

# Ashford

North Boys School

## Second World War

1939 – 1945

Unlike several other schools of similar size and status within the county of Kent, the former Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School, sadly has no form of remembrance, such as memorial plaque or commemoration book to honour the former pupils who lost their lives during the Second World War. Due to the lack of a school commemoration, it might initially appear that the school simply forgot its former pupils and staff members sacrifices. Nothing could in fact be further from the truth, because in 1946 a forty page book was produced at the school 'in house,' with the Forward written by Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Sholto Douglas G.C.B., M.C., D.F.C. In addition to a Roll of Honour, the book also briefly records the service records of other pupils who fortunately survived the years of conflict. The transcriber having tried several times in vein to obtain a copy of the book whilst a pupil at 'The North' (1952-1957), it was a delight to be given a copy in 2005 by a member of staff. Without a copy of the book, doubtless several of those commemorated below would not have been known as ex pupils. The school motto is "Do a common deed uncommonly well," Those commemorated below, did just that.

**AMES, ARTHUR WILLIAM HERBERT.** Ordinary Seaman, P/JX 518558.

H.M.S. Collinwood, Royal Navy.

Killed by enemy action 18 June 1943. Aged 17.

Son of Lionel Herbert and Winifred Grace Ames of Moorstock Lane Sellindge, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Sellindge, Ashford, Kent, (St. Mary) churchyard.

Commemorated in Sellindge (St. Mary) parish church, and on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial. Arthur was a pupil at the Ashford, Kent, North County Modern (Boys) School between 1938 and 1940. He had enlisted in the Royal Navy on 31 May 1943, it being only 19 days prior to his demise. H.M.S. Collinwood was, and still is a Royal Navy shore based training establishment at Fareham, Hampshire.

**ANDERSEN, RAYMOND CANUTE.**

Died 3 February 1943. Aged 15.

Son of Alfred and Nellie Louisa Andersen.

Also commemorated in Bybrook Cemetery, and on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial. Raymond died at his home 72 Birling Road, Ashford, Kent, his mother sadly died with him, but she is commemorated on the Ashford, Kent civic war memorial as Nellie Louisa Baxter. A former pupil at the Ashford, Kent, North County Modern (Boys) School from 1939 until his demise, where he is remembered as Raymond Niels Andersen.

**BROWN, DOUGLAS HENRY.** Gunner, 14258735.  
100 (The Gordon Highlanders), Light Anti-Aircraft/Anti-Tank Regiment, (T.A.)  
Royal Artillery.  
Died 14 June 1944. Aged 21.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Son of Robert Thomas Brown and Lilian F. Brown of Brabourne, Ashford,  
Kent.  
Buried Imphal War Cemetery, Manipur State, India. Grave Ref: Grave 7. K. 1.  
Douglas was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School  
1934-1936.  
Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps.

**BYRNE, DONALD JOSEPH.** A.R.P. Messenger.  
Died 6 January 1941. Aged 16.  
Son of Joseph O and Olive Rose Byrne of Tanganyika, British East Africa.  
Resided at 39 Bentley Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.  
Donald was injured on 16 September 1940 at Newtown, Ashford, Kent, and  
died of his injuries at Ashford Hospital on 6 January 1941. He was a pupil at  
the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1935-1940, where he is  
remembered as Donald James Byrne.

**COLEMAN, FREDERICK THOMAS WALTER.** Lance Corporal, 6288418.  
4th Battalion. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).  
Died between 13 and 16 November 1943. Aged 25.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Son of Robert and Emma Jane Coleman of 24 Kennington Road,  
Willesborough Lees, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Leros War Cemetery, Greece. Grave Ref: 3. A. 5.  
Frederick was a pupil at the Ashford, Kent North County Modern (Boys)  
School 1929-1932. For most of the Second World War, his service had been  
overseas prior to his death, having served in France 1939-1940, followed by  
Malta 1940-1943. Later in 1943, Frederick fought and died during the  
disastrous Dodecanese Expedition on Crete, having left Alexandria, Egypt  
aboard H.M.S. Petard on 22 October 1943, and no doubt helping in the  
rescue of some of his comrades, when H.M.S. Eclipse was sunk after hitting a  
mine. Having arrived safely at Leros, the battalion and everybody else on the  
island were subjected to a massive increase in enemy air offensives which  
became heavier from 13 November with enemy sorties then averaging about  
eighty a day, causing havoc with the infrastructure and a high casualty rate  
amongst the defenders including to Frederick's battalion. It is likely that  
Frederick lost his life resultant of the enemy air attacks.  
Pre war member of The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

**CRAWFORD, WALTER THOMAS.** Private, 6288040.

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

Died 23/24 October 1943. Aged 24.

Born and resided Portsmouth, Hampshire.

Commemorated on the Athens Memorial, Greece. Face 5.

Walter is also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial.

Walter and his comrades had been granted leave in Alexandria, Egypt, but spent most of their six weeks in North Africa in a transit camp at Sidi Bishr, from where they were earmarked to join the 8th Indian Division. Before that could take place, however, on 23 October 1943, his battalion was rushed to the docks at Alexandria and boarded two destroyers, H.M.S. Eclipse and H.M.S. Petard (of Enigma machine fame) which set off at high speed for an unknown, destination (as usual), to the troops. The battalion was in fact on its way to Leros, it being the last infantry battalion to be sent to bolster the island's defences, with the neighbouring island of Kos having already fallen to the Germans. H.M.S. Eclipse (Pennant HO8) was a 1405 ton E class destroyer, commanded by Lieutenant Commander E Mack D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N. which struck two mines off the Bay of Kalymnos during the ill fated Leros Expedition. At the time of her loss the destroyer was carrying 'A' company and part of the HQ company, of the 4th Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment), when she detonated a mine under her forward boiler room, setting the fuel tanks ablaze. She immediately took on a heavy list and broke in two, spilling burning fuel into the sea, and sunk within three minutes. 115 members of Walter's battalion died when she went down, as did 135 of the ships crew of 145. It is not clearly remembered in what year Walter had left the Ashford, Kent North County Modern (Boys) School having enrolled in 1933, at which time he resided at Brook Cottages, Coldharbour, Wye, Ashford, Kent. Fortunately however what is clearly recalled is that whilst serving on the island of Malta during the time of the siege, Walter had saved a boy from drowning by diving into the sea and dragging him to safety. Prior to serving on Malta from 1940 to 1943, Walter had been a member of the British Expeditionary Force, and had arrived at Cherbourg, France on 18 November 1939 with his battalion. Pre war Territorial member of The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

**EARLE, FREDERICK JOSEPH.** Sergeant (Air Gunner), 1332585.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 75 (New Zealand) Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 21 April 1943. Aged 22.

Son of Frederick Earle, and the stepson of Edith A Earle of Guildford, Surrey.

Buried Esbjerg (Fourfelt) Cemetery, Denmark.

Grave Ref: Collective grave A. 11. 11-14.

Frederick was a crew member of Stirling bomber BF506 AA-P, that was flown by 21 year old Pilot Officer (Pilot), Alan G. Tolley, of Wellington City, New Zealand, which took off at 2205 hours on 20 April 1943 from R.A.F. Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, as part of a mixed bomber force of 425 aircraft on a bombing mission to the Baltic ports of Rostock and Stettin on the Oder. Also airborne at the same time was a small diversionary force of 11 Mosquito's to carry out the first ever high level nuisance attack on Berlin undertaken by Mosquito's, they were employed as a diversion for the main



force of heavy bombers which had been assigned to attack Rostock and Stettin. Frederick's aircraft was one of 86 Stirling's that were dispatched to attack the Heinkel factory near Rostock, due to an intense smoke screen hiding the factory the bombing pattern was very scattered and with very little physical damage to the designated target inflicted. At 0300 hours on 21 April 1943 Flight Sergeant Cyril Cobb the Wireless Operator (and Air Gunner) transmitted a signal reporting that the aircrafts starboard inner engine was on fire which was the last communication sent. Twenty six minutes after the transmission being sent, the Stirling crashed at Boegballe north of Vejle, Denmark, killing all seven crew and was later reported as having been shot down by an enemy night-fighter. Although unable to find out for certain, but after checking through various relevant data it would seem likely that the Stirling was shot down by Luftwaffe 'ace' night-fighter pilot, Gunter "Fips" Radosch of 11./NJG 3., who by the end of the hostilities had 65 victories credited to him, he survived the war and died 29 July 1988. The Stirling's crew which had included four New Zealanders, are all interred in the same cemetery. In the next grave to Frederick is fellow crew member Gerald 'Jerry' Town, who was a school friend during the time when Frederick attended the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School from 1932 to 1936, at which time the Earle family resided at 14 Gladstone Road, Willesborough, Ashford. Frederick and Gerald had both enlisted in the RAF (VR) in 1941, Gerald is also commemorated on Ashford civic war memorial and has a tribute to him on this Roll of Honour.

**FRIAR, NORMAN WALTER.** Leading Seaman (Radar), P/JX 307147.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Penelope.

Died at sea 18 February 1944. Aged 21.

Son of Frederick John and Patience Mary Friar of 53 Hunter Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Panel 81. Column 2.

Norman and 416 other members of the 5220 ton Arethusa class light cruisers crew perished when his ship sunk immediately after being struck by two torpedoes from the German submarine U-410 commanded by the U-boat 'ace' Oberleutnant zur See, Horst-Arno Fenski off Anzio, Italy. The first torpedo struck H.M.S. Penelope in the after engine room and was followed, 16 seconds later, by a second one which hit in the after boiler room, causing her immediate sinking.. The remarkable point of the attack by the U-410 is that the cruiser was making 26 knots when she was hit. As far as can be ascertained, this is a unique case in the history of submarine attacks in all of the Second World War, no other vessel running at such high speed was ever successfully attacked. 415 of the crew of H.M.S. Penelope, including the captain went down with the ship, and there were 206 survivors. Commanding H.M.S. Penelope at the time of her loss was 46 year old Captain George D. Belben, D.S.O., D.S.C., A.M., (Twice Mentioned in Despatches) of Verwood, Dorsetshire. Norman was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School from 1933 to 1936, and had enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1941. Norman had previously served aboard the corvette H.M.S. Kingcup on convoy escort duties, and had been onboard the ship during the bombardments of North Africa, Sicily, Pantellaria and Italy. Norman had been originally posted as missing following the sinking of H.M.S. Penelope. The submarine

commander Horst-Arno Fenski survived the Second World War, a native of Königsberg, East Prussia he was only 46 years old when he died in Hamburg, Germany on 10 February 1965.

**GATES, TONY ALAN.** Fusilier, 14689168.

6th Battalion, Royal Scots Fusiliers.

Died 11 February 1945. Aged 19.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Ernest William and Caroline Ann Gates of 80 Albemarle Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Tony had been a pupil of the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School from 1936 to 1939.

Buried Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Kleve, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. Grave Ref: 58. J. 9.

Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps, and had also served in The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment), the East Surrey Regiment and also the Green Howards. Tony served in the United Kingdom 1943-1944, prior to taking part in the D-Day Landings on 6 June 1944, after which he fought in other actions in Normandy and other parts of France, later being in action throughout the North West Europe Campaign in Belgium and Holland. Tony was moved to the cemetery where he now lies following the cessation of hostilities, as the other two soldiers from his battalion who were killed on the same day are at rest in Jonkerbos War Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands, near to where they fell. They being Private John Baker from Middlesbrough and Corporal John McInnis from Aberdeen. Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, was created after the Second World War when burials were brought in from all over western Germany and is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the country.

**GILHAM, ERNEST THOMAS.** Private, 14559722.

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

Died Italy 28 July 1944.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Thomas Richard D and Lillian Fanny Gilham.

Husband of Rose Man Gilham of Gillingham, Kent.

Buried Florence War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: VI. D. 10.

Ernest had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School from 1929 to 1930.

Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps.

Ernest was amongst the 32 men of his battalion who were killed outright or died of wounds during its assault on Monte Sclari south east of Florence, Italy and probably lost his life at point 770. Having been initially carried forward on tanks to point 706 the terrain then became far too steep for tanks, soon after starting to climb on foot Ernest and his comrades were subjected to intense machine gun and mortar fire from well prepared enemy positions, despite their mounting casualties which had also included 79 men wounded, the forward platoons of the battalion got within 400 yards of the mountain's summit.

**HADLUM, JOSEPH FRANCIS.** Private, 14716122.

7th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.

Died 25 September 1944. Aged 18.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Francis and Ada Mary Hadlum of 3 Marlow Road, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery Gelderland, Netherlands.

Grave Ref: 9. A. 8.

Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps on 7 February 1944, and had served overseas for exactly one month prior to his demise. Joseph was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern Boys School 1936-1939. Buried in the grave next to Percy Stover from Ashford, Kent, who also served in the same regiment in a different battalion, and who was also a former pupil of the school. Joseph died in the Western Europe Campaign during "Operation Market Garden."

**HANEY, JAMES.** Sergeant (Observer/Navigator), 1280935.

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

Died 19 August 1941. Aged 29.

Son of Frederick Joseph and Mary Waterworth Haney.

Husband of Dorothy Violet Haney of "Winslade," Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

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

Buried Kiel War Cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. Grave Ref: 2. G. 8.

James had been a member of staff at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School from 1934 until just prior to his enlistment in 1940. Ashford, Kent resident Dennis Hayward served in the same squadron (please see his brief commemoration), and who died only ten days after James was recorded as lost. James was a crew member of Wellington bomber W5416 EP-? which was flown by 26 year old Flight Lieutenant, William W. Burton, B.A. (Oxon.), R.A.F.(V.R.) of Retreat, Cape Province, South Africa. The bomber took off at 2240 hours on 19 August 1941 from R.A.F. Driffield, East Yorkshire, on a bombing mission to Kiel, Germany. Although James is recorded as dying on 19 August 1941 by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission this is in fact erroneous albeit by only a few hours, as contact had been made by his aircraft at 0318 hours on the morning of the following day, when a wireless transmission trying to raise R.A.F. Bircham Newton, Norfolk was made by the aircrafts crew. So far (February 2003) no trace of the lost Wellington has ever been found, but it is assumed to have crashed over the North Sea. On 19 September 1941 exactly a month after his aircraft had taken off on its last mission James body was washed ashore at Norderpiep, Germany from where he was laid to rest with military honours at Büsum, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. James family were informed of his death and burial via the International Red Cross, since the war his body has been moved to Kiel War Cemetery, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. All five of the other men who perished with James have no known graves and are therefore commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.



**HARLOW**, VICTOR DOUGLAS. Galley Boy.  
Merchant Navy, SS Elstree Grange (Liverpool).  
Died 3 May 1941. Aged 16.

Commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. Panel 37.

Victor joined the Merchant Navy in 1940, and had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1936-1938, at which time his home address was 21 Osbourne Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent. Having just discharged its cargo in Liverpool docks, Victor's ship, commanded by Captain A. G. Ablett received a direct hit amidships by a parachute mine, during a heavy enemy air-raid. SS Elstree Grange was completely wrecked after the vessels ammunition store blew up, seven of the crew lost their lives and many others were wounded. During the attack and sinking, one of Victor's shipmates, Seaman, George Wheeler rescued two badly injured men and for his gallantry was subsequently awarded the George Medal.

**HILLS**, FREDERICK WILLIAM. Private, 14651035.

1/6th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment.

Died 20 September 1944. Aged 19.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Charles W. F. and Gladys Geraldine Hills of 32 Herbert Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Coriano Ridge War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: VIII. F. 7.

Frederick had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1936-1939. Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps in 1943, and served in the United Kingdom. In 1944 Frederick served in the Italian Campaign, as a member of the East Surrey Regiment.

**HUXSTEP**, PATRICK SOUTHEE. Sergeant, 909029.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 55 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 20 April 1941. Aged 22.

Son of Harry Huckstep and Louisa Huxstep of Ramsgate, Isle of Thanet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Alamein Memorial, Egypt. Column 243.

From 1930 to 1933 Patrick had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School. Patrick's squadron spent the duration of the war years in the Mediterranean area of operations, from the start of the war until June 1940 flying IN the Suez region, of Egypt. With Italy joining the war, No.55 Squadron, R.A.F. began flying its Blenheim's on raids over Libya, and in March 1942 the squadrons Blenheim bombers were replaced by Baltimore's which were used extensively in support of the British 8th Army. In October 1944 Boston aircraft were sent to replace the Baltimore's, and in September 1945, whilst based in Greece 55 Squadron, Royal Air Force was equipped with Mosquitoes.

**IRVINE, FREDERICK 'Freddie' DAVID.** Flying Officer, 178975.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 17 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 3 June 1945. Aged 22.

Son of John Archibald and Ada Irvine of 45 Linden Road, Ashford, Kent.  
Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. Column 447.

Frederick had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1933-1936. Following pilot training in the U.S.A., 'Freddie' flew over 200 operational hours prior to his death. Initially with 136 Squadron, R.A.F. flying Hawker Hurricanes, and later with 17 Squadron, R.A.F. flying Supermarine Spitfires, following his enlistment in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in 1940. At the time of 'Freddie's' death 17 Squadron were deployed in Burma on escort and ground attack roles equipped with Spitfires, the squadron were engaged on same from November 1944 until June 1945 when it was withdrawn in time for the preparation of the invasion of Malaya. One of the pilots posted to the squadron in November 1944 was James 'Ginger' Lacey D.F.M., who was the top scoring Royal Air Force pilot during the Battle of Britain in 1940. During the battle 'Ginger' Lacey had been shot down or forced to land nine times, including being shot down in a dog-fight over Ashford, Kent on 17 September 1940 and as such serving with 'Freddie' Irvine was not his only link to Ashford! The following is an encounter with the enemy on the Burma front as related by 'Freddie.' "I was patrolling at 3,000 feet over the bridgehead at Myinmu when enemy aircraft were reported as approaching. I went up to 18,000 feet and after two minutes sighted several aircraft 4,000 feet below. I picked up a loose pair and gave one a short burst. Next I went for a wing man and gave him a good squirt, but could not see what happened because another fighter jumped me. Then I selected another. The other Oscar seemed to stop, with black smoke and fuel pouring from the side of the fuselage. I watched it go down in a steady descent until it was near the ground. On the way home I attacked another Oscar, but could not observe the effect." On a previous occasion he had to make a belly landing with his aircraft, when three Japanese Oscar aircraft which he had attacked followed him back to his base and attacked.

**JAMES, FREDERICK ERNEST.** Trooper, 6349620.

56th Regiment, Reconnaissance Corps. Royal Armoured Corps.  
Died 27 February 1943. Aged 22.

Son of Ernest and Alice Lilian James of Boughton Corner, Bilting, Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on the Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial, and on Godmersham, Ashford, Kent, Second World War memorial plaque, located in the parish church of [St Lawrence the Martyr](#).

Buried Medjez-EI-Bab War Cemetery, Tunisia. Grave Ref: 5. H. 3.

Originally enlisted in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment in 1940.

Frederick had taken part in 'Operation Torch,' the amphibious landings in Morocco and Tunisia, North Africa in November 1942, and lost his life as the result of enemy bombing at Tunisia, North Africa. For a year 1933-1934, Frederick had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School. His brother Arthur George James who fortunately survived the Second World War, served in the Royal Navy on Minesweepers and had also been a pupil at 'The North' from 1937 to 1940.



**NEWINGTON, JOHN.**

Died 24 March 1943. Aged 14.

Son of Percy Edward and L. A. Newington of 135 Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on Kennington, Ashford, Kent civic war memorial, and John Newington Close on Little Burton Farm Estate, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, is named in his honour and remembrance. He was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1939-1942. John was injured at Stanhays Agricultural Engineers Works, Godington Road, Ashford, Kent, and died later the same day of his injuries whilst a patient at Ashford Hospital, Kent. It would appear that his father had served as a Private, in both The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) and the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) during the years of the Great War.

**PAINE, ERIC JOHN.** Lance Corporal, 6291041.

5th Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

Died 7 November 1944. Aged 25.

Born and resided Kent.

Son of Walter and Alice Paine of 67 Bently Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Faenza War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: VI. C.

From 1933 to 1937 Eric was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School. Eric enlisted in The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) in 1940 initially serving in the 70th Battalion guarding military installations in Kent. He remained in the United Kingdom until 1943, he then served in the 5th Battalion of the regiment in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. During the fighting in Sicily Eric was wounded in the right thigh and evacuated from the battle front and returned to North Africa where he was hospitalised. By the time Eric was fit for duty again, his battalion had reached the Italian mainland where he rejoined them on the front line, but he was again wounded during the fighting at Monte Cassino, on that occasion he was hit in his left arm. After being again hospitalised he rejoined his unit on discharge from hospital, but was killed in the city of Florence.

**POSSEE, WILLIAM FRANK.** D.F.C. Flying Officer (Flight Engineer), 53824.

227 Squadron Royal Air Force.

Died Wednesday 14 March 1945. Aged 21.

Son of Frank and Annie Elizabeth Possee of The Green, Hinxhill, Ashford, Kent.

From 1935 to 1939 William was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School.

Buried Durnbach War Cemetery, Bad Tolz, Germany.

Grave Ref: Joint grave 2. C. 27-28.

William was the Flight Engineer of Lancaster Bomber RA546 9J-J which took off at 1703 hours from R.A.F. Balderton, Nottinghamshire on 14 March 1945 on a mission to Lutzendorf to bomb the Wintershall synthetic oil plant. As an all 5 Group bomber force the raid was comprised of 244 Lancasters and 11 Mosquitoes, of which William's aircraft was one of 18 Lancasters lost on the raid. The aircraft is thought to have crashed in the Bad Windsheim area near Illesheim. William and 26 year old Warrant Officer Class I (Pilot), William A.

Johnson R.C.A.F. from Lashburn, Saskatchewan, Canada were killed in the crash and are interred together. Maurice Hunt from New Zealand, and Robert Nesbit from Northumberland were injured and sadly died on 18 March and 8 April respectively and are at rest in graves 25 and 26 next to the two Williams, the other four crew members became prisoners of war. Due to his extensive injuries Flight Sergeant S.H.H. Jobson were confined in a Hospital in Holland until the cessation of hostilities and the liberation. William enlisted in the Royal Air Force in 1940 and had completed 36 operational flights over enemy territory including Italy and Germany prior to his demise. Whilst serving as a Sergeant he had been granted a commission on 25 November 1943, and had also served with 9 Squadron, R.A.F. from June 1944. Lancaster Bomber RA546 was delivered to William's squadron on 5 March 1945 was lost on its first operation, with a total of only 5 recorded hours. The name Lutzkendorf which was in the former East Germany, no longer exists on maps of Germany, as the area is now known as Krumpa. The site for Durnbach War Cemetery was chosen, shortly after the cessation of hostilities, by officers of the British Army and Air Force, in conjunction with officers of the American Occupation Forces in whose zone Durnbach lay. The great majority of those buried here are airmen shot down over Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Austria, Hessen and Thuringia, brought from their scattered graves by the Army Graves Service.

**STAPLES, CHARLES WILLIAM JAMES.** Leading Seaman, C/JX150887.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Grove (L77).

Died 12 June 1942. Aged 21.

Son of William James and Harriett Elizabeth Staples of 12 Grosvenor Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

Also commemorated on Kennington war memorial and the Chatham Naval Memorial.

Panel 52. Column 2.

Charles enlisted in the Royal Navy as a Boy in 1936, a year after leaving the Ashford North County Modern Boys School, which he had attended from 1932. Following his initial training at H.M.S. Ganges in Suffolk, Charles served on several ships prior to his demise, they being H.M.S. Ramillies, H.M.S. Southampton, H.M.S. Firedrake, H.M.S. Heather, and eventually the 1050 ton, Hunt (Type II) escort destroyer H.M.S. Grove on which he died. Built by Swan Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd. of Wallsend-on-Tyne, H.M.S. Grove was commissioned on 5 February 1942, and as such was virtually a new ship when she was lost on 12 June 1942. Having been an escort ship in convoy AT-49 to Tobruk, Charles's ship had only one of its screws working when she ran aground near Raz Azzaz. After being refloated she was reduced to a speed of only 8 knots which obviously left the vessel vulnerable to attack. At 0537 hours on the morning of the 12 June 1942, off the coast of Sollum, Egypt, H.M.S. Grove was sunk by two torpedoes fired from the German submarine U-77 commanded by 31 year old Kapitänleutnant, Heinrich Schonder, whilst the destroyer deployed as part of the escort force of convoy MW-11, which was an eastern supply convoy going to Malta, under Rear-Admiral P.J. Vian during 'Operation Vigorous.' Two officers and 108 ratings perished when H.M.S. Grove was sunk, but thankfully at least 60 of the ships compliment survived, although different books and data etcetera

checked show a slight variance in figures regarding survivors. Having been promoted to Korvettenkapitän on 1 June 1943, Heinrich Schonder, a native of Erfurt, was lost with the rest of his crew when on his first patrol in the Type IX-D2 submarine U-200, on 24 June 1943 southwest of Iceland, by an R.A.F. Liberator aircraft of Coastal Command, just over a year after the sinking H.M.S. Grove.

**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 Ref: 28. B. 6.

Roy had been a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1936-1937.

He was an Air Gunner on Lancaster bomber NF936 SR-F which was flown by 23 year old Flying Officer (Pilot), Thomas J. Edwards, of Abertridwr, Glamorgan, Wales. The aircraft took off from R.A.F. Ludford Magna, Lincolnshire at 1709 hours on 4 November 1944, engaged on a mixed bomber raid to Bochum, Essen, Germany. Taking part on the raid were 749 aircraft, and was comprised of 384 Halifaxes, 336 Lancasters, and 29 Mosquitos, of No's 1, 4, 6 and 8 Groups. 23 Halifaxes and 5 Lancasters were lost on the mission. Luftwaffe night fighters caused most of the casualties amongst the bombers. No 346 (Free French) Squadron, based at R.A.F. 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, with in excess of 4000 buildings either destroyed or severely damaged as the result of the raid, several industrial plants and works were wrecked including the important steel works. A lot of the credit for the raids success being attributed to the work carried out by the Pathfinder Force aircraft. Due to the amount of collateral damage inflicted on the night of 4/5 November 1944, it was destined to be the last major raid on Bochum undertaken by Bomber Command during the Second World War. 23 Halifax and 5 Lancasters were lost on the raid, and the exact cause of Roy's aircraft loss is still unclear, all eight onboard the bomber were killed and are buried in the same cemetery. No.101 Squadron R.A..F were unique in having the addition task of operating the A.B.C. radio jamming device in addition to its bombing operations resulting in an extra specialist German speaking crew member being carried. 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 crew was 19 year old Sergeant (Navigator) Claud Terriere from Mauritius who has the sad distinction of being one of the youngest Bomber Command Navigators to die on operations in 1944. Roy's Lancaster was delivered to his squadron, ABC equipped on 16 August 1944, and prior to its loss had been amongst the 771 aircraft that had taken part in the key operation to Essen, Germany on 25 October 1944. When lost, the aircraft had a total of 142 hours flying, and was one of two 101 Squadron's Lancasters lost which were lost on this operation.



**STEWART, ERIC PETER.** Sergeant (Flight Engineer), 1722688.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.  
Died 17 June 1943. Aged 19.  
Son of John and Elsie Stewart of Charing, Ashford, Kent.  
Eric was a pupil at Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1935-1937.  
Buried Charing, Ashford, Kent, Cemetery. Grave Ref: 9A.

**STROVER, PERCY ELVY.** Private, 5504437.  
1st Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.  
Died 10 October 1944. Aged 25.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Son of William and Elizabeth Strover.  
Husband of Betty R Strover of Coulsden, Surrey.  
Also commemorated on Westwell, Ashford (Kent) civic war memorial plaque.  
Buried Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, Gelderland, Netherlands.  
Grave Ref: 9. A. 9.

Percy is at rest in the grave next to Joseph Hadlum from Ashford, Kent, who also served in the Hampshire Regiment but in a different battalion. Joseph was also a former pupil of the Ashford North County Modern Boys School, where Percy is remembered as Percy Elvey Strover. Percy attended the school from 1929 to 1933 at which time he resided at Buck Street, Challock, Ashford, Kent. Following his enlistment in 1940, Percy first fought in Burma before being sent to the European war theatre. His younger brother Bert Elvey Strover who thankfully survived the Second World War, was also an ex pupil of 'The North' (1934-1937), and he served in the R.E.M.E. as a Driver from 1941, and saw action in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, during the Western Europe Campaign.

**TOWN, GERALD 'Jerry' ALBERT RAYMOND.**  
Sergeant (Flight Engineer), 1217965.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 75 (New Zealand) Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 21 April 1943. Aged 22.  
Buried Esbjerg (Fourfelt) Cemetery, Denmark.  
Grave Ref: Collective grave A. 11. 11-15.  
Gerald was a crew member of Stirling bomber BF506 AA-P, that was flown by 21 year old Pilot Officer (Pilot), Alan G. Tolley, of Wellington City, New Zealand, which took off at 2205 hours on 20 April 1943 from R.A.F. Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, as part of a mixed bomber force of 425 aircraft on a bombing mission to the Baltic ports of Rostock and Stettin on the Oder. Also airborne at the same time was a small diversionary force of 11 Mosquito's to carry out the first ever high level nuisance attack on Berlin undertaken by Mosquito's, they were employed as a diversion for the main force of heavy bombers which had been assigned to attack Rostock and Stettin. Gerald's aircraft was one of 86 Stirling's that were dispatched to attack the Heinkel factory near Rostock, due to an intense smoke screen hiding the factory the bombing pattern was very scattered and with very little physical damage to the designated target inflicted. At 0300 hours on 21 April 1943 Flight Sergeant Cyril Cobb the Wireless Operator (and Air Gunner) transmitted a signal reporting that the aircrafts starboard inner engine was on

fire which was the last communication sent. Twenty six minutes after the transmission being sent, the Stirling crashed at Boegballe north of Vejle, Denmark, killing all seven crew and was later reported as having been shot down by an enemy night-fighter. Although unable to find out for certain, but after checking through various relevant data it would seem likely that the Stirling was shot down by Luftwaffe 'ace' night-fighter pilot, Gunter "Fips" Radosch of 11./NJG 3., who by the end of the hostilities had 65 victories credited to him, he survived the war and died 29 July 1988. The Stirling's crew which had included four New Zealanders, are all interred in the same cemetery. By a strange twist of fate (or scheming), another of the Stirling's crew was Frederick Earle who was a school friend of 'Jerry' at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School when he was a pupil at the school 1933-1938. At time when Gerald was a pupil he had resided at Sandpit Cottage, Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford. Now the former school friends and comrades lie in adjacent graves, both had enlisted in the R.A.F.(V.R.) in 1941. Frederick is also commemorated on Ashford civic war memorial and has a tribute to him on this Roll of Honour.

**TUTT, NORMAN PERCY.** Sergeant (Flight Engineer), 812184.  
Royal Air Force (Auxiliary). 9 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 10 April 1943. Aged 22.

Son of Percy John and Annie Elizabeth Tutt of 44 Somerset Road, Ashford, Kent.

Norman enlisted in the Royal Air Force (Auxiliary) in 1938, and was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School 1932-1935.

Buried Oudewater Protestant Cemetery, Zuid, Netherlands.

Grave Ref: Plot 6. Grave 64.

Also commemorated about two miles away from where he and his comrades died. On the opposite side of the road from the cemetery where Norman and his comrades are at rest, which is just outside the Roman Catholic Cemetery, the local inhabitants of Oudewater have erected a small but respected memorial in remembrance and honour of the seven crew of Lancaster bomber ED502 WS-V. The memorial at Oudewater is both well maintained and cared for. A remembrance service is conducted every anniversary of the crash to commemorate the seven who lost their lives, all vehicle movements are stopped, with local diversions put in place whilst the service takes place and is also very well attended every year. Norman and the six airmen who were killed with him are the only Commonwealth casualties at rest in the cemetery, and lie in adjacent graves, which are of course officially maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; unofficially they are equally well cared for by the Dutch inhabitants of Oudewater. Norman and his comrades lost their lives when the aircraft crashed at Snelrwaard, Utrecht near Oudewater, Holland after being shot down by an enemy night-fighter on the night of 10 April 1943 at 2245 hours. In a bomber force of 104 Lancasters and 5 Mosquitoes, Norman's Lancaster which was flown by 23 year old Warrant Officer (Pilot), Arthur M. White, R.N.Z.A.F. of Hamilton, Waikato, Auckland, New Zealand. The aircraft had taken off from R.A.F. Waddington, Lincolnshire at 2048 hours 10 April 1943, to attack Duisburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany. With thick cloud obscuring the target area the bombers scattered their bombs over a wide area, and 8 of the Lancasters were lost.

Lancaster bomber ED502 WS-V, had been on the strength of Norman's squadron since 21 January 1943, and by the time it was shot down had completed a total of 142 hours. It is believed that at the time of his death, Arthur White was flying his thirteenth sortie as captain of his own crew. Oudewater is a village 24 kilometres south-west of Utrecht, 9 kilometres east of Gouda, and 37 kilometres north-east of the city of Rotterdam. The cemetery is on the eastern outskirts of Oudewater, on the northern side of the road to Montfort, and contains only seven Commonwealth war graves, they being the Lancasters crew who are buried in adjacent graves.

**WHITEHEAD, FRANK RICHARD.** Private, 6283134.

'C' Company, 5th Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

Died 20 May 1940. Aged 19.

Born Canterbury, Kent. Resided Kent.

Son of Edward and Hilda Whitehead of 60 Albemarle Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Le Meillard Communal Cemetery, Somme, France.

From 1932 to 1935 Frank was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern Boys School. Only two war casualties are at rest in the above cemetery, the other being Richard Edwards who came from Islington, London and died in 1916. Frank had left for France with his battalion from Southampton on 19 April and arrived at Le Harve the next morning as a member of the British Expeditionary Force. Frank was killed in action at Le Meillard, to the north of Amiens, Somme, France, during the France and Belgium campaign, whilst trying to affect an escape in a small party, which was fleeing from a massively numerically superior and better equipped enemy force, which his battalion had already engaged the previous day, only a few miles from where he was lost his life. Franks company, commanded by Captain A.D.M. Hilton had been the first in the battalion to sight and engage German tanks with wholly inadequate arms, and also whilst at the same time being hampered by fleeing refugees near Pommera east of Doullens.

Pre war member of The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) having enlisted in 1939.

**WRATTEN, JACK.** Sergeant, 1264399.

Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 15 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died 26 February 1943. Aged 22.

Son of George and Emily Wratten of Forge House, Brookland, Romney Marsh, Kent.

Jack was a pupil at the Ashford North County Modern (Boys) School, 1932 to 1935. Also commemorated on Second World War memorial plaque at Brookland Cemetery gates, Romney Marsh, Kent, and on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey. Panel 170. Jack was on his thirteenth operational sortie over enemy territory when he died having enlisted in the R.A.F.(V.R.) in 1940. He was a crew member of Stirling bomber R9279 LS-J, which was flown by 24 year old Flight Lieutenant, Victor H. Harris, R.C.A.F. of Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. The aircraft took off from R.A.F. Bourn, Lincolnshire at 1918 hours on 26 February 1943, to take part on a bombing mission to Köln (Cologne), Germany, and was in a mixed bomber force of 427 aircraft, which was comprised of 145 Lancasters, 126 Wellingtons, 106 Halifaxes, 46 Stirlings,



and 4 Mosquitos. Almost all the bombs dropped on the city, fell within the south western area of Cologne. Of the ten aircraft that were lost on the raid, Jack's was the only Stirling, the actual cause the loss of both the aircraft and eight crew is still unclear, all are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

**Subject to more research, but the following lady may have been a pupil  
at the  
Ashford North County Modern (Girls) School.**

**HILLS, BEATRICE DOREEN.** Private, W/270394.

Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Died 29 April 1944. Aged 21.

Born and resided Kent.

Daughter of Sidney L. Hills and Elsie M. Hills of Willesborough, Ashford, Kent.  
Beatrice Hills Close, on the Little Burton Farm Estate, Kennington, Ashford,  
Kent is named in her honour and remembrance.

Buried Ashford (Bybrook) Cemetery. Grave Ref: Section Z. Grave 3035.

