

# Kenardington

## Second World War 1939 – 1945

**WILSON, PETER THOMAS.** Pilot Officer.  
Royal Air Force. Not yet traced.

**COOMBER, HENRY.** Private, 6289218.  
2nd Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).  
Died at sea 17 June 1940. Aged 21.  
Born and resided Kent.

Son of William Henry and Lucy Coomber of Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent.  
Commemorated in Kenardington (St. Mary) Kent parish church, and on the Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France. Column 38.  
Henry was amongst those who died onboard H.M.T. Lancastria. Contrary to popular belief which now seems to prevail in some quarters, the evacuation of the British and French troops from France in 1940 did not end with Dunkirk. British and French forces were still being rescued at least two weeks later when Britain's worst maritime disaster of the Second World War took place. On 17 June 1940, the 16,000 ton Cunard liner which was in use as a troopship, the H.M.T. Lancastria lay approximately five miles off St Nazaire, France in the estuary of the River Loire, and was embarking soldiers, Royal Air Force personnel, and also civilian refugees, including women and children, all of whom were being evacuated from France, when the country was on the verge of collapse. The exact numbers onboard the ship will almost certainly never be known, but probably exceeded 6000; although some commentators have estimated the casualty number as high as 9000, but that figure is almost certainly wild speculation, The H.M.T. Lancastria was attacked and hit by bombs from German Junkers Ju 88 aircraft which were **probably** of KG 30, which caused her to roll over and sink within twenty minutes. Although it is not known for certain which Luftwaffe formation the bombers belong to, or even for certain exactly what type of aircraft they were, but the general consensus has been that they were Ju 88s. Aircraft of II./ KG 30 who exclusively flew Junkers Ju 88 aircraft, are known to have been attacking shipping in the estuary of the River Loire, at the time of the loss of H.M.T. Lancastria.

## LOST MAN

**STILLWELL, JOHN DIGBY.** Lieutenant, 113723.  
44th Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.  
Died at sea 5 December 1941. Aged 27.  
Born London. Resided Kent.  
Son of Clarence Digby Stillwell and Fanny Sarah Stillwell.  
Husband of Janet Cecil Stillwell of Kenardington, Ashford, Kent.  
Commemorated on Second World War memorial plaque in Appledore, Kent  
parish church, and on the Alamein Memorial, Egypt. Column 21.  
Pre war member of the Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.

