and took part in several important bombing missions prior to its loss, by which time it had completed a total of 433 hours.

DAVIS, ALAN ROLAND NEWHAM. Sergeant, 1254599.
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 609 Squadron, Royal Air Force.
Died 23 December 1942. Aged 21.
Son of Charles and Ethel Florence Davis of Folkestone, Kent.
Commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. Panel 81.

HOOKER, DONALD. Driver, T/14641465.
212 Infantry Divisional Transport Company, Royal Army Service Corps.
Died 19 February 1945. Aged 30.
Born and resided Kent.
Son of Charles and Jacey Hooker.
Husband of Doris Cedelia Joyce Hooker of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.
Buried Goirle Roman Catholic Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands.
Grave Ref: Row 3. Grave 3.

NETTLETON, PATRICK JOHN MURIEL. Pilot Officer (Pilot), 33483.
263 (Fellowship of the Bellows) Squadron, Royal Air Force.
Died 29 March 1940. Aged 21.
Son of Hugh and Avis Nettleton.
Nephew of Mrs. W. Nettleton of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.
Buried Bristol (Canford) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section E. Grave 118.
Patrick died whilst his squadron was based at Filton, Bristol, Gloucestershire, equipped with Gloucester Gladiators, having been reformed there on 2 October 1939.

SMITH, ROBERT EDWARD. Sergeant (Air Gunner), 1890521.
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 7 (Pathfinder Force) Squadron, Royal Air Force.
Died 23 April 1944. Aged 18.
Son of Frank William and Elsie Smith of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.
Buried Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Kleve, Nordrhein-Westfal, Germany.
Grave Ref: 1. H. 9.
Robert was a crew member of Lancaster bomber ND353 MG-N, which was flown by Flight Lieutenant A.H. MacGillivray R.C.A.F. The aircraft took off at 2320 hours on 22 April 1944 from R.A.F. Oakington, Cambridgeshire on a bombing raid to Düsseldorf, Germany. The raid was carried out by 596 aircraft, they being 323 Lancasters, 254 Halifaxes, and 19 Mosquitos, which belonged to all groups with the exception of No. 5. 2,150 tons of bombs were dropped in this old-style heavy attack on the German city which caused much destruction, but also allowed the Luftwaffe night-fighter force to penetrate the R.A.F. bomber stream. The attack fell mostly in the northern districts of Düsseldorf and widespread damage was caused. Once over

the target area Robert's aircraft was attacked and badly damaged by a German night-fighter which resulted in the bomber crashing. A total of 29 aircraft, which were 16 Halifaxes and 13 Lancasters were lost on the raid to Düsseldorf. Incredibly four of the seven crew of Robert's bomber survived and were captured, the fact that the four survived, is probably even more remarkable because all seven of the Lancasters crew had eluded death less than three weeks previously when returning from a raid on Nürnberg. On that occasion their Lancaster ND350 MG-Z was diverted away from R.A.F. Oakington to R.A.F. Feltwell, Norfolk due to dense fog, but on landing at 0614 the aircraft crash-landed, and hit a concrete pill-box at which point their Lancaster burst into flames, but all had escaped without injury.

SWAIN, THOMAS. Private, 961186.

2nd Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own).

Died 24 March 1945. Aged 30.

Born and resided Surrey.

Foster-son of Mrs. E. H. Manser of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar. Grave Ref: 20. F. 1.

Pre war member of the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own).

TAYLOR, VICTOR SUITERS. Private, 6288274.

4th Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

Died 31 January 1943. Aged 24.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Harry and May Taylor of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Imtarfa Military Cemetery, Malta. G.C. Grave Ref: Collective grave 3. 3. 25.

Pre war member of The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

TESTER, ARTHUR WILLIAM CHARLES. Driver, 1884092.

270 Field Company, Royal Engineers.

Died 14 January 1944. Aged 24.

Born Hastings, Sussex. Resided Kent.

Son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Tester.

Husband of Bertina Tester of North Harrow, Middlesex.

Buried Minturno War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: 7 H. 1.



Civilian Casualties

ALDWORTH, JOHN.

Died 11 July 1944. Aged 15.

Son of Joseph Bertram and Dorothy Aldworth of 6 West End Cottages, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

John died at his home 6 West End Cottages, Biddenden.

COLLINS, JOHN. Not yet traced.

STANDEN, JAMES THOMAS.

Died 15 March 1941. Aged 76

Son of Timothy and Sarah Baker Standen of Landgate, Rye, Sussex.

Husband of Rosetta Ellen Standen.

James died at his home, Mannering Farm, Biddenden

STANDEN, ROSETTA ELLEN.

Died 28 March 1941. Aged 73

Daughter of Mr and Mrs James Hogben of Eastling, Faversham, Kent.

Widow of James Thomas Standen.

Rosetta was injured at her home Mannering Farm, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent on 15 March 1941, and died of her injuries whilst a patient at the Kench Hill Emergency Hospital, Leigh Green, Tenterden, Kent on 28 March 1941.

Lost Men

DIAMOND, PERCY EDWARD GEORGE. Guardsman, 2613212.

3rd Battalion, Grenadier Guards.

Died 6 October 1944. Aged 38.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of John T. and Emily F. Diamond.

Husband of Annie Irene Diamond of Biddenden, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Santerno Valley War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: II. B. 17.

Commemorated on the General Post Office, Second World War memorial plaque, located in the Royal Mail Sorting Office, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent.

Prior to enlisting in the army Percy had been employed by the General Post Office, at which time he was based at the Tenterden, Kent, Post Office, and was a pre war member of the Grenadier Guards.

POST WAR MILITARY CASUALTY
INTERRED ALL SAINTS CHURCHYARD
Biddenden

LANCASTER, FREDERICK WILLIAM HENRY. Lance Corporal, 27388116.
Welsh Guards.
Died 25 December 1946. Aged 22.
Son of Harold and Louisa Lancaster of Benenden, Kent.

