

Woodchurch

Second World War 1939 – 1945

DUNNELL, G. Although there are only seven Commonwealth casualties commemorated by the CWGC with this surname, two of them have G as their first initial. Although the civic war memorial at Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent is amongst the worst of about 500 photographed for this website, and is the worst in the Ashford, Kent area. Ironically the panel commemorating this casualty is both clean, clear, and in fairly good condition, upon which he has a single initial. Due to same, both 'matching' casualties are briefly commemorated below, as it has not been possible to positively ascertain which is the Woodchurch casualty. It should be pointed out however, that a positive Woodchurch casualty has been located, and entered below as a 'Lost Man.' He might actually be the man commemorated on the war memorial, having possibly been known by all and sundry with a Christian name begging with G.

DUNNELL, GRAHAM GREAVES. Marine, PO/X 3868.
Royal Marines, H.M.S. Hood.
Died 24 May 1941. Aged 19.
Son of Albert Dunnell and of Gladys Dunnell of Colton, Norfolk.
Commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Panel 58, Column 3, and on the H.M.S. Hood Memorial, in the Hood Chapel, Church of St John the Baptist, Boldre, Hampshire. For comprehensive information appertaining to Graham's ship, please see the excellent website www.hmshood.com it being that of the H.M.S. Hood Association.

DUNNELL, GEORGE MALCOLM. Lieutenant, 138530.
Durham Light Infantry.
Died 28 July 1943. Aged 31.
Born Exeter. Resided Middlesex.
Son of George William and Kate Dunnell.
Husband of Daphne Morna Christine Dunnell of Scorrier, Cornwall.
Buried Wallasey (Rake Lake) Cemetery, Cheshire. Grave Ref: Section 15.
Grave 19.

FAUX, FREDERICK WILLIAM. Leading Seaman, C/J1123436.
Royal Navy, H.M. Submarine Oxley,
Died 10 September 1939. Aged 30.
Son of Charles Henry and Ann Faux.
Husband of Doris May Faux of Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent.
Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 33. Column 1.
H.M.S. Oxley was tragically sunk by the submarine H.M.S. Trident that it was patrolling with, and only Lieutenant Commander H. G. Bowman who was the

Commanding Officer, and Able Seaman Gluckes who was a lookout survived the sinking off the coast of Obrestad, Norway, although another officer Lieutenant F K Manley R.N.R. was initially seen swimming in the water, but was also sadly lost. Various relevant data accessed conflict, as some state that H.M.S. Oxley was hit by a torpedo fired from H.M.S. Trident, whilst other records state that she was accidentally rammed, but most state the former including the findings resulting from the Board of Enquiry which total exonerated the officers and ratings aboard H.M.S. Trident. The Board found that H.M.S Oxley was some way out of position at the time of her loss. Both submarines were patrolling off the coast of Norway on Sunday 10 September 1939 and had both been in regular contact with each other. H.M.S. Triton spotted an unidentified submarine, and believing it to be H.M.S. Oxley a number of signals of recognition were flashed by H.M.S. Triton. As no reply was forthcoming from the unidentified submarine, following several challenges, Triton fired two torpedoes that were direct hits on Frederick's submarine. After closing to the area of the sinking three survivors were located and rescued by H.M.S. Triton..

DRAIN, JOHN ARTHUR. Sergeant (Air Gunner), 1394720.

Royal Air Force (Volunteer Reserve). 57 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

Died Monday 21 December 1942. Aged 20.

Born at Erpingham, Sandy Lane, Beddington, Mitcham, Surrey 3 June 1922.

Son of Arthur Edward Drain and Kathleen Drain (née West).

Buried Geraardsbergen (Grammont) Communal Cemetery, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Grave Ref: Collective grave 6-9.

After residing at Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent, John's family resided for several years at Bonnington, Ashford, Kent. John was the Upper Turret Gunner of Lancaster bomber W4223 DX-P, which had a bomb load of four pound incendiary bombs when it took off from R.A.F. Scampton, Lincolnshire at 17.37 hours on an operation to bomb Munich, Germany, as the Lancaster crossed the coast of Belgium it was picked up on enemy radar and at approximately 1130 hours the aircraft was intercepted by a Messerschmitt Bf110 German night-fighter and shot down over Sint-Maria-Lierde, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium crashing in the hamlet of Kakebeke, only the rear gunner Sergeant Roden Pickford R.N..Z.A.F. survived the crash, but badly injured he was captured and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner of war. Roden died in New Zealand in 1987. For lots more information appertaining to the crash, and recovery of John's aircraft, please see the website of the Belgian Air History Association at www.baha.be Making mention of same here, also allows the transcriber to publicly acknowledge, all of the additional help and valuable specialist assistance freely given by the Belgian Air History Association. In particular Wim Govaerts for his kindness and patience with me, and providing several additional photographs and extra information.

GOUGH, ALBERT GORGE. Aircraftman 2nd Class, 1336935.
Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.
Died 3 October 1942. Aged 20.
Son of Charles Henry and Minnie Elizabeth Gough.
Buried Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent (All Saints) Churchyard.

WHITE, A Not yet traced.

BARTON, A. Not yet traced.

BELL, D. Not yet traced.

FAIRBROTHER, AMOS. Private, 4038703.
2nd (Airborne) Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment. 1st Air Landing
Brigade.
Died Friday 22 September 1944. Aged 30.
Born Sussex. Resided South East London.
Son of Mr and Mrs W. Fairbrother of Eltham, Kent.
Husband of Hilda Fairbrother of Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent.
Commemorated on the Groesbeek Memorial, Gelderland, Netherlands. Panel
3.
Died during "Operation Market Garden." Two days previously during the same
battle at Arnhem, Holland where Amos fell, 22 year old Lance Sergeant John
Baskeyfield of the same battalion won the Victoria Cross (posthumous) for his
heroic action engaging enemy tanks, like Amos he is also commemorated on
the Groesbeek Memorial.

MIDDLETON, HARRY WILLIAM THOMAS. Stoker 2nd Class, C/KX105320.
Royal Navy, H.M.S. Leda. (J79).
Died 20 September 1942. Aged 21.
Son of Richard and Susan Fanny Middleton.
Husband of Christina Margaret Middleton of Birmingham.
Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 62. Column 2.
Built at Devonport Dockyard, by Richardson Westgarth, H.M.S. Leda was a
850 ton Halcyon class minesweeper, she was commissioned on 19 May
1938. On 20 September 1942, H.M.S. Leda commanded by Commander
A.H. Wynne-Edwards, R.N. was torpedoed and sunk in the Norwegian Sea
south-west off the coast of Spitsbergen, by the German Submarine U-435
commanded by 31 year old Kapitänleutnant, Siegfried Strelow, who to his
credit picked up several survivors of the sinking. Harry's ship left Archangel on
13 September 1942, on the return leg as part of the ill fated Convoy PQ17
which is often referred to along the lines as being probably the "unluckiest PQ
Russian Convoy" due to the extraordinary high number of vessels sunk and
men who were lost. Korvettenkapitän, Siegfried Strelow later perished with the
rest of his crew when the U-435 was sunk on 9 July 1943 by a Wellington
bomber of 179 Squadron, Royal Air Force.

BURR, JAMES ORLANDO. Midshipman.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Raven.

Died 22 April 1940. Aged 19.

Son of Frank E Burr and Gertrude Burr of Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Hampshire. Grave G. 8. 15.

At the time that James was at H.M.S. Raven it was a Royal Naval Air Station at Eastleigh Aerodrome, Hampshire, made famous as being the place where the original Spitfires had been tested. It remained as H.M.S. Raven until 1946, and now having been very much enlarged since the naval relinquishment is Southampton Airport.

RUBIE, HARRY. Stoker, C/K66668.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Falcon.

Died 11 January 1940. Aged 23.

Son of William D and Sophia J. Rubie.

Buried Hong Kong Cemetery, China. Section 17B. Grave 9897.

Harry's ship was a China River Gunboat with a ships compliment of 55, in February 1942 she was handed over to the Chinese Navy and was renamed the Luan Huan, after several name changes she remained in Chinese Navy service until 1974.

LOST MEN

BENNETT, CYRIL FLOYD. Major, 132797.

1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry, Royal Armoured Corps.

Died 7/8 January 1944. Aged 26.

Born Plymouth, Devon. Resided Bristol, Gloucestershire.

Son of Harry and Hilda Bennett of Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Husband of Madge Bennett of Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent (All Saints) Churchyard.

Pre war member of the Inns of Court Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps.

DUNNELL, KENNETH STANLEY. Private, 3053771.

2nd Battalion, Royal Scots.

Died 29 August 1945. Aged 35.

Born London. Resided Canterbury, Kent.

Son of Arthur William and Matilda Elizabeth Dunnell of Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent.

Buried Yokohama War Cemetery, Japan. Grave Ref: British Section R. B. 1.

Pre war member of the Royal Scots.

Yokohama War Cemetery was constructed by the Australian War Graves Group after the Second World War, and contains the graves of the Commonwealth servicemen who died in Japan as prisoners of war, or with the occupying forces following the cessation of hostilities.

JACOBS, REGINALD HENRY. Gunner, 2057912.
338 Battery, 34 (Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment) Searchlight
Regiment, Royal Artillery.
Died 20 September 1940.

Born North London. Resided South East London.

Buried Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent (All Saints) Churchyard.

The 34 (Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery, was formed in August 1940 from the 34 Anti-Aircraft Battalion, (Royal Engineers), Royal Artillery, based at Blackheath, South East London of which Reginald had been a pre war member. Both units were Royal Artillery Territorial Army Regiments. The 34 (Kent) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery (T.A.) became the 633 (Kent) Regiment, Royal Artillery (T.A.), in January 1945 engaged on Home Defence Duties. 633 (Kent) Regiment, Royal Artillery (T.A.), became part of the 307 Infantry Brigade, and served in the North West Europe campaign during April 1945, and returned to the United Kingdom the following month.

RACINE, MAX. Gunner, 1584876.

338 Battery, 34 (Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment) Searchlight
Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Died 20 September 1940.

Born South West London. Resided North London.

Buried Woodchurch, Ashford, Kent (All Saints) Churchyard.

As both Max Racine and Reginald Jacobs died whilst serving in the same unit, on the same day it is likely that their deaths were the result of enemy action in Woodchurch or an accident.

