

Stowting

Second World War 1939 – 1945

The following Stowting, Ashford, Kent, casualties would not have been known or included here, but for the references to each in the little gem of a book entitled, 'Before It's All Forgotten,' by John Hammond and others from the little village of Stowting.

FAGG, LEN.

Resided Verandah Cottage, Stowting, Ashford, Kent.

Len (Leonard)? a soldier was wounded in North Africa, resulting from which he was eventually evacuated to Johannesburg, South Africa to convalesce, but unfortunately whilst recovering at Johannesburg, Len contacted Tuberculosis. After being sent back to the United Kingdom, Leonard continued his treatment at Preston Hall, British Legion Village, Aylesford, Maidstone, Kent, from where he was moved to Bournemouth, Dorset, where he died. Len was brought back to Stowting, and laid to rest next to his mother, at which time he was accorded a full military funeral. As there is no CWGC commemoration for Len, or a Second World War, Roll of Honour entry for him, and whilst unfortunately it is sadly not unusual to find a casualty missing from either sources of information, although it is by no means unique to find the same casualty missed on both, it appears to fortunately be a rare occurrence. The usual explanation for same is that the person concerned has been commemorated on a war memorial, or other form of remembrance, with the name by which they were known in a respective location.

HOARE, REGINALD. Gunner, 2065275.

468 Battery, 29 (Kent) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Died 18 May 1943. Aged 20.

Born Canterbury, Kent. Resided 'Whiteways,' Stowting, Ashford, Kent.

Son of William John and Edith Florence Hoare of Stelling Minnis, Kent.

Buried Stelling, Kent (St. Mary) churchyard.

Commemorated on Stelling Minnis, Kent, civic war memorial.

Reg was killed when the army lorry he was in was hit by an aircraft.

Pre war member of the Royal Artillery, (Royal Engineers, Territorial Army), it might be that Reg had served in the 468 Battery, 29 (Kent) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery since its formation. It being formed from the 29 Anti Aircraft Battalion Royal Engineers in August 1940 at Chatham, Kent.

SMITH, CHARLES or CHARLIE.

In the excellent book referred to above, Charlie Smith is shown as having been posted missing after the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940, and that his friends had said that he was with them on the beaches and when going out to a rescue ship, but that he never reached England. Checking the CWGC commemorations on the Dunkirk Memorial revealed four soldiers named Charles Smith, none of which 'matched' a Kent casualty. After more checks the following casualty was revealed, and as such whilst not a perfect match it seemed right to enter brief details of the casualty here. It might be that the parents of the following casualty had moved to the other side of Ashford, Kent, post the Second World War, at the time when family details were being added to the commemorations by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission:- **SMITH, CHARLES KENNETH**. Private, 6289225.

2nd Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

Died at sea 17 June 1940. Aged 21.

Born and resided Canterbury, Kent.

Son of Harry William Smith and Sarah K Smith of Charing, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Les Moutiers-en-Retz Communal Cemetery, Loire-Atlantique, France.

Grave Ref: Collective grave 8. (Screen Wall Panel 48).

Charles was amongst the many died aboard 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. 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. 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.