

# Hothfield

## Second World War 1939 – 1945

**CROUCHER**, ARCHIBALD CECIL CHARLES. Gunner, 1597533.  
34 Battery, 12 (11th Battalion, (Finsbury Rifles) The London Regiment) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery. (Territorial Army).  
Died 13 May 1941. Aged 29.  
Born and resided Kent.  
Husband of Gwendoline Myrtle Croucher of Hothfield, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Hothfield, Ashford, Kent (St, Margaret) Churchyard.  
At the time of Archibald's demise his unit belonged to the London District based at Pentonville, and eventually consisted of 34, 35, 36 and 44 Batteries having been formed from 1 Battery, 61 Anti-Aircraft Brigade in April 1939.

**MEECH**, RICHMOND. Sergeant (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner), 910491.  
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 40 Squadron, Royal Air Force.  
Died 16 May 1941. Aged 20.  
Son of Richmond Settatree Meech and Grace Annie Meech of Hothfield, Ashford, Kent.  
Buried Reichswald Forest, Kleve, Nordrhein-Westfal, Germany.  
Grave Ref: Collective grave 17. F. 2-5.  
Richmond Meech Drive on the Little Burton Farm Estate, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, is named in his honour and remembrance.  
Richmond was a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner on Wellington bomber R1167 BL-N which was flown by 19 year old Sergeant (Pilot), William E. Moore, of Reading, Berkshire. The aircraft took off at 2210 hours on 15 May 1941, from R.A.F. Alconbury, Huntingdonshire to take part in a bombing mission to Hannover, Germany. Wellington bomber R1167 BL-N failed to return from the raid, the cause of the aircrafts loss has never been established, five of the aircrafts crew who were killed are interred in the same cemetery, Sergeant P. Addison survived the crash but was captured, and became a prisoner of war, later being incarcerated in Camp L1 and probably Camp 18A.

**REED**, FELIX JOHN. Leading Stoker, C/KX103891.  
Royal Navy, H.M.S. Bullen (K469).  
Died 6 December 1944. Aged 28.  
Son of John William and Laura Elizabeth Read.  
Husband of Rose May Read of Folkestone, Kent.  
Buried Lerwick New Cemetery, Shetland. Grave Ref: Terrace 11. Grave 26.  
H.M.S. Bullen was a 1140 ton Captain class frigate, which was built by the Bethlehem Shipyard Inc., of Hingham, Massachusetts, U.S.A. in 1943, for service with the United States Navy but was never commissioned into U.S. Navy, as she was transferred to Great Britain as a lend lease vessel upon her completion. On 6 December 1944 H.M.S. Bullen, commanded by 32 year old

Lieutenant Commander Anthony. H. Parish, R.N., from Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, was torpedoed and sunk by the German u-boat, U-775 which was commanded by Oberleutnant zur See, Erich Taschenmacher, west of Strathy Point, Cape Wrath, off the north east coast of Sutherland, Scotland. At the time of her loss H.M.S. Bullen had a ships compliment of 168 officers and ratings, 71 of whom went down with the ship including her commander, several of those lost lie in the same cemetery as Felix.

## LOST MAN

**BRIDGER**, CYRIL JOHN. Leading Stoker, C/KX 8312.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Duchess (H64).

Died 12 December 1939. Aged 24.

Son of Harold and Elizabeth Bridger of Hothfield, Ashford, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 33. Column 3.

Built by Palmers Shipbuilding & Iron Co Ltd of Jarrow-on-Tyne, H.M.S. Duchess was a 1,360 ton 'D' class destroyer which was commissioned on 24 January 1933. At the time of her tragic sinking she was commanded by 34 year old Lieutenant Commander Robert C. M. White R.N., and was only an hour away from docking at Greenock, Scotland, when she was accidentally rammed by the 31,000 ton battleship H.M.S. Barham, approximately nine miles off the Mull of Kintyre. From the ships compliment of 190, 6 officers and 123 ratings perished in the freezing waters of the Atlantic, including her Captain, who was son of Sir Robert and Lady White of Woodbridge, Suffolk.

