

# Brook

## Second World War

1939 – 1945

Although only three Second World War casualties connected with Brook near Ashford, Kent have so far been found, of whom two are commemorated on the Smeeth, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial, and the other on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial. We have been unable to locate any form of Second World War memorial in the village of Brook. Unfortunately due to the lack of village remembrance they are all commemorated on this website in the category of lost men.

**HILLS, THOMAS.** Able Seaman, C/J48902.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Encounter.

Died 22 April 1945. Aged 44.

Son of Thomas William and Charlotte Hills.

Husband of Daisy Constance Hills of Brook, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Ambon War Cemetery, Indonesia. Grave Ref: 31. A. 4.

Commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial.

Built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co. of Hebburn-on-Tyne, H.M.S. Encounter, an E class destroyer was commissioned on 2 November 1934. On 27 February 1942, H.M.S. Encounter took part in the seven hour 'Battle of the Java Sea.' The Dutch 1680 ton Admiral class destroyer H.N.L.M.S. Kortenaer was hit amidships at 1713 hours by a torpedo fired from the 13,300 ton Myōkō class Japanese heavy cruiser Haguro, and broke in two sinking almost immediately, losing 59 from the ships compliment of 171. H.M.S. Encounter rescued 113 from the stricken vessel, but one survivor later died onboard her. 'The Battle of the Java Sea' cost the lives of 6,339 sailors from both sides. H.M.S. Encounter was escorting H.M.S. Exeter to Colombo, Ceylon for repairs when she was scuttled by her crew, after being badly damaged in the Java Sea by the Japanese Heavy Cruisers Myoko and Ashigara on 1 March 1942. It would appear that Thomas died whilst a prisoner of war of the Japanese, as most of the crew were taken prisoner by the Japanese.

**WILLIAMS, LIONEL GRAHAM.** Pilot Officer, 42550.

233 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 3 November 1940. Aged 19.

Son of Thomas Harry and Natalie Williams of Brook, Ashford, Kent.

Commemorated on Smeeth, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial as Graham Williams, also commemorated with both initials on the Runnymede Memorial.

Panel 10.

A brother of the following casualty.

Lionel was the pilot of the Coastal Command 18 Group, Hudson I bomber N7374 ZS-N, which took off from its base at R.A.F. Leuchars, Fife, Scotland at 0840 hours on 3 November 1940, to take part in an offensive patrol by three aircraft. By 1057 hours, flying at 3,000 feet the formation which Lionel's Hudson was in reached the Norwegian coast in position XZUB 0010, and turned south. It was then that two 1000 ton coastal vessels heading on a northerly course were spotted by the Coastal Command aircraft. At that time one of the ships was approximately 3 miles south of Egersund, Rogaland, and the other just to the north of the important natural harbour. On 9 April 1940, Egersund was amongst the first towns and cities in Norway to be occupied by the Germans during the Second World War, and was important to them because of its good harbour, and the telegraph line between Norway and England which was situated there. The Germans built up large camps in the area, and several important events happened in the vicinity, and as such received the attention of Coastal Command on a frequent basis. At 1110 hours the three aircraft reached Lister and prepared to bomb the Luftwaffe aerodrome. The formation was running up from 3,000 feet when the aircraft were attacked by six Messerschmitt Bf110s, and climbed to cover at 5,000 feet. Lionel's aircraft on the port side of the small formation was concentrated on by the German aircraft, and during the attacks lost formation with flames coming from his Hudson's starboard bow. Despite being outnumbered by the Messerschmitt's, the other two aircraft evaded being shot down by them, and safely returned to their base where at the raid debriefing the pilots of the aircraft said that they thought that Lionel and his three crew had a reasonable chance of baling out or making a force landing. Regretably all the crew were lost and are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, two of whom like Lionel were aged 19.

**WILLIAMS, HARRY MALCOLM.** Flight Lieutenant, 66508.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 102 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 14 April 1942. Aged 26.

Son of Thomas Harry and Natalie Williams of Brook, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Smeeth (St. Mary) Churchyard, Kent

Commemorated on Smeeth, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial as Malcolm Williams, and on the Wye College Second World War memorial plaque as H.M. Williams.

His brother Lionel Graham Williams also fell (please see above) and is commemorated on Smeeth war memorial as Graham Williams.

Harry was the pilot of a Handley Page Halifax bomber, R9488 DY- which was on an Air Test when it crashed near Baldersby, six miles north east of Ripon, Yorkshire, at 1246 hours on 14 April 1942. According to several eye witness to the crash, the aircraft had made a series of left and right turns before

stalling and spinning into the ground killing all eight onboard the Halifax. As a Halifax usually had a crew of seven, probably Leading Aircraftman, John Livesey from Blackburn was normally ground crew. The cause of the accident was thought to be due to rudder overbalance.

