

Ashford Christchurch

Beaver Road, South Ashford, Kent

Second World War 1939 – 1945

By far and away the easiest of the victims of the Second World War to research for this website has been those associated with the village of Chilham, due to the fact that local resident Len Budd had already undertaken a lot of the research in preparation for the book which he has written called "Our Heritage of Freedom." Fortunately, and very generously Len is happy for others to access and use his book for their own research, providing it is not for commercial use, in exactly the same way as we are happy for others to benefit from our own ongoing researches for non profit or commercial use, as such many thanks to Len.

ADAMSON, SIDNEY LAMBERT. D.C.M. Major, 147597.
Royal Army Service Corps.
Died 21 January 1945.
Born Hull. Resided West London.
Buried Chilham (St Mary) churchyard. Grave Ref: Row 4. Grave 5.

AUSTEN, GEOFFREY FRANK. Leading Aircraftman, 539289.
Royal Air Force.
Died 18 September 1944.
Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. Column 438.
Local information obtained by Len Budd indicates that Geoffrey had resided at Shottenden, Kent opposite the Old Post Office.

BEANEY, HENRY WILLIAM. Gunner, 6283274.
14 Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery.
Died 19 April 1943. Aged 36.
Born Kent. Resided Canterbury, Kent.
Son of Henry and Elizabeth Maria Beaney.
Husband of Kate Beaney of Chilham, Kent.
Buried Oued Zarga War Cemetery, Tunisia. Grave Ref: 1. K. 8.
Originally enlisted in The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

BUSBY, HERBERT JAMES. Able Seaman, C/J 103417.

Royal Navy, SS Laconia.

Died 12 September 1942. Aged 37.

Son of Alfred Edward and Sarah Catherine Terry Busby of Margate, Isle of Thanet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 53. Column 2.

At the time of her loss in addition to her 136 crew members, the SS Laconia was carrying about 80 civilians, 268 military personnel and approximately 1800 Italian prisoners of war, who were guarded by 160 Polish soldiers. In addition to the people on board, she had carried some military equipment. The length of sentence at the Nuremberg Trials given to Grossadmiral Karl Dönitz reflected on his "Laconia Order," which he issued on 17 September 1942, which forbade any help being given to victims of his U-boats, it being the direct result of the sinking of Herbert's 19,695 ton ship in the South Atlantic, and the actions that had been undertaken by the commander of the submarine which had sunk her. When 34 year old Korvettenkapitän, Werner Hartstein commanding the U-156 surfaced after torpedoing the SS Laconia, he was horrified to see that the ship had women, children and Italian prisoners of war onboard her, and promptly started a rescue operation whilst at the same time calling for help from other U-boats. Admiral Dönitz then ordered three other German submarines to assist in the rescue operation, plus Italian Regina Marina and Vichy French vessels, Werner Hartstein without getting approval radioed that he would not attack any ship rendering help in the rescue of those from the SS Laconia. Despite having a Red Cross flag draped over the forward gun of U-156, at about 1230 hours on 16 September 1942, the submarine was attacked by an American Liberator bomber, at which time the estimated ninety Laconia survivors were ordered to jump into the sea as the U-boat dived. Resulting from the attack on the U-156 by the bomber, the following day Admiral Dönitz issued the Laconia Order. Werner Hartstein and his crew survived the attack, but he died on 8 May 1943, aged 35. Local information obtained by Len Budd indicates that Herbert had been a resident of Selling, Kent. As Herbert was a member of the Royal Navy on the SS Laconia, it would seem likely that he was probably a D.E.M.S gunner.

CRITTENDEN, SAMUEL.

Died Thursday 21 October 1943. Aged 42.

Resided at Chandlers Farm, Chilham, Kent, where Samuel was injured, and died later the same day whilst a patient at Willesborough Hospital, Ashford, Kent.

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

CROUCH, KENNETH. Flight Sergeant (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner), 624759.

Royal Air Force, 12 Squadron.

Died Monday 9 March 1942. Aged 23.

Son of William James Louis Crouch and Harriett May Crouch of Chilham, Kent.

Buried Uden War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands. Grave Ref: 1. E. 10.

Kenneth was a crew member of Wellington bomber Z8409 PH-H, which was flown by 19 year old Flight Sergeant (Pilot), Michael S. Duder, of Ambleside, Westmorland. The aircraft took off at 0204 hours on Monday 9 March 1942 from R.A.F. Binbrook, Lincolnshire, on a bombing mission to Essen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany that was carried out by 211 aircraft, they being 115 Wellingtons, 37 Hampdens, 27 Stirlings, 22 Manchesters and 10 Halifaxes. Although it was a fine night, industrial haze over the Essen target prevented accurate bombing and the raid was a disappointment. The raid was however another major step forward, it being a heavy raid on the previously difficult target of Essen, with leading aircraft now fitted with the Gee navigational aid. Gee could only enable the aircraft to reach the approximate area of the target. Photographic evidence showed that the main target, the Krupps factories, was not hit, but some bombs fell in the southern part of Essen. Later Essen reports stated it to have been only a light raid with a few houses and a church destroyed, 10 People killed and 19 missing. A total of 8 aircraft, 5 Wellingtons, 2 Manchesters and 1 Stirling were lost. At 0548 hours Kenneth's Wellington bomber was shot down by an enemy night-fighter, and crashed into a wood near Dreumel, Gelderland, Holland south of Tiel, Utrecht. Sergeant H. E. Macey survived the crash and was captured, severely wounded, he was confined in hospital until his repatriation during October 1943. The other five crew died, and are all interred in the same cemetery. Local information obtained by Len Budd, indicates that Kenneth lived at Soles Hill, Chilham, Kent.

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

Royal Air Force.

Died Wednesday 27 September 1944. Aged 33.

Son of William and Priscilla Dadds.

Husband of Irene May Dadds of Hackney, London.

Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. Column 441.

Information obtained by Len Budd, shows that Bernard was a former resident of Chilham Lees. Bernard had been a pupil at Ashford Grammar School from 1922 to 1927 where he is commemorated in the Book of Remembrance which shows him as died in a transport ship off Java. 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.

ELGAR, VICTOR NORMAN JOHN. Ordinary Telegraphist, C/JX 273000.

Royal Navy, H.M. Trawler Artic Pioneer (FY164).

Died 27 May 1942. Aged 31.

Son of Mr and Mrs J. L. Elgar.

Husband of A. A. Elgar of Hadleigh, Essex.

Buried Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Hampshire.

Grave Ref: E. 62. 1-18. Collective grave.

Victor's vessel was a 501 ton A.S.W. Trawler which had been taken over by the Admiralty in August 1939, and then armed with a 4 inch gun, she was sunk off Portsmouth Harbour on the day that Victor died, after colliding with the 35,000 ton battleship H.M.S. King George V. Local information obtained by Len Budd, revealed that pre enlistment in the Royal Navy, Victor had been an Insurance Agent for the Prudential Insurance Company.

FEAKINS, FREDERICK JOHN. Sergeant (Air Gunner), 1473318.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

35 (Pathfinder Force) Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 11 September 1944. Aged 20.

Son of John Richard and Celia Feakins of Chilham, Kent.

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

Germany. Grave Ref: 30. D. 10.

Frederick was an Air Gunner on Lancaster bomber ND702 TL-G, which was flown by Flying Officer (Pilot), George Bradburn, of Newton, Hyde, Cheshire. The aircraft took off at 1640 hours from R.A.F. Graveley, Cambridgeshire on 11 September 1944 to mark a target for the main bomber force over Gelsenkirchen, near Essen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. 379 aircraft, they being 205 Halifaxes, 154 Lancasters, and 20 Mosquitos carried out attacks three separate raids on the Castrop-Rauxel, Kamen and Gelsenkirchen (Nordstem) synthetic oil plants, with Frederick's Lancaster engaged on the latter operation as a Pathfinder. The first two targets were clearly visible and were accurately bombed, but the Nordstem plant was partially protected by a smoke-screen which hindered marking by Frederick and his comrades and the bombing by the following main force, the smoke-screen also effectively prevented observation of the results. The three attacking bomber forces were escorted by 26 squadrons of fighters, comprised of 20 squadrons of Spitfires, and 3 each of Mustangs and Tempests. Losses on the three raids were fairly light, mainly because no Luftwaffe fighter aircraft were encountered, but 5 Halifaxes of No 4 Group, and 2 Pathfinder Lancasters were lost from the Nordstem raid, one being Frederick's aircraft, and 1 Lancaster was lost from each of the other raids, all those lost were caused by flak or by 'friendly' bombs. At 1825 hours the aircraft crashed at the coal mining town of Gladbeck to the north east of Essen, it being only a few miles away from the target area, in the north eastern outskirts of the Ruhr conglomerate. Two of the seven crew survived the crash and were taken prisoner, they were Flight Sergeant, R. Rhodes, who became prisoner of war No.809, and Flight Sergeant, D.M. Lambert, prisoner of war No.788. Both were later interned in Stalag Luft L7, at Bankau, near Kreuzberg, Upper Silesia, Poland. The five crew members who lost their lives, all lie in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery In 1991, the 35/635 Association erected a marble memorial at the side of one of the roads adjacent to their former base to commemorate all

who died at, and flying from R.A.F. Graveley, between 1942 and 1945. Very appropriately the colour chosen for the memorial being a good match to R.A.F. blue.

GAY, WYNDHAM TREVOR. Gunner, 808460.

90 (City of London) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. (Territorial Army).

Died 18 August 1941. Aged 29.

Born and resided Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales.

Son of William and Lillian Gay.

Husband of Violet Gay of Abertillery, Monmouthshire, Wales.

Buried Chilham (St Mary) churchyard. Grave Ref: Plot A. Row 20. Grave 3.

Pre war member of the Royal Artillery.

As part of the 56 (London) Infantry Division, Gay's Field Regiment had been based on the Kent coast from 1940, later going to Suffolk, and in November 1942 went to serve in Iraq.

GRAVES, ALBERT GEORGE. Flight Sergeant (Pilot), 536190.

Royal Air Force. 6 (Coastal Command) Operational Training Unit.

Died 18 December 1941. Aged 23.

Son of Mr and Mrs James Graves.

Husband of Margery Graves of Thornaby-on-Tees, Yorkshire.

Buried Thornaby-on-Tees Cemetery, Yorkshire. Grave Ref: Plot O. Row O. Grave 12.

Also commemorated on Crundale, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial war memorial. Albert was a crew member of an R.A.F. Thornaby, Yorkshire based, 6 (C) Operational Training Unit, Lockheed Hudson V9032, which had stalled on take off and came down above Eaglescliffe. It crashed on the farmhouse of Quarry Farm, Ingleby Barwick, near Thornaby, killing five of the aircrafts crew. To further compound the tragedy, the farmer, thirty nine year old Charles Raymond (Ray) Garbutt, his wife, forty one year old Violet Mary Garbutt (née Hawthorne), and two of Ray and Violet's four children, eight year old Alick, and six year old Charles were also killed. Despite both the crashed aircraft, and the farmhouse being a flaming inferno, the two other boys aged nine and eleven escaped with their lives. The fiancé of twenty three year old South African, Pilot Officer (Observer), Michael B. Van Heerden R.A.F. (V.R.), of Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, who was one of the Hudson's crew who perished, later offered to adopt both the two boys who had survived the disaster. Albert and Michael are buried in adjacent graves, and Sergeant Leslie Hogg (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) R.A.F. (V.R.), from West Croydon, Surrey, is at rest just behind them in Plot O. Row N. Grave 12. The other two crewmen who died were buried at their home locations, Sergeant, (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) Harry W.G. Hewitt, of Teddington, Middlesex, is at rest at Teddington Cemetery, and Sergeant (Pilot), Richard H.D. Palmer, is at rest at Enfield (Lavender Hill) Cemetery. The Hudson had been purchased directly from Lockheed-Vega at Burbank, California, U.S.A., by the British Purchasing Commission. After delivery to the United Kingdom in August 1941, and its acceptance at M.U. it was issued directly to 6(C)O.T.U. Local information obtained by Len Butt, during his researches on the war dead of Chilham, Kent, revealed that Albert had been a Crundale resident,

and had been employed by the Tritton family as a Carpenter on their Godmersham, Kent, Estate, prior to enlisting in the Royal Air Force.

HAY, ETHEL FRANCIS.

Died 11 October 1940. Aged 74.

Daughter of the late Lieutenant Colonel Everard Stepney Milman of 151

Cromwell Road, Earl's Court, London.

Widow of Colonel Charles Hay.

Resided at Robin's Croft, Chilham, Kent, and died whilst a patient at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Kent.

JELL, DENNIS JAMES. Able Seaman, C/SSX 31106.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Bramble. (J11).

Died 31 December 1942.

Son of Percy James and Alice Jell.

Husband of Kathleen Constance Jell of Rolvenden, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 54. Column 3, and the Rolvenden, Kent civic war memorial.

Built at H.M. Dockyard Devonport, by Barclay Curle, Whiteinch. H.M.S. Bramble was Helcian class minesweeper, which was commissioned on 22 June 1939. When she was lost on 31 December 1942, she was part of the escort force to Convoy JW-51B, which left Loch Ewe, Scotland heading for Russia. In the Barents Sea, whilst returning from a search for stragglers of the convoy, she was sighted and engaged by the German Heavy Cruiser, Admiral Hipper. Her engagement with the much larger ship left her badly damaged, and she was later being sunk by the German destroyer Eckholdt, resulting in the deaths of 8 officers and 113 ratings. Captain Robert Sherbrooke, of H.M.S. Onslow who was in command of the convoy escorts, was later awarded the Victoria Cross for his gallantry during the enemy attacks. For comprehensive details appertaining to H.M.S. Bramble, and the other ships in her class, the best site accessed has been www.halcyon-class.co.uk as such it is pointless adding more regarding his ship, at this brief commemoration to Dennis.

LEWIS, HENRY FILMER. Bombadier, 941201.

74 (Northumberland) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. (Territorial Army).

Died 6 April 1945. Aged 26.

Born Canterbury, Kent. Resided Chilham, Kent.

Son of Victor and Annie Lewis.

Husband of Sylvia E Lewis (née Troke) of Challock, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Forli War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: VI. C. 12.

Local information obtained by Len Budd, shows that Henry had resided at Church Hill, Chilham. It would seem likely that Henry was serving with another unit of the Royal Artillery, or died of wounds at an army hospital in Italy, as the 74 (Northumberland) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery left Sicily in November 1943, and returned to the United Kingdom. At the time of Henry's death, the regiment was taking part in the North West Europe Campaign, having crossed to the continent in June 1944 in the 49th Infantry Division.

LLOYD, HENRY SIMON RAOUL. Pilot Officer (Pilot) 147904.
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 466 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force.

Died Sunday 30 May 1943. Aged 21.

Son of Charles and Simone Emilie Lloyd of Chilham, Kent.

Buried Brussels Town Cemetery. Grave Ref: X. 17. 27.

Local research by Len Budd indicates that Henry resided at Godmersham, which is a village adjacent to Chilham. On Chilham war memorial Henry's initials are shown as H.R.S. but Henry's CWGC commemoration, R.A.F. data accessed, and his entry in the General Record Office, Second World War (R.A.F.) Overseas Deaths (volume 9, page 262, 1943) all show his initials as being H.S.R. Henry was the pilot of Wellington bomber HE212 HD-"Yvonne Proudabag" which took off at 2223 hours on 29 May 1943, from R.A.F. Leaconfield, Yorkshire, to take part in a 719 bomber raid on Wuppertal, Germany. The bombers taking part on the raid were 292 Lancasters, 185 Halifaxes, 118 Stirlings, 113 Wellingtons, and 11 Mosquitos, Henry's aircraft being one of the 113 Wellington's taking part. The raid was aimed at the Barmen half of the long and narrow town of Wuppertal, and was recorded as being the outstanding success of the 'Battle of the Ruhr.' Both Pathfinder marking and Main Force bombing was particularly accurate, and a large fire area developed in the narrow streets of the old centre of the town. It is probable that this fire was so severe that the first, small form of what would later become known as a firestorm developed. Because it was a Saturday night, many of Wuppertal fire and air-raid officials were not present, having gone to their country homes for the weekend, and the fire services of the town, during what was their first air-raid, were not able to control the fires. Approximately 1,000 acres, they being possibly eighty per cent of Barmen's built up area was destroyed by fire. Five out of the town's six largest factories, 211 other industrial premises and nearly 4,000 houses were completely destroyed. Henry's Wellington was intercepted and shot down at 0400 hours on 30 May 1944, by a Luftwaffe, Messerschmitt Me 110 night-fighter which was flown by Oberleutnant Rudolf Altendorf of I./NJG4, who at the time probably was with Uffz Arndt, his regular gunner. In addition to Henry's aircraft, a total of 33 aircraft were lost on the raid, they being 10 Halifaxes, 8 Stirlings, 8 Wellingtons, and 7 Lancasters. Henry's bomber crashed at Vollezele, Brabant, Belgium, which is about nineteen miles west-south-west of Brussels where all five crew are buried in adjacent graves. In 1994 a memorial was erected in Vollezele by local inhabitants to commemorate the crew, who were all Sergeants with the average age of 21. It was a pleasure to learn from Len Budd, that the parishioners of Chilham to their credit, have organised trips to the graves of the village fallen, including paying their respects at the memorial to the crew of the "Yvonne Proudabag." Chilham, Kent, being clearly a caring community, that both remembers its former parishioners lost to the world wars, and undertakes positive steps to ensure their sacrifices are not forgot, long may that continue to be the case. In 2003 a book was published entitled De Lastste Vlucht Van "Yvonne Proudabag," which I am assured when translated into English is:- The Last Fight of the "Yvonne Proudabag," it tells the story of the aircraft's last flight, and was written by Cyrik De Decker and Jean-Lois Roba, the text is in Dutch, but with the introduction in English. Rudolf Altendorf flew in the 'Battle of Britain' with IV./LG(Z)1,

during which his unit suffering heavy losses. Before the cessation of hostilities he scored a total of 29 victories serving with NJG 3, 4, and 5, and survived the Second World War despite some near misses.

LONDON, GILBERT IVAN. Stoker 1st Class, C/KX 90467.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Whirlwind. (D30).

Died 5 July 1940. Aged 25.

Son of Mr and Mrs Walter London.

Husband of Phyllis Isa May London of Chilham Lees, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 38. Column 2.

Built by Swan Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd. of Wallsend-on-Tyne, H.M.S. Whirlwind was a 1188 ton Admiralty V&W class destroyer, that was commissioned on 15 March 1918. Commanded by 39 year old Yorkshire man, Lieutenant Commander John Malcolm Rodgers, R.N., H.M.S. Whirlwind was torpedoed and sunk approximately 120 nautical miles off Lands End, Cornwall, by the German submarine U-34 which was commanded by 35 year old Kapitänleutnant, Wilhelm Rollmann, who reported that one torpedo had struck just under the destroyers bridge, and that the forepart of the ship sank immediately, but the rest of the ship stayed afloat for some time. Wilhelm Rollmann died in the North Atlantic on 5 November 1943 whilst commanding the U-848 on its first patrol. John M. R. Rodgers survived the sinking of H.M.S. Whirlwind, and retired as a Commander D.S.C., on 2 July 1946.

MATTHEWS, WALTER JAMES. Sergeant, 5435183.

Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

Died 29 September 1940. Aged 28.

Born and resided Cornwall.

Son of James and Lilian Matthews.

Husband of Marian Winnifred Matthews of Shottenden, Kent.

Buried Chacewater (St Paul's) Churchyard Extension, Cornwall. Grave Ref: E. E. 18.

Walter and Marian had only been married for 29 days, when he tragically lost his life in a boat accident, following an enemy raid at St Mawes, Cornwall.

NB. It would be very remiss to not make mention of the fact that Walter's widow, Mrs Marian Matthews has been an invaluable source of help to Len Budd, in providing valuable local information for his book commemorating those from Chilham who lost their lives in the two world wars.

PATTERSON, ALBERT FRANK. Petty Officer Stoker, C/KX77268.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Electra (H27).

Died Friday 27 February 1942. Aged 36.

Son of Albert and Edith Patterson.

Husband of Amy Elizabeth Patterson of Chilham, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 61. Column 1.

Built by Hawthorn Leslie & Co. of Hebburn-on-Tyne, H.M.S. Electra was a 1405 ton

E class destroyer which was commissioned on 15 September 1934. At the time of her loss she was commanded by Commander Cecil W May R.N. H.M.S. Electra was sunk by the Japanese light cruiser Jintsu, during the Battle of the Java Sea, which at the time that it was fought, was the largest

naval surface battle since the Battle of Jutland on the 31 May 1916. The day before she was lost, H.M.S. Electra in company with H.M.S. Exeter, H.M.A.S. Perth, and the Netherlands light cruiser H.N.L.M.S. Java, arrived at Surabaya, Indonesia from Tanjong Priok, North Jakarta, Indonesia, but with other destroyers being left behind at Tanjong Priok. On 27 February 1942 the striking force left Surabaya, with the three Royal Navy destroyers in the lead, with H.M.S. Electra in the centre, H.M.S. Jupiter to port, and H.M.S. Encounter to starboard. They were followed by H.N.L.M.S. DeRuyter, H.M.S. Exeter, U.S.S. Houston, H.M.A.S. Perth, and H.N.L.M.S. Java; followed by two Dutch and four American destroyers. That afternoon, they made contact with the enemy. H.M.S. Electra managed to evade the shells and torpedoes in the first round. At 1715 hours H.M.S. Exeter received a hit which destroyed a 4-inch gun mount, and then exploded in a boiler room, causing her to lose speed. At 1725 hours seeing that H.M.S. Exeter was in trouble, H.M.S. Electra headed toward the enemy ships, followed by the other two Royal Navy destroyers, to cover H.M.S. Exeter's escape, and for the gallant Commander May to engage in what several commentators have described as a "gallant but suicidal attack" when engaging the superior enemy force to save the damaged H.M.S. Exeter. After numerous near misses from the gunfire of the Japanese light cruiser Jintsu, H.M.S. Electra fired back, scoring several hits on the Jintsu, in addition to also hitting the destroyer Asagumo. During the action H.M.S. Electra sustained several hits, which knocked out A and X gun mounts, wrecked the electrical system forward, cut off all communications, destroyed a searchlight platform, damaged the after boiler room, and ruptured the main steam line. Inevitably H.M.S. Electra eventually came to a stop, fired off her torpedoes, and started to list to port. After a fire started under B gun mount, and Y mount ran out of ammunition, the order to abandon ship was given. One surviving whaleboat got away after being loaded with wounded, but it was destroyed by an enemy shell shortly afterwards. Soon after the evacuated wounded were got away in the whaleboat, H.M.S. Electra finally sank. On 29 March 1947, a stained glass window at the Church of St. George, at the Royal Naval Barracks, Chatham, Kent, was dedicated to the crew of H.M.S. Electra.

SARGEANT, HENRY. Private, 6284917.
2nd Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).
Died 21 February 1944. Aged 31.
Born and resided Canterbury, Kent.
Also commemorated on the Lower Harges, Canterbury, Kent civic war memorial.
Buried Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq. Grave Ref: 23. G. 7.
Pre war member of The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

THEOBALD, EDWARD HUGH CRAFT. Pilot Officer (Pilot), 67716.
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 30 Squadron, Royal Air Force.
Died Sunday 28 December 1941. Aged 26.
Son of Hugh Whittard Theobald and Edith Maud Theobald of Hadlow Down,
Sussex.

Buried Halfaya Sollum War Cemetery, Egypt. Grave Ref: 19. B. 10.
Edward's squadron moved to Egypt from Iraq just before the start of the
Second World War. In March 1941 during the defence of Greece, the
squadron was equipped with Hurricane fighters, and after the fall of Greece,
the squadron returned to Egypt in May 1941, and was re-formed at El Amriya,
and converted to Hurricane IIs. Armed with the new fighter, the squadron
undertook offensive patrols, night fighter operations and bomber escort duties.
As the result of shortages of manpower, 30 Squadron had six Yugoslavian
officers, and seven other ranks posted in. Their contribution did not last long
however as after several dangerous infringements of standing orders in which
one Yugoslav died, they were grounded and posted out of the squadron. No.
30 Squadron, R.A.F. fought on into the Western Desert until February 1942
when it received orders to embark on H.M.S. Indomitable, alongside No. 261
Squadron, R.A.F., and travel to Ceylon to form a defensive force against
possible Japanese invasion, and arrived shortly before the Japanese attack
on the island. In May 1944 a move was made to Burma and after the
Japanese surrender the squadron went to India, and was disbanded in
December 1946.

WYLES, FREDERICK BERNARD HORACE. Private, 317565.
1st Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).
Died 12 September 1944. Aged 28.
Born Kent. Resided Canterbury.
Son of Mr and Mrs Frederick Wyles.
Husband of Laura May Wyles of Chilham, Canterbury, Kent.
Buried Gradara War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: II. F. 65.
Frederick was killed when his battalion were in support of the 2/7th Battalion,
The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey), during an attack by 18 Brigade
on San Savino, where the enemy was barring the way to Rimini. Initially it had
been Brigadier Erskine's wish that Frederick's battalion should lead the
assault on the ridge at San Savino.
Originally enlisted in a cavalry regiment.

LOST MAN

EPPS, PHILLIP SIDNEY. Sapper, 14638749.

Head Quarters Troop, 4th Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers.

Died Tuesday 19 September 1944. Aged 19.

Born and resided Kent.

Buried Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands.

Grave Ref: 26. B. 8.

Philip was killed in action during 'Operation Market Garden,' in the Western Europe Campaign. Phillip was in a glider which took off under tow from Spanhoe airfield near Corby, Northamptonshire on Monday 18 September 1944 heading for Arnhem, Holland. He was a member of a Head Quarters Troop, 4th Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, Jeep crew which was loaded with explosives and flamethrowers. Phillip is recorded as making the comment "I hope nothing hits this trailer or we will never make it to Arnhem," however the glider did make it to Holland and crash landed in a potato field at Wolfheze. On the day of his demise, Philip and the Jeep crew were ordered by their O.C. Major Perkins, to try and reach Oosterbeek Head Quarters, as the radio which Philip was manning was not working, near Sandersweg they were ambushed when the Jeep was blown up, which resulted in Phillip losing his life, and his comrades who were with him being captured. Every year in April several ex members of the 4th Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, and their families, hold a service of commemoration at the village church of Glaston, in the former county of Rutland where there is a memorial plaque to commemorate the squadrons fallen of the Second World War, several of the units members had been based in the village following their return to the United Kingdom from Italy. Owned by Steve McLaughlin, there is an excellent website dedicated to the 4th Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers of the Second World War, it being www.28chatsworth.fsnet.co.uk being both very comprehensive, and regularly updated, in addition to being easy to navigate, the site is one well worth visiting.

