

Rudgwick War Memorial

Holy Trinity Church

Second World War

ROLL OF HONOUR

*Also includes those we know of, but not commemorated in Holy Trinity Church,
page 36 onwards*

Flower Festival 1974, Second World War Memorial Plaque is under the right hand flag





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Able Seaman Peter William Port

Killed on the night of **12 December 1939**, serving on HMS Duchess, out of Chatham Dockyard, in fog off The Mull of Kintyre, a ship's electrician, aged 19.

Peter was a son of Thomas Port and Lydia, née Mobbs, who lived in Jasmine Cottage, Cox Green. He is remembered on the Chatham Memorial as well as in Rudgwick church. His ship, a destroyer, sank as a result of being rammed midships by the older but much bigger battleship HMS Barham, which she was escorting to Greenock from Gibraltar, herself sailing from the China Seas, almost home. Duchess capsized and exploded, its crew mostly below asleep, any survivors drowning in the icy waters. Peter's best friend, Ernest Swinhoe, from their time in Hong Kong was one of the survivors, on watch on the guns when the collision occurred. 139 men lost their lives, 29 survived. Ever since that day, however, ships have had escape hatches built into their sides, to prevent the fate that befell many of the Duchess's crew.

As a boy, Peter had been a choirboy in the church. His father was from Cox Green, his mother from Northants. His brothers, Ben and Tom (sometimes known as John), also joined the navy. The latter had a long career from boy seaman in 1934 to Lieutenant in 1977. He heard of Peter's death when in Portsmouth - he was not listed among survivors. The family reckon it was Miss Penghilly, headmistress of Ellens Green School and daughter of a Cornish lifeboatman, who inspired the brothers to go to sea. He also had a sister Wendy.

The family were well known in Rudgwick as builders (father and grandfather, with Edwin Reeves), and his aunt Ivy was a teacher who went to work on a motorcycle, was very well known in Rudgwick in the flower shows and the church, and late in her long life, a little booklet about her interesting life was written. His uncle Thomas died in The Great War from illness. In 1939, Ports also lived in Jasmine House and Bankside, both neighbouring Peter's family cottage.



Peter Port

HMS Duchess

Chatham Memorial



Corporal Raymond (Ray) George Shrubb

Ray, as he was known, died of a brain tumour whilst on sick leave from France on **12 March 1940**. He was 20 years old. His parents were Walter (George), from a Rudgwick family working at Hope Farm when Ray was born, and Mabel, née Penfold, born in Duncton. The Shrubbs were true sons of the soil, good with livestock and horses, reliable workers, to judge from the time they spent on each farm. Ray was the only son; he had a sister Phyllis. Ray's funeral and his burial were, like his parents' marriage, in Rudgwick, where he lies in the churchyard under a CWGC headstone: "For you dear rest and peace for us happy memories". His funeral was with military honours. The Last Post was sounded.

Ray had been serving with the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment since war broke out, but was sent home in January 1940. He died in the Emergency Hospital at Cuckfield. It was not a good time to be seriously ill. He had a girlfriend in Loxwood called Edith.

The Shrubbs lived at Mill Farm, Gibbons Mill, where his father worked as a farm carter for the bailiff Mr Hamilton, and would have known the family of Mrs Charman, who would die later in 1940 from enemy action in Horsham, as she too was brought up at Mill Farm, and whose parents sent flowers to Ray's funeral. Members of the Henderson/Keate family who owned Mill Farm also sent flowers from Scotland.

Ray's war was short, but we know the 1st and 4th Battalions of the Kents went to France with the BEF in 1939. It seems more likely he was in the 4th, a Territorial unit. The battle for France was from 10 May, well after his death. His regiment were digging trenches in expectation of Great War style fighting at the time Ray came home on leave, so Ray will, as did the never have fired a gun in anger. Did he join the army before the war or was he one of 1.5m men conscripted before the end of 1939?



Holy Trinity graveyard

Ray Shrubb's CWGC headstone



SOLDIER'S FUNERAL AT BILLINGSHURST

**Cpl. R. G. [Shrubb] Served in
France: Died in Hospital**

WREATH FROM COMRADES

Corporal Raymond George [Shrubb], of Mill Farm Cottage, The Haven, Billingshurst, who served in France from the outbreak of war till the end of January, was buried in [Rudgwick] Churchyard on Saturday, after a service in the Parish Church. His coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and a bugler from his Regiment sounded the Last Post and Reveille.

Corporal [Shrubb] died in Haywards Heath Emergency Hospital on the previous Tuesday, from a tumor on the brain. He was 20 years of age. He is survived by his mother and father and one sister.

The mourners at the funeral included: Mr. and Mrs. M. [Shrubb] (father and mother), Miss Phyllis [Shrubb] (sister), Mrs. M. [Shrubb] Sen. (grandmother), Mr. and Mrs. Langley, Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Mr. and Mrs. Skinner, Mr. and Mrs. D. [Shrubb], Mr. F. [Shrubb] (uncles and aunts), Mr. Langley Jun., Mrs. Joyce, Mr. Francis Jun., Miss Francis, Mr. and Mrs. Skinner Jun. and Mrs. T. Fern (cousins), Miss Edith Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, Mr. and Mrs. Neal, Mrs. F. Etheridge, Mr. David Henderson, Mr. F. Etheridge, Miss Boxall, Miss Chamberlain and Mr. and Mrs. Nobes.

Floral tributes were received as follows:

With deepest sympathy to our loving Ray, from his broken hearted Mum and Dad and Sister Phyllis. In deepest sympathy from his Commanding Officer, Officers and Men of Battalion in which Cpl. [Shrubb] served. From Granny [Shrubb]. From Granny Penfold and Auntie, Uncle and Cousins from Toun House. Aunt, Uncle and Cousins (Shipley). Auntie, Uncle and Cousins (Chichester). Auntie Eth, Uncle Jimmy and Tom ([Rudgwick]). Cousins George, Winnie, Gladys and Tom. Mary and Annie [Shrubb] (Phyllis and Stan). Uncle Dick and Aunt Elsie. Auntie, Uncle and Cousin (Chelmsford). Aunt Rhoda, Uncle Jim and Kathleen (Guildford). Girl friend Edith (Loxwood). Miss D. Henderson and Harry Keate (Kilmelford, Scotland). Mrs. D. Henderson and family (Vacehry, Cranleigh). The Mill Farm Cottages. May, Win and Margaret (Kilmelford, Scotland). Mr. and Misses Secretan and Mr. Nolford Secretan (Swaynes). Miss Gladys Boxall. Mr. and Mrs. Nobes (Plaistow). Mr. E. N. and C. Birchmore, A. and E. Brighty (Tunbridge Wells). Mr. and Mrs. Napper and family. Fred and Joyce Etheridge. Mr. and Mrs. Beacher. Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Eddy Francis and Elsie Francis (Logmore). Mr. and Mrs. Francis, Frankie and Peggy, and Mr. Thayne. Mr. and Mrs. Mills, daughter and Benny Cooper (Loxwood). Mr. and Mrs. Charman (Blue Ship). Mr. and Mrs. Jeans ("Lock"). Mr. and Mrs. Smith (Okehurst). Mr. and Mrs. Hammond. Evelyn and Jessie. Mr. and Mrs. Garton (Rudgwick). Mr. Newbury, May and Olive. From Pennthorpe School. The Mill House, Matron, Hilda, Miriam and Miss Fairbanks.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. George Hilton and Sons, of Haywards Heath.

County Times funeral report
(misleading headline suggests as at
Billingshurst)

Cuckfield Hospital, wartime buildings in use until 1991



Private Arthur Hurst

Ambushed during the withdrawal to Dunkirk (the battle for France), **20 May 1940**, aged 21. He was serving with 2/5th Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, and was already working as a bricklayer.

He was a son of George Hurst, a carpenter born in Horsham, and Jessie, née Liggins, from Hammersmith, who lived at Greenhurst in Tisman's Common. His brother Fred was killed in 1945 (page 31 below). Arthur joined Rudgwick School in 1923.

2/5th Queen's were a new Territorial battalion formed in 1939, part of 169 brigade, one of six Queen's battalions, all of which fought in France in 1940. He will have joined up at Stoughton Barracks, Guildford. All Queen's soldiers wore the paschal lamb cap badge with pride.

2/5th Queen's were at Pont-Remy near Abbeville (about 30 hour's march from Dunkirk) on the date Arthur was killed. Others were taken prisoner by the Germans that day. Many were caught or killed trying to cross the wide River Somme, not far from the coast. Apparently, the French were not too thrilled to see them either, chaining their wells. Soldiers were so hungry they resorted to stealing from farms.

"After crossing the Oise on May 17, German Gen. Heinz Guderian's advance troops reached Amiens two days later. On May 20 they swept on and reached Abbeville, thus blocking all communications between north and south. By the next day motorized divisions had taken over the line of the Somme from Péronne to Abbeville, forming a strong defensive flank."
(*Britannica*)

His deployment to France in a hurry does beg a question. One book, albeit a different battalion, describes them as "under-trained, unprepared and under-armed"; another source about the same brigade: "heavy casualties due to the men having very little training". He and his brother Frederick, 1945, are remembered together in Rudgwick, Arthur also con the Dunkirk Memorial.



Dunkirk Memorial



Arthur Hurst

2nd Lieutenant Holford Cave Secretan

Holford Secretan served with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment in Belgium. He was 24 when he died of wounds received at Broek Straat, a row of houses, at Anseghem (south west of Oudenaarde), on **23 May 1940**. The BEF advanced into Belgium, fiercely fighting the Germans in a vain attempt to stop their relentless advance towards France. Later on, they made a gallant stand to protect the panzer breakthrough protecting the rear of the retreat to Dunkirk, with many more losses.

In 1945, his father, Spencer Secretan, the third generation of his family to have spent 50 years an underwriter at Lloyds, wrote to the papers seeking his son's fate, as he had not ever had any confirmation of his status as a fatal casualty or as a prisoner. Mr Secretan appealed to returning PoWs for information, "last seen 22 May, placed on a truck going to Casualty Clearing Station at Vichte (a nearby village). News gratefully received". This was all too common a fate for families. In October, 1940, he was erroneously reported to be a PoW in the local paper, which also divulged that he had been educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge, and became a schoolmaster at Woodbridge School, Suffolk, where he was in the Special Reserve. He had lived all his life in Rudgwick (born near Dorking). Holford was his grandfather's name. His body was never found; he is commemorated on the Dunkirk Memorial, at his college, and on a family memorial in Rudgwick church (choir stall), and on a private stone in woodland next to Swaynes by Bowcroft Lane.

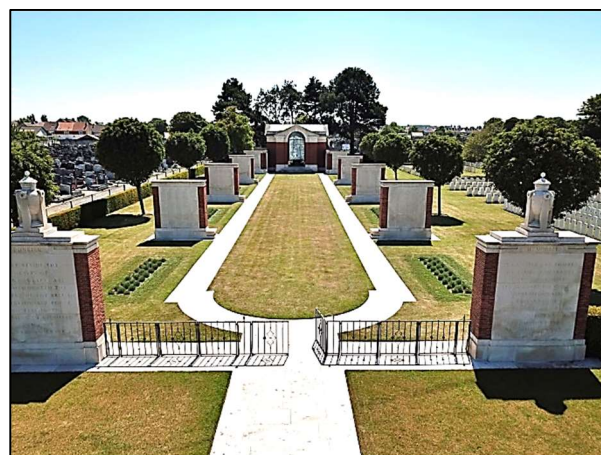
Spencer and Mary (née Cave-Browne) had seven children, Holford the only boy. His sisters were Muriel, Ann, Molly, Henrietta, Rachel and Joyce. The family lived at Swaynes Farm, owning land across the east of Rudgwick village, and always reckoned to be friendly and welcoming neighbours to users of footpaths, and much involved in the village. Sadly, Holford's mother had died in 1934, aged only 51. That, and his status as he only boy, help us understand Spencer's obvious grief for his lost son. His cousin Edward Cave-Browne, killed 1943, is remembered in Rudgwick (page 25).

Holford Secretan seated centre



**Holford
Secretan**





**The Secretan choir stall inscription in
Holy Trinity church**

Dunkirk Memorial

Private Leslie Ronald Thompson

Captured in France, having enlisted in 1/5th Battalion, The Queen's Regiment, he was taken as a PoW to Lamsdorf (Lambinowice), near Krakov in Poland, where he died in captivity on **6th November 1940**, aged 21, and was buried in Rakowicki Cemetery, Krakov. On his gravestone: "He died for freedom and honour. Loved by all who knew him, little pal".

Leslie joined 1/5th Queen's, a Territorial battalion formed in 1939, at Stoughton Barracks, Guildford. They were part of 169 Brigade, sent to France on 2 April 1940. His battalion was repatriated from Dunkirk in late May to reform. But it seems likely that Leslie was captured before Dunkirk.

He was the son of Frederick and stepmother Elizabeth Thompson who lived at Bay Cottage in Tisman's Common. Frederick (often known as Frank) who came from a large Horsham family was a bricklayer's labourer (1901), a bricksetter at the Sussex Brick Company either in Warnham or Southwater (1911), a gardener at Bucks Green Place (1921), then a boot repairer, but was "slightly incapacitated" by 1939. Leslie was born in Bucks Green, his birth mother Clara Stevenson, who was from Bermondsey. She died in 1923, when Leslie was only four, and was buried in Rudgwick. She had a younger son William, who also served in the army.

His father was married three times, firstly to Emma, who was Clara's sister. They had two surviving children, Leslie's older step siblings. Maurice and Elsie joined Rudgwick School in 1915, transferring from North Heath. Leslie followed in 1924 (after his mother's death), joined two years later by William. In 1924 and 1926, they lived at Wanford Cottages. There were no children from the third marriage. Many changes of occupation and home were all too common in the early 20th century. We do not know what Leslie did after leaving school.



**Rakowicki
Cemetery,
Krakov**



Lamsdorf Camp, 1942
©Imperial War Museum



Captain Hugh John (Jock) MacLiesh

“Jock” MacLiesh, a career officer, enlisted in 1938, but died in the El Daba Desert, Libya, on **18 November 1940**, aged 22. The local paper only ran a story on him in 1942. It tells us he had two sisters; he was a scholarship boy at Stowe School followed by Sandhurst, where he won the history prize. Joining the 2nd Battalion, King’s Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster) in 1938, he served in Palestine running a prison, and by 1940, the battalion was sent to Libya.

He was a writer of poetry and short stories, not so surprising as his mother wrote over a 100 novels as Dorothy Black (her maiden name, 1880-1977), by this time divorced, who lived at Dukes Cottage in Cox Green. Hugh (known as Jock), through his mother, was a grand nephew of Frederick Delius, the composer. She married Jock’s father, also Hugh McLiesh, and they moved to Burma where she began to write, and where Jock, and his sister Mary, were born and raised as was his father, an east India merchant, before him. There are multiple levels of confusion over the surname, as it is variously spelt Mc or Mac, and Liesh or Leish. His father at their marriage signed as MacLiesh, as it is also spelt on the Rudgwick memorial. In the military record it is equally confused, MacLiesh on Jock’s war grave: “When we remember today, whence was sorrow”, and MacLeish in the regimental record. His father died in Guildford in 1942, it is said in a bicycling accident, but they had moved to Cox Green in about 1937, Dorothy staying there until at least 1956.

His battalion was based at Mersa Matruh, between Sidi Barrani and El Alamein, leading up to his death. When Sidi Barrani was evacuated on the 17th September 1940 by the British forces (at the time of the Italian advance) the 2nd Battalion covered the withdrawal of troops. The war in the desert was a relentless series of battles, operations, sieges and raids across the scorching sands of Libya and Egypt, but many casualties occurred from Italian bombing. Hugh is buried in the El Alamein War Cemetery. He is also remembered in Ewhurst church, where his mother had a plaque put up recording his (initial) burial in Oasis El Daba. She had received a letter, dated 26 October, arriving after his death saying he was well and due a weekend pass.



Alamein War
Cemetery

County Times
1942

**Death of Son of
Sussex Novelist**

CAPTAIN Hugh John MacLiesh, only son of Dorothy Black, the novelist, of The Duke's Cottage, Rudgwick, died in Libya on active service, in November, 1940, aged 22.

Captain MacLiesh won a scholarship to Stowe, and from there went to Sandhurst, where he gained first and second history certificates. In 1938, he joined the King's Own Royal Regiment and was sent to Palestine, where he was put in charge of a prison. Two years later he was sent to Libya.

Captain MacLiesh wrote poetry which was bought in America and also a few stories, one of which will be published in "The Argosy" magazine shortly.

Although only 22, he left £1,700, and as an example of his thrift he took out an insurance policy instead of buying a car. He also left £10 free of all duty to Mrs. Reeves, of 7, Mill Cottages, Bucks Green, who looked after him in his youth.

West Sussex County Times 27th February 1942

Rhoda Mary Charman (née Napper)

The death of Rhoda and husband Ernest George Charman was the result of a bomb dropped on 16 Orchard Road Horsham on **29 November 1940**. She was born in Rudgwick, daughter of William and Mary Napper of Weavers, Drungewick Lane, Loxwood (on the Rudgwick boundary). William was an electrician but had been disabled for nine years. They had previously lived at Mill Farm, Gibbons Mill, where William had been responsible for the hydro-electric plant at the old mill.

In 1940, Rhoda was aged 23, Ernest 24, and a member of The Home Guard. Their daughter Betty aged nearly 2 survived in her cot. Seven in total were killed that night; three other children, including two evacuees, were killed as other houses were severely damaged. The Charmans were buried in Hills Farm Cemetery, Rhoda's name is on the Rudgwick War Memorial.

Two bombs fell, one in the street, a long, straight road off Depot Road. A burst water main hampered firemen tackling the fires, and a bus was passing injuring the driver. The Salvation Amy were on hand. The story ran in the West Sussex County Times, which could only report that it happened in "a south-east town". Horsham surely knew. Today 16 is a smart post-war semi with a red front door.

Ernest's parents had lived with them in September 1939, but had moved to Denne Road by this time. In an online register of civilian deaths, all the dead were named. Others were Alfred Bullard, 64, at No 9; Percy Lawrence, 46, Joan Hunt, 10, evacuee from Peckham, and Audrey Sexton, 6, evacuee from Tooting, all at No 10; Raymond Waters, 14, at No 12. Ray's brother sleeping in the same bedroom survived and later was father of a latter day Tisman's Common resident, Ray apparently killed by the blast with no mark on his body. All civilians were classed as war dead by the CWGC. There were no other civilian fatalities in Horsham during the war, just that of a Horsham fireman injured at Colgate, also in 1940. Her brothers who died in the conflict, both born in Rudgwick, are also on Rudgwick's memorial (see pages 17 and 21).

Another victim of the bombs was Norah Bristow, who was to take up her post as the new headmistress of Slinfold School on 2 December. The school log book refers to her being granted two days leave to salvage some of her furniture as "owing to enemy action my house was bombed on Friday November 29th and rendered uninhabitable". She lived at 72 Depot Road, 1 minute's walk from the bomb site.

**Rhoda and
Ernest at home
in their garden**



Seven Killed When Germans Bomb South-East Town

UNION JACKS FLUTTER FROM DAMAGED WINDOWS

ONE child had a miraculous escape and three other children, including two orphans, were killed last week when a hostile plane dropped two bombs on a south-east inland town, causing the deaths of seven people and damaging a number of houses.

But the spirit of the survivors is ungalloped, being typified by the Union Jacks that adorn the jagged window frames, and the sentiments of the mother of one of the orphans, who bravely said she would prefer her daughter to be killed than to live, perhaps maimed for always.

A rescue party thought they had found all the people in one house, but a Council employee hearing a faint cry, made his way through the wreckage, balanced on a ledge and rescued a baby girl.

She was still in her cot, cold, with belts on the bedclothes and the string from a picture hanging round her neck. She was quickly taken to a place of safety and was cared for by a local doctor, with whose children she was seen playing the day afterwards.

All the neighbours did what they could for the unfortunate ones and the Salvation Army quickly arrived on the scene, dispensing tea and refreshments. The bursting of a water main hindered the Fire Brigade, who were obliged to fill buckets from a crater in the road made by one of the two bombs, but in a very short space of time all the services were working efficiently, and rescue work proceeding apace.

relief will be gladly given on application.

Persons desiring to inspect property salvaged and stored can do so on application and the Surveyor to the Council will issue the necessary authority for the removal of such effects upon being satisfied as to the ownership. For this purpose those inspecting and claiming to remove furniture are asked to produce their National Registration Identity cards.

In order to meet urgent cases of need, arrangements have now been made whereby advances payments of compensation up to limited amounts will be made in respect of damage to essential household furniture and personal clothing, where the resources readily available for replacing damaged furniture and clothing are limited.

Advances in respect of furniture will be made where the total income of the claimant's household does not exceed £400 a year, in respect of clothing where the total income of the claimant does not exceed £250 a year if there are no dependants, or £400 a year if there are dependants. An advance in respect of furniture will be made up to £50 or the amount of the damage, whichever is the

BU'S DRIVER INJURED

Fifteen people were treated for injuries, including the driver of a bus, whose vehicle was damaged by the explosion.

The local Council are extremely grateful for the services rendered by the military authorities both with personnel and equipment, and they wish to express their appreciation of the individual acts of kindness on the part of householders in the vicinity who gave shelter and help to those in distress.

The Clerk to the Council affected by the disaster writes: We are most anxious to assist those who have raised questions with regard to claims for the loss or damage of property and effects. The first step to take is to apply for form V.O.W.1., which can be obtained from the Clerk to the Council.

Claimants are asked to note that this form, duly filled in, must be sent by the claimant to the District Valuer, Brighton, within 30 days after the loss or damage has occurred.

The Government state that the extent to which payments may be made in respect of claims will not be determined until the end of hostilities and that no payment will be made in the meantime.

In addition to private and household goods which have been stored for protection, Rescue and Demolition Parties have salvaged a considerable quantity of personal effects, jewellery, watches, handbags, etc., and much has been traced to owners and handed over. A few items remain for identification. Will personal inquiries be addressed to the Council Office.



West Sussex County Times
An anonymous town

Rhoda Charman and daughter Betty

Trooper Benjamin Herbert Hickman

Benjamin served in the Headquarters of the 1st Armoured Brigade (part of 2nd Armoured Division), Royal Armoured Corps. He was killed at Phaleron, close to Athens in Greece, on **20 April 1941** the day after his 22nd birthday. He is buried in the Phaleron War Cemetery, his grave inscribed, “Down in our hearts he is living yet, we loved him too dearly to forget”.

He was born in Croydon, the son of Benjamin Hickman and Eliza Pattenden. In 1939 he lived with his father and sister Mary at The Croft, Lynwick Street, also with his step-mother Lydia. Benjamin Jr was a gardener, his father, from Staffordshire, a council labourer. His sister Mary worked in a cattery. Before coming to Rudgwick, they had lived in Rowhook, but in Warnham parish. In 1921, the Hickmans had lived in Croydon. His father died in 1944, but Lydia remained at The Croft until her death in 1948.

His unit was sent to Egypt, then to Greece as part of General Wilson’s army, known as W Force, in order to try to stop the German invasion. Arriving on 7 March, they had to be withdrawn on 29 April 1941, having been unsuccessful. Between 10 and 18 April the battle of Mount Olympus raged, after which came the retreat to Piraeus Harbour, and the air battle of Athens on 20 April (in which Roald Dahl flew), the day on which Benjamin was killed. it was also the day on which the Greek III Army Corps surrendered. It is not known what his unit was doing that day.

Phaleron War Cemetery, Greece



Phaleron, in the Italian sector (brown) just east of the Peloponnese, very near Athens Greece was divided among the Axis powers, Italians, Germans (red), Bulgarians (green)

Third Officer Margaret (Peggy) Eulalia Chappé-Hall

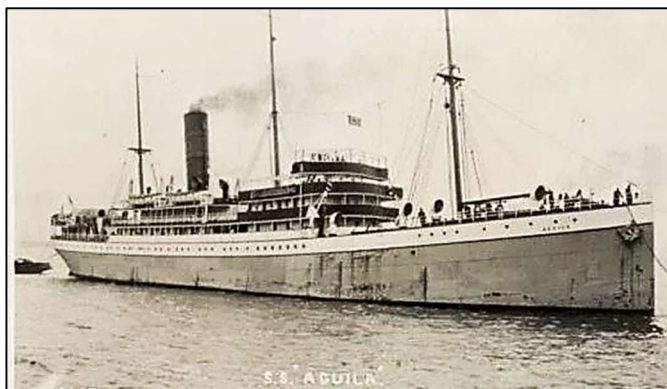
Margaret, or Peggy, was a hospital trainee in Weymouth when war broke out. Soon, she was serving in the Women's Royal Naval Service (Wrens), at first in Pembroke, then in Scarborough in HMS President II, an unassuming house, actually a secret Y Station (one of many) handling signals intelligence, feeding messages to Bletchley Park, a notable success being the sinking of Bismarck in May 1941 (though at the time she was still in Pembroke). Peggy was one of 12 Scarborough Wrens who volunteered for duty in Gibraltar, where she would have been one of the first to serve in a similar wireless intercept role there, based in a tunnel. These Wrens, 21 altogether, were travelling on SS Arguila from Liverpool. The ship was in convoy carrying general cargo, but was attacked off Fastnet by a German U-boat wolfpack. She was torpedoed on passage from Liverpool, at 03.10am on **19 August 1941**. Only one of 21 Wrens aboard survived. It was the first such attack of the war, ten other ships also sunk, and the last time naval personnel travelled on a merchant ship.

She was 26 years old, born in Maharashtra, India, the only child of the Revd. John and Dulcibella Chappé-Hall. Her father had died in India in 1926. She is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial as well as in Rudgwick. Her mother placed a newspaper announcement stating she was "in proud and ever-devoted memory, per ardua ad alta". Dulcibella and Peggy were registered living together at Forge Cottage, Bucks Green from about 1937 to 1939. Dulcibella had previously lived at Green Lanes, Bucks Green for two years. She also served as a Wren (a Chief Officer) in the war, but was in hospital in Weymouth in late 1939. Dulcibella continued to own Forge Cottage until about 1951 after which she moved to Grundisburgh, Suffolk.

SS Aguilá

WRENS Memorial (National Memorial Arboretum)

Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Trooper Percy Alfred Napper

Percy (Perce) Alfred Napper, 4th Royal Tank Regiment in the Royal Armoured Corps, was seriously injured in action but died on the operating table on **22 November 1941** at Tobruk, Libya, aged 30. He is buried in the Tobruk War Cemetery. He married Mary (Marie) Gwen Amies, of Billingshurst in 1936. His name is also on the Billingshurst War Memorial. "Lovingly remembered by Marie, Eileen and Jean". In 1939, Marie, his wife, was living with Peter and Mary Buckman at 4, Five Oaks Cottages, Billingshurst. Perce had served in the Tank Corps since 1929 or earlier. There were two children, Eileen and Jean. Mary subsequently married again to Joseph Laurence in 1944.

He was born in Rudgwick, daughter of William and Mary Napper of Weavers, Drungewick Lane, Loxwood (on the Rudgwick boundary). William was an electrician but had been disabled for nine years. They had previously lived at Mill Farm, Gibbons Mill, where William had been responsible for the hydro-electric plant at the old mill. His sister Rhoda (page 13) had already been killed by a bomb in Orchard Road Horsham in 1940, and his brother Harold (page 21) would be killed later in the war, 1942.

The 4th Royal Tank Regt sailed for the Mediterranean on 18 December 1940 in HMT *City of London*. They endured an Atlantic hurricane, and an engagement with the German *Admiral Hipper*, arriving in Port Tewfik on 16 February via the Cape and Suez. Their tanks followed in April. The British 4th Tanks were then in Tobruk; their first major action was in mid-May with mixed results, followed by many more such actions. After Wavell was replaced by Auchinleck, the 4th moved from Mara Matruh into the Tobruk enclave. On 20/21st November the tanks led the successful break out from Tobruk but it was then that Perce was killed on the 22nd.



Percy Napper

**Original grave and
named cross**

Tobruk War Cemeterey



**Marie with Eileen and Jean,
and their stepfather Joseph,
c1945**



Midshipman Colin Hilliard Shiel Wilson

The fourth of five children born to Patrick and Faith Wilson, Colin was a baby when they moved to Lynwick House, Rudgwick in 1923. Aged 19, he drowned when the light cruiser HMS Dunedin was torpedoed in the Atlantic on **24 November 1941**. He is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. His parents moved south from Sheffield to live at Dorset Lodge, Thames Ditton, and had a London home at Cornwall House Stamford Street, Lambeth. Colin was born at Dorset Lodge. Colin had been a page boy at the wedding of Diane Barker of Gaskyns, and a trainbearer at a relative's wedding in Co Durham.

His father (nicknamed Pom-Pom) had a distinguished military career in the Royal Artillery, serving in South Africa (Mentioned in Dispatches) and in The Great War, in which he was awarded the DSO, was Mentioned in Dispatches again, and invented the 'Wilson fuse'. In 1911, he married Faith Priestman, a Quaker coal mine heiress, in Co Durham.

Colin left Wellington School for Dartmouth. It was probably Colin's first time at sea. Dunedin was on the South Atlantic Station from April 1941 for eight months. During this time she captured the German Lothringen, escorting her to Bermuda. Enigma code breaking was making an impact on naval successes. Unfortunately a U-boat located Dunedin off the Sierra Leonian coast. Incredibly, she was sunk from over 4,000 yards when steaming at 17 knots under constant wheel, hit by two accurate torpedoes at 13.26 GMT. She sank in 17 minutes, many men jumping off immediately. Death in the water was a ghastly business; 72 survivors were picked up three days later by a US merchant ship but five died subsequently.

The lectern in Rudgwick church was given in memory of Colin and his father (who pre-deceased him). It is inscribed:

"In memory of PATRICK HOGARTH WILSON, Lieut. Colonel, RA. 1874-1939.

PRUDENCE WILSON 1917-1928 [his sister].

COLIN H.S. WILSON, Midshipman R.N. 1922-1941.

His mother was added later: F.H.W. 8.7.1886 - 30.3.1959.

Prudence had died in Rudgwick in 1928, aged only eleven. His other siblings were Patricia and Garth (who had joined the Royal Artillery in 1939). Most of the land (388 acres, including Woodsomes) was sold in 1940, Lynwick House was sold in 1945 after occupation by Canadian troops.

HMS Dunedin, Brisbane River, Australia



Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Holy Trinity
Rudgwick,
inscribed lectern



Private Joan Mary Clevett

Joan was in the Auxilliary Territorial Service (ATS) based at Tidworth, Wiltshire where she died on **6 January 1942**, aged only 16. She was daughter of Leonard and Annie Beatrice (née Heading) Clevett, and sister of Charles (and of Leonard and James). Her epitaph is “Best beloved until we meet in His presence, mother and brothers”.

The ATS was formed in 1938 with a range of non-combatant vital tasks undertaken (on 2/3rds pay compared to servicemen). Some served overseas, but not Joan. She was too young to have been conscripted. She was one of the 717 ATS women who died or were killed in the war, but one of only two at Tidworth. At her age she may not have had much responsibility. Why she died is unknown. Our late queen was another who served in the ATS.

From 1939 to 1947, her mother Annie (known as Beatrice) was lodging at Stalheim (now The Hollies opposite the Co-op) in Rudgwick. She worked as a charwoman, as she had before her marriage. She was a widow, Joan’s father having died in 1938, aged 55, when her parents lived at Hawksden, a farm at Mayfield, East Sussex. Joan was then just 13. Joan’s CWGC citation states that the family were from Rotherfield, East Sussex. When Joan was born they lived in Uckfield. When her older brothers James and Charles were born they lived in Greenford Middlesex, before that when Leonard was born, in Bow. His father was born in Selsey, West Sussex, his mother in Clerkenwell. Leonard had served in The Great War in the Royal Fusiliers from 1914 to 1916, and was sent to France, but invalided out. In 1921 her father was working at Greenford Farm in Middlesex. It is difficult to know why Annie moved to Rudgwick after her husband died. I can find no evidence of Joan or Charles living here. Her brother Charles, who also died in the war is on page 28.



Joan’s headstone Tidworth

ATS Memorial National Memorial Arboretum

Tidworth Military Cemetery



Ordinary Seaman Timothy James Hare Duke

Timothy died on **17 January 1942** in the intense winter cold of Arctic convoy duties. His ship, HMS Matabele, a destroyer, was torpedoed. He was 19 years old. His name is inscribed on the Plymouth Naval Memorial.

He was son of Reginald Hare Duke, C.B.E., and Mary Duke, née Woodforde. In September 1939, Timothy and his mother were renting Eames House, Church Street from Billy Butcher, the butcher at Southdown House next door. We know that he rented it out because another family are documented there later in the war and wrote it up for a BBC archive. Timothy had just left Lancing School in 1939 (where he is on the school memorial), and was an agricultural pupil, which suggest he was learning farming on one of the local farms. He also worked in Government Forestry. At the time of his death he was expecting to be commissioned as an officer in the RNVR. Just prior to his death he had been back on leave in Rudgwick for Christmas.

His father had died in 1929 aged only 41, a diplomat who was in Germany as The Great War began in August 1914, appointed MBE when general secretary to the Commission Internationale de Ravitaillement, Board of Trade, and from 1919 a commercial secretary. It is not surprising therefore that Timothy was born in Brussels. Of three sons, the eldest died aged two. His brother Robin (an RA Lieutenant in the war) survived to old age, appointed CBE for his work with The British Council. His grandfather John Hare Duke, had been a vicar; he died in 1941. Timothy's mother died on 19 September 1940. By the time of his death Timothy was an orphan (still not 21). On his mother's Rudgwick headstone is written: "In memory of Mary Diana Fooks Duke who died suddenly at Eames House on Sept 19 1940 aged 50 years, also of Timothy James Hare Duke killed at sea 17 Jan 1942 aged 19 years". The family moved to Rudgwick in 1927.

HMS Matabele had had a busy war, but we do not know how long young Duke had been aboard after training. In January 1942, she was one of two destroyers screening a convoy of eight merchant ships from Iceland to Murmansk, on the 17th just one day from Murmansk. She sank in two minutes. Many men jumped overboard but succumbed to hypothermia. Two survived.



Plymouth Naval Memorial

HMS Matabele



Private Harold Joseph (Joe) Napper

Joe Napper, 6th (City of Norwich) Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment, died in Malaya aged 29 on **20 January 1942**, commemorated on the Singapore Memorial.

Joe had served in India in the 1930s. In 1939, initially on home defence duties, later they were part of the 11th Indian Division defending Singapore. Harold never got to be part of this. He was killed in the fighting for Singapore/Malaya. The 6th had sailed from Glasgow on 27 October 1941 aboard the *Duchess of Athol*, via Halifax, Canada, and the Cape, expecting to land at Bombay, instead heading for Mombasa and Singapore. arriving on 13 January 1942. They were sent straight into battle without further training. His battalion were on the Muar to Yong Peng road in Malaya under Japanese attack from the air. On the 19th no contact with the enemy was made, but on the 20th there were casualties near the river, followed by a full Japanese attack from both front and rear in which he lost his life. Failing to hold their positions, the survivors withdrew on 24 January back towards Singapore. His battalion was captured in February by the Japanese in Singapore along with the 4th and 5th, perhaps a fate worse than death. Mercifully or not, Harold never knew this.

He was born in Rudgwick, daughter of William and Mary Napper of Weavers, Drungewick Lane, Loxwood (on the Rudgwick boundary). William was an electrician but had been disabled for nine years. They had previously lived at Mill Farm, Gibbons Mill, where William had been responsible for the hydro-electric plant at the old mill. His sister Rhoda (page 13) had already been killed by a bomb in Orchard Road Horsham in 1940, and his brother Percy (page 17) was killed in 1941.

The Nappers were part of a big family. In addition to Rhoda, Percy and Harold, there were Louise, Gertrude, William, George, Wally, Tom, Mary and Alice, eleven all told.



Harold Napper

Singapore Memorial



Flight Lieutenant Peter John Fisher

Fisher served in 70 Squadron, Royal Air Force. He was believed killed during the battle of El Alamein, on **5 March 1942**. He was aged 25. The six crew, Pilot Officer G P Chambers (RNZAF), Sergeant T G Middlebrook, Flight Lieutenant P J Fisher, Sergeant K M Tuck, Flight Sergeant R C V Rogers, and Flying Officer R Maggs were missing believed killed in their Wellington bomber. The aircraft failed to return from an operational flight over Benghazi, Libya. They were declared to have died on 25 March. They are remembered on the Alamein Memorial. Peter's squadron were based at RAF Heliopolis in Egypt from June 1940, taking delivery of their first Wellingtons there. But they relocated frequently in support of the Eighth Army's westward advance into Libya, and after Peter's death, into Tunisia and Italy. He had been abroad for 2½ years, and had previously been wounded in early 1941, spending a long time in hospital.

His father Albert Fisher was staying at Ulmara, now Bridge Cottage, opposite the pharmacy in Rudgwick, in 1939. He was retired from the colonial civil service in Uganda, having been invalided out of the Honourable Artillery in The Great War. Peter, the only child, had attended Cranleigh School, where he is remembered on the school memorial, and London University, joining up before war began. Albert Fisher lived in Rudgwick from about 1931, for a long time at The Old School House in Lynwick Street, from 1939 at Ulmara, from 1948 at Goblin's Pool Hotel (Snoxall, Bucks Green), then from 1951 at The Beeches, Church St, where he died in 1952. His wife, Peter's mother, Margaret, was a well known novelist, poet and journalist who died in 1933 when they were in Lynwick Street. She was from a family which moved to India – her father studied Sanskrit - where she was born. She wrote under her maiden name, Margaret Peterson, writing 26 novels, many set in India or Uganda. In Rudgwick she took an active part in writing for the famous Leap Year Pageant in 1932, not many months before her death, alongside such luminaries as Bernard Prance (near Cox Green) and Heath Robinson (Cranleigh). The Fishers are buried in Rudgwick.

Vickers Wellington bomber

Alamein Memorial



Ordinary Seaman Richard (Dick) Stanley Clarke

Dick Clarke was in the Merchant Navy, a hazardous occupation in the war. He died when his ship SS Empire Stevenson was torpedoed on **13 September 1942** whilst in an Arctic Convoy, PQ18. He was only 18, a youngest son, still in school at Clark's College, Guildford, (to which he had transferred from Rudgwick School) when war broke out. He had lived at The Vale, Loxwood Road, Bucks Green with his parents, John and Marnie. He had two brothers, Ken and Roger, serving in The Middle East, and a sister Gwen. John had a butcher's shop in their front room, which many Rudgwick residents will remember as it was still in business for many years after the war.

The family knew of the sinking before being informed, and that there were few survivors. In fact, there were none. Dick did his initial six month's training at The Prince of Wales Sea Training School in Dover. He had already made trips to America and Canada and to Spain and The Mediterranean according to The County Times. He had learnt to sail in The Red Sea (photo), He served on the SS Empire Stevenson, which was carrying war materiel on this voyage. His name is listed on The Tower Hill Memorial, London.

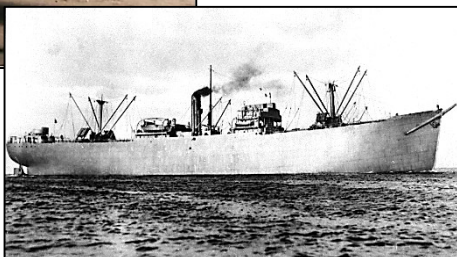
The convoy was sailing from Scotland and Iceland to Arkhangelsk in the Soviet Union. The convoy departed Loch Ewe, Scotland on 2 September 1942, rendezvoused with more ships and escorts at Iceland and arrived at Arkhangelsk on 21 September. a lapse of time from the previous convoy gave the Germans a chance to regroup, and PQ18 was relentlessly attacked by bombers, torpedo-bombers, U-boats and mines, despite having a larger number of escorts including an aircraft carrier, and benefitting from Ultra code breaking of communications traffic. But two can play that game, the Germans also breaking our codes. No less than 13 ships were sunk, compared to our sinking just four U-boats. In the case of Empire Stevenson the air-launched torpedoes damaged the ship which was then attacked by gunfire from a U-boat, whereupon she blew up and sank north of Bear Island. She was a new ship launched in 1941 at South Shields. All 59 crew were killed. There were several aged 18, and one just 17. She was one of three Empire ships where loss of life was the equivalent of Stevenson. There were 76 Empire ships all built during or soon after the war. During hostilities, the ships were owned by the Ministry of War Transport. Despite Britain having the largest merchant navy in the world, we lost 4,000 out of 12,000 ships.



Dick Clarke

SS Empire Stevenson

Tower Hill Memorial



Chief Petty Officer James William Hayman

James died when his ship HMS Marigold was torpedoed off Algiers in The Mediterranean escorting Convoy MKS3Y on **9 December 1942**. He was 46 years old. James was the shopkeeper (grocer and sub-postmaster) in Bucks Green in 1939. The shop was on Guildford Road just west of the Church Street junction, now called Old Stores Place. Unsurprisingly, he was a married man. His wife Alice, née Ripley, assisted him in the shop, and continued to run the shop until well after the war, assisted by Maurice, their son. It is thought she continued the business until about 1961, when she was 60. It was taken on by Charles Jenden, ex-landlord of The Queen's Head. The Haymans were married in Kent in 1923. Maurice, their only child, was born in 1924. James's Commonwealth War Graves entry adds that he was a son of James and the late Harriett Hayman. His father died in 1944, Alice died in 1987, having moved to Essex.

He was born in Holloway, London and was of an age where he served in The Great War. In fact, his service history goes back to 1911 when he enlisted and served first in HMS Ganges as a "Ship's Boy", followed by numerous other ship and shore establishments until in the war he became an Ordinary Seaman, promoted in turn to Able Seaman, Leading Seaman and in 1920 to Petty Officer. He was on HMS Iron Duke at the Battle of Jutland. He finally left the navy in 1933 with a pension, and came to Bucks Green within a year to a new but short-lived career in retail. Not unusual for a serviceman.

On 8 December 1939, he was called back in service as a Chief Petty Officer. He joined Marigold, a corvette, on 12 March 1942. It would be his last posting. His service record indicates missing presumed killed on 9 December. An Italian plane dropped a torpedo on his ship. Marigold was also a new ship, launched in 1940, completed February 1941, one of 24 Flower class ordered in 1939. She was built for escort duties. She spent most of her time in The Mediterranean. One of the contributions of escort ships was to pick up survivors of other ships sunk, and this she did on

numerous occasions. In November 1941, she was also reputed to have sunk the U-boat which had previously sunk Ark Royal, but there was no proof she got the right one. On the fateful day, she was on escort duty off the coast of Algeria, but was attacked by three Italian S.79 VTB bombers. Just one torpedo struck home. She sank in nine minutes, with 40 crew lost. They are commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial.



CPO Hayman

HMS Marigold



Chatham Memorial



Marigold's crew (after action against the U-boat which sank Ark Royal)

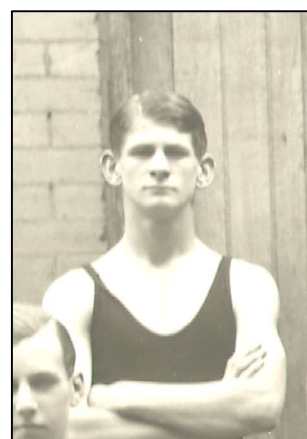
Flying Officer Edward Henry Cave-Browne

Edward served in 23 Squadron, enlisting in RAF Volunteer Reserve in 1940. He was aged 20, a very young officer piloting a Mosquito over Sicily, when he was shot down on **16 February 1943**, reported missing, only to be confirmed dead in 1943. He took off at 01:38hrs for an intruder mission to Trapani, with WO Frederick Westcott as observer, also killed.

This was several months before the successful autumn invasion of Sicily. Edward had probably only recently finished training, after leaving Charterhouse School. In December 1942 the squadron had transferred from RAF Bradwell Bay, Essex to the Mediterranean, flying from RAF Luqa on Malta. It attacked enemy airfields and railway targets in Sicily, Tunisia and Italy through 1943. Early operations from Malta involved for example flying to the African coast, to harrass axis troop movements around Tripoli. During the German evacuation (January 1943), the squadron's Mosquitos were able to block the road over a length of about 15 miles, and subsequently flew up and down the traffic jam strafing targets revealed by burning transports. He is commemorated at Catania War Cemetery Sicily.

He was a son of William and Muriel Cave-Browne, of Wimbledon, Surrey. He had two brothers (John recorded as being of Rudgwick in 1939, when he joined the Royal Engineers) and a sister. His father was a senior army officer in The Great War, became Chief Engineer of Malaya in the 1930s, and of Eastern Command 1939-40, was awarded CBE, MC, and DSO. He rose to Major-General in 1940 on being appointed to oversee national fortifications, retiring in 1941.

Holford Cave Secretan (who was also missing in the war, but had died in 1940, (page 9) was son of William's sister Mary who married Spencer Secretan, who came to live at Swaynes, Rudgwick. In 1934 the Cave-Brownes had a home in West Wittering, Sussex, and in 1939 in Wimbledon. After the war they lived nearby in Cranleigh and Wonersh. They also must have come to live in Rudgwick, perhaps at Swaynes, from 1939 (see John above) and around the time of Edward's death, and his father's retirement. Edward may have visited the Secretans before the war, but as far as can be seen never lived in the village.



20 Squadron Mosquito over Sicily

Edward Cave-Browne at Charterhouse School

Maj-Gen William Cave-Browne in 1941 ©National Portrait Gallery



Gunner Albert Charles Barrett

Albert was serving with 7th Coast Regiment, Royal Artillery when he was captured and imprisoned by the Japanese on the fall of Singapore in February 1942. The batteries of the regiment fired just two very large 15 inch guns, located in Jahore Battery (the largest outside Britain), at Japanese infantry, but to no avail. The guns were only located for defence from the sea, not how it turned out from the Malay Peninsula. The British destroyed their own guns.

He is stated to have died on **5 March 1943**, aged 32, and is commemorated on the Singapore Memorial. He was taken with his unit on a Japanese ship from Singapore, bound for New Guinea. They have since been called the Gunners 600. His ship, probably the Kenkon Maru was later sunk by allied forces, but some time after his voyage. The Kenkon Maru was sunk on 21 January 1943, by the USS Gato. The 600 had been held in the holds of this ex-British collier.

A poignant letter to his wife and next of kin May Barrett, from the War Office, tells the story as it was known on 6 December 1945, after the war's end, when he and his fellow prisoners had been officially declared lost at sea. The precise date of 5 March must have been decided upon later, probably no more than a guess.

He was a son of Albert and Annie Barrett; husband of May Crummett, and father of Joyce. In 1939, he was doing heavy manual labour (earlier he was on farm work), the family living at No 4 Lynwick Street, with his father also living with them and working on a farm. In 1921, Albert Sr, originally from Berkshire, was working for Birchmore's Bakery in The Haven, living at Lugmore (Hall House) nearby. Albert Charles was born there. His mother Annie was from Billingshurst. May was a daughter of George Crummett who started Station Garage in Church Street in the 1920s, and was still at 4 Lynwick Street in 1945. Her father-in-law Albert Sr also lived there until his death in 1956, She married a second time to Charles Burrows of Horsham in 1946, and died in 1994 in Devon; daughter Joyce died in 2003. Malcolm Francis remembers his nextdoor neighbour, Albert Sr, in the late 1940s filling in the bomb shelter the family had constructed.



Annie and Albert



Albert and May, wedding day



Right, Albert Charles



May and Joyce (Copnal Horsham)

Albert's war medals



**Jahore
Battery,
Singapore**



<p>Telephone: MAYFAIR 9400. Your Ref. _____ W.O. Ref. <u>55801</u> SS/350/120/865 (Cas./P.M.)</p>		<p>THE WAR OFFICE, CURZON STREET HOUSE, CURZON STREET, LONDON, W.1. 6th December, 1945.</p>
<p>Madam,</p> <p>I am directed to inform you with deep regret that the name of your husband No. 1739282 Gunner BARRETT A.C. Royal Artillery (Coast) appears on a list only now received of Prisoners of War who were passengers on a sunk Japanese transport. The vessel which is stated to have left Singapore for New Guinea on the 13th October, 1942, is reported to have been sunk some time after the 1st March, 1943, between New Britain and an unknown destination.</p> <p>No further information concerning the sinking of this vessel is known, and since no report of the rescue or recovery of your husband has been received, it is feared that there is now little hope of his having survived. Investigation is proceeding. Meanwhile, until further information is received or an official decision is taken regarding his fate, Gunner Barrett will be officially recorded as "Missing at Sea".</p> <p>In conveying this sad news, the Department offers you its sincere sympathy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">I am, Madam, Your obedient Servant,</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W. Kent</i></p> <p>Mrs. E. Barrett, 4, Lynwick Street, Rudgwick, Horsham, Sussex.</p>		

Letter, War Office to May Barrett, dated 6 December 1945

Was Gunner Albert Barrett “missing at sea”? The Japanese transport ship, Kenkon Maru, was sailing from Singapore to New Guinea (now in Papua New Guinea, PNG), departing on 18 October 1942. The War Office stated in the letter that investigation was proceeding. Thanks to Richard Davies, one of our members whose uncle met the same fate, we now know that the facts were very tragic, and written in some detail online, https://www.roll-of-honour.org.uk/atrocities/600_Gunners_Party/html/history.htm, naming every man. They had arrived in New Britain, PNG, on 5th November 1942. At the end of that month, 517 men re-embarked for Ballalae, one of the Solomon Islands, leaving behind 82 of their colleagues, most of whom were considered too sick to make the journey, and of whom only 18 survived the war.

Those taken to the tiny island of Ballalae were forced to assist in the construction of an air strip. None of these 517 men survived. Many were killed by allied bombing of their camp, first in March 1943 (which corresponds to the official date of his death), then in June 1943, with additional navy shelling. No attempt was made to provide shelter in, for example, trenches. All those still alive, some 70 to 100, were executed most likely by bayonet or by beheading on the orders it is thought of Lt Com Ozaki, acting, he has stated, according to Japanese military protocol, the Japanese fearing imminent invasion, or the men were of no further use and malnourished. The official date given for the Ballalae Massacre is 5th March 1943 but interviews by an Australian military team with locals,



Japanese, Koreans and Chinese agree that June 1943 is more accurate. They reported that the Japanese denied any knowledge of the “white” captives. After the war, 436 bodies were exhumed together with artefacts proving these men were the missing artillerymen. The bodies were reburied at Bomana Commonwealth War Cemetery, Port Moresby, PNG.

So, it is not possible to say if Albert Barrett died in March or June 1943, or how he died.

Ballalae Island and airstrip today
(Google image)

Kenkon Maru ©Walter Frost



Private Charles Albert Clevett

Charles was Joan's older brother (page 19). He was killed in action aged 25 serving with 1st Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment at Enfidaville near Sousse in Tunisia on **21 April 1943**. He is buried at Enfidaville War Cemetery, with the epitaph, "Well done, sleep on beloved, RIP". Unlike his sister's entry, his mother is stated to be of Rudgwick by the CWGC.

Charles was born in 1918 at 7 Brent Cottages, Greenford, Middlesex; his father a farm labourer. He joined the army in 1936, and was soon sent to serve in Palestine, where he was when war broke out in 1939. 1st Royal Sussex were then part of 23rd Infantry Brigade, transferred to 7th Indian Infantry Brigade in October 1940. They were then sent to Abyssinia (Eritrea) 1940-1941, then to Libya 1941-1942, where they had a torrid time in the Western Desert, including fighting at El Alamein. His battalion was therefore part of the Eighth Army from September 1941, fighting commencing in November. Defeats in 1942 were controversial for the top command, the army retreating, pursued by Rommel into Egypt to rebuild. Churchill replaced Auchinleck with General Montgomery in August 1942. The tide turned, ending with the Axis defeat at the second battle of El Alamein, November 1942, when 1st Royal Sussex and two Indian battalions commanded by Brigadier Holworthy were placed in the northern sector. They ended up in Tunisia in February 1943. Charles was killed two months later. Most of those buried at Enfidaville War Cemetery died in the final battles from March to the beginning of May. The cemetery contains 1,551 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.

By the day he died, "the combined Axis force was hemmed into a small corner of north-eastern Tunisia and the Allies were grouped for their final offensive. The Eighth Army attack on the position at Enfidaville on 19 April [2 days before his death] captured the village, but strong resistance meant no further progress was possible. Attacks further north met with greater success and Tunis fell on 7 May, Bizerta on the 8th. By 11 May, the position at Enfidaville was surrounded and resistance ceased on the following day. [Soon after his death,] the war in North Africa which commenced the previous November, came to an end in Tunisia with the defeat of the Axis powers by a combined Allied force." (CWGC website)

From 1939 to 1947, his mother Annie (known as Beatrice) was lodging at Stalheim (now The Hollies opposite the Co-op) in Rudgwick. She worked as a charwoman, as she had before her marriage. She was a widow, Charles's father having died in 1938, aged 55, when they lived at Hawksden, a farm at Mayfield, East Sussex. Charles was then aged 20. The family were from Rotherfield, East Sussex. When the brothers James and Charles were born they lived in Greenford Middlesex, his father working at Greenford Farm. Before that when eldest son Leonard was born, in Bow, and in Uckfield when Joan was born. His mother was born in



Clerkenwell, his father in Selsey, West Sussex. Leonard had spent The Great War in the Royal Fusiliers from 1914 to 1916, and was sent to France, but invalided out.

It is difficult to know why Annie moved to Rudgwick after her husband died. I can find no evidence of Joan or Charles living here.

Enfidaville War Cemetery

Able Seaman Howard Thurstan De Bower Brown-Greaves

Another naval torpedo attack death for Rudgwick to mourn, on **18 February 1944**, this time when HMS Penelope sailed out of Anzio near Naples during the costly landings and land battle that had begun on 22 January. Penelope, a light cruiser, was attacked by a U-boat, which scored two hits, from which she quickly sank. Steaming at 26 knots, she is believed to be the fastest moving target for a successful U-boat attack of the whole war. Howard, aged 22, was one of 415 crew who were lost; 206 survived. He was born in Loxwood as was his brother Michael. He was the elder son of Revd Henry and Margaret Brown-Greaves. Howard was educated at Newton College, Newton Abbott, volunteering for the navy on leaving school. His first ship was HMS King George V, followed by 18 months on Penelope. Howard is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. He was aged 22.

Earlier his parents were married in Portsmouth in February 1911 when a curate in Colchester, enumerated under the surname Brown-Banham in April 1911 in Suffolk. By 1918, Revd Brown-Greaves was in Sussex, curate in Kirdford serving the chapel-at-ease in Plaistow; Howard was noted as aged three in 1921, their address Loxwood. The family were likely renting property as in 1919 they were at Little Headsfoldwood, 1920 Linden House, before settling on Blackwool until they left in 1929 for Old Barkfold, Plaistow. Howard and Michael must have wondered which house they would live in next. Howard's grandfather was Revd French Banham. Howard's mother came from a naval family.

Howard's father died in Icklesham, Sussex in 1934, where he had been inducted vicar only two years earlier. Having lived in Middleton-on-Sea for several years, by 1944, his widowed mother Margaret was living at Middle Gingers, Cox Green, an area she may have known from when she lived in Loxwood. The CWGC concurs she was in Rudgwick. During the war years she was organist at Rudgwick church. She later lived at Little Kings, Church Street, as did Michael at times, probably until her death in 1985.



HMS Penelope

Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Flight Sergeant Ronald Frank William Buckman

Did anyone from Rudgwick die in Normandy in 1944? The answer is, no. There was one associated event in France, when a plane with 21 year old Ft Sgt Ronald Buckman among the crew was brought down near Arras in north-eastern France, in which he lost his life. The date was **14 June 1944**, otherwise D+8. Arras would have been a major rail hub in the German chain of communications to the Normandy front line.

Buckman was serving with 434 Squadron (Bluenose), RAFVR, in 6 Group Bomber Command. He is commemorated on the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede. Over 20,000 men and women of allied air forces, who were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the UK and NW Europe, and who have no known graves, are listed.

Buckman was flying in a Handley Page Halifax III, from RAF Croft in Yorkshire (now an auto circuit), as a wireless operator (Wop/AG). Five of the seven crew survived, four of whom evaded capture. Buckman was instrumental in their escape but on returning to the cockpit for his pilot, the two were blown up in an explosion. The bodies of PO Wood, a Canadian serving with the RAF, and Buckman himself, were never recovered. Buckman was the hero of the hour.

Ronald Buckman was born in Rudgwick. He joined Rudgwick School on 17 April 1928. When he joined the school he lived at Watts Corner, at the very bottom of Church Street. Mrs Florence Buckman registered him (normally it would have been the father).

Her husband was Alfred, Rudgwick born and bred (Florence originally from Battle, East Sussex). The family lived at many places in Rudgwick over the years. Alfred took work where he could get it. By 1939, with a grown up family, the Buckmans, Ronald included, lived at Myrtledene on Haven Road. Alfred was very much alive in 1928 when Ronald started school. Florence added to the family income by taking in washing, according to two consecutive censuses.

Ronald was stated by the Commonwealth War Graves commission to be "the son of Mrs. C Grant, of Rudgwick, Sussex", and husband of Amelia (Millie) Agnes Florence Sheel, of Rudgwick. They had only recently married in Uxbridge in 1943, and had no children. Charles Grant was Ronald's father, and Ethel Buckman (born Rudgwick 1903) was his mother (Mrs C Grant). Ethel was the fifth of Alfred and Florence's seven children. the mystery of school registration was simple – Florence was his grandmother, Alfred his grandfather. On the outbreak of war in 1939, grandfather Alfred, his son Henry and grandson Ronald, were all employed in market gardening.

Charles Grant, a chauffeur, married Ethel in Rudgwick in 1929. The 1939 Register does not provide relationships, but confirms Ronald was part of what was his grandparent's household. By 1939, the Grants were living in Horsham, and had two other children.

In October 1923, another boy was born, only a few months after Ronald. Named Wilfred, he too lived with his grandparents, son of the Buckman's eldest daughter, Olive. In 1947, Ronald's widow married Wilfred.



1944
ROYAL AIR FORCE
FLIGHT SERGEANT
BRIGHTWELL G.C.
BRIGNELL C.
BRODEN M.H.
BROLL J.
BROMLEY H.H.J.
BROWN B.A.K.
BROWN H.S.
BROWN R.A.
BRUMFITT T.
BRYAN T.
BUCHANAN A.K.D.F.M.
BUCKINGHAM H.F.
BUCKMAN R.F.W.
BULL K.F.
BURNETT W.M.H.
BURTENSCHAW D.F.
BUTTLE J.E.C.
BYRNE T.P.
CAILE A.
CAMPBELL A.
CARB E.C.
CARTER C.



Ronald and Millie's wedding

Ronald in flying kit

RAF Croft Memorial, names below

Canadian records of PO Wood, the pilot

Runnymede Air Forces Memorial

Handley Page Halifax

Birth Date: 1922-November-20 (age 21)
Born: Victoria, Capital Regional District, British Columbia, Canada
Son of Major William Henry Wood and Gertrude Jane (nee Morris) Wood, of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Home: Toronto, Ontario



Flying Officer Henry (Harry) George Payne

Harry Payne was an air gunner with 180 Squadron, RAF, new to the squadron based at Dunsfold Aerodrome, at the time of his death aged 27, in a needless and tragic flying accident over Peper Harrow, Surrey. His pilot was Cees (say “case”) Waardenburg, 23, a Dutch pilot also new to the squadron, and to its Mitchell bombers. The flight was a short familiarisation flight authorised by squadron Wing Commander Alan Lynn (who it was said was also billeted in Rudgwick). The story goes that they spotted some land girls working in a field and decided to “buzz” them, hit a tree and crashed killing both men. The date was **30 August 1944**. Their funeral was on 2 September at Rudgwick church. Both men were buried there, but Cees’s body was removed to the Dutch military section of Mill Hill Cemetery in 1964. Harry’s grave has a CWGC headstone, one of three from this war in Rudgwick (four with Cees). “The Eternal God is thy Refuge and Underneath are the Everlasting Arms”.

Harry was connected to Rudgwick in a way Cees was not. He married Nancy (Twinkle) Cooper, in Rudgwick on 23 July 1943. The vicar wrote an effusive description of the service, perhaps a little embarrassing for him a year later, but understandable in the grim circumstances of 1943. Harry was billeted with his wife and her parents just behind the church at High Croft in Rudgwick. Nancy was a daughter of Charles and Dorothy Cooper, both well-known and active in the village. Nancy had a baby in Autumn 1944, named Gillian. Gillian never knew her father. Gillian married Paul Bellevue-de-Silva in Harrow in 1967.

Harry was the son of Henry and Nancy of Dundee, but was born in Essex, joining the RAF in his teens in 1935. He served in Palestine and Iraq, then Egypt and Greece on photo reconnaissance, became a gunner instructor, served in a glider squadron before D day, was in planes dropping supplies to the French Maquis and harassing behind the lines in Normandy - varied and useful service.

See page 43 for details of Cees Waardenburg.



F/O. Harry Payne Source: Nancy Cooper, via Russ Legross

Harry Payne
Harry and Nancy
North American
Mitchell in RAF
livery at Dunsfold



Wedding.

In these days of grim realities, it is pleasant to be asked to share the happiness of others. Such an occasion was offered on Saturday, July 23rd, when Miss Nancy Lilian (Twinkie) Cooper, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cooper, of Highcroft, was married to Flying Officer Henry George Payne, R.A.F., by the Vicar, Rev. A. N. Wynn. If happiness is infectious, all the outward signs were propitious, our lovely old Church made beautiful with white flowers and an accent of blue hydrangeas, the organ and "sweet singing in the choir," and the BELLS! Add to these, a charming Bride—who might have been attired by a fairy God-mother, with her small attendant, Pamela Sparling, and a very proud bridegroom, the picture was complete. After the service in Church, one feels the fairy God-mother surpassed herself, as Mr. and Mrs. Cooper invited the many friends of the bride and groom to "Highcroft," to enjoy their kind hospitality, and to wish this happy young couple "God speed" in their present venture, and when peace comes to the world again, many happy years together.

Rudgwick Parish Magazine August 1943

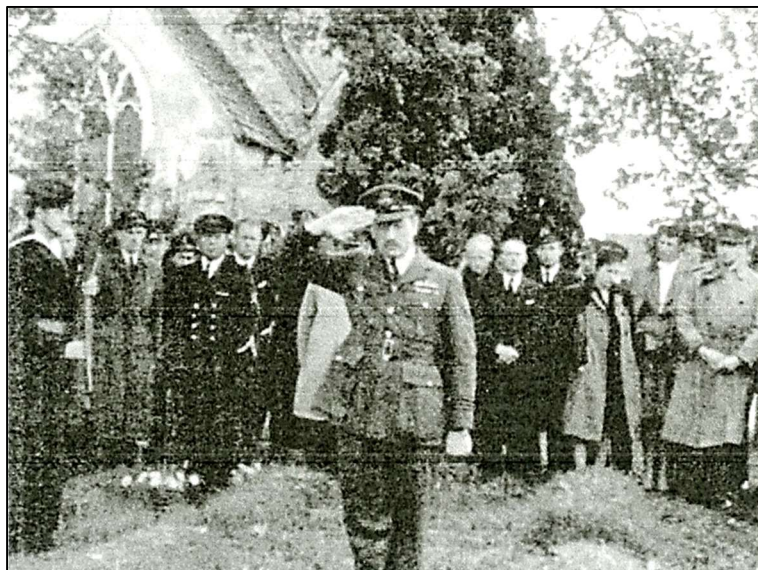
Rudgwick Parish Magazine October 1944

**Rudgwick Church September 1944, Joint
Military Funeral, Payne and Waardenburg**

IN MEMORIAM.

We were most distressed and grieved to hear about the flying accident in which Harry Payne and Cornelius Waardenburg lost their lives. They were taking up a machine for a test flight, but before sufficient height had been gained, one of the engines gave out, and the machine dived to the ground. Mr. and Mrs. Payne were married in our Church about a year ago, and many of us were at the wedding. It was such a happy and bright one, and the bride and bridegroom looked so radiantly happy. We feel for Mrs. Payne, who takes her bereavement so bravely. We pray that God may be with her in this hour as He was with Christ on the Cross. Sometimes He gives us hard things to bear, but if we trust Him He gives us strength and faith to overcome. Mr. Payne's great friend was Cornelius Waardenburg, and it was fitting they should be buried side by side in our quiet Churchyard. He was a Dutchman, and we do not know his relations, but they have been told of how his body lies in our Churchyard, and we shall remember them both, and think of them as brave men who risked their lives in our cause, and counted not the cost. God be with them in that other world.

The funeral, which was on the afternoon of Saturday, Sept. 2nd, was taken by the Vicar, and the Dutch Chaplain read the lesson. There was a large muster of English and Dutch airmen at the service. The coffins were draped with Union Jacks, and the bearers were R.A.F. men. The firing party were formed from Dutch Marines. At the close of the service at the graveside, the Dutch Chaplain gave an address in Dutch and in English.



Private Frederick George (Frank) Hurst

Frederick was one of Arthur's brothers (see page 8). Their siblings were Joan, Len, Doris, Jack and Alan. They were sons of George Hurst, a carpenter born in Horsham, and Jessie, née Liggins, from Hammersmith, who lived at Greenhurst in Tisman's Common. Frederick, known then as Frank, joined Rudgwick School in 1922. By 1939, he was a general labourer. Frederick or Frank joined the 1st Battalion, Royal Lincolnshire Regiment.

After losing one son in 1940, his parents, George and Jesse, may have been relieved Frederick had survived until 1945, but it was not to be. Did they know he was in The Far East, and did they know how bad it was there? Whilst the war was rapidly reaching its final act in Europe, Frederick was in the jungle war in Burma, a brutal conflict against diseases and the Japanese. He died on **15 March 1945**. He was 28 years old. Frederick has no known grave. His name is inscribed on the Rangoon Memorial, which has 27,000 names, in the Taukkyan Cemetery, Yangon, Myanmar, with the words "They died for all free men". The site is now closed to the public as a result of the political situation.

It is not known when he joined up, but his battalion, part of the 71st Indian Infantry Brigade, was in Burma from March 1942, transferred from India. Their first victory was in February 1944, known as the battle of the Admin Box, the turning point of the campaign, according to General Slim. The British held their ground, supplied from the air, smashing the idea of Japanese invincibility. He died after this, before the battalion was part of Operation Dracula on 1 May, the landings to capture Rangoon. Did he die of wounds received at Action Box, or some other operation, or was he smitten with a disease such as malaria as over 12,000 others were? He was unmarried.



**Rangoon Memorial
Taukkyan Cemetery**

Frederick Hurst



Gunner George Arthur William Nickolay

George served with 3 Battery, 6th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery. He died on **16 April 1945** whilst a prisoner of war working on the Burma-Siam railway. Of those we remember on Rudgwick's memorial, he was the last, and the only one in 1945, to lose his life. He was 33 years old and recently married.

George married Mary Park in 1938. A year later they were living in Horsham at 75 Park Street, George working as an ambulance driver and caretaker. Mary remarried later in 1945 to George Parsons.

George Nickolay's unit, re-equipped after Dunkirk, was defending the home front in its air defence role during the Blitz, then sent to the Middle East, but was diverted to the Far East in January 1942 when the Japanese invaded Malaya. Split up, ill-equipped, and fighting against overwhelming odds, the regiment was captured in Java, Dutch East Indies, in March 1942. Many of the men taken prisoner later died working on the Burma Railway. He is commemorated in the Kanchanubari Cemetery, located 130km north of Bangkok, Thailand.

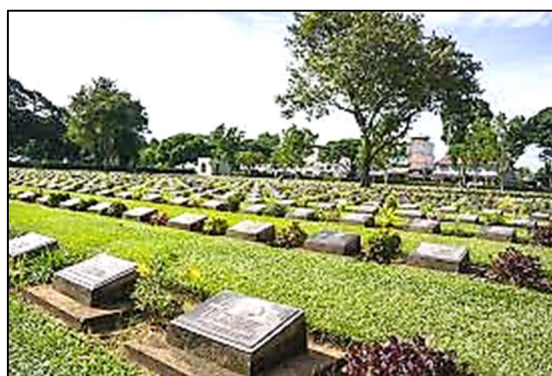
He was a son of Frederick and Emily Nickolay of Little Kings, Church Street, where they lived from the 1920s to about 1950, after which daughter Lena and her husband Jack Clifford continued to live there for many years. His father also died later in 1945. He had been a gas light and coke fitter in Willesden, where George was born. The 1939 Register tells us that he was "incapacitated", and so were two children, Frederick (page 33) and Lena. There were eight siblings, the others being Emily, Louisa, Isabel, Albert and Margaret.

For anyone wishing to understand the horrors and the truth about this infamous railway and its "victims", the CWGC website blog has a good summary.



George Nickolay

**Kanchanubari
Cemetery Thailand**



Frederick Charles Nickolay

A brother of George who it is said died in a diving accident whilst serving in the Royal Navy, April 1942. His death is not recorded by CWGC, but is stated to be in Horsham Registration District. There is no record of him in West Sussex death records. He was 36 years old, and was living at home at Little Kings in 1939, though apparently incapacitated.

Others known to have been killed or died in the war, not remembered in Holy Trinity church

Gunner Horace Jeffrey Bristo

Killed in a traffic accident on the A281 near Smithers Farm Rudgwick at 10.00 pm in blackout on **9 August 1940** whilst reportedly walking two local girls home. Aged 20, he served in 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery based "near Rudgwick". in fact, this unit was the first to occupy the camp opposite Gaskyns (now Queen Elizabeth Road). His home was in Wolverhampton. Although not named inside the church, his CWGC headstone is in Rudgwick churchyard. The vicar had some kind words to say about his death in the Parish Magazine, describing him as a well-liked young man.

"In 1939, 1 RHA was part of 51st (Highland) Infantry Division, and fought at Saint Valery. The regiment was captured after severe fighting, but some batteries managed to escape after the Battle of Dunkirk. The regiment reformed and was deployed to Northern Africa in late 1940, where it arrived with the Middle East Command in October 1940 and took a large part in Wavell's campaign which opened on 9 December 1940." (*Wikipedia*) This suggests "reforming" was undertaken near Rudgwick, as the date of Horace's death was after Dunkirk, and before the deployment to North Africa. Moreover, Horace may have been one of the luckier survivors at Saint Valery and on the beaches of Dunkirk.

Other research indicates that the regiment, which by this time was fully mechanised, but with its big guns of course, was still stationed in Rudgwick on 21 November 1940. These dates do not match up! But the source cites the war diary (www.researchingww2.co.uk). Horace had joined up in 1938. The details below are from his 1938 attestation record and casualty card.

in 1921, Horace, who was born in Wolverhampton, had been living with his parents and grandmother in Great Yarmouth. He was only one year old. His father was also Horace, a butcher's assistant (by 1939 a motor driver, by then back in Wolverhampton), his mother was Violet. He had younger siblings, Rose and Colin.



Rudgwick headstone

Service records

886565	BRISTO	Horace Jeffrey	Died 9.8.40
--------	--------	----------------	-------------

JEFFREY			
Part II	1 DECORATIONS - ENTER <u>one</u> in each space		
2 PARENT CORPS		1) at time of death	R.A.
OR REGT		11) on 1 Sep 1939	R.A.
3 RANK held at time of death		Gnr	
4 PLACE OF BIRTH		WOLVERHAMPTON STAFFS	
5 PLACE OF DOMICILE		WOLVERHAMPTON STAFFS	
6 DATE OF DEATH (in figures, e.g. 11/12/44) Enter in boxes		<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> DAYMONTHYEAR </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> 9840 </div>	
7 THEATRE OR COUNTRY WHERE FATAL WOUND SUSTAINED OR DEATH OCCURRED		U.K.	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>Record Office Stamp</p> <p>RA RECORD OFFICE (Head Branch)</p> <p>FOOTS CRAY - WOLVERHAMPTON</p> </div> <div> <p>NB - FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION & DISPOSAL OF FORM RH</p> <p>SEE WOCM 19/GEN/1252/AG 1(Records) DATED 5 SEP 46.</p> </div> </div>			

Sub Lieutenant Maurice Swithinbank

Maurice was 24 years old and serving in 830 Naval Air Squadron, a pilot flying a Fairy Swordfish torpedo bomber in Malta, headquartered at the St Angelo fort, based at RAF Hal Far, where they had been for several months, in the eye of the storm to which Malta was subjected. On the night of **6/7 February 1942** he was going in to attack an Italian destroyer and a merchant ship off the coast of Tripoli. The squadron's brief was to damage supply lines to North African battlefields. Two planes were up at the time, the other reporting an explosion, and afterwards Maurice was posted missing, as was his observer, Sub Lt Thomson, "Lost Without Trace During A Night Attack on A Ship 30 Miles Northeast of Cape Turgeunes". By the time of his death, the squadron was so depleted, a few weeks later it was merged with 828 Squadron.

Maurice was the eldest son of Crossley and Phoebe Swithinbank of Maybanks near Cox Green, 1918-1936. Maurice and his younger brother were born at Maybanks, baptised in Rudgwick. Maurice was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College Cambridge. In 1939, he was awaiting call up at his parent's house Dinnington Grove near Newbury. He is not remembered in Rudgwick church, but a note of his loss was reported in the parish magazine.



Fleet Air Arm Memorial, Lee-on-Solent



Fairy Swordfish Mark 1

Fleet Air Arm flypast at RAF Hal Far, mid-1950s (Meteors and a Sea Hawk)



Lance Bombardier Jack Belchamber

Serving with 50th Battery 17th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment Royal Artillery, Jack died in an accident in Tunisia on **12 June 1943**, aged 34. Son of Walter Charles and Alice Winifred Belchamber, he was a grocer's assistant in Cranleigh. He married Nellie Howick of Bury St Austin's Rudgwick in 1929, and they then lived at Hillcrest, Hermongers Lane, later at Crowthorne Ellens Green, both over the border in Ewhurst. They had two children, Joyce and Eric. Nellie died in 2000, her funeral was at Worthing Crematorium.

Jack is buried in Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia. 17 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA was formed with two batteries at Chelsea, in December 1938, one of which was the 50th. It moved to Scotland in 1941 in a defensive capacity, before going to North Africa in November 1942 (and then to Italy in September 1943). This corresponds with Jack's time in the deserts of Libya and Tunisia with the 8th Army during their breakthrough campaign which was completed in May, just weeks before Jack was killed. See the page on Jack Clevett above, who had died in April, and is also commemorated at Enfidaville.

The German surrender over a period of days ended on the 12th, the day Jack was killed. "Messe, commander of the Italian 1st Army, held the line north of Takrouna and on 12 May, cabled *Comando Supremo* vowing to fight on; at 7:55 p.m. that evening, after the German collapse, Mussolini ordered Messe to surrender. Next day, the 1st Army was still holding opposite Enfidaville but the remaining 80,000 men were surrounded; the RAF and artillery [including Jack's unit] continued their bombardment and around noon, the 1st Army surrendered to the Eighth Army (*wikipedia*).” It seems likely that it was in this “last stand” by the Italians, that Jack died.

Casualties among the British, American and Free French forces had been huge: from November 1942 up to the surrender, casualties for British and Commonwealth troops alone were 38,360 men; 6,233 were killed, 21,528 were wounded and 10,599 reported missing. Jack had so nearly made it through.



Enfidaville Cemetery

Anti-Aircraft
gunnery in the
Western
Desert



Captain Arthur Alfred Burdon Ellis

Captain Ellis served with 3 Commando, having begun the war in the Royal Army Service Corps. 3 Commando were a battalion of the Special Air Service formed in July 1940, all volunteers. It had been in action in the Channel Islands, Norway, the Dieppe Raid, then moved to North Africa in early 1943, followed by Sicily and mainland Italy (featured in BBC's *SAS Rogue Heroes*). Ellis was in the advance party at the Salerno landings (on 7 September), and that is when he lost his life on **2 September 1943**. He was 33 years old, born in Steyning. He was first reported missing on a recce of the beaches but was later confirmed died of wounds as a German prisoner of war (he would have been executed had he survived).

His connection with Rudgwick is, admittedly, tenuous. His wife since 1936, who he married in Surrey, was Kathleen Adele Gahan who lived in Rudgwick at the time of his death (according to The Evening News on 1 March 1944, when confirmation of his death became known), but there is no back up support for this. She was a vet (MRCVS), unusual in the day, and continued to practice long after the war, but not in Rudgwick. She died in 2004 in the New Forest. His parents were Mabel and Col AC Ellis CBE.

Arthur is buried in the Salerno War Cemetery, Italy. His headstone below affirmed him as RASC, not as a Commando, probably in line with practice for these brave volunteers. It states "For England, forward if we can".

Salerno,
personal
headstone



Private George E Christopher Ayres

George served with the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment (3 Para). He died at Arnhem, Holland on **18 September 1944**, aged 24. A shop salesman, he was husband of Evelyn May Woolf, a draper's assistant. They married in Ross-on-Wye in 1943. In 1944 Evelyn lived in Tisman's Common. After the war she married again. Evelyn Railton, as she became, died in 2009 in Ruislip. George is commemorated on the Groesbeek Memorial, near Nijmegen, Holland.

In 1939, George had been living with his parents, Richard, a maintenance fitter, and Louisa, in Leyton, Essex. He had brothers Thomas, Joseph and Leslie, and a sister Hannah. George was born in West Ham, London.

From August 1942, they were part of the Parachute Regiment in 1st Airborne Division. These were highly trained, disciplined, and fit young men trained to move 50 miles in 24 hours and to fight against superior forces with heavy weaponry. In 1942, On 12 November the 3rd Parachute Battalion jumped onto and seized the vital airfield at Bone between Algiers and Tunis, arriving barely before German paratroopers deployed for the same mission. By 1944, the 1st Parachute Brigade, which included 3 Para, was much a larger force. They had been forced to fight as infantry in the difficult winter desert campaign of 1943-4.

"The brigade conducted three major airborne operations and took part in more battles than any other formation in 1st Army, capturing 3,500 prisoners and inflicting 5,000 casualties at a cost of 1,700 to themselves. General Alexander congratulated the brigade on learning the Germans had conferred the 'Red Devils' nickname, which has since become the unofficial title for British Airborne Forces.

3 Para were involved in the invasion of Sicily, losing half their strength at Primasole Bridge, then landing at Taranto on the mainland with less opposition. In December 1943 they returned to UK to prepare for the invasion of Europe.

Arnhem (Operation Market Garden) was not easy. They dropped on 17 September. George died the next day. Blocked with heavy casualties they fell back to Oosterbeek where the 1st British Airborne Division was destroyed in an epic nine day stand. It cannot be said when George joined 3 Para. With their great losses in previous operations, there must have been a large number of fresh volunteers.



3 Para dug in at Arnhem



Groesbeek Memorial, Holland

Private Ronald (Ronnie) Albert Francis

He was a son of Albert and Rose Francis, born at Fir Tree Cottage in The Haven (which we cannot identify), but baptised in Horsham. The family were at Lugmore, The Haven from 1921 to 1928, and near Witley, Surrey in 1939). Ronnie was a general labourer before the war, his father a gamekeeper (in 1921 at Garlands). Ronnie's grandfather was Harry Francis, a farmer at Collins Cross, The Haven, previously at Garlands Farm. Ronnie married Florence Beatrice Lavender at Thursley, Surrey in 1940. There were no children. Also in 1940, his father died.

1/5th Queen's had landed in Normandy on 8/9 June 1944, after D Day. They were involved in the Normandy battles in the bocage, in July attacking Caen from the south, in August securing the road to Vire and the higher ground of Mount Pinçon, followed by the break out to The Seine, advancing to Ghent in September and into Holland in October.

Serving in 1/5 Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey), he is said to have died at Reusel-de Mierden, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands on **22 October 1944**, aged 27. The village is just over the Dutch border, north east of Antwerp. He is buried in Uden War Cemetery. Antwerp and the Uden area had already been liberated in September.



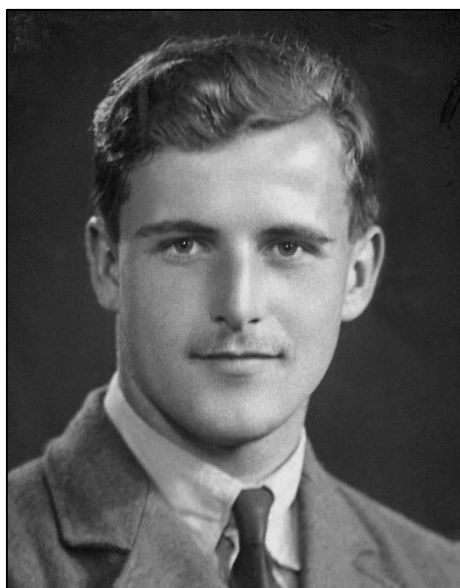
Uden War Cemetery

Pilot Officer Robert Josephus Constable Higgins

Robert Higgins was a master at Pennthorpe School, Gibbons Mill, arriving fresh from his own education at Cranleigh School, 1935 to 1940. From Pennthorpe, he joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Known as Tee Hee because of his laugh, he married one of the Cranleigh assistant matrons, Kathleen Watson, in 1943. She came from Folkestone. He was the son of Robert and Phyllis Higgins. He is not remembered in Rudgwick, but was well known to a generation of Pennthorpe pupils.

He flew Lancasters with 90 Squadron from RAF Tuddenham Suffolk, on the occasion of his death attacking gun positions near Vlissingen (Flushing in English). It was a daylight raid with 227 aircraft on **28 October 1944**. There were just two losses. Most of the bombing is thought to have been successful. Robert was 23 when he was killed.

Except for a single crew member, the entire crew was reported missing. The report from the Air Guard of shipyard 'De Schelde' stated "four parachutes were seen just outside the Outer Pontoon landing in the sea. Bomber Command Losses reported two drownings at sea and two lost in the explosions of a shed when they landed at Bomladingen which (obviously) no longer existed. In the following months several British pilots' bodies were washed up near Ritthem after which they were buried temporarily in the dike. None of these bodies could be identified but it is still not excluded that one or several of them belonged to this crew. He is remembered on the RAF Runnymede Memorial.



PO Robert Higgins, 1942

Cranleigh School War
Memorial unveiled 2016

Royal Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede



Reserve 1e Luitenant (Ft Lt) Cornelis (Cees) Waardenburg

Cees, pronounced "case" was a Dutch national, a qualified pilot, who had been a navigator/observer/bomb aimer in the aircraft flown by W/C Alan Lynn in 320 Sqn (Royal Dutch Naval Air Service), also now his new squadron commander in 180 Sqn, RAF, based at Dunsfold Aerodrome. In order to gain experience of flying Mitchell bombers, new to Cees, he had Lynn's permission to fly a circuit over Surrey taking with him FO Harry Payne. Whilst over Peper Harrow near Godalming they foolishly flew low over, it is said, land girls working in a field, the plane's wing clipping a tree and crashing killing both men immediately. The date was **30 August 1944**. Cees was 23 years old.

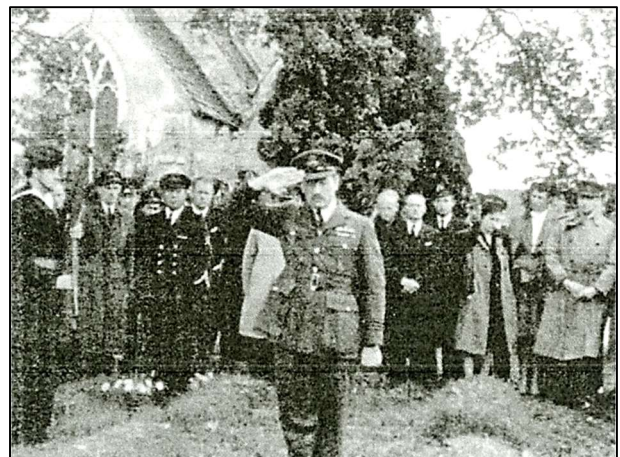
Lynn it is said lived in Rudgwick, and Harry Payne certainly did at High Croft. Lynn arranged to have the funeral at Rudgwick on 2 September, both men buried there. However in 1964, Cees's body was exhumed and re-laid to rest in Mill Hil Cemetery Dutch military section. He is not remembered on Rudgwick's memorial.

Cees came from Schipluiden, Holland, qualifying as a pilot in the Dutch air force, but previous to that had served in the army fighting the German invasion in 1940, for which he was awarded a Bronze Cross (BK), posthumously raised to a Bronze Lion (BL) in 1946. He made three attempts to escape to England, eventually landing on a Suffolk beach on 4 September 1941. He was sent for further flying training in Canada, returning July 1943. He then made 100 flights on a "tour" with Alan Lynn. On 18 May 1944 he was awarded a DFC. *"As captain of aircraft in 320 Squadron R.D.N.A.S. of Our Naval Air Service based in the United Kingdom, he has displayed courage, drive, skill and perseverance in numerous operational sorties over a period of eight months, as well by day as by night, having carried out numerous successful bombing attacks on hostile shipping, often in the face of heavy enemy flak whilst having had to repulse numerous attacks by enemy fighter aircraft."* [Note: "captain of aircraft" refers to his rank in the original Dutch, not that he piloted the plane.]

See also Harry Payne,
page 32-33.

Cees Waardenburg

Holy Trinity Rudgwick
joint funeral for Harry
Payne and Cees
Waardenburg
W/C Lynn salutes



Register entries and exhumation record

No. 684 Cornelius Waardenburg Exhumation took place on 15th July 1964 by Dutch War Graves Foundation transferred to Mill Hill, Paddington Cemetery No. 684	Dunsfold Aerodrome	September 2nd	23 years	A. H. Wynn <i>W. H. Wynn</i>
No. 685 Harry George Payne	Highcroft Rudgwick	September 2nd	27 years	A. H. Wynn

Eight Airmen Killed at Pallinghurst 7 January 1944

The RAF Volunteer Reserve Crews

FL682 (buried in the ground near the house and stables)

Flying Officer Ernest Fooks

pilot, from New Zealand, 32 (CWGC, Brookwood, Surrey)

Pilot Officer Leonard Taylor

navigator, Birmingham, 24 (CWGC, Broadwood End, Birmingham)

Flight Sergeant Charles Forsyth

wireless operator/gunner, Newhaven, 23 (private burial, Newhaven)

Flight Sergeant George Ormandy

gunner, Beckenham, 20 (private burial, Beckenham).



Airmen of Flight FL682, from left, Leonard Taylor, Charles (Bob) Forsyth, Ernest Fooks (with pilots wings), George Ormandy.

FR396 (crash landed and caught fire down the hill in an orchard)

Warrant Officer Terence Riordan

pilot, Abergavenny, 22 (CWGC, Brookwood, Surrey)

Flight Sergeant Douglas Morris

navigator, Abergavenny, 23 (CWGC, Abergavenny)

Flight Sergeant Stanley Norton

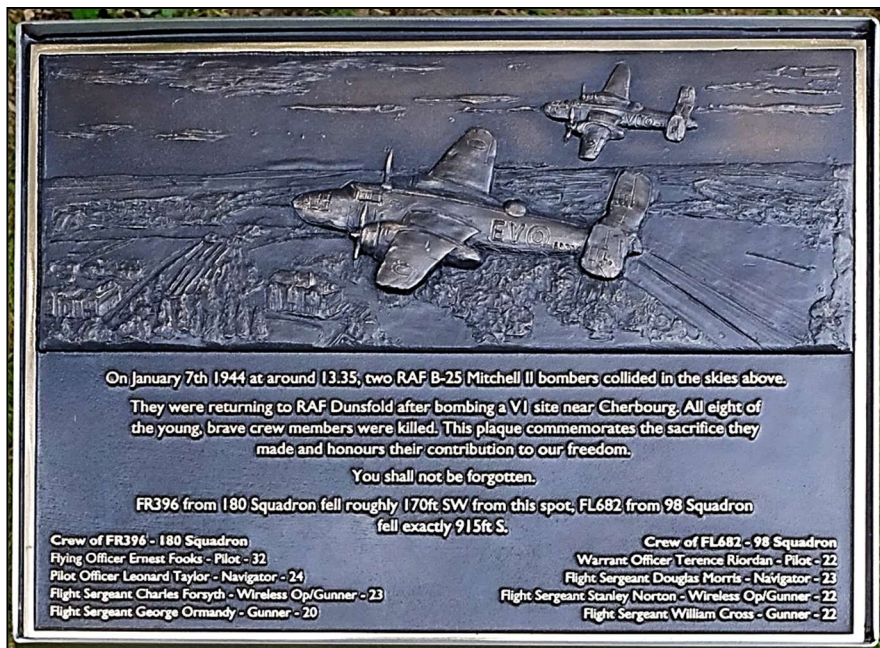
wireless operator/gunner, Lincoln, 22 (CWGC, St Swithin's, Lincoln)



Airmen of Flight FR396, from left, Terence Riordan (with pilot's wings), Douglas Morris, Stanley Norton, and an unknown airman. This photo was taken of the crew before William (Bill) Cross joined the team. A photo of Bill Cross has been superimposed.

Flight Sergeant William Cross

gunner, Ribbleton, near Preston, 22 (CWGC, New Hall Lane, Preston)



**Memorial unveiled at Rikkyo School, Pallinghurst, Rudgwick
31 August 2019**

Unterofizier Karl Kurt Born

Karl Born was shot down in an ME 109, crashing in flames at Roman Gate Cottage, Rudgwick on **9 September 1940**, during the early days of the Battle of Britain. This is on the Rudgwick Slinfold border, a few metres on the Slinfold side. He is the only known German casualty of the war in Rudgwick. He was 21 years old. He was first buried in Hills Cemetery Horsham, now buried in the Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery.

Born had several victories in his log book in 1940: a Blenheim south of Portland 25 July; two Hurricanes south of the Isle of Wight 8 August; a Hurricane south of Portland 11 August; a Spitfire at Ford W Sussex 11 August. His assailant is known, Sergeant Josef František, 303 Squadron RAF, flying a Hurricane.

Sergeant Josef František

Josef “was a Czechoslovak fighter pilot and Second World War fighter ace who flew for the air forces of Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, and the United Kingdom. He was the highest-scoring non-British Allied ace in the Battle of Britain, with 17 confirmed victories and one probable, all gained in a period of four weeks in September 1940.

František was a brilliant pilot and combatant but frequently breached air force discipline first in Czechoslovakia, in France and Britain. The RAF found it best to let him patrol alone, a role in which he was highly successful. He was killed in a crash in October 1940 in the final week of the Battle of Britain.” *Wikipedia*.

He trained as a pilot in Czechoslovakia, escaped to Poland, where he served and was honoured, escaped again to Romania, from there to Lebanon, and to France where he again served in the air force. He eventually joined the RAF Polish 303 Squadron on 8 August 1940. His was an almost private war, so insubordinate was this brilliant pilot. He was awarded the DFM and bar. He had four successful actions over the Horsham area. On the day he shot down Born, he had several other successes, finally shot down himself, calmly walking to a station and carrying his parachute home. His final victim was an ME109 over Brooklands, Surrey on 30 September. n **8 October 1940**, he crashed at Ewell, Surrey, cause unknown. He is buried in Northwood, Middlesex. He remains a legend in the Czech Republic.



Messerschmitt 109 E-3



Karl Born, Cannock Chase

Rudgwick Parish Magazine, October 1939

The list shown here is a useful guide to those who joined up right at the start, or before the war broke out. Most names of men who thankfully returned home later do not appear elsewhere in this document. A small number were siblings of those killed, and a small number were themselves killed.

Killed:

Jock MacLiesh
Peter Port
Holford Secretan
Raymond Shrubbs
Leslie Thompson

Siblings:

John Cave-Brown
Robin Duke
(Thomas) John Port
Benjamin Port
William Thompson
Garth Wilson

REMEMBER BEFORE GOD

Those who have gone from this parish to
serve their King and Country.

Sidney Allingham. R.A.F.
Ted Bailey. Army.
Humphrey Botting. Army.
Valentine Botting. Army.
Kenneth Boxall. R.N.
Robert Broadbridge. R.N.
Frank Butcher. R.A.F.
John Cave-Brown. R.E.
James Cecil. Sussex Yeomanry.
Robert Cecil. Sussex Yeomanry.
Cecil Christy. Army.
Robin Duke. Sussex Yeomanry.
Peter Fisher. R.A.F.
Edwin Green. R.A.F.
Archie Hyde. Army.
Nigel Hendricks. Cameronians.
Patrick Hendricks. Cameronians.
Robert Jolly. R.N.
Frederick Jackson. R.A.F.
Albert Knight. Royal Sussex Regt.
Harold Laker. Royal Sussex Regt.
— Lillywhite. Army.
Jock MacLiesh. Army.
Jack Marden. R.N.
Geoffrey Marden. R.A.F.
Charles Martin. R.N.
— Osgood. Army.
John Port. R.N.
Peter Port. R.N.
Benjamin Port. R.N.
Holford Secretan. Royal Sussex Regt.
Raymond Shrubbs. West Kent Regt.
David Skinner. Army.
Robert Sopp. R.N.
Roy Stevens. R.A.F.
Clive Temperly. Rifle Brigade.
Leslie Thompson. Army.
William Thompson. Army.
Robert Underwood. Queen's Regt.
Jack White. Royal Sussex Regt.
Garth Wilson. R.A.
Ronald Young.
Roslyn Young. Army.

Rudgwick Roll of Honour Summary Chart

Date	Rank	First name	Surname	Age	Unit	Location
12.12.1939	Able Seaman	Peter	Port	19	HMS Duchess	Irish Sea
12.03.1940	Corporal	Raymond	Shrubb	20	West Kent	Cuckfield Hospital (on leave)
20.05.1940	Private	Arthur	Hurst	21	Queen's (W Surrey)	Northern France
23.05.1940	2 nd Lieutenant	Holford	Secretan	24	Royal Sussex	Belgium
06.11.1940	Private	Leslie	Thompson	21	Queen's (W Surrey)	Poland (PoW)
18.11.1940	Captain	Hugh	McLiesh	22	King's Own (Lancaster)	Libya
29.11.1940	Mrs	Rhoda	Charman	23	civilian	Horsham
20.04.1941	Trooper	Benjamin	Hickman	22	Royal Artillery Company	Greece
19.08.1941`	3 rd Officer	Margaret	Chappé-Hall	26	WRENS	Atlantic Ocean
22.11.1941	Trooper	Percy	Napper	30	Royal Artillery Company	Libya
24.11.1941	Midshipman	Colin	Wilson	19	HMS Dunedin	Atlantic Ocean
06.01.1942	Private	Joan	Clevett	16	Auxiliary Territorial Service	Tidworth Wilts
17.01.1942	Ordinary Seaman	Timothy	Duke	19	HMS Matabele	Arctic Ocean
20.01.1942	Private	Harold	Napper	29	Royal Norfolk	Malaya
05.03.1942	Flight Lieutenant	Peter	Fisher	25	RAF	Libya
13.09.1942	Ordinary Seaman	Richard	Clarke	18	SS Empire Stevenson (Merchant Navy)	Arctic Ocean
09.12.1942	Chief Petty Officer	James	Hayman	46	HMS Marigold	Mediterranean Sea
16.02.1943	Flying Officer	Edward	Cave-Brown	20	RAF	Sicily
05.03.1943	Gunner	Alfred	Barrett	32	Royal Artillery	Soloman Islands (PoW)

21.04.1943	Private	Charles	Clevett	25	Royal Sussex	Tunisia
18.02. 1944	Able Seaman	Howard	Brown-Greaves	22	HMS Penelope	Off Anzio, Italy
14.06.1944	Flight Sergeant	Ronald	Buckman	21	RAF	NE France
30 08.1944	Flying Officer	Henry	Payne	27	RAFVR	Dunsfold, Surrey
15.03.1945	Private	Frederick	Hurst	28	Royal Lincs	Burma
16.04.1945	Gunner	George	Nickolay	33	Royal Artillery	Burma (PoW)
Other Deaths, not on Rudgwick War Memorial						
09.08.1940	Gunner	Horace	Bristo	20	Royal Horse Artillery	Rudgwick
07.02.1942	Sub-Lieutenant	Maurice	Swithinbank	24	Naval Air Squadron	Off Libya
02.09.1942	Captain	Arthur	Ellis	33	Special Air Service	Italy (PoW)
12.06.1943	Lance Bombardier	Jack	Belchamber	34	Royal Artillery	Tunisia
07.01.1944	Flying Officer	Ernest	Fooks	32	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Pilot Officer	Leonard	Taylor	24	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Flight Sergeant	Charles	Forsyth	23	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Flight Sergeant	George	Ormandy	20	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Warrant Officer	Terence	Riordan	22	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Flight Sergeant	Douglas	Morris	23	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Flight Sergeant	Stanley	Norton	22	RAFVR	Rudgwick
07.01.1944	Flight Sergeant	William	Cross	22	RAFVR	Rudgwick
30.08.1944	1e Luitenant	Cornelis	Waardenburg	23	Dutch Naval Air Service	Dunsfold, Surrey
18 09.1944	Private	George	Ayres	24	Parachute Regiment	Netherlands
22.10.1944	Private	Ronald	Francis	27	Queen's (W Surrey)	Netherlands
28.10.1944	Pilot Officer	Robert	Higgins	23	RAF	Netherlands
Enemy Casualty						
09.09.1940	Unterofizier	Karl	Born	21	Luftwaffe	Rudgwick

Some analysis

The ages of the men and women above never ceases to shock. There were five fatalities under 20 years of age, and another twenty three under 25.

Three were women. How common is that on village war memorials? There were none in The Great War.

There were sixteen flyers, not all in the RAF, including one German. one Dutchman, and boosted by the eight killed at Pallinghurst, Rudgwick in January 1944.

There were five in the Royal Navy, plus one in the Merchant Navy. All were in ships sunk by torpedo, including a WREN, except one in the Royal Naval Air Squadron

The remainder, a majority, were serving in the numerous regiments and branches of the Army. The exception was one female civilian in Horsham,

The majority were Other Ranks, but there were some prominent deaths as in all wars, among officers, fourteen in total.

Fourteen died in or near Rudgwick. Only one other died on home soil, the young 16 year old Joan Clevett at Tidworth. Most theatres of war are included, some distinctly time-specific, such as northern France and Belgium in the fighting before Dunkirk, those in North Africa, and two between VE Day and VJ Day in the Far East.

Four died in captivity, including soon after capture, of which two were prisoners of the Japanese.

There were fatal casualties throughout the war years, but 1940 (8) and 1944 (15) stand out. On the Rudgwick memorial there were one in 1939, six in 1940, four in 1941, six in 1942, three in 1943, three in 1944 and two in 1945, 25 in total. In a few cases, family members did not know for a long time if their missing man was dead.