

‘The Fallen’ of  
Prior Park College  
in  
Wartime Conflicts



# Introduction



In the heart of Prior Park College is the Chapel, Our Lady of the Snows. Therein hangs the plaque to commemorate those who lost their lives during the Second World War.

*The designer and carver of the Memorial, Mr Hugh R Burt, spent twenty years of his early life in South Africa, where he was engaged in works of national importance, including the Rhodes Memorial and the carving of the whole of the ornamental decoration in the then new debating chamber of the Union Parliament in Cape Town. Back in England again he was entrusted with high class work for many eminent architects, including Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Edwin Lutyens. One of his most recent works was the carving of the Angel Cresting for the St James' Chapel in Exeter Cathedral, and the designing and carving of the ornamental work on the recently dedicated oak pulpit in the same Cathedral. (Gossip Bowl Dec 1952)*

Thousands of children, parents, teachers, visitors and alumni have walked past this plaque and maybe never looked up, never seen the faces that belong to these names, myself included until one day. Standing gazing up at the list of names, hearing the echoes of the Remembrance Day cry of "we shall remember them" I felt it was important to make these names real for all the Chapel visitors.

All the information has been gathered from old magazines, obituaries, Commonwealth Graves Commission and searches on the internet. These boys were like any class of students, some academic, some sporty, some slipping under the radar completely.

The research is not complete and there are three issues missing of the Second World War period. Still looking for: Dec 1939, Dec 1941 and July 1943

The new archive site: <http://priorparkcollege-heritage.daisy.websds.net/> has helped to see their faces and hear their stories. As missing magazines appear so does more of the story.

Quote from SLOAN entry:

*“Bob Sloan is a name not likely to be soon forgotten at his school, by the Old Boys or by those who were privileged to be called his friends.”*

Hopefully, now all the lost boys will be remembered again and for the years to come.

Booklet compiled by Carole Laverick on behalf of the Prior Park Alumni – updated October 2020.

Additional Researchers: Vivian Gallaher (Class of 1968)

Simon Beck (Class of 1969)

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	Denotes died during the war		Denotes a brother to one who died in war

The ghostly image on each page is Robert Sloan.

# William HAROLD-BARRY

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1870	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Ballyvonare, Co Cork
<b>Class of</b>	1887	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Date of Death</b>	1895	<b>Place of Death</b>	Jameson Raid, South Africa
<b>Age at Death</b>	26	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	
<b>Regiment</b>		<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	Prelude to the Boer War		
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Harold Philip Harold-Barry (1884)	Rev Edward Harold-Barry (1879)	John A Harold-Barry (1886)
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>	1881	<b>Additional researcher</b>	David Grant



**THE COLLEGE XI. 1884.**

*Standing : E. CHICHESTER, R. CHICHESTER, J. REYNOLDS, H. LOUGHNAN, R. RADCLIFFE, H. FOLEY.  
On Tree : L. LANGLEY, A. ROSTANT, J. B. CHARD, J. RADCLIFFE.  
On Ground : W. BACQUE, H. HAROLD BARRY.*

His brother in 1884 cricket team photo featured in 1930 magazine

*Gossip Bowl 1944: MR. HAROLD P. HAROLD-BARRY – Obituary Harold Philip Harold-Barry, the eldest son of John Harold-Barry, J.P., D.L., was born at Ballyvonare, Buttevant, Co. Cork, in 1865. He was one of four brothers at Prior Park, one of whom is Rev. Edward Harold-Barry C.J., Weybridge ; his years were from 1879 to and he was often heard, in later life, to speak with evidently sincere affection of his school-days. During this time he proved a useful medium bowler, though his undoubted prowess at cricket was overshadowed by that of his brother William (afterwards killed in the Jameson Raid), who achieved an innings of 200 not out in a match against the Priests and Divines (1887) !*

*On leaving school, Harold devoted himself to the management of his father's estate, to which he succeeded in 1898. He kept up his sporting activities ; he remained a keen cricketer, rode well to hounds, and was no mean shot. He married Helen Riddell, of Hermeston Hall, Worksop, Notts. There were seven children of the marriage : four boys and three girls. The eldest son was killed in the last war. Harold's youngest daughter is married to Lieut.-Commander W. Esmond, R.N., the brother of Eugene Esmond, V.C.*

*His life may be summed up by saying that he had a real good innings and always played with a straight bat. He passed away at his old home on November 17th, 1944, fortified with all the rites of our Holy Mother the Church.*

Wikipedia Research: The **Jameson Raid** (29 December 1895 – 2 January 1896) was a botched raid against the South African Republic (commonly known as the Transvaal) carried out by British colonial statesman Leander Starr Jameson and his Company troops ("police" in the employ of Beit and Rhodes' British South Africa Company) and Bechuanaland policemen over the New Year weekend of 1895–96. Paul Kruger was president of the republic at the time. The raid was intended to trigger an uprising by the primarily British expatriate workers (known as Uitlanders) in the Transvaal but failed to do so. The workers were called the Johannesburg conspirators. They were expected to recruit an army and prepare for an insurrection. The raid was ineffective and no uprising took place, but it was an inciting factor in the Second Boer War and the Second Matabele War.

"The Press Association is informed by the British South Africa Co. that they have been advised by cable from Cape Town that Captain W H Barry, who was seriously wounded while with Dr Jameson's expedition in the Krugersdorp fight, died during the night of the 1st of February, and that his funeral was fixed for yesterday (the 3rd instant).

Captain Barry was an Irishman, and was the son of a gentleman well-known in the South of Ireland - namely, Mr J Harold Barry, of



Ballyvonare."

*Freeman's Journal, Wednesday 5th February 1896*

*Harold P Harold-Barry married Helen Riddell and it was his brother, William that was killed in the raid. In the College Chapel there is a column that has the Riddell clan motto on the top – could this be in his memory?*



# First World War

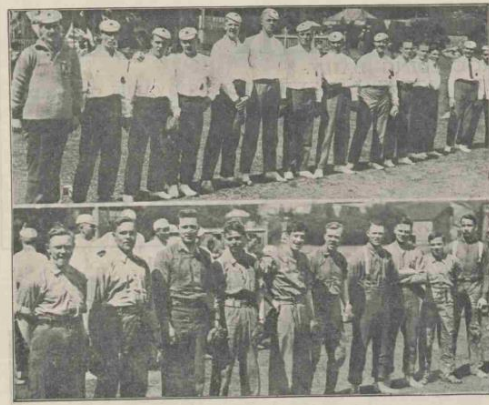
The College closed between 1904 and 1924 and during the WW1 period the College was used as a training ground for Somerset Light Infantry. Between 26<sup>th</sup> November 1916 and 20<sup>th</sup> February 1919 the No 18 Officer Cadet Battalion were based here with over 1,698 cadets and officers. (Please refer to the digital archive for full details of names and regiments involved). Canadians were stationed here for several years to enable them to convalesce in the scenic Bath valley. Graffiti on the St Peter's clock tower is a testament to some of their names. Notices in local churches when the soldiers came and helped at services gave specific soldiers names.

Wells Journal - Friday 30 June 1916

CORPUS CHRISTI FESTIVAL AT WELLS. The Roman Catholics of Wells and the district celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi in the city on Sunday and in the afternoon a procession took place from the Church in Chamberlain-street to the field opposite the Carmelite Convent, the imposing ceremony being witnessed by a large gathering. The Rev. Fr. Morton, the priest-in-charge of the mission, was again responsible for the arrangements, and this, the third outdoor procession in Wells in connection with the ceremony since the Reformation, was as imposing and picturesque as on previous occasions. The railings in the field were decorated in a most tasteful manner with an abundance of wild flowers gathered by the children and arranged by the Sisters of St. Mary's Convent. In the centre of this flower screen was erected the Altar of Repose, decorated in a charming manner by Miss Merchant with some choice flowers, whilst the banks of flowers and plants on either side added to the beauty of the setting, these having been sent by Madame Glenton Myler, Mrs. Robinson (Chamberlain-street), Miss Pickets (Wookey Vicarage), and Miss Annie Murphy.

The service commenced in the Church at 3.30 and shortly afterwards the procession slowly wended its way towards the field, being headed the processional cross carried Assistant Scout Master Phipps, and two torch bearers (Dick Weight and Dick Welsford). Following were a number of girls in white embroidered dresses with crimson sashes, decorated with bouquets of red and white flowers and white lace veils. The small children added to the picturesque nature of the procession by carrying banners of crimson and white, and the elder girls with sheafs of pink poppies and spiraea, Mother Marie Joseph, of St. Mary's Convent, being responsible for the dresses and decorations. Next came the Book bearer (Fred Brown), two torch bearers (Clement and William Morton)<sup>1</sup>, and two thurifers (Bernard Daly and Charles Weight) with their boat bearers (Alphonso Francis and Donald Brown). Aileen Daly and Sally Trenchard, carrying baskets ornamented with crimson roses and ivy, acted as flower strewers, proceeded the canopy borne by four Canadian soldiers, who were drawn from a party of nine under the command of Captain Enright, who came from Prior Park, Bath, which is a discharge depot for Canadian troops. The officer and men have all seen active service with our forces in the West, where they were disabled, and are now awaiting to returned to Canada. The Blessed Sacrament was carried the Rev. Fr. Morton, who was assisted at the service by Father O'Connell, of Bristol.





THE RIVAL BASE BALL TEAMS. Photo, "Bath Weekly Chronicle."  
Upper Picture: Prior Park Depot Team. Lower Picture: Salisbury Team.



## DOMINION DAY IN



Photo, "Bath Weekly Chronicle."  
The Mayor leads the Prior Park Team.

*Gerald Walker (Class of 1948) writes in 1965 Gossip Bowl: The buildings and grounds then fell again into a state of dereliction until, in 1915, the Army took possession at a rent of £200 and quartered a Somerset Division there. These were followed by convalescent Canadian soldiers, and later by officer cadets.*

*While the Somersets were there, an epidemic broke out, which was attributed to faulty drainage. Under an extensive scheme, in which the trenches were dug by German prisoners of war, pipes replaced the old culverts, and the system was linked with that of the city. It cost the trustees £1,000.*

*When the war ended Prior Park reverted to the Diocese, and the time was almost at hand for the return of the Christian Brothers.*

During this time it is estimated that over 1,698 soldiers came through these doors and stayed here in one capacity or another.

Obviously because of the closure in 1904, it has been harder to trace soldiers that might have been educated here and then perished in the conflicts. All the records were lost in the fire in 1991.

### **Sir Arthur Bliss**

English composer, was at Prior Park in 1917, a military posting as instructor following his injury incurred at the Somme in July 1916 while serving with the Royal Fusiliers. After being passed fit for duty, he was posted as an instructor to an officers' cadet battalion in Prior Park (1917-1919).

There are many accounts from his book which are so interesting to read of his life at Prior Park including a visit from an author, Rudyard Kipling.

Ref: As I remember by Arthur Bliss.

“ Our Colonel happened to be acquainted with Kipling, and unknown to his junior officers invited him to Prior Park one day to see what sort of

training the New Army was getting; I believe Kipling, at this time, was busy collecting material for a book on the subject. At the hour of his visit I was on the miniature rifle range with my cadets, and we were desultorily engaged in puncturing holes in small targets supposed to represent the head and shoulders of an enemy at (say) two hundred yards.

I was suddenly summoned by our Colonel to confront a small man distinguished by thick overhanging eyebrows, keen eyes behind magnifying glasses and a jutting chin. "And what are you doing here with your men, Captain Bliss?" he quietly asked – I imagined a pencil poised above a note-book. I remained completely tongue-tied. Our present occupation in the miniature rifle range seemed far too remote from any experience to be faced in the front line. No words came from me, and Kipling walked away, beside the displeased Colonel, despairing, I suspect, of our military future."

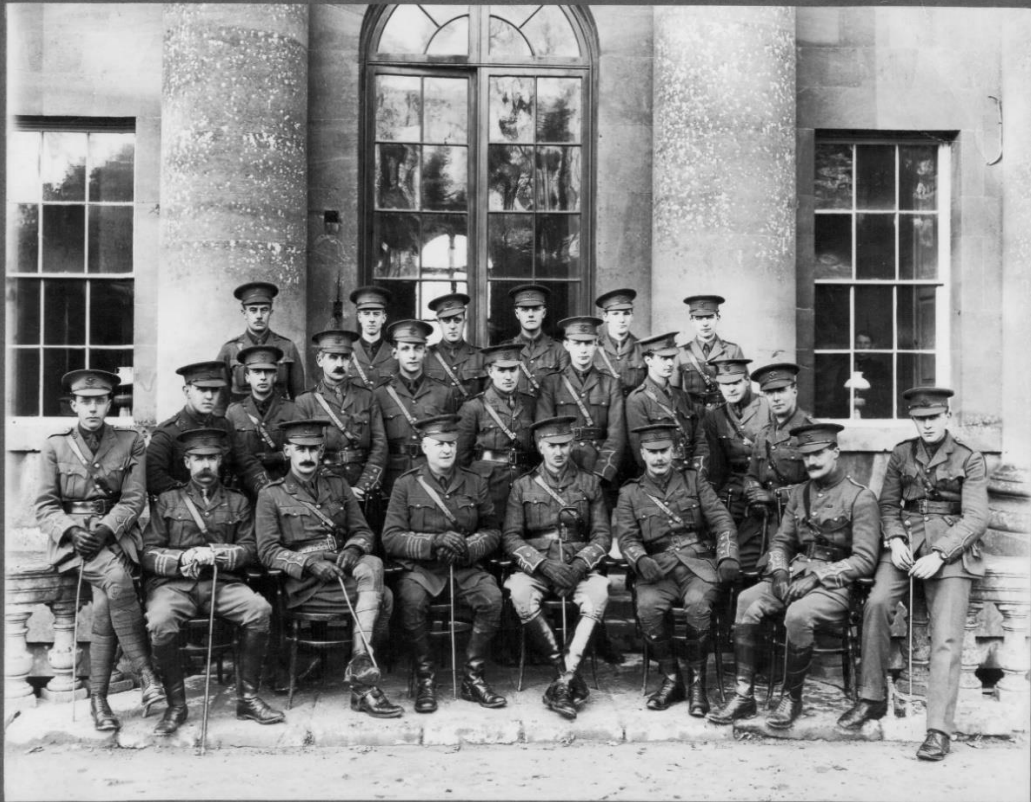


**DIGGING FOR VICTORY:** in 1914, Prior Park was taken over by the 2/4th Somerset Light Infantry who were billeted there for training before being shipped out to India. Here they are seen practicing digging trenches on Claverton Down



**AT EASE:** Second Lieutenants Elkington and MacLagan and Major Amory of the 2/4th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry are seen on the terrace enjoying some autumn sunshine at Prior Park in the autumn of 1914





*Graydon Bird Bath*

4th (RES.) BATTALION PRINCE ALBERT'S SOMERSET L.I.



THEATRE, PRIOR PARK, BATH.

NO. 226.

BATTALION ORDERS  
by Lieut. Col. W. H. Wild, D.S.O.  
Commanding No. 18 Officer Cadet Battalion.  
Prior Park. Bath. Sept. 27th 1917.

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PART 1.

- DUTY. Orderly Officer to-morrow, Lieut. J. K. Gwinnell.  
Battalion Orderly Sergeant to-morrow, No. 7/6, A/CQMS  
Hesaltine C.P.G.,
1. DENTAL TREATMENT. Cadet B. Stringer "C" Company, will report to the Dental Surgeon at 10-30 a.m. to-morrow, 28th inst, for Dental Treatment.
2. MEDICAL BOARD. Captain H. E. Meade will appear before a Medical Board at the Bath War Hospital at 11-0 a.m. to-morrow, 28th instant.
3. COURSES OF INSTN. Referring to para 3, Battalion Orders No. 225, dated 26th instant, for Captain Lancaster read Lieut. H.L. Crockett to attend Rifle Course assembling on Monday, Oct. 1st 1917, at Hayling Island.
4. UNDER AGE SOLDIERS. Officers Commanding Companies will render to the Orderly Room by 12 Noon, 30th instant, a return shewing whether there are any soldiers serving in their respective Companies who claim to attain the age of 19 years of age on a date subsequent to that which would agree with their age on the attestation or record of service paper.
5. BADGES FOR BOMBERS. Southern Command Order No. 2127 is published for information:-  
"With reference to A.O. 403 of 1915, the badges for Bombers will in future be embroidered all in scarlet instead of in scarlet and drab as heretofore.  
Stocks of the existing badges will be used up before the new badge is issued".
6. STANDARD TESTS IN BOMBING. Southern Command Order No. 2149 is published for information:-  
"Reference to Army Council Instruction No. 1230 of 1917, Appendix 1, any Officer holding a certificate obtained at a Command or Army Bombing School may now conduct these tests.  
3rd sub-para of para 5 of Appendix 1, Page 47, "Training and Employment of Bombers" will not apply."
7. APPOINTMENT. Captain T.J.E.Blake is appointed Company Commander of "A" Company.  
Authy:- War Office letter 42/Young Officers/946 (S.D.3) dated 25th Sept. 1917.
8. PROMOTION. 2nd Lieut. (Acting Lieut.) G. Thorneycroft M.C., Northumberland Fusiliers promoted to the temporary rank of Lieutenant with effect from 24th August 1917.  
Authy:- London Gazette dated 24th Aug. 1917 and War Office letter No. 142639/7 (M.S.1a) dated 26th Sept. 1917.

(sd) J. D. Butler, Captain.  
Adj. No. 18 Officer Cadet Batt.



## Campaign Medals for WW1

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The 1914-15 Star</b></p> <p>This medal was established in December 1918. It was awarded to those who fought in any theatre of World War I from 5<sup>th</sup> August 1914 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1915, except those who were eligible for the earlier 1914 Star. The 1914-15 Star was never awarded alone. The recipient would also have been awarded the British War and Victory Medals. The medal was made of bronze and had the recipient's name, rank, service number and unit impressed on the reverse, which was plain.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The British War Medal</b></p> <p>The British War Medal was established in July 1919. It was the most commonly awarded medal of World War I. It was the only medal that could be awarded on its own. This silver medal was awarded to officers and men of the British and Imperial Forces who either entered a theatre of war (an area of active fighting) or served overseas (perhaps as a garrison soldier) between 5<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918 inclusive.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Allied Victory Medal</b></p> <p>At the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, it was agreed that the Allies should each issue their own bronze victory medal with a similar design, equivalent wording and identical ribbon. The Victory Medal was never awarded alone but usually with the British War Medal. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the rim. The full set of the three medals above were known as 'Pip', 'Squeak' and 'Wilfred', while the set of War and Victory medals were known as 'Mutt' and 'Jeff'.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Memorial Plaque of World War I</b></p> <p>The Next of Kin Memorial Plaque was a bronze plaque, approximately 11cms in diameter, with the name of the person who died serving with the British and Empire forces in the First World War. This was issued to the Next of Kin of the casualty along with a scroll. They were posted out separately, typically in 1919 and 1920, and a 'King's message' was enclosed with both, containing a facsimile signature of the King.</p>

# Map of Fallen WW1





# Francis Patrick BRANIGAN

<b>Date of Birth</b>	28 June 1887	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Woolwich
<b>Class of</b>	1905	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	Victory Medal	British War Medal	Memorial Death Plaque
<b>Date of Death</b>	9 DEC 1920	<b>Place of Death</b>	Timperley, Christchurch, Cheshire
<b>Age at Death</b>	33	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	
<b>Regiment</b>	"B" Bty. 170th Bde	<b>Service Number</b>	191778
<b>Service</b>	Royal Field Artillery	<b>Position</b>	Signaller
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>	Ida Branigan	<b>Children</b>	Norah May and Denis Patrick
<b>School census</b>	1901	<b>Additional researcher</b>	

## From Forces War Records:

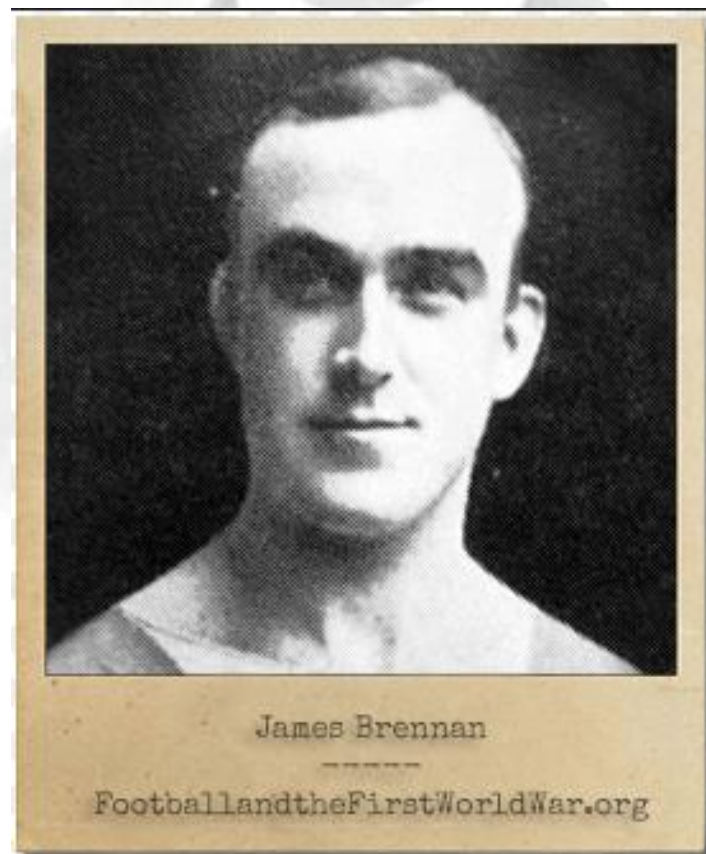
### Information:

SON OF PATRICK HENRY AND MARIA BRANIGAN; HUSBAND OF IDA BRANIGAN, OF 31, GRAFTON ST., OXFORD RD., MANCHESTER. BORN AT WOOLWICH.

Ancestry research also shows that he had two children: Norah May (1915-1996) married but no children and Denis Patrick (1917-1996) married and one son who died without issue.

# James Francis BRENNAN

<b>Date of Birth</b>	10 Sept 1884	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Templemore, Ireland
<b>Class of</b>	1902	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>			
<b>Date of Death</b>	6 Sept 1917	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in Action. West Flanders, Belgium
<b>Age at Death</b>	32	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Tyne Cot Panel 54 to 60 and 163A.
<b>Regiment</b>	Kings Regiment (Liverpool) then Lancs Fusiliers	<b>Service Number</b>	235518
<b>Service</b>	British Army	First and Fifth Battalion	
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>	Nothing on Ancestry	<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>	NO	<b>Additional researcher</b>	



From Wikipedia:

**James Francis Brennan** (10 September 1884 – 6 September 1917) was an Irish professional football inside right who made one appearance in the Football League for Bury.

### Personal life

Brennan attended Prior Park College in Bath. He served in the King's Regiment (Liverpool) and the Lancashire Fusiliers during the First World War and was holding the rank of corporal when he was killed in action in West Flanders, Belgium on 6 September 1917. Brennan is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing.

### James Francis Brennan | Service Record

Club(s)	Brighton & Hove Albion Bury Liverpool			
Rank	Corporal			
Previous Service Number(s)	4761			
Regiment or Corps	Lancashire Fusiliers			
Unit(s)	1/5th Battalion			
Previous Regiment(s) or Corps	The King's (Liverpool Regiment)			
Unit(s)	1/8th (Irish) Battalion			
Type of Casualty (If applicable)	Killed in Action			
Date of Death (If applicable)	06/09/1917			
Place of Death (If applicable)	France and Flanders			

From Forces War Records:

### Incident Details:

War Office Daily List No. 5490

### Incident Date:

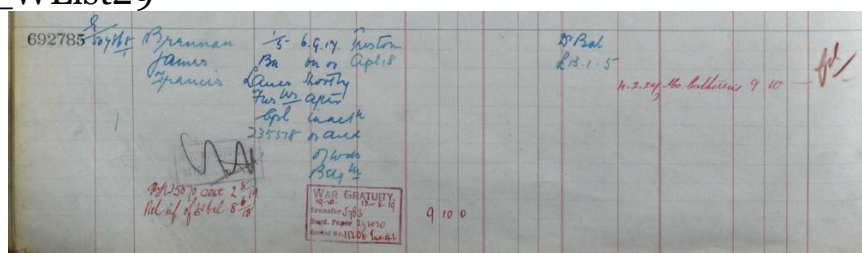
12/02/1918

### Casualty Listed As:

Previously reported wounded and missing, now reported killed.

### Archive Reference:

NLS 1918\_WList29



# Allan BUSH

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1887	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Waterloo, Lincs
<b>Class of</b>	1905	<b>Medals</b>	MC and DSO
<b>Campaign Medals</b>			
<b>Date of Death</b>		<b>Place of Death</b>	
<b>Age at Death</b>		<b>Memorial Ref</b>	
<b>Regiment</b>		<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>			
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>	1901	<b>Additional researcher</b>	

Friend of Bertie Minch, who writes....

*Gossip Bowl Dec 1942: "In the Magazine for December, 1929, Col. Minch refers to many of the masters and boys of his day. In your journal," he continues, "I see Col. Creagh mentioned.*

*Yes, I served in the Leicester Regiment with him in Delhi. . . I also see the name Canning. I remember a Canning in my time known as Tom Canning, who could hit a cricket ball. . . Tollemaches, yes, charming lads, one Rex was a great friend of mine. . . A redhaired lad called Bush. . . a greathearted pugnacious fellow, had an encounter with Br. Dunne, but they became great friends. . . I believe he won the M.C. and D.S.O. and was killed in the war [1914—18].*



# William COFFEY

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1889	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Enniskillen
<b>Class of</b>	1907 (school closed in 1904)	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	1914-1915 Star Medal	British War medal	British Victory medal
	Memorial Death Plaque		
<b>Date of Death</b>	22 MAY 1915	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action. Gallipoli
<b>Age at Death</b>	25	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Turkey
<b>Regiment</b>	Royal Einniskilling Fusiliers	<b>Service Number</b>	8832
<b>Service</b>	British Army		1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>		<b>Ancestry research</b>	When William Coffey was born in 1890, their father, James, was 42, and their mother, Letitia, was 30. He had eight brothers and three sisters.
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>	1901	<b>Additional researcher</b>	

**From Gossip Bowl 1930:** The following is a list of the successful candidates in the Oxford Examinations of July, 1902, a year to be remembered with regret by many an Old Boy, especially those who left Prior Park that year. We give the list in full as it may prove of interest to many.

*Oxford Senior:—E. Kaltenback (Kay), J. Carr, T. Canning, P. Larrony, P. Markey, L. Nash, W. Beamish.*

*Oxford Junior:—R. Bond, T. Beamish, F. Brady, G. Delaney, T. Lyndon, W. Nugent, J. O'Brien, M. O'Connell, A. Owen, L. Parnell, J. Dillon, G. Welstead, H. Birch, L. Birch, W. Ferguson, E. Garrett, E. Malone, L. Nourry, P. Slattery.*

*Oxford Preliminary:—R. Barton, L. Bond, A. Clanchy, **W. Coffey**, F. Collins, W. Cronin, L. Harvey, W. Malone, P. Norton, J. Nourry,*

*M. J. Petty, P. Price, P. Robinson, F. Ross, T. Taunton, A. L. Thompson B. Tierney, C. Tottemache, W. Tollemache, M. Tottemache, C. York, G. Beamish, F. Branigan, L. Brett, C. Ferguson, **A. Mankelow**, E. Markey, O. O'Gorman, E. Stay, R. Upham.*

Rank	Sergt.
Regiment	Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
Birth place	Ardaragh, Co. Fermanagh
Enlistment place	Belfast
Death place	Gallipoli
Theatre of war	Balkan Theatre
Information:	Parents: James and Letitia Coffey, of Corradarragh, Florence Court, Enniskillen.

WW1 Actions and Troop Movements (ORBATS) for Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Battalion

If William Coffey stayed with this unit, this map shows where he would have fought

The Battles Of Helles - The Landing At Cape Helles

Alçitepe - 25/04/1915 [PREV](#) [NEXT](#)

1915

The Battles Of Helles - The Landing At Cape Helles - 25/04/1915

Location: Cape Helles. Turkish/Ottoman victory. Frustrated by the stalemate on the Western Front, in 1915 the Allies decided to open up a new front against the Ottoman-Turkish Empire in the Dardanelles.

A new force, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force under General Hamilton was formed and in April 1915 this force began to initiate its plan of attack on the Turks by landing a force on the Gallipoli Peninsular. The M.E.F. would land in three phases; the Australian and New Zealand Army (ANZAC) Corps' would land at Z Beach on the west coast at Gaba Tapa, the French force would land at Kum Kale whilst the main British landing would be at Cape Helles.

There would be five landing points at beaches codenamed S, V, W, X and Y. The 29th Division under Major-General Aylmer Hunter-Weston was detailed to make the initial landing and secure the beaches.

Composed in the main of experienced battalions brought back from various points of the Empire, the Division would land in two phases, 86th Brigade, augmented by 2nd South Wales Borderers and 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers of 87th Brigade and 2nd Hampshire Regiment of 88th Brigade along with Plymouth Battalion and Anson Battalion of the Royal Naval Division, would make the initial landing and establish beach heads, while the main force would follow on behind to secure the high ground of the Achi Baba Ridge and the village of Krithia (Alcotepe) beyond. The success of the operation and fate of the troops was decidedly mixed.

Whilst the main beaches, V and W were mined and defended by barbed wire and machine gun posts, S, X and Y had hardly any defences at all. With the approaches to the beaches being too shallow for large vessels to approach, the troops would approach them in small wooden boats towed behind a steamship.

Once close to the shore the steamship would pull away and the soldiers would row the rest of the way. The exception to this was X Beach where an old Glasgow collier, the SS River Clyde, was adapted as a landing craft to run in close to the shore and be grounded from where troops would disembark.

Prior to the landings the landing points were subjected to an immense artillery barrage from warships stationed offshore, which proved practically useless as the ships were armed with armour piercing ammunition for naval operations, rather than the high explosive shells required to clear shore defences. On S Beach, two companies of 2nd South Wales Borderers landed from HMS Cornwallis at 07.30am under fire from a small Turkish garrison.

A third company landing around the point, they scaled the cliffs to capture the garrison from above. The battalion then remained where they were.

2nd Royal Fusiliers and A Company of 1st Lancashire Fusiliers landing at X Beach found their landing totally unopposed. The twelve Turkish defenders having been frightened away by the bombardment from HMS Implacable and HMS Dublin.

By 06.30am they had begun to reach the top of the cliffs and by 07.30am the whole of the battalion was there. One company being left to cover the



beach, a second company secured the high ground to the north-east, where they were held up by Turkish resistance.

The rest of the battalion moving south-west to secure Hill 114, between X and W Beaches, assisted by 1st Border Regiment and 1st **Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers** from the second phase landings, by 11.00am. Y Beach was also unguarded, 2000 men from 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers, Anson Battalion and A Company of 2nd South Wales Borderers landing totally unopposed, the whole force being larger than the entire Turkish garrison on the peninsular at that time.

Moving up Gully Ravine to the top of the cliffs above there was dissension among the officers in command as to what they should do next. Entirely unaware of the disasters unfolding at V and W Beach they did nothing and waited for something to happen.

What did happen was that Turkish reinforcements counter-attacked at dusk, resulting in 700 casualties. As the wounded were evacuated to the British battleships offshore, an unauthorised withdrawal began and the beach was deserted by midnight on 26th April.

The easternmost of the landing beaches, V Beach, overlooked by Fort Etrugrul and Sedd el Bahr castle was defended by little more than A Company of men armed with rifles and four machine guns. However so well sited were they that 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers in their small boats came under devastating fire as soon as they approached the shore.

As did 1st Royal Munster Fusiliers and 2nd Hampshire Regiment as they attempted to leave the the SS River Clyde. The artillery bombardment having done little to clear the barbed wire emplacements on the beach, the survivors of the landings struggled through it to attempt to find safety in the lee of a low ridge on the far side of the beach where they were forced to stay.

W Beach was intended to be the main landing point for the M.E.F. and was assaulted by troops of 1st Lancashire Fusiliers landing from HMS Euryalus and HMS Implacable. Again the artillery bombardment had done little to disturb the barbed wire entanglements and to add to the difficulty of the disembarking troops the beach was also mined and protected by machine-guns.

Approaching the shore under a fusillade of bullets, the survivors attempted to hack and negotiate their way through the barbed wire and mines to reach the Turkish machine-guns. Gradually a foothold was

gained and as more troops made the shore the Turkish trenches were overrun.

Moving out from the beachhead, by early afternoon they had joined-up with 2nd Royal Fusiliers at Hill 114 and with assistance from 4th Worcestershire Regiment had captured Hill 138. Six men of 1st Lancashire Fusiliers, Captain Bromley, Captain Willis, Sergeant Stubbs, Sergeant Richards, Lance Corporal Grimshaw and Private Kenealy were all awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions during the W Beach landing.

The image shows two historical forms. The left form is a 'REGISTRATION CARD' for William Coffey, Form 1/4682, No. 238. It contains personal details such as name, date of birth (2-4-1889), place of birth (Inchicore, Dublin), and occupation (Immigrant worker). The right form is a 'REGISTRAR'S REPORT' for the same individual, dated June 1917, signed by James H. Wright, Registrar. It includes physical descriptions like height (5'6"), weight (140 lbs), and color of eyes (Blue).

May 2019 Paul Kemp (PPA 1976) visited the grave of William Coffey and saw where the counter attack took place.

*“Coffey was killed leading a counter attack here. Captain Ibrahim Heyratin of the Turkish 27th Regiment wrote that the Inniskillings 'exploded' out of their trench and drove the Turks back. That night Coffey's friends recovered his body and buried it in a temporary grave. This was VC stuff but no officer witnessed it so Coffey went unrewarded.”*







# Ralph Goulstone GALE

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1883	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Jersey
<b>Class of</b>	1901	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>			
<b>Date of Death</b>	26 March 1918	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action. Arras, France
<b>Age at Death</b>	35	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	FOSSE NO.10 COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, SAINS-EN-GOHELLE III. B. 13.
<b>Regiment</b>	Royal Engineers	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>			B Special Coy
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>	Christine Ann Gale	<b>Children</b>	Joan Ursula and Pamela Mary
<b>School census</b>	1901	<b>Additional researcher</b>	Mike Bell, grandson



Son of the late John and Bertha S. Gale, of Southbourne, Bournemouth;  
husband of Christine A. Gale, of The Little Cottage, La Rocque, Jersey.

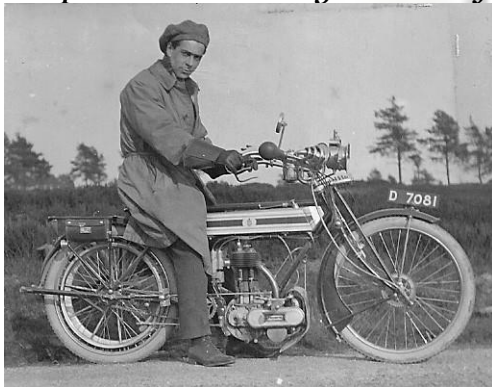
## ***The death of my grandfather in the First World War***

### ***Mike Bell, Leckhampton***

*My grandfather Ralph Gale was one of almost one million British soldiers who died in the First World War. It is almost impossible for us, with our present day concerns and media hysteria over one or two men missing at sea or in distant lands, to realise the impact of the huge number of men killed in the Great War. I think when I watch the jostling crowds of runners at the start of the London marathon, that they are the same as the number of British and French men killed in a single day in the battle of the Somme during that terrible war. Each of those men left behind a traumatised family.*

*My grandfather was a pharmacist. Pharmacy runs in our family. Nine of my immediate ancestors were chemists and druggists, dating back to Jean Piquet who was born in Jersey in 1825. Three of my grandparents, both of my parents, and my son Jason, who works at Gloucester Royal Hospital, have all qualified as pharmacists. When he died Ralph left behind a shattered family, including my granny and my mother, who never overcame their loss. And they were only one of so many British families whose lives were cruelly damaged by the war.*

*Ralph was a daring biker before the war*



*He joined up and became a pharmacist in the Royal Army Medical Corps*



## *Ralph as an army sergeant pharmacist*

*My mother as a proud little girl a few years before her father was killed.*



*Ralph qualified and registered as a chemist and druggist in 1905. He married my granny Christine Piquet from Jersey, and had a daughter, my mother Joan, who was born in 1910. Ralph signed up as a sergeant pharmacist in the Royal Army Medical Corps where he was enrolled in the 3/3 London Field Ambulance Unit. He was based at Tadworth Camp army hospital in Surrey. However, he felt that he was not doing enough for his country, and after 30 months at the camp he bravely volunteered for a more active role in the fighting. With his experience in the use of chemicals he was assigned as a Second Lieutenant to B Special Company of the Royal Engineers who specialized in gas warfare. He died in action, aged 35, on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1918, very near the end of the war. Like so many of his companions he received no medals or formal recognition and I have been unable to find any details of his final days or how he died.*

*A massive German offensive code named Michael and led by Ludendorff, started on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1918. 12 British divisions of British troops faced 42 divisions of Germans. The heavily outnumbered British forces were driven back 40 miles and 21,000 British troops were captured in the first day of fighting. We can only imagine the terrible battles of the rearguard action as my grandfather and his mates fought desperately to keep the Germans at bay. The commander of the British forces, General Gough, was made a scapegoat for the dreadful defeat and dismissed by the Prime Minister Lloyd George. But the German army had overstretched itself and reached the end of its tether. Soon after this last*



*effort the cease fire came into effect at 11 am on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. It was confirmed the following year at the Treaty of Versailles.*

*Ralph is buried beneath a white marble tombstone in a small cemetery 20 km north of Arras in northern France. Soldiers were buried near where they fell and their bodies were not brought back to Britain. Families and friends were not able to attend the funerals. Like so many of his comrades he left his family to struggle on into the future. He received little or no recognition from the army, the state or the war-weary nation. There were just too many casualties for ordinary men to receive any attention. There was no “Help for Heroes” and little support for injured men or the bereaved families.*



# Thomas James GOLDING

<b>Date of Birth</b>	9 DEC 1879	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Cork, Ireland
<b>Class of</b>	1897	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	1914-1915 Star	The British War Medal	The Allied Victory medal
	The Memorial Death Plaque		
<b>Date of Death</b>	27 SEPT 1917	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action. Passchendale
<b>Age at Death</b>	37	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Belgium Battery Corner Cemetery 11.E.1
<b>Regiment</b>	RAMC	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	Army		Captain
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Michael White



But just under five months earlier, the war came to his own family's door in Cork. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1915, the Cunard liner, RMS Lusitania, was on the last day of her voyage from New York to Liverpool. Shortly after 2pm, when about 11 miles off the coast of County Cork - near the Old Head of Kinsale - the liner was struck by a torpedo fired by German submarine U-20. A second explosion soon followed. The great liner, which had set new records in 1907 for the fastest crossings of the Atlantic, both eastwards and westwards, sank within 20 minutes. From a total of 1,962 passengers and crew, only 761 survived. Some injured survivors of the sinking were brought to Golding's Nursing Home to complete their recuperation, after they had been released from hospital

[illegible]

The second page apparently shows that his pay was stopped for the duration of the period that he spent in Queen Alexandra's Hospital, as was the pay of the other patients. There seemed to be little sympathy for those who fell ill, even if the illness was contracted while on active duty.

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The death notice in the Cork Examiner newspaper states that Thomas Golding was killed on the 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1917. All other Irish references to his death at the time also state that it occurred on 25<sup>th</sup> September. All British references, with one exception, state that he was killed on 26<sup>th</sup> September. The one exception is De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, which gives 27<sup>th</sup> September as his date of death.

Regardless of which is correct, Thomas Golding was almost certainly killed during the Battle of Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres.

The overall Passchendaele campaign lasted from July to November 1917. During September/October, the British Army adopted a strategy of carrying out a series of short assaults to gain ground. One of these is known as the battle of Menin Road Ridge. It lasted from 20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September. The next assault is known as the battle of Polygon Wood. This lasted from 26<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

Thomas Golding possibly met his death during one of these two assaults. We know that he was attached to the South Staffordshire Regiment at the time. While this is a help to narrow down the date, it is not enough on its own to tell us the exactly when he was killed, as a number of battalions from the South Staffordshire Regiment fought at both the battle of Menin Road Ridge and the battle of Polygon Wood.

## GOLDING, THOMAS JAMES

[ORDER PHOTO](#) < [BACK TO LIST](#)

**Cemetery:** Belgian Battery Corner Cemetery

**Country:** Belgium

**Area:** Ieper West-Vlaanderen

**Rank:** Captain

**Force:** Army

**Official Number:**

**Unit:** Royal Army Medical Corps.

**Nationality:** British

**Details:** Killed in action 26th September 1917. Age 30. Son of Dr. James Golding M.D. and Kate E. Golding of 18 Patrick's Place Cork. II. E. 1.

Photograph by Rudy van Kerckhoven



## DEATH OF CORK OFFICERS

### CAPT. GOLDING, R.A.M.C.

The announcement of the death of Captain Thomas J. Golding, R.A.M.C., will be received with feelings of deep regret not alone in his native city of Cork, but in many parts of the country, where he was widely and popularly known. Son of the well-known Cork physician, the late Dr. Golding, he qualified from the Cork Queen's College, where he was held in the highest esteem by the Professors, lecturers and students, and subsequently practised in the city. He afterwards joined the Royal Army Medical Corps, and his efficiency quickly gained for him his captaincy. Some time ago he proceeded to France, where he saw a good deal of service, but unfortunately he lost his life in action on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of last month. Dr. Golding was a practitioner of great ability, whose kindly disposition as well as his many excellent qualities endeared him to the members of his profession as well as citizens of all creeds and classes. He possessed a host of acquaintances, and it can be truly said of him that he never made an enemy. His death will be deplored, and to his bereaved mother, Mrs. Golding, 18 Patrick's Place, Cork, as well as the members of the family, will go forth sincere and heartfelt regret and sympathy in their great affliction.

### The Roll of

wrote: "He was always a man I could rely upon in action, doing his work thoroughly and with energy, quite regardless of any personal risk." *Uns.*

**GLEESON, WILLIAM**, Sergt., No. 391, 1st Batta. (65th Foot) The York and Lancaster Regt., yet s. of James Gleeson, by his wife, Mary; b. Rotherham, co. York; educ. there; was employed at the Barrow Colliery; enlisted in Sept. 1914, after the outbreak of war; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from 28 Dec. 1915; and was killed in action 1 July, 1916. Quartermaster-Sergt. E. Collins wrote: "He was a splendid soldier, fearless, and one always to be relied upon to do his duty. His platoon thought the world of him and your loss is ours." He m. at the Catholic Church, Barnsley, Harriett Ann (No. 4, Court 1, Copper Street, Sheffield Road, Barnsley), dau. of Philip Collins, and had two children.

**GOFF, HENRY ALBERT**, Private, No. 45990, Machine Gun Corps, eldest s. of Henry Albert Goff, Carter, by his wife, Mary; b. Gosport, co. Hants, 29 May, 1895; educ. there; was a Pearl Insurance Agent; enlisted in 1916; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from the following Aug., and died 24 April, 1917, from wounds received in action. He m. at Gosport, Mary Esther (2, John Street, Gosport), dau. of Alfred Thomas Byatt, of Gosport, and had a son, Henry Albert, b. 17 Oct. 1916.

**GOLDER, REGINALD JAMES**, Sergt., No. 3182, 4th (Territorial) Batta. Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regt.), s. of the late James Stephen Golder, by his wife, Agnes Ada (21, King Street, Reading); b. Reading, co. Berks, 18 July, 1885; educ. Kendrick School there; was a Bookbinder; joined the Berkshire Regt. 19 Oct. 1914; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from May, and died a prisoner of war at Sedan 14 July, 1916, from wounds received in action at Neuve Chapelle the previous day; *usm.*

**GOLDING, T. J.**, Capt., R.A.M.C., only s. of the late J. P. Golding, M.D., by his wife, Kate E. (18, Patrick's Place, Cork), dau. of G. W. Harding, of Charleville, co. Cork; b. Cork, 9 Dec. 1879; educ. Prior Park College, Bath, and Cork University, where he took his degree of Medicine; was subsequently in practice at Cork; volunteered for active service on the outbreak of war 4 Aug. 1914, and was gazetted Lieut. R.A.M.C.; took part in the Dardanelles campaign in 1915, being attached to the Australian Troops; was subsequently employed on Home service in Ireland; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from Aug. 1917; was attached to the South Staffordshire Regt. 24 Sept. following, and was killed in action at Ypres on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the same month. Buried there; *usm.*



T. J. Golding.

**GOLDSACK, JOHN GEORGE WILLIAM**, Private, No. 6658, 17th (Service) Batta. The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regt.), s. of John George Goldsack, of 20, Baleskine Road, Eltham, co. Kent, by his wife, Jane

## De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914 - 1919, Vol.

Thomas Golding's death was undoubtedly a grievous loss to his mother and sisters. His passing meant that all the male members of the family had died at young ages, his only brother at two and a half, his father at 55 and now Thomas himself at 37.

Similar to what happened in 1885, when his aunt and brother died within a short period of time, Thomas's death was quickly followed by another. Just over a month afterwards, a first cousin of Thomas and his sisters, Captain James Golding Harding, a nephew of Kate Golding, was also killed in the war. He was about 21.





# Benjamin Hilton LEIGH

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1868	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Piura, Peru
<b>Class of</b>	1886	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	British War Medal	Victory medal	
<b>Date of Death</b>	9 OCT 1918	<b>Place of Death</b>	Died of Tropical Disease. Epsom
<b>Age at Death</b>	51	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Epsom War Cemetery K99
<b>Regiment</b>	RAMC	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	Army	<b>Siblings</b>	Frederick Augustus, PPA 1891
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	George Edward, Class of 1889	John, Class of 1887	William, Class of 1887
<b>Married</b>	Florence Holt Dyson	<b>Children</b>	Carmen Cortez Leigh
<b>School census</b>	1881	<b>Researcher</b>	Vivian Gallaher



Benjamin Hilton Leigh Cortez was born in 1867 in Piura, Peru. Benjamin's father was Irish born, Henry Hilton LEIGH. From the 1881 census we can see that 4 of the Leigh children were part of the register at Prior Park College, Bath. Benjamin aged 12, George aged 9, John aged 11 and William aged 11. There is uncertainty as to who the mother is. This is where the Cortez connection comes in. Henry was firstly married to Carmen Cortes

del Castillo. No record of children from this relationship. When she died he married his sister-in-law, Mercedes Jesus Cortes del Castillo, who is believed to be the mother of the boys.

By 1891, Benjamin was a 23 year old medical student at the School of Medicine at Owen's College. In 1896 he qualified in Edinburgh as a doctor with triple qualifications.

Benjamin was 31 when he married 22 year old Florrie Dyson, the daughter of George Varley Dyson on 14 March 1900 in St Stephens Church, Chorlton upon Medlock, Lancs.

In 1901, Benjamin and Florrie were living in Southend, working on his own account. Two years later, their daughter, Carmen Cortez Leigh was born – now was she named after Benjamin's mother or aunt?

On 1 April 1915, Benjamin then aged 47 joined the RAMC as a Lieutenant. He went overseas in August 1915 and first served in Malta. In July 1917 he then went overseas to Salonika and he was there awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

In April 1918 he was invalided back to the UK and admitted to Manor War Hospital in Epsom, where he died on 9 October of a tropical disease. He was buried on 12 October in the Epsom War Cemetery in plot K99.

Benjamin married Florence 'Florrie' Holt DYSON on 14 March 1900

They had one daughter: Carmen Cortez LEIGH born on 29/8/1903

Carmen married Walter Stanley Frederick BANTIN on 1955 in Canada.

Carmen met her husband 'Wal' when he was in hospital in Canada, recovering from wounds received during the Second World War as she was a nursing assistant at the time.

Carmen died on 10 Dec 1985 and is buried in Canada. They had no children.

Walter went back to the UK and died in 2001.

The Cortez family are direct descendants of Hernandez Cortez (1485-1547) who was a soldier and explorer. The Cortez family also held large estates in Peru for growing cotton but also owned extensive silver mines.

# Archibald Henry MANKELOW MC

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1887	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Cherat, India
<b>Class of</b>	1905 ( College closed in 1904)	<b>Medal</b>	MC
<b>Campaign medals</b>	1914-1915 Star	Victory Medal	British War Medal
	Memorial Death Plaque		
<b>Date of Death</b>	14 MAY 1915	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in Action. France
<b>Age at Death</b>	27	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	ST. VAAST POST MILITARY CEMETERY, RICHEBOURG-L'AVOUEI. B. 5.
<b>Regiment</b>	39 Garhwal Rifles	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	Army		Lieutenant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	None		
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>	1901	<b>Researcher</b>	Vivian Gallaher



LIEUT. MANKELOW.



LIEUT.  
ARCHIBALD H. MANKELOW.

The brave death of this young officer seems the more tragic as it followed so shortly after he had distinguished himself at Neuve Chapelle, where he won the Military Cross for his bravery on March 12th. Though his stay as a boy at this College was brief, his name will be held in high honour among those Edmundians who have fallen in this war.

Archibald Henry Mankelow was the only son of Captain and Mrs. Mankelow of Ashley New Milton, Hampshire, and was born in the year 1887. He was educated at Prior Park College, and when that was closed in the spring of 1904 he came to St. Edmund's to complete his last school year before proceeding to Wimbledon for his immediate preparation for Sandhurst. He entered the army in 1906, obtaining his first commission in the Royal Berkshire Regiment. Afterwards he joined the 89th Gurkha Rifles, 1st Batt.

The official announcement that the Military Cross had been conferred upon him stated that it was given "for conspicuous gallantry at Neuve Chapelle" adding that "he showed great determination and ability throughout the operations, handling his machine guns against enemy on March 12th, with great effect." Very shortly after this announcement was made, news was received that he had fallen in action on May 14th. His parents, to whom the sympathy of all will be offered, have received many letters from the front in which his comrades have paid high tribute to his worth, and in one occurred a phrase which may well sum up his brief career, "he was a very brave soldier who helped to make the name of his regiment."

The following reference to him written by his old school-fellow, Lieut. A. V. Gompertz, of the Royal Engineers, well expresses the general opinion.

"I last met him in 1912. We went back to India in the "Arabia" together and spent most of the days together talking or playing deck cricket. He will be a loss to everybody as he was just one of those solid chaps that always does the right thing and never gets flurried or loses his head. His regiment thought a lot of him."

On June 2nd Community Mass was celebrated in the College Chapel for his soul, and at the Requiem for Edmundians fallen in the war special allusion was made in the sermon to his bravery at Neuve Chapelle.

R. I. P.

E. B.

## Nationality:

British

## Information:

Parents: Henry James and Elizabeth Mankelow, of The Oaks, Ashley, New Milton, Hants.

## Rank:

Lieutenant

## Gallantry Awards:

### Military Cross

Instituted on 28th December 1914 the Military Cross (M.C.) is the third level military decoration awarded to Officers.

This decoration was awarded to Archibald Henry Mankelow for an act or

acts of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy.

The Military Cross (M.C.) is awarded for gallantry during active operations against the enemy.

Archibald Henry Mankelow, as an owner of the Military Cross, is entitled to use the letters M.C. after his name.

Citations for the M.C. were published in the London Gazette during the Great War. However if the M.C. was a King's Birthday or New Year award, details were not published and in most cases will not be available.

**Regiment:**

39th Garhwal Rifles

**Commemorated:**

Indian

Gazette on 5 June 1915.

Here are a few links to photographs of **Lieutenant A. Mankelow** which also include biographical details plus other mentioned material: SBYRW: 10992: 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regt. (and Wilts.). A black and white photo of the Officers at Meerut, India in 1911 (with names).



SBYRW: 33329: 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Royal Berkshire Regt. A black and white photograph of the Battalion football team in 1909. This team were the winners of the Punjab Bengal Army Football Association Challenge Cup. Lieutenant A. Mankelow is fifth from Left, second row, wearing a tweed suit and cap, and leaning on a walking stick.



SBYRW: 45597: a sepia photograph from November 1910 in Meerut, India. The following year he transferred to the 39th Garhwal Rifles. He

was awarded the Military Cross and was killed in action in 1915 serving with this regiment (Times obituary appeared on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup>,1915).



There are other similar photographs in this same internet reference section.

National Archive

Reference : WO 95/3945/3

Catalogue description: 39 Garhwal Rifles

Date: August 1914-November 1915.

Meerut Division

Garhwal Brigade

1/39<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>/39<sup>th</sup> Garhwal Rifles, amalgamated in March 1915 and thereafter known as Garhwals.

### **Lieutenant A. Mankelow 1/39 Garhwals**

Notes by Commander of the Garhwal Brigade

9<sup>th</sup> March, 1915.

Archive Text Image: Page 233.

Battle of Neuve Chapelle: Archive Text Image: Page 240.

Share of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 39 Garhwal, according to Operation Orders No.25 issued by the G.O.C. Garhwal Brigade.

The battalion was in position by 04.30 a.m. on the 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1915.

Machine Guns: Two machine guns under **Lieutenant Mankelow** were detailed to remain under orders in Port Arthur to be sent up after the assault as occasions required.

Assault: Archive Text Image: Page 241

No.2 Company under Captains Clarke and Owen immediately bore too much to the right and thus caused Captain Kenny's No.4 Company to also bear too much to the right, the consequence being that a large portion of the German Front Line trench i.e. from the Rue du Bois for nearly 200 yards south of the road was not attacked, the Germans still holding it in force.



I should mention here that during the artillery bombardment the German trench had hardly been touched by our shells all along the front that was meant to be attacked by the battalion. The barbed wire was practically still intact.

The two leading companies managed immediately, after some fighting and clearing obstacles in the face of very heavy fire, to capture a portion of the trench some 200 yards in extent immediately to the right of "C" Company.

Seeing that the battalion attack had swerved too much to the right, and, not knowing what extent of the trench was still held by Germans, I ordered Captain Murray to support with his two platoons immediately in rear of No. 2 Company, which had suffered heavy losses.

Captain Sparrow with only two platoons had followed immediately behind No.4 Company leaving two platoons in the right salient. I do not know why he did this unless it was that he thought, that as the "jumping off" place in the trench could not hold more than two platoons, he had better get ahead with the two platoons ready and in a good position for advancing.

Archive Text Image: Page 242

Anyhow, he had apparently given orders to two platoons to remain in support.

Seeing that the large portion of the trench still in the hands of the Germans could not be assaulted by the few men I had left, especially as it would have to be carried out across 100 yards of open ground swept by rifle fire from the uncaptured portion of the German trench, and enfiladed by machine guns in the enemy's trenches from the vicinity of the ESTAIRES-LA BASSE road, I sent the Adjutant to the salient of Port Arthur, on the right side, to give orders that no man was to attempt to advance until I received reinforcements sufficient to assault the German trench.

I was not able to find out for some time as to what had happened to all the British Officers of the attacking companies, but after some delay I ascertained that they had all been killed, and that the survivors of the attacking companies were holding the captured trench under the command of Garhwali Officers.

I was unable to get to these men, or, to give them any assistance. They were, however, in a fairly good position, and they held their ground all day despite of a few German attempts to dislodge them by means of bombs, etc.

I telephoned to Brigade HQ at about 8.45 a.m. and explained the situation and requested reinforcements, at once. I asked for two companies.

Archive Text Image: Page 243

About 10 a.m. I received a lacerated wound on my left thigh, field-dressed it and managed to carry on. Soon after this I received two companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> London Regt. T.F. (Territorial Force/Army) as reinforcements, and was informed that the Seaforth Highlanders and 2nd Gurkhas were going to assault the uncaptured portion of the trench from the direction of the inner flank. I was given to understand that as soon as I saw this attack developing, I was to send forward my two companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Londoners together with the remainder of my own men.

There had been a good deal of shell fire directed on to Port Arthur and in consequence there had been several casualties. Captain Taylor I.M.S., the Medical Officer of the Battalion came up to Port Arthur where he did excellent and unceasing work in attending to the wounded all that day and most of the night, although under shell fire most of the time.

The attack of my two leading companies together with the supporting platoons under Captains Sparrow and Murray, I consider, was carried out with the greatest dash and bravery. The officers and men being fired upon from both sides as well as their front. Also, as I have mentioned before, barbed wire entanglements were almost still intact along the whole front of the German trench.

Archive Text Image: Page 244

The attack of the Seaforth Highlanders did not develop until about 5pm, at which time a bombing party commenced advancing down the trench from the right flank of the German trench captured by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Leicesters towards the left flank of the portion held by my battalion.

As soon as I saw the leading platoons of the of the Seaforth Highlanders advance from the groups of buildings on the inner flank, I ordered the advance of the two companies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Londoners, and also the remainder of my own men. All these carried out the assault with the greatest courage, although losing heavily all the time. On the attack reaching the German trenches the remainder of the enemy, some 3 officers and 80 men, surrendered and were taken prisoner, and sent to the rear.

I sent the machine gun officer, the Adjutant and **Lieutenant Mankelow** forward to the captured trench, where the companies were collected and work was continued in recovering the trench, etc.

I was unable to go any further on account of the wound in my leg. Major MacTier of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 39<sup>th</sup> Garhwals was sent to relieve me in command of the battalion at about 10pm, after he had arrived to confer with the Brigadier in the salient of Port Arthur. I left at about midnight 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> of March on a stretcher accompanied by the medical officer. The remainder of the account of the battalion's share in the battle up to the afternoon of 12<sup>th</sup> March is supplied by the Adjutant of the battalion.

The remainder of the night was spent in cleaning up the captured trench, and, in reversing the parapet. The night was a quiet one, there being no

shelling or firing at our position of the trench. The whole of the 11<sup>th</sup> March passed off quietly except for a little shelling up to nearly midnight when fairly heavy shell fire was directed on Port Arthur and in the vicinity of our trenches. This shelling was kept up until dawn.

At dawn, heavy firing broke out on our left and almost immediately was evident to our front too. It was a hazy morning and difficult to see any distance. A pistol was fired which revealed German attacking columns charging our position in three lines. Rapid fire with rifles and machine guns opened up immediately and the enemy's attack never reached our position. The firing was soon controlled and stopped when it was ascertained that the attack on our front had failed but the enemy had succeeded in getting around our right flank, where they were mostly accounted for by the machine guns of the Black Watch.

Archive Text Image: Page 246.

During the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> working parties had been employed in digging a trench (which was no more than three feet deep) along to the main road. Up this shallow trench the enemy managed to creep, as the working parties through an error, on being given the order to stand to arms before dawn, had instead evacuated this short piece of trench. The right flank of our line was thus exposed although defended by a picket with trench mortars at that point. The enemy commenced a bombardment on this flank to try and 'drive' it in, but, the men with great gallantry, in spite of severe losses, managed to repulse all attacks.

The machine gun placed at this point i.e. on our flank was splendidly served, and, was the chief means of stopping all attempts on the part of the enemy to rush the position. I would here add that the work of the machine guns, in spite of very severe losses, were admirably handled by **Lieutenant Mankelow** and his men, who served the guns splendidly, man after man being shot, while necessarily exposing themselves to work the guns.

The Gahrwals were gallant and steadfast throughout the battle, never giving a yard of ground in spite of very heavy casualties and the constant danger of being surrounded and rushed on the right flank. **Lieutenant Mankelow** and his machine guns contributed the mostly in repelling the German attack in the morning, and, the machine gun on the extreme right of our lines was also served magnificently and was the means of also driving back all attempts by the enemy to push back our right flank. This battle saw 98 killed, 190 wounded and 22 missing.

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Archive Text Image :Page 79

14-5-1915

Death of **Lieutenant A. Mankelow**



Weather fine and rainy. Contemplated attack on enemy position postponed for 24 hours but orders received that it would take place at 11.30 p.m., the night of 15<sup>th</sup>.

The artillery bombardment which had been normal but continuous was to cease at 11.25 p.m. At 2 p.m. orders were received for battalion to move down into trenches between Windy Corner and Lansdowne Post for a day's rest. Arrived there at 5p.m. The distance at this point from the enemy firing line was about 1,400 yards.

**Lieutenant Archibald Mankelow** was killed this day by a shell which exploded near bomb guns.

Vivian Gallaher ( Class of 1968) brought to light Lieutenant Mankelow as a Prior Park alumnus and was so affected by his story that he wrote the following poem of his demise.

A Machinegunners' Lament

Life's great journey may end  
This day, this night, he mused.  
The shelling stopped, and,  
Distant cries of agony and innocence torn,  
Reached ears as poisoned spears.  
The dawning light, fields of glissening dew.  
"Man the Gun", Lieutenant,  
"Acoming, they are, in waves of grey."  
No time to think, now  
Only to obey.  
Death so near, emptied fear, and,  
Minds cleared themselves of despair.  
The smoke and flashing flames of fire  
The bullets on their way;  
His thoughts fell to a silent place  
Whence he saw his parents knelt in prayer,  
About his childhood bed,  
A fever, great about him, stormed.  
The memory of laughter and joy  
From his friends at school, he heard,  
And in response he placed his hand  
Upon his heart, to its motto true:  
"God our Leader, God our Light".

Vivian Gallaher

# Spanish Civil War

This ran between 17 July 1936 and 1 April 1939.

Two past pupils that we know of were lost in this conflict:

JOSE FROIS (pictured below) AND

FELIPE BERGE

The war has often been portrayed as a struggle between democracy and fascism, particularly due to the political climate and timing surrounding it. In early 1939, the Nationalists achieved victory, and ruled Spain until Franco's death in November 1975.

Investigating further.



# Note of explanation from the Phoenix book:

In 1939 there came the sad report that two old boys, Jose Frois and Felipe Berge, had been killed in action fighting under Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

All this reflects the rather uncritical Catholic dalliance with right-wing extremism of that period. This clearly sprang from the perception that the real threat was the Red menace of the Soviet Union. All enemies of the USSR, it seemed, must be friends of the Church. Moreover were not these dictators providing just what an authoritarian church insisted that people needed – order and firm discipline? Had not Pius XI favoured what he called ‘Catholic totalitarianism’ and were not ‘family values’ safer under Mussolini than any government of the left? Catholics bred for heel-clicking obedience to absolute church authority failed to detect some of the maggots in these apples, for instance that Mussolini, while discovering the uses of being a Catholic, saw none in being a Christian. The startling distinction in his mind is instructive. Christianity, he rightly perceived, inescapably had its roots in Judaism and that he could not be having. Hitler, with his naked neo-paganism, was always more difficult for Catholics to take, while Franco, like Mussolini, was easier. Faced with the appalling slaughter of priests and nuns by the left in Spain, it was at least tempting to turn a blind eye to Franco’s ruthless use of torture and executions and throw in one’s lot with this version of ‘Catholic totalitarianism’.



# Second World War

Despite extensive damage during the bombing raids to Bath, Prior Park College pupils remained unharmed. The attacks had all taken place during the Easter holidays and only one of the Christian brothers sustained an injury to his ankle on the rubble.

## **Quote from Wikipedia:**

Bath was largely untouched during the Blitz, the German night bombing offensive against Britain's cities, though nearby Bristol was bombed severely throughout that period. Bath was subject to numerous air raid warnings as raiders flew overhead on their way to Bristol, but no bombs were dropped on Bath at this point.

This changed in April 1942 with the start of the Baedeker Blitz, mounted in response to a step-change in the effectiveness of the RAF's bombing offensive in March 1942, that resulted in the destruction of the city of Lübeck.

## **The Blitz**

Over the weekend of 25–27 April 1942, Bath suffered three raids, from 80 *Luftwaffe* aircraft which took off from Nazi occupied northern France.

As the city sirens wailed, few citizens took cover, even when the first pathfinder flares fell, the people of Bath still believed the attack was destined for nearby Bristol. During the previous four months Bristol had been hit almost every night, so the people of Bath did not expect the bombs to fall on them.

The first raid struck just before 11 pm on the Saturday night and lasted until 1 am. The German aircraft then returned to France, refuelled, rearmed and returned at 4.35 am. Bath was still on fire from the first raid, making it easier for the German bombers to pick out their targets. The third raid, which only lasted two hours but caused extensive damage, commenced in the early hours of Monday morning. The bombers flew low to drop their high explosives and incendiaries and then returned to rake the streets with machine-gun fire.

## Effects

417 people were killed, another 1,000 injured. Over 19,000 buildings were affected, of which 1,100 were seriously damaged or destroyed, including 218 of architectural or historic interest. Houses in the Royal Crescent, Circus and Paragon were destroyed and the Assembly Rooms were burnt out. A 500 kilograms (1,100 lb) high explosive bomb landed on the south side of Queen Square, resulting in houses on the south side being damaged. The Francis Hotel lost 24 metres (79 ft) of its hotel frontage, and most of the buildings on Queen Square suffered some level of shrapnel damage. Casualties on the Square were low considering the devastation, with the majority of hotel guests and staff having taken shelter in the hotel's basement. The majority of Bath's churches were greatly damaged including St Andrew's Church which had to be demolished and the site is now a park.

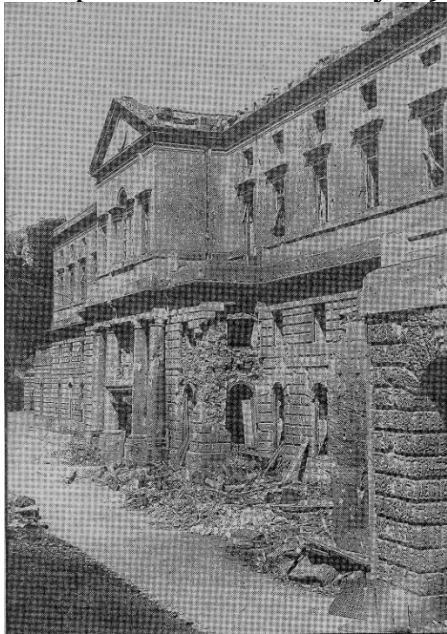
The buildings have subsequently been restored, although there are still some signs of the bombing.

The huge bomb crater that took out the oak tree in the valley just below the steps, remains to this day, a different colour of grass throughout the year. The second bomb took out the front of St Paul's and all of the Chapel windows and some of the interior. It didn't stop them the following day, getting on their bikes and cycling up to the College to check out the damage. The remains of the pillars that were blasted away from the entrance of St Paul's are now stored (shrapnel and all) underneath St Paul's in the cellar.

There is also the story that one of the Luftwaffe pilots was a Prior Park alumni and could not bear to unload his bombs onto the valley and so flew closer to Radstock and dropped the bombs there. This cannot be verified, but it is a lovely story passed from one old boy to another.

St Paul's house was uninhabitable and the boys were 'temporarily' moved into the Academy Hall with camp beds. Some boys spent years in the Academy hall as their dorm because trying to get builders and the building supplies were so difficult during war years that the final renovation was

completed in the early 1950's! Photo below is from Gossip Bowl 1953.





## Peace time memories from 1946.

*“I joined the teaching staff of Prior Park College in September 1946, on the same day as the first boys arrived at Cricklade. Most of the teaching was done by monks, Christian Brothers, who continued to direct the College until 1981. In those early days I was the only full-time lay teacher, and, as I have been told, was welcomed as a bit of a novelty. It seems hard to imagine.*

*In that first year the pupils - all boys - numbered just 180. They were all boarders, and even those with parents in Bath could visit home - for Sunday lunch - only twice a term. Terms were a little longer than they are today, and there were no half-term breaks. Does all this seem very hard and harsh? It was, I assure you, a very happy place. My wife and I thought it a very wonderful place, and we have thought so ever since.*

*The pattern of full days, half-days and games afternoons was much as it is now, but there was no CCF, no activities periods, and very little in the way of organised outings. Permission to go into Bath was rarely given. For the juniors in St Peter's, Combe Down was the destination for walks — in formal dress, in a “crocodile” - on Sunday afternoons. They enjoyed one another's company, and there was Sunday tea in prospect: fish-paste as a treat, or perhaps fried bread with marmalade. It was a simple life-style in what was, compared with today, a very simple world: no TV, no computers, comparatively few cars. War-time food rationing still prevailed, and a good part of St Paul's was in ruins, the result of bomb-damage. (The evidence can still be seen.)” Notes from Sidney Ash in 1994 Gossip Bowl.*

*ANGLES ON THE WAR – the pupils speak out (December 1942, Gossip Bowl)*

*Here in Prior Park on our lofty classical perch on the hills above Bath —so near and yet so fair and so far—we have our own views, and they are neither classical nor picture postcard. They are honest, straightforward, and concern ourselves. They are not inspired by the Ministry of Information— in fact they are not inspired at all,*

*The effect of the war on the College buildings comes home forcibly to Patrick D. O'Connell:*



*Patrick D O'Connell 1943 Hockey*

*The factor in this war which has disturbed me most is the persistent aerial bombardment carried on by German aircraft. This has, in a way, affected everyone in this School, or rather Senior House ; for, as a result of enemy action, not only have we been temporarily deprived of private rooms, but our work and lessons have been interfered with. . . The recreation room belonging to the Upper Fours and Lower Fives has been hopelessly smashed up. . . The Seniors still have their billiard room, and table-tennis room. The Sixth Form sitting-room has not however fared too well; but the builders are rapidly putting this right.*



*Geoffrey Manners Nightingale, as befits his name, bursts into song on the blitzed buildings.*



*Bomb-shattered walls he left behind.  
British hearts take more to conquer,  
Valiant souls can solace find  
Even though in broken mortar.  
His notes and his rhymes are not quite tuneful at times, but he perseveres,  
observing of the Seniors :  
They miss their former sunlit haunts,  
Though artful tricks seem just the same,  
And in another spot they vaunt  
Their valorous deeds, and call them fame.  
Naturally philomel becomes nostalgic :  
Where are the benches where we sat  
And gossiped in the summer sun ;  
And where the tree that, as a hat,  
Gave welcome shade to everyone ?*

*Denis Joyce links up war with home-going for holidays :*



*Before the war one of the most enjoyable and interesting days of the holidays was the day on which we returned home. Then gas-masks, identity-cards, and other impedimentary articles were unthought of. What an enjoyable experience it was to loll in a half-empty carriage*



*buying papers and sweets, and all the luxuries which have been rationed for Englishmen !. . . Now cries of " Have you forgotten your gas-mask, identity-card, ration-book, clothes-coupons ? " pursue us to the station. We enquire about the train. " Train be 'arf-hour late " . . . At the first stop we are swamped by an infuriated crowd, who have been kept waiting longer than is advisable. Then the misery begins—aching toes, cramped joints, hungry stomachs, until after many misfortunes we are deposited on our home station platform more dead than alive. Rather an obtuse angle, but then Denis" is large-sized and spacious-minded.*

*But let us descend from the apex to the base, from the lofty Sixth to the homely Fourth.*

*Food-rationing, naturally, cuts deep. Frederick Sherman says : The rationing of sugar, bacon, eggs, cheese, tea, meat and many other things has come home to me. I think however that the rationing of sweets is the worst of all.*

*John Duggan is sweet-toothed also : Rationing, especially sweets, has affected me greatly, and has brought the war to my very stomach.*

*Evidently war has made a great difference to Francis McCaffrey's food supply—he believed in high living, lots of shops and ships : Before the war I could walk into a greengrocer's shop, ask for some tinned fruit, two or three oranges, half a dozen eggs, two pots of jam, and plenty of other things, and get them. But to-day if I walked into a shop and asked for one egg and one pot of jam, I would be told that eggs and jam are kept for registered customers. When I could not get what I wanted I would have to eat what could be got at school. Francis looks much healthier since he confined himself to School diet.*

*Clothing restrictions come in for comment. John Duggan says : I have to be more careful than before of my clothes, especially grey suits, which require so many coupons.*

*Fred J. Sherman is more explicit : Nowadays, instead of having three or four suits, we have to be satisfied with two, or at the most, three. We no longer have inside pockets in our coats, nor do we have turnups on our trousers. What a privation !*

*Pat Hegan's views are rather mixed and unexpected :  
Nowadays we see shops showing shells and guns for Warships Week ;  
requests for Aid for Russia ; posters for Wings for Victory: instead of silk  
stockings, sweets and long forgotten articles.*



*Pat Hegan 1944*

*Food-rationing is linked up with Christmas in Kenneth Coventry's mind:  
The war has affected the home festival of the year, Christmas. No  
more does the table creak with the weight of the turkey and other  
delicacies. Now, one is well off if one has a pheasant for Christmas  
dinner. Ducks and geese are available only to very regular customers. A  
turkey is an unheard of thing to have in these times.  
If Kenneth has any friends in Ulster he should get in touch with them  
next Christmas ; or with his friends in what Patrick Rafferty calls  
" De Valera's land of plenty."*

*The drone of the bombers by night over the roofs of the dormitories  
is loud in many boys' minds. The sound sends their thoughts home to  
the safety of their loved ones.*

*John Sylvester writes :*

*In my hometown one out of every five houses was destroyed or  
damaged. My own house was badly damaged, and we had to move. In  
this way, and in many others, our pre-arranged plans were brought to a  
stop. . .*

*Two of my cousins are prisoners in Germany ; and when they were put  
into irons we realised what war meant.*

*There is a note of separation mingled with pride in John Duggan's  
words:*

*I have several relations in the Forces : two uncles who have just gone  
abroad and are still on the sea, and a cousin who won the D.C.M. at  
Dunkirk ; for by his action 180 officers and men were saved—they were  
the last men to leave the beach.*

*There is deep filial love in Peter Kelly's confession :*



*Before the war, when my father was constantly at home with me, I did not know what it was like to be without him ; but, when war broke out, and he had to join up, it made a dreadful difference to our home. But, please God, the war will soon be over, and a lot of the families, that have been broken up like mine, will be reunited again for the rest of their short stay on earth.*

*Jean Sinclair's account of how his home life in France has been affected requires no commentary :*

*My home is near Paris. We are on June 8th, 1940. The Germans are coming. They are at 25 miles from here. This evening my father is coming back from his job at Paris. It is half-past seven. . . We hear the steps of my father coming. My mother goes to open the door for him. " Good evening, dear, what is the news ? " " Oh ! very bad," answered my father, " the Germans are at Fontainebleau. In certain places they have crossed the Seine."*

*During supper only a few words were exchanged. After supper all the family went outside the door to breathe the fresh air of the night. When we stopped talking we could hear the boom of the guns approaching. The next evening they were at 15 miles, and we could hear distinctly the noise of the battle approaching. During the night my mother got ready all the most precious clothes ; and the next morning she prepared our car and put all the things in it. Soon we were on the road. All the country was covered by a kind of greyish fog. That was the smoke of the battle. That smoke when breathed made our noses all black. That day we kept moving all the time as best we could. The car was beginning to be very warm. We could go only five or ten yards and stop, because the roads were terribly crowded. This day we could go only ten miles. We slept in a wood by the side of the road. The next morning we took our breakfast—a bit of bread with a sardine on it. This day, the 9th June, we went 30 miles. The 12th June we' arrived in St. Agil, a little village where a friend of my mother was living. We stayed there about 48 hours. The 14th at two o'clock in the morning a policeman knocked at the window crying : " The Germans are at 5 miles from here. All the men from eighteen to forty*



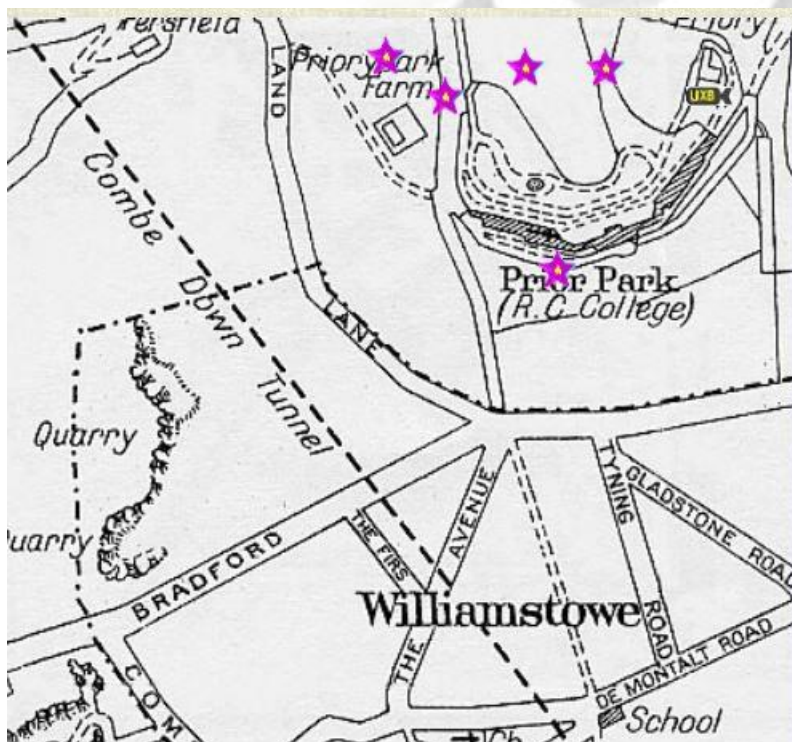
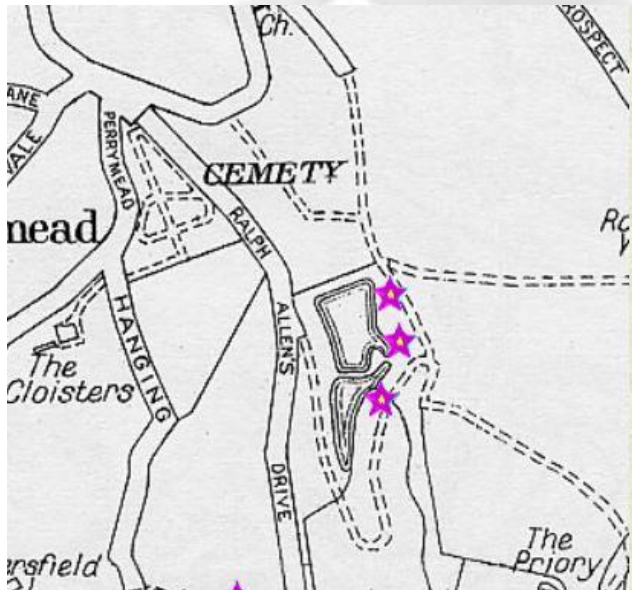
*years old must escape immediately." We got up and put the things into the car. That was very difficult for we could not have any light at all because the German 'planes were purring over our heads. A week later we were in a quiet little village in the Pyrenees.*

*The armistice had been signed and the Germans had half France for themselves.*

*That is how the war affected me. And that, perhaps, is the acutest, most poignant angle of all.*

*J.B.T.*

## Where the bombs fell in 1942 bombing



“The latest recruit whom Peter McKeigue has captured for the Artist Rifles is John Canning – and a splendid one, too. Peter’s ambition is to form a **“Prior Park Platoon”** so he wishes that those going to London should apply to him.”

Entry from Gossip Bowl 1939. Peter survived the War and lived til the ripe old age of 92!

# PRIOR PARK XV., 1933.



P. M. McKeigue	B. L. O'Reilly	P. R. Leahy	J. L. Pardoe	B. H. Leigh	D. R. Ross	G. E. Leigh	J. Marmion
J. D. Williams	H. P. Ferreira (Vice-Capt.)	T. J. Hughes (Capt.)	S. P. Clements	F. M. Falkner			
	D. M. Fleming			I. A. Lee			

Peter pictured here with Lawrence Beresford O'Reilly, James Williams and Ian Lee (brother to Maurice)



## The 1934 Rugby Photo – the story behind the picture.

Beresford O'Reilly and James Williams (Captain) played rugby with John Sloane (Robert's brother), Ian Lee (Maurice's brother) and Arthur de Freitas (Wilf's brother) in 1934.

Beresford O'Reilly died in 1941 at the age of 23. Buried in Boulogne. RAF

James Williams died in 1945 at the age of 27. Killed in action in Burma. Royal Artillery.

Robert 'Bob' Sloane died in 1941 at the age of 26. Buried in UK. RAF

Maurice Lee died in 1940 at the age of 21. Killed returning from an operation in bad weather conditions. Buried in UK. RAF

Wilfrid de Freitas died in 1942 at the age of 26. Killed on active service in the Libyan campaign. RAF

Beresford and James would have known Bob, Maurice and Wilf as brothers of their team mates, just as you would.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

PRIOR PARK XV., 1934.



D. M. Fleming	W. P. Foster	G. E. Leigh	L. B. O'Reilly	J. W. Marnion	F. H. Fox	J. H. O'Neill	J. H. Sloan
F. M. Falkner	S. P. Clements (Vice-Capt.)	J. D. Williams (Capt.)	J. L. Pardoe	I. A. Lee	M. F. Knight		
	A. G. de Freitas						

Result of Season : Played 10, Won 9, Lost 1. Points for 170, Against 14.



That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. go **by**, from this day to **the** end of time, without our being remembered: we few, we happy few, we band of **brothers**—for whoever sheds **his** blood with **me** today shall be **my brother**. However humble **his** birth, this day shall grant him nobility.

Shakespeare: Henry V: Act 4 Scene 3



**PRIOR PARK**  
COLLEGE  
BATH

## Resting place or Memorial location of former Prior Park College students who fought in the Second World War

Map (not to scale) illustrates the location of the memorial or resting place. Details which are known are below alongside the name of the soldier. Some details are missing, details stated are correct as per the Prior Park College Alumni office records.



**De Freitas, Wilfrid A A**  
Class of 1933  
03/03/1942  
Alamein Memorial, Egypt

**Dias, Peter V**  
Class of 1941  
20/04/1945  
Lithian

**Edwards, Lance Franklin**  
Class of 1933  
04/01/1942

**Forde, Edward C**  
Class of 1904  
16/02/1944  
Runnymede Memorial

**Fox, Peter W**  
Class of 1926  
09/01/1940  
Karachi War Cemetery

**Gordon-Canning, Cecil James**  
Class of 1904  
13/06/1941  
Chatham Naval Memorial

**Groves, J**  
Unknown

**King, Cecil P**  
Class of 1938  
17/04/1943  
Runnymede War Memorial

**Lee, Maurice W**  
Class of 1936  
31/12/1940  
St Mary's Cemetery in Cray

**Lundon, William Edward**  
Class of 1940  
06/06/1942  
Kilcrumper Cemetery, Ireland

**Mahony, Alfred A J**  
Class of 1936  
29/05/1940  
Dunkirk Memorial

**Minch, John Bertie**  
Class of 1908  
08/11/1942  
Delhi War Cemetery

**O'Brien, John P**  
Class of 1927  
22/06/1941  
Alamein Memorial, Egypt

**O'Reilly, Lawrence B (Berestford)**  
Class of 1935  
10/02/1941  
Boulogne Memorial

**Osborne, Ralph J**  
Class of 1933  
15/07/1940  
Cairo

**Pike, Geoffrey Peter**  
Class of 1932  
03/03/1940  
Runnymede memorial

**Rose, Peter Cecil**  
Class of 1939  
26/06/1942  
Runnymede Memorial

**Ryan, Bernard Thomas**  
Class of 1926  
30/03/1944  
Portsmouth Naval Memorial

**Sheil, William Anthony**  
Class of 1898  
29/04/1945  
Reichswald Forest War Cemetery

**Sloan, Robert W**  
Class of 1932  
17/01/1941  
Upavon Cemetery

**Sullivan Robert D**  
Class of 1932  
20/02/1944 DP  
Runnymede Memorial



**Todd, George Richard**  
(brother to Todd, Thomas Francis)  
Class of 1925  
01/07/1945  
Japanese POW

**Todd, Thomas Francis**  
Class of 1925  
1/12/1939  
Mont Huon Military Cemetery

**Ward, Bernard Harry**  
Class of 1937  
23/06/1943  
Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand

**Williams, James D**  
Class of 1935  
12/01/1945  
Taukkyan War Cemetery, Burma

## WW2 Campaign Medals

	<p><b>War Medal 1939-1945</b></p> <p>This medal was awarded to all full time service personnel who had completed 28 days service between 3rd September 1939 and the 2nd September 1945. Eligible personnel who had been “Mentioned In Despatches” during the War were entitled to wear a bronze oak leaf emblem on the ribbon. Those eligible for a campaign star, yet who had their service cut short by death, wounds or capture by the enemy, still qualified for this medal</p>
	<p><b>1939-1945 Star Medal</b></p> <p>All servicemen would have been awarded this star if their service period was terminated by their death or disability due to service. Also the award of a gallantry medal or “Mention In Despatches” also produced the award of this medal, regardless of their service duration.</p> <p>Fighter Aircraft Crew who took part in the Battle of Britain (10 July to 31 October 1940) were awarded the "Battle of Britain" bar to this medal. In undress uniform, a silver-gilt rosette was worn on the medal ribbon to denote the award of this clasp.</p>
	<p><b>Air Crew Europe Star</b></p> <p>This medal was awarded to Commonwealth aircrew who participated in operational flights over Europe, from UK bases or for operational flying from the UK over Europe, between the period 3rd September 1939 to 5th June 1944.</p> <p>The recipient would have been awarded this star if their service period was terminated by their death or disability due to service. The award of a gallantry medal or “Mention In Despatches” also produced the award of this medal, regardless of their service duration.</p>





## Africa Star

The Star was awarded for one more day's service in North Africa between 10th June, 1940 and 12th May, 1943, both dates inclusive.

The Star was awarded for the following qualifications and operations:

Navy and Merchant Navy – Any Service at sea in the Mediterranean between 10th June, 1940 and 12th May, 1943, and or service in support of the campaigns in Abyssinia, Somaliland and Eritrea. Naval service ashore in the same areas as the army would also qualify. Members of the Merchant Navy who took part in the operations off the coast of Morocco between 8th November, 1942 and 12th May, 1943 would also qualify.

Army – The qualification is the entry into North Africa on the establishment of an operational unit. Service in Abyssinia, The Somaliland's, Entitres, Sudan and Malta.

R.A.F – The qualification was to have landed in, or flown over, any of the areas previously mentioned (except West Africa), or territory occupied by the enemy.

Members of the Australian Imperial Force qualified for the Star for Service in Syria from 8th June, 1941, and 11th July, 1941.

# Wilfrid Albert Anthony de FREITAS

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1 OCT 1915	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Demerara, British Guiana
<b>Class of</b>	1933 Head Boy CLIFFORD	<b>Medal</b>	DFC
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	3 MAR 1942 GB or 20 Dec 1941 CWGC	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action. Egypt
<b>Age at Death</b>	26	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Alamein Memorial, Egypt
<b>Regiment</b>	70 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	33163
<b>Service</b>	RAF		Wing Commander
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Michael, Class of 1939,	Leonard, Class of 1937	Arthur, Class of 1935
			Wilfrid M, Class of 1962, nephew
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



### **Gossip Bowl Dec 1935:**

*The following communication from the Adjutant of the Royal Air Force College at Cranwell will be of interest:—*

*" WILFRID ALBERT ANTHONY DE FREITAS."*

*The above-mentioned Old Boy of your School successfully graduated from this College on 26th July, 1935 and has now taken up his commission as a Pilot Officer in the Royal Air Force. The following summarises his record at the College : " Order of merit on entering the College 6/32 ; on passing out 15/29.*

*A most popular and amusing character. He represented the College at Cricket and Hockey, and did well at Administration, Armament, and Air Navigation.*

*He was slow to learn to fly, but is now a satisfactory and reliable pilot. Will develop into an excellent Officer."*

*We congratulate Wilfrid on his excellent record at Cranwell: it is but a replica of his record at Prior Park, and we wish him abundance of success in his new career.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1942:** *In British Guiana, at Demerara, Wilfrid Albert Anthony de Freitas was born on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915. He was the second son on Dr Q B de Freitas M B E, Government Medical Officer of Demerara. Wilfrid with his brothers first attended Aston-Le Walls House School under the management of Rev Martin Edwards, and he with his younger brother Arthur came to Prior Park in September 1930, his fourth brother Leonard came later.*

*His ability, his easy yet forceful manner soon showed that he was destined to win for himself an outstanding place in the College. His first responsible post was Secretary of the Sodality in 1931, and a year later 1932-33 he was its President. In the same year he was School Captain, Captain of Clifford House, Secretary of the Radio Society, and was in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV Rugby 1932, Hockey XI 1933 and Cricket XI 1933 being invariably opening batsman. He was among the most successful and efficient of our School Captains.*

*In July 1931 Wilfrid obtained Honours in the School Certificate Examination with exemption from Matriculation, and during the next two years prepared for the entrance examination to the Air Force. He won sixth place and was Prize Cadet, RAF College, Cranwell. He left Prior Park in July 1933.*

*In the December number of the magazine of 1934 we read: "W. de Freitas, Captain of the School two years ago, is now one of the Seniors in RAF College, Cranwell. We congratulate him on having obtained his cricket colours" – he kept up the efficiency in games he had acquired at school.*



*Early in 1935 he passed out of Cranwell and was posted to a torpedo bomber squadron. After further coastal training he joined a torpedo spotter reconnaissance squadron in HMS Courageous in March 1936, and from October 1938 was with a similar squadron in the Furious; he went on foreign service to Alexandria. Thus at the outbreak of war he was a seasoned airman and advanced from post to post till a few months before his death he was gazetted Wing Commander. He had previously been awarded the DFC. On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1942, he was listed as “missing” and later as “killed on active service” in the Libyan campaign.*

*Thus by the will of Heaven a promising career was cut short. Wilfrid possessed all the elements for a great career, ability of mind, activity and healthiness of body, a pleasant gentlemanly manner, and to crown all a sound religious sense. His pure life was sacrificed in the noblest of earthly causes, and hence may we not with more than confidence pray: Eternal rest give unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him.*

From CWGC: Wing Commander service number 33163. Date of death 20/12/1941 at the age of 26 (different from GB). He flew with RAF 70 Squadron and had been awarded the DFC. He is buried at the Alamein memorial. Son of Dr Q B de Freitas MBE and Hermine de Freitas of Georgetown, British Guiana.

PRIOR PARK 1st XV., 1932.



E. Geary	M. Falkner,	H. Ferreira	C. Howell	R. Skon	B. Sullivan	D. Leahy	B. Leigh
H. Kendall	A. Fonseca (Vice-Capt.)	R. Hudson	W. B. Canning (Capt.)	T. Hughes	S. Clements		
				W. de Freitas			
				Played 8	Won 6	Lost 2	

From Forces War Records:

<b>Date of Death:</b>	20/12/1941
<b>Information:</b>	SON OF DR. Q. B.DE FREITAS, M.B.E., AND HERMINE DE FREITAS, OF GEORGETOWN, BRITISH GUIANA.
<b>Gallantry Awards:</b>	<p><b>Distinguished Flying Cross</b></p> <p>The Distinguished Flying Cross (D.F.C.) was instituted on 3rd June 1918 and is a Level 3 Gallantry Award, originally for Commission Officers and Warrant Officers of the Royal Air Force. Later it was for all ranks of the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army, and Royal Air Force.</p> <p>This distinguished awarded was presented to Wilfrid Albert Antony De Freitas for an act or acts of valour, courage or devotion to duty whilst flying in active operations against the enemy.</p> <p>The recipient, Wilfrid Albert Antony De Freitas, as an owner of the Distinguished Flying Cross is entitled to use the letters D.F.C. after his name.</p> <p>A bar is added to the ribbon for holders of the D.F.C. who received a second award.</p> <p>This silver medal was designed by E Carter Preston, the winner of the design for the Next of Kin Memorial Plaque, AKA - Widow's Penny, Dead Man's Penny, Death Plaque.</p>

# Peter Vivian DIAS

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1923	<b>Place of Birth</b>	British Guiana
<b>Class of</b>	1941 BAINES	<b>Medal</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	20 APRIL 1945	<b>Place of Death</b>	Airplane crash in Lothian
<b>Age at Death</b>	20	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Haddington Roman Catholic Graveyard in East Lothian
<b>Regiment</b>	Air Bomber	<b>Service Number</b>	605691
<b>Service</b>	RAF Voluntary Reserve		Sergeant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl Dec 1940:** Philip and George Camacho, Arthur and Michael de Freitas, Victor Gonsalves, Victor Ferreira, P. Dias and R. O'Dowd are keeping Prior Park well to the front in Georgetown (E.G.). B. and G. Camacho have been doing well in cricket and hockey. Arthur



*de Freitas sticks to his favourite Rugby. We hope soon to hear of the exploits of our latest alumnus—P. Dias. The possibility of an O.P.P. Hockey or Cricket XI versus the rest of Georgetown is not remote.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1946:** *And here we may recall the toll of the war in such fine B G Old Boy contemporaries of the above in the death of Peter Dias, Flight Lieutenant Cecil Kay ( Head of School) and Wing Commander Wilfrid de Freitas, DFC (Head of School). Requiescant in pace!*

605691 – V.P. Dias – Br. Guiana – attested 24.9.43 – Sgt. Navigator UK 13.10.44

[Source NA AIR 2/6876] With No 19 Operational Training Unit “C” Flight, he took off on a cross country flight in a Vickers Wellington LP760 at 11.52 on 20th April 1945. Near to Bank Head Farm, Humble, eight miles to the southwest of Lothian, the Wellington was cruising along at 5,000 feet when eyewitnesses on the ground reported a flash from front to rear. It was just after 12.40. The starboard wing broke away and the aircraft turned over and spun to earth, striking the ground upside down. Debris rained down; there was a wreckage trail of some 2,500 yards, and an opened parachute fell 500 yards beyond this. The investigator’s report concluded that the accident arose through lack of control, perhaps owing to icing or bumpiness, followed by structural failure in the air. The aircraft had “broken up suddenly and violently”, with its heavier parts dropping “practically vertically”. [Source: [Dover War Memorial Project](#)]

Dias, Vivian Peter Sergeant in Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve served as an air bomber. Service Number 605691. Buried in Haddington Roman Catholic Graveyard in East Lothian. Son of Vivian Charles Dias and of Cecily Alice Dias (nee Benbow), of Georgetown, Demerara, British Guiana.

From the War Forces Records:

<b>Information:</b>	SON OF VIVIAN CHARLES DIAS, AND OF CECILY ALICE DIAS (NEE BENBOW), OF GEORGETOWN, DEMERARA, BRITISH GUIANA.
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Britain
<b>Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve during World War 2</b>	

## **More information about Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**

Formed: 1936

The RAFVR was formed in July 1936 to provide individuals to supplement the Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) which had been formed in 1925 by the local Territorial Associations. The AAF was organised on a Squadron basis, with local recruitment similar to the Territorial Army Regiments. Initially the RAFVR was composed of civilians recruited from the neighbourhoods of Reserve Flying Schools, which were run by civilian contractors who largely employed as instructors members of the Reserve of Air Force Officers (RAFO), who had previously completed a four year short service commission as pilots in the RAF. Navigation instructors were mainly former master mariners without any air experience. Recruits were confined to men of between 18 and 25 years of age who had been accepted for part time training as Pilots, Observers and Wireless Operators. The object was to provide a reserve of aircrew for use in the event of war. By September 1939, the RAFVR comprised 6,646 Pilots, 1,625 Observers and 1,946 Wireless Operators

When war broke out in 1939 the Air Ministry employed the RAFVR as the principal means for aircrew entry to serve with the RAF. A civilian volunteer on being accepted for aircrew training took an oath of allegiance ('attestation') and was then inducted into the RAFVR. Normally he returned to his civilian job for several months until he was called up for aircrew training. During this waiting period he could wear a silver RAFVR lapel badge to indicate his status.

By the end of 1941 more than half of Bomber Command aircrew were members of the RAFVR. Most of the pre-war pilot and observer NCO aircrew had been commissioned and the surviving regular officers and members of the RAFO filled the posts of flight and squadron commanders. Eventually of the "RAF" aircrew in the Command probably more than 95% were serving members of the RAFVR.

During 1943, the decision was taken by the Air Ministry to raise an order for members of the RAFVR to remove the brass and cloth 'VR's worn on the collars and shoulders of officers and other ranks (respectively), as these were viewed as being divisive. No similar order was raised for members of the Auxiliary Air Force, who retained their 'A's on uniforms at that time.

# Lance Franklyn EDWARDS

<b>Date of Birth</b>	25 MAR 1919	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Midsomer Norton
<b>Class of</b>	1933 BROWNLOW	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	4 JAN 1942	<b>Place of Death</b>	Airplane crash in Yeovilton
<b>Age at Death</b>	22	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	St John Baptist in Midsomer Norton. Plot 3, Row 22, Grave 10
<b>Regiment</b>	759 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	RNReserves		Lieutenant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	





**Gossip Bowl 1942:** *Lance Franklyn Edwards was born on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919 (the Feast of the Annunciation), and after attendance at a local school came to Prior Park College in September, 1930. A few years previous he has been received into the Church, and on St Joseph's day, 19<sup>th</sup> March 1932, a few days short of his birthday, he was confirmed. He left in April 1933 and entered as a Cadet in the British Indian Steam Navigation Company. He remained in this service at the outbreak of war and was twice picked up at sea, being once torpedoed and once bombed and "sunk".*

*Six months before his death he joined the Fleet Air Arm (RNR). He was attached to H.M.S. Heron. He obtained a Commission in this service and was a promising young pilot. Lieut. Lance Edwards was twenty two years old when he met his death. Two days before his death he received the Last Sacraments and was able through the Chaplain to send his mother an account of how it all happened. He will have our prayers and constant remembrance. May he rest in peace.*

## New names to be added to Midsomer Norton's War Memorial

Tuesday, 10 January 2017 - Midsomer Norton, Radstock and District Journal

**Midsomer Norton Town Council has voted to add a new plaque to the Town's War Memorial in remembrance of two local men who lost their lives serving their country.**

Resident, Mr David Carter, spoke at the meeting, informing Councillors of his research after the Town Council's appeal in the local media, uncovering two new names – Lance Franklyn Edwards and Thomas William Walter.

Lance Edwards was a Lieutenant with the Royal Naval Reserve, H.M.S Heron, and was born in Midsomer Norton in 1919. His father, Frank, was also born in the town, and married Gladys, in Frome, in 1913. They had four children.

Lance joined the services in August 1937 as a mid-shipman at H.M.S. Heron, Yeovilton, and was promoted twice before becoming a Lieutenant in November 1941. From 2nd February 1940 for twelve months, he was on HMS Worcestershire, an armed merchant cruiser.

At some point, he must have joined 759 Squadron, dying of his injuries when his Hurricane crashed near the Yeovilton airbase on 4th January 1942. His body was brought back to Midsomer Norton, but there was no inscription on the headstone. It is thought that his name may have been missed from the War Memorial, as his mother was living in Bristol at the time and unaware that the names were being collated.

From CWGC: Lieutenant no service number logged, Died on 04/01/1942 at the age of 22. Was in Royal Navy Reserves on HMS Heron. He is buried in St John Baptist in Midsomer Norton and is the son of Frank and Gladys Edwards.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Information:</b>	Son of Frank and Gladys E. Edwards.
<b>Ship:</b>	<a href="#">HMS Heron</a>

# Edmund Gerard FORDE

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1917	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Bristol
<b>Class of</b>	1935 CLIFFORD	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Air Europe Star
<b>Date of Death</b>	16 FEB 1944	<b>Place of Death</b>	Over the North Sea
<b>Age at Death</b>	27	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Runnymede Memorial
<b>Regiment</b>	434 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	170975
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Flight Officer Wireless Operator/Air Gunner
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			See <b>Robert Dennis Sullivan</b> Page who died days after Eddie in the same mission
<b>Married</b>	Freda Simmons	<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Simon Beck



Pictured on the left. Crew 30 of 434 Squadron in the cockpit.



***Gossip Bowl Dec 1940: Eddie Forde is now Gnr E. E. Forde, 5<sup>th</sup> Surrey Regiment RA. Or rather was in September (1940). How far he has travelled since we know not.***

### **Pilot Officer Edmund G Forde**

His full name was Edmund (or Edmond) Gerard Forde and was born in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1917.

His parents were Edmond and Kate Forde (maiden name McSweeny) of Bristol who married in Bristol in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 1910.

He had two brothers, 1) Diarmaid (or Diarmuid) B Forde born 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 1911 who died 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1917 aged 5, and 2) John F Forde born 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 1914.

He married Freda Simmons of Bristol in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1943. Freda was born in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1921 to Frederick W Simmons and Ella E Simmons (maiden name Worner) who were married in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1920. There are no recorded offspring of Edmund and Freda. Freda remarried in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1945 to Gordon G H Coombs in Bristol and they had one child, Paul R Combes ( born 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 1946). Freda died in 1956.

### **“Eddie Forde”**

### **E G Forde – Known War Record**

The London Gazette of 29/2/1944 (p998) records that on 18 Dec 1943 Edmond Gerard Forde (170975) was gazetted as Pilot Officer on probation (Emergency) in the Royal Airforce Volunteer Reserve, General Duties Branch. It is worth noting that by the time this notification was published he had already been killed in action (night of 15/16 Feb. 1944).

Presumably he was “attached” to 434 Squadron as it was a Royal Canadian Air Force unit based at Croft. It was not uncommon for RAF personnel to be posted to RCAF units to make up the required numbers. He was in Crew 30, as the WOP/AG (Wireless Operator/Air Gunner) and as far as can be assessed from information found, he could only have gone on three missions – one on 28 December 1943, one on 28 Jan 1944 and the final, fateful one on 15 Feb 1944.

### ***IN EXCELSIS VINCIMUS - "WE CONQUER IN THE HEIGHTS"***

*Honouring the courageous men of RCAF 434 "Bluenose" Squadron.*

*During WW II part of Canada's contribution consisted of fifteen heavy bomber squadrons known as "RCAF 6 Group" combining with Britain's "Bomber Command". 434 Squadron was one of the 15 that were*

*stationed at various airfields in the County of Yorkshire, England. Also known as the "Bluenosers" 434 was initially based out of Tholthorpe then Croft in the two years Overseas, 15th June 1943 – 9th June 1945.*

The eleventh raid of The Battle of Britain took place on December 29, 1943 with 434 Squadron fully participating. F/L F. Carter piloted Halifax "Y" (York) LK971 with his regular crew including W/O. D. G. Goodfellow as Bomb Aimer. Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command, Sir Arthur Harris, had kept the Halifaxes away from the more demanding raids on Berlin but on this night he asked for maximum impact so most Halifax Squadrons were called in. The 434 Squadron log book says there was "A maximum operational effort for tonight". The raid was very effective and 434 Squadron suffered no losses so the crew felt it was a big success. F/Lt Frank Carter would fly to Berlin again on January 28th as part of another major effort, following one of the most effective raids on the 27th. Harris wanted to hit them hard and keep hitting them without letup. However, for 434 Squadron, this night would be called "Black Thursday". There were 4 aircraft lost and 30 aircrew, a huge loss for the squadron. There was major damage in Berlin so strategically the raid was seen as a success but for 434 Squadron, it was a serious blow.

After the January 28 raid to Berlin, there were several weeks of very bad weather during which little flying was done. Aircraft and men were moved in and promotions came quickly as many senior fliers had been lost. For Don Goodfellow's crew, the disaster of late January resulted in their pilot, Flight Lt. Frank Carter, being promoted to Squadron Leader, which would have been a great honour for the men. Donald and the rest of the crew had been interviewed for commissions and word was that they would be coming through soon.

Operations were planned for two successive nights and then cancelled due to bad weather but February 15 would prove to be the first good night for flying in a long time so a major push to Berlin was in order. The largest contingent of Halifaxes and Lancasters to date were assembled for this raid. A new and different tactic would be employed in order to frustrate German Fighter Command. The plan was to assemble the bombers much further north over the North Sea and head east across Denmark, then turn south and fly south east to the Baltic Sea, approaching Berlin from the north east. Significant diversions were expected to occupy many of the German fighters while the main bomber stream approached Berlin.

The tactic was largely successful but was aided a good deal by a consistent cloud cover which made it difficult for the German fighters to locate and engage with the bombers. The result was one of the largest bomb loads delivered during the Battle of Berlin and, at least for 6 Group, the smallest losses of any of the major raids. Strategically, the raid of February 15, 1944 was a significant success.

After Squadron Leader Frank Carter piloted the familiar “Y” to the rendezvous over the North Sea – the Halifax bomber disappeared. No trace has ever been found. The 434 Squadron Log states:

“Our A/C all reported in from diversion bases by an early hour this morning with the exception of “Y” in charge of S/L F. Carter, J13993, pilot, P/O W. McPherson J22449, 2nd pilot, P/O S. Jenkins J18996, Nov., W/O D. Goodfellow R123319, **P/O E. Forde 170975, WOP/AG**, P/O J. Rood J19511, P/O J. Wheeler J19486, P/O J. Blanchard C13462, F/E, and they have been regrettably reported as missing on operations against Berlin.”

We also see in “The RCAF Overseas”, page 67, “Our losses on this raid were much below average, though two experienced crews skippered by S/L A. V. Reilander of the Tigers and S/L F. Carter of the Bluenoses were among those who did not return.”

Also, tragically, a few days later, the 434 Squadron Log also records that “A commission was receive today for WO2 D. G. Goodfellow, R123319, A/B, as P/O No. J19853, effective 23.1.44 but unfortunately he has been missing on operations since the 15.2.44 raid on Berlin.”

The exact fate of Halifax “Y” on that night will likely never be known. After all these years, not a trace of the aircraft or its crew has been found. The information that is available shows that, across all operations, a total of 52 bombers were lost on the February 15th raid to Berlin and only four of them are unaccounted for – one being Halifax LK971 from Croft. This would suggest that the bomber experienced a catastrophic event, meaning it likely exploded in the air.

Air crews had reported events like this in the past. They would suddenly see a huge flash in the sky where an aircraft had been flying – and then nothing. This might happen when a fully laden bomber took a direct hit to the bomb bay from the 20 mm canon of a German fighter. The list of lost



bombers accounted for on February 15 includes several that are known to have been shot down by JU 88 night fighters around Berlin, in Holland and around the Baltic sea and east side of Denmark. The JU88's had 20 mm cannon pointed upwards to shoot at the belly of a loaded bomber. It could be that LK971 was destroyed in this way but it could also be that it was shot down and crashed in the Baltic, sinking into deep water where it has not been found. It's all speculation at this point.

What is not speculation is that the families of 8 young men received tragic news of their loved one "Missing in Action" and later, "Lost and Presumed Dead."

**Finally**, this picture of a broken memorial stone rescued from a skip in 2005 that was apparently at the RBS branch at 28 Cavendish Square which, apparently was also at one time the site of the National Bank of Ireland. It shows the name EG Forde in the 1939/45 section so perhaps he was working in the NBI or the RBS until he volunteered for the RAF. Funnily enough, Simon Beck (Class of 1969 and researcher) used to work just over the road from that place, in the NatWest, Cavendish Square! .



From CWGC: Pilot Officer in 434 Squadron, 170975 died on 16/02/1944 and is commemorated at Runnymede Memorial. He is the son of Edmond and Kate Forde of Bristol and husband of Freda Forde also of Bristol.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Incident Date:</b>	15-16/02/1944
-----------------------	---------------

<b>Incident Time:</b>	1719
<b>Duty Location:</b>	Berlin
<b>Station:</b>	<a href="#">Raf Croft</a>
<b>Command:</b>	Bomber Command
<b>Aircraft Mark:</b>	V
<b>Aircraft Code:</b>	WL-Y
<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Halifax
<b>Aircraft Serial:</b>	LK971
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Runnymede Mem

## Raf Croft during World War 2

### More information about RAF Croft

Formed: 1941

Disbanded: 1946

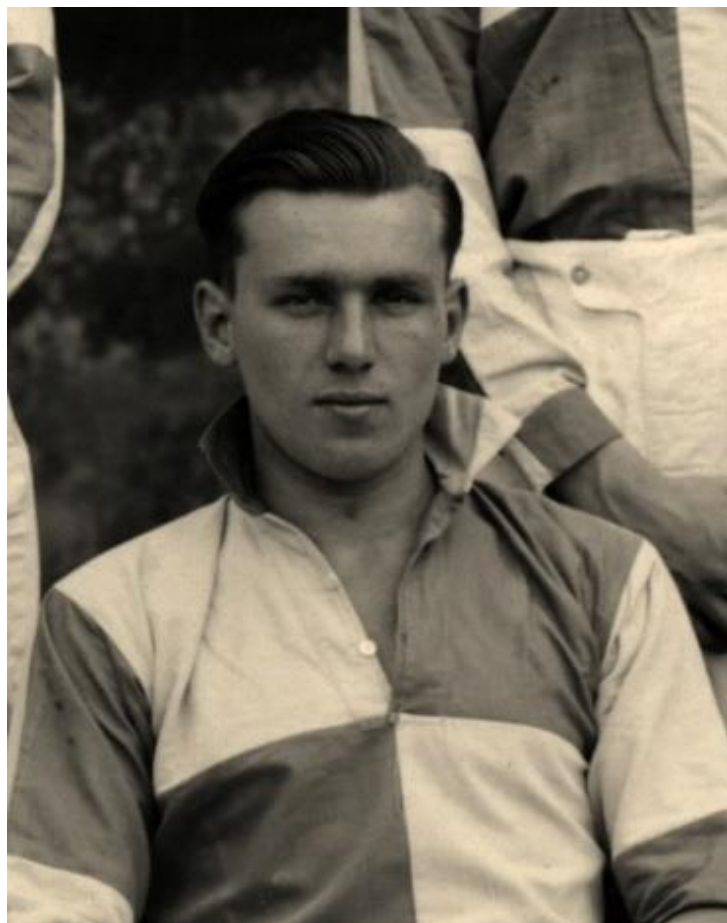
RAF Croft, known locally as Croft Aerodrome or Neasham, opened in 1941 and served as a Second World War RAF Bomber Command station. In 1943, Croft became a sub-station of RAF Middleton St. George which was allocated to No. 6 Group, Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). After the RCAF left in 1945, Croft saw little wartime activity. Later in 1945 the aerodrome became a satellite of No. 13 Operational Training Unit based at Middleton St. George (flying de Havilland Mosquitoes). The station was closed in the summer of 1946.

# William Patrick FOSTER

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1917	<b>Place of Birth</b>	
<b>Class of</b>	1937 BROWNLOW	<b>Medal</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	4 October 1944	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action. Burma
<b>Age at Death</b>	27	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Singapore Memorial on column 434
<b>Regiment</b>	152 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	907568
<b>Service</b>	RAF		Flight Sergeant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Parents</b>	Thomas & Effie Foster		
<b>Married</b>	To Sadie Kathleen Foster	<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	

## GB 1960 entry:

For many years past several Old Boys have asked for information of Pat Foster, Captain of the record-making Hockey XI of 1937 that in ten games scored 27 goals to nil against. Many enquiries have failed to elicit the least information of him but some time ago a parcel arrived from an unknown sender, containing his 1st XI Cricket Cap and Blazer, 1st XI Hockey Shirt and Stockings with a semi-cryptic note : 'Pat Foster, killed in Burma 1939 War'. Many who knew Pat as a most popular Captain and all-round Sportsman will read this sad news with regret and breathe a prayer for his soul. R.I.P.



**OPERATIONS RECORD BOOK**

Air Force (India) Form 540

See instructions for use of this form in K, R, and A, C, I, and notes in R, A, F, Field Service Pocket Book.

No. of pages used for day: Two

PAGE No. 1

of (Unit or Formation) No. 102 (Hyderabad) Squadron.

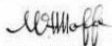
Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendices.
TULIHALL.	1944 <del>XXXX</del> October.		<p>During the month of October the Squadron moved from TULIHALL in the Indian State of M. IPUR to T.M. in Burma. We are thus the first Squadron of the Allied Air Forces to operate from an airstrip in Burma in this campaign.</p> <p>Orders for the re-organisation of the Squadron were received. In future 102 Squadron, in common with other Squadrons in Air Command, South East Asia, will be small, the establishment being pilots, Adjutant, Intelligence Officer and a few key supervisory personnel. The ground staff will be formed into No. 7152 Servicing Echelon, linked in memory to the Squadron by its number, 102 with a 7 in front. All echelons are being so numbered. The purpose is to make the Squadron mobile and in theory whenever next move forward the Servicing Echelon will remain here and another will await us at our new Station. Everyone hopes this will be avoided and that it will be possible for the Squadron and Echelon to move together as such a good spirit exists between the pilots and the ground staff.</p>	
		1st.	<p>1116437 Corporal McNeill W. Service Police was hit by a lorry and killed while on detachment at No. 3 Hill Depot, Chilloong. (for his rest period). He was a popular member of the Squadron and carried his duties well and tactfully. The lorry did not stop and the driver is unknown.</p>	
		2nd.	<p>The Officers, W.C.O's and Airman arranged a collection for "Henry's mother" and it says much for the popularity that £1,005/- were collected and the sum of £74-18-4 forwarded to Mrs McNeill.</p> <p>Photographs of the Squadron by flights were taken today, it is hoped to be able to give a print to each man.</p>	
		3rd.	<p>W/Cdr COURTNEY J.C. who has recently returned from a Fighter Leader Course in the United Kingdom gave a lecture to the pilots on the Royal Air Force in England. (His talk unofficially concluded with a discussion on the quality of the beer in that country).</p>	
		4th	<p>0075638 Flight Sergeant FORTER W.P., pilot, was missing today, failing to return from a scramble.</p>	
		5th	<p>A search for W/Cdr FORTER was carried out by two spitfires of the Squadron, piloted by W/O R.G. ALLINGTON and W/O R.E.M. HURMAN. The search proved unsuccessful.</p>	
		11th	<p>We were today informed that the Squadron would move to T.M. in Burma in the near future.</p>	

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Page No. 2.

Place.	Date.	Time.	Summary of Events.	References to Appendix.
TULIHAI.	12th		A New Canteen for the Liaison was opened to day in a thatched basha with bamboo wattle sides. Decorated with curtains and original drawings and fitted with electricity, it is one of the best the Squadron has had to date.	
	20th		An advance party of six Other Ranks proceeded by road to LAMU to lay out the site and erect tents. The tentage was obtained by Headquarters, No. 248 Wing at LAMU. The Squadron will be completely under tents as the aerodrome was occupied by the Japanese and these bashes which were not destroyed in the fighting were burned for hygienic reasons.	
	26th		The first main convoy of 23 vehicles carrying half the Servicing personnel and other ground staff moved to LAMU today. The ninety mile journey over a new road cut out of the mountainside was completed on time.	
	29th		The Squadron aircraft flew to LAMU and were the first Squadron of the ROYAL AIR FORCE to land in Burma.	
	30th		Our first operation from LAMU was carried out today: M.T. Vehicles returned to TULIHAI to complete the move.	
	31st		The rear party of 17 vehicles and the remainder of the ground staff moved to LAMU. Four vehicles had not returned from the first convoy and some had to be lost by the 1st Repair and Servicing Unit to replace them. One of these was used for towing a trailer. The brakes failed when the vehicle was descending a steep slope and the driver turned into the cliff face on his right to avoid the 300 foot precipice on his left. The lorry turned on its side, one passenger broke two fingers, but the load was saved.	

  
 W. W. MOFFAT.  
 Major.  
 Commanding,  
 No. 124 (Bomber) Squadron.

Q. P. W.—382(G133)—27-43—9400

Singapore Memorial stands in Kranji War Cemetery. It bears the names of more than 24,000 casualties of the land and air forces of the Commonwealth who died during the campaigns in Malaya and Indonesia or in subsequent captivity and have no known grave. The memorial also commemorates airmen who died during operations over the whole of southern and eastern Asia and the surrounding seas and oceans.



After the surrender of Singapore, the Kranji area was used as a prisoner of war camp by the Japanese and this cemetery was begun by the Commonwealth prisoners at the camp. In 1946, it was decided that Kranji would be designated as Singapore's main war cemetery.

# Peter William FOX

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1914	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Berkshire
<b>Class of</b>	1926	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	9 JAN 1940	<b>Place of Death</b>	Tropical disease in India
<b>Age at Death</b>	26	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Karachi War Cemetery
<b>Regiment</b>	Signal Corps	<b>Service Number</b>	2323054
<b>Service</b>	Royal Army		Signalman
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl Dec 1939:** Peter Fox, whose death from illness in the NW Frontier of India occurred early in January 1940, was amongst those who transferred from Clifton to Prior Park in 1924. He entered the School in 1921 and left in 1926. He was remarkable amongst his class-fellows for his happy temperament and his daring spirit; often at play hour he would be seen with a group around him hatching some plan or bent upon some

miniature “raid”. Though not outstanding in games or studies, he was proficient in both and was capable of making his mark in life.

*It must have been a delight to him when his unit (Signals) was docketed for India, and visions of novelty, excitement and expeditions must have filled his mind. But the Lord when He goeth into His garden picketh not the faded and worthless flowers but chooses the best, irrespective of age, for the adornment of his Heavenly abode. To that abode the pure soul of Peter Fox was called on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1940.*

*That the popularity which he enjoyed as a boy and the goodness that he always displayed did not desert him in his military life is made very evident in the following extracts from letters sent from India to his mother at Stratford-on-Avon.*

*From Major Keene, RAMC: “Last night I was sent for as a senior Roman Catholic officer here. I saw your boy sleeping peacefully in Heaven. He did not suffer, and if we can die with the same certainty of Heaven as this boy did we need not worry.*

*Of course, he died many thousands of miles away from you all. But it was God’s Will. We did try, but it was a case no surgeon could deal with.....The boy died as a great Catholic.....*

*“Years ago when our first baby died, Monsignor Molony, now in Liverpool, wrote: ‘It is sad, but remember by your union an angel has entered Heaven.’ And this is my message to you.”*

*From Fr M Doyle, Chaplain: “It will be of some consolation to you in your great sorrow to know that I saw your son many times before he died and on two occasions I brought him Holy Communion.*

*“He was a splendid boy, faithful to his duties and well loved by all. I thought it fit, therefore, to write to you, and whilst assuring you of my deepest sympathy to let you know that your son had the consolations of his Holy Faith. I also buried him in Bannu cemetery. God rest him.”*

*From a companion: “Wreaths were sent from all the Sections....Father Doyle managed to arrive in time to take the service....I felt that Peter was freed when I heard the trumpeters sound the Last Post and the Reveille. Everything seemed so peaceful in this lovely little cemetery in Bannu....Peter was pure in every sense and I am sure he is resting in Heaven.”*

*It is no wonder that, having received such consoling tributes about her son, Mrs Fox wrote to Brother Roche: “I am very proud of the religious*

*training he received at the College which enabled him to die so good and holy a death."*

*We and all who knew him sincerely sympathise with his family, and will sometime breathe a prayer for the eternal repose of his soul. May he rest in peace.*

From CWGC: Signalman 2323054 died on 09/01/1940 at the age of 26. He was in the Royal Corps and is buried at the Karachi War Cemetery.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Resided Town:</b>	Birmingham.
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	WO 304/7
<b>Place of Death:</b>	India

## **Royal Corps Of Signals during World War 2**

### **More information about Royal Corps Of Signals**

Formed: 1920

The Royal Corps of Signals (often simply known as the Royal Signals - abbreviated to R SIGNALS) is one of the combat support arms of the British Army. Signals units are among the first into action, providing the battlefield communications and information systems essential to all operations. Royal Signals units provide the full telecommunications infrastructure for the Army wherever they operate in the world. The Corps has its own engineers, logistics experts and systems operators to run radio and area networks in the field.[1] It is responsible for installing, maintaining and operating all types of telecommunications equipment and information systems, providing command support to commanders and their headquarters, and conducting electronic warfare against enemy communications.

The Royal Signals was created in 1920, after Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War issued a Royal Warrant declaring that there should be a Corps of Signals within the British Army. The origins date



back to 1870.

During the Second World War, the corps had over 150,000 members. After the war, the unit took part in several notable campaigns in Palestine, Malaya and the Korean War. The Royal Signals also delivered communications in the Falklands War, the first Gulf War, Kosovo and the second Gulf War. Currently, they are deployed in Cyprus, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

All members of the corps wear a blue and white tactical recognition flash on the right arm. The cap badge also features Mercury, the winged messenger of the Gods.



# Cecil James GORDON-CANNING

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1886	<b>Place of Birth</b>	India
<b>Class of</b>	1904	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	Victory medal	British War medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	14 JUNE 1941	<b>Place of Death</b>	Ship torpedoed in Trinidad
<b>Age at Death</b>	55	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Chatham Naval memorial
<b>Regiment</b>	HMS Lindsay	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	RNVR		Lieutenant Commander
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>	Esther Stella Gordon-Canning	<b>Children</b>	No known children on Ancestry
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	


From CWGC: Lieut-Commander ( no service number recorded) with Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves ON HMS Benbow. He is remembered at Chatham Naval memorial.

[Crew list of Ships hit by U-boats](#)

Cecil James Gordon-Canning


RNVR. British

Born	1886
Died	14 Jun 1941 (55)

	Ship	Type	Rank / role	Attacked on	Boat
	<a href="#">St. Lindsay</a>	Steam merchant	Passenger (Lieutenant-Commander)	14 Jun 1941 (+)	<a href="#">U-751</a> (1)

### Personal information

Son of Francis William and Mary Rose Gordon-Canning; husband of Esther Stella Gordon-Canning, of Bath, Somerset. Lost on passage aboard **St. Lindsay** to the shore establishment HMS Benbow on Trinidad.

<b>Name</b>	<b>St. Lindsay</b>		
<b>Type:</b>	Steam merchant		
<b>Tonnage</b>	5,370 tons		
<b>Completed</b>	1921 - Wallace Shipyards Ltd, North Vancouver BC		
<b>Owner</b>	St. Quentin Shipping Co Ltd (B. & S. Shipping Co), Newport		
<b>Homeport</b>	Newport		
<b>Date of attack</b>	14 Jun 1941	<b>Nationality:</b>	 British
<b>Fate</b>	Sunk by <a href="#">U-751</a> ( <a href="#">Gerhard Bigalk</a> )		
<b>Position</b>	47° 51'N, 38° 25'W - Grid BD 4144		
<b>Complement</b>	47 (47 dead - no survivors)		
<b>Convoy</b>	<a href="#">OG-64</a> (detached)		
<b>Route</b>	Glasgow (3 Jun) - Clyde (5 Jun) - Trinidad - Buenos Aires		
<b>Cargo</b>	3000 tons of general cargo		
<b>History</b>	Completed in January 1921 as <b>Canadian Highlander</b> for the Canadian Government (Merchant Marine Ltd), Montreal. 1928 transferred to Canadian National Steamships Ltd, Montreal. 1936 sold to Montreal, Australia, New Zealand Line Ltd (MANZ) Line Ltd, Montreal. 1939 sold to Britain and renamed <b>St. Lindsay</b> for St. Quentin Shipping Co Ltd (B. & S. Shipping Co), Newport.		
<b>Notes on event</b>	At 03.46 hours on 14 June 1941 the unescorted <b>St. Lindsay</b> (Master Oliver John Stanley Hill), detached from convoy <a href="#">OG-64</a> , was hit on port side underneath the bridge by one G7e torpedo from <a href="#">U-751</a> while steaming at 9 knots in rough sea about 580 miles east of St. John's, Newfoundland. The U-boat fired the torpedo on the surface from a distance of only 350 meters, remaining unseen in the dark night with low visibility, after having missed the ship with a first torpedo at 02.48 hours. The hit caused a very heavy detonation after which the		

vessel rapidly settled by the bow and sank vertically with the stern raising out of the water after 80 seconds.

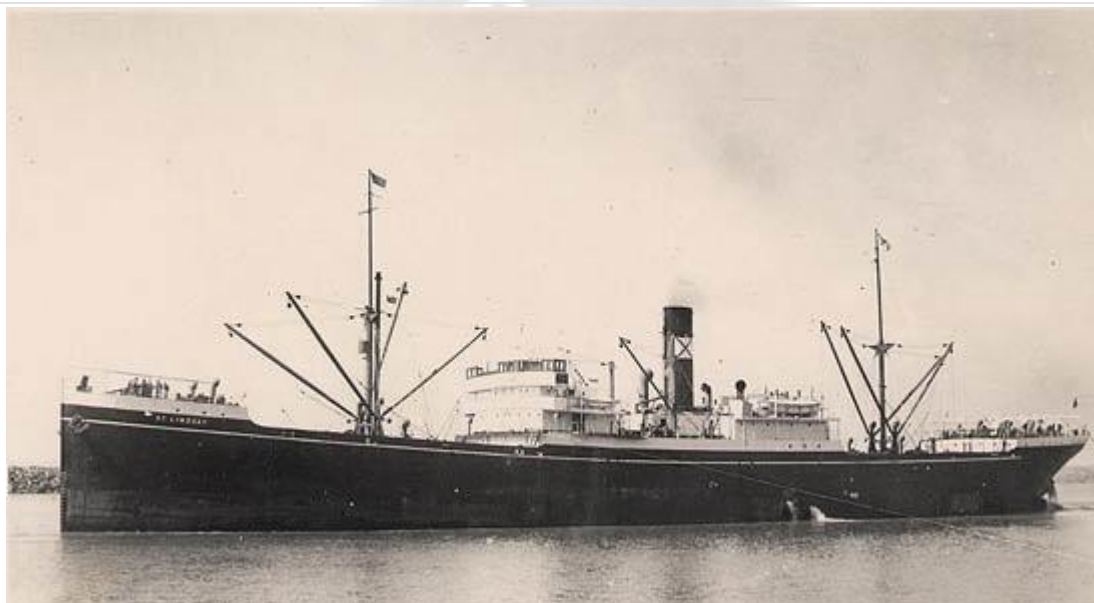
**St. Lindsay** had been reported missing after leaving the convoy and was presumed lost in approx. 51°N/30°W. The master, 35 crew members, six gunners and five passengers (naval personnel) were lost.

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## On board

[We have details of 47 people who were on board.](#)

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From Forces War Records:

<b>Incident Details:</b>	Missing, presumed killed.
<b>Information:</b>	Late Midshipman R.N.R. ; DD as Lieutenant Commander RNVR ; CWGC = Cecil James GORDON-CANNING.
<b>Ship:</b>	HMS "Benbow"
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	ADM 90/023



# Joseph Lewis GROVES

<b>Date of Birth</b>	Circa 1925	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Appledore, Devon
<b>Class of</b>	1943 but he left in 1941 at 16 BAINES	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>			
<b>Date of Death</b>	29 July 1943	<b>Place of Death</b>	Torpedoed and sunk by U177 submarine
<b>Age at Death</b>	18	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Tower Hill, Panel 32
<b>Regiment</b>	Merchant Navy on M V Cornish City	<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>			
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Identical twin brother, John	<b>Parents</b>	Alfred and Gertrude Groves
<b>Married</b>	No	<b>Children</b>	No
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	

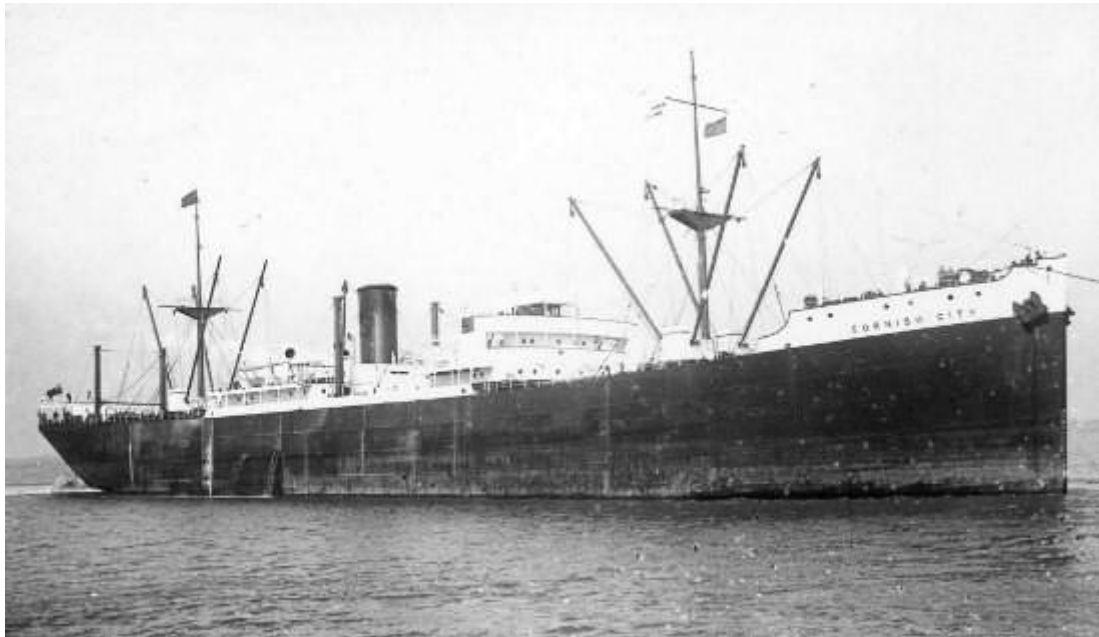
GROVES, Joseph Lewis	Apprentice	18	Appledore, Devon	29. 7.43	M.V. "CORNISH CITY" 161624
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From **GB 1953** Among the recently married are D. A. Ryan, P. Shrimpton, D. Walton, H. Stanton, P. Hegan, **J. Groves**, A. McCarthy.

**GB 1953** Among recently traced Old Boys are N. Hossell (Blackpool), Martin Jenny (Teignmouth) and John Groves (Northam, N. Devon). We should be grateful to get some news of the two former. **J. Groves** has made the sea his career since leaving School. He already has secured the coveted Master's Extra Certificate and is now awaiting to take over a ship of no mean tonnage. Well done, **John**.

Both these entries convinced the researcher that the WW2 plaque was in error that J Groves had in fact actually survived. It was never considered that J Groves could have been a TWIN. In 2020, an obituary came in for Emilio Lopez who had written a book about his life and in it he mentions being friends with identical twins, John and Joseph Groves. He also writes about the death of Joseph at the early age of 18, just 18 months after he had left College.

It was with a heavy heart that this book has been amended and J Groves is now found and remembered on the Fallen memorial as the youngest fallen alumnus. RIP



<b>Name</b>	<b>Cornish City</b>		
<b>Type:</b>	Motor merchant		
<b>Tonnage</b>	4,952 tons		
<b>Completed</b>	1936 - Furness Shipbuilding Co Ltd, Haverton Hill, Middlesbrough		
<b>Owner</b>	Sir William Reardon Smith & Sons Ltd, Cardiff		
<b>Homeport</b>	Bideford		
<b>Date of attack</b>	29 Jul 1943	<b>Nationality:</b>	 British
<b>Fate</b>	Sunk by <u>U-177</u> ( <u>Robert Gysae</u> )		
<b>Position</b>	27° 20'S, 52° 10'E - Grid KR 5726		
<b>Complement</b>	43 (37 dead and 6 survivors).		
<b>Convoy</b>	<u>DN-53</u> (dispersed)		
<b>Route</b>	Lourenço Marques - Durban (22 Jul) - Aden - Suez		
<b>Cargo</b>	9600 tons of coal		
<b>History</b>	Completed in November 1936		
<b>Notes on event</b>	At 09.00 hours on 29 July 1943 the <b>Cornish City</b> (Master Henry Thomas Isaac), dispersed from convoy <u>DN-53</u> , was hit amidships by one of two torpedoes from <u>U-177</u> and sank within one minute southeast of Madagascar. The		

master, 31 crew members and five gunners were lost. Five crew members and one gunner rescued themselves on rafts, were questioned by the Germans and later picked up by **HMAS Nizam (G 38)** (Cdr C.H. Brooks, RAN) and landed at Port Louis, Mauritius.

### Roster information listed for Joseph Lewis Groves

Ship	Type	Rank / role	Attacked on	Boat
 <u>Cornish City</u>	Motor merchant	Apprentice	29 Jul 1943 (+)	<u>U-177</u>

### Aboard Cornish City when hit on 29 Jul 1943

Name	Age	Rank
Anglo, Albert, Merchant Navy	23	First Radio Officer
Barry, Richard James, Merchant Navy	20	Second Radio Officer (Senior)
Bradbury, Henry Thomas, Merchant Navy	19	Ordinary Seaman
Bradley, Norman Reginald, Merchant Navy	21	Junior Engineer Officer
Burns, Peter William, Merchant Navy	16	Deck Boy
Buttigieg, Gerald, Merchant Navy	35	Able Seaman
Cobner, Howard Llewellyn, Merchant Navy	46	Able Seaman
Cockaday, Douglas Leonard, Merchant Navy	23	Junior Engineer Officer
Cole, Frederick Edward, Merchant Navy	22	Sailor

Crowley, Patrick, Merchant Navy	39	Chief Steward
Cutler, Robert Edward, RN	19	Able Seaman (DEMS gunner)
Davenport, Leslie George, Merchant Navy	29	Able Seaman
Ewing, Richard Henry Cecil, Merchant Navy	18	Steward
Fletcher, Harry Gladstone, Merchant Navy	54	Carpenter
Giles, Alan, Merchant Navy	18	Deck Boy
Grant, Christian, Merchant Navy		Boatswain (Bosun)
Grey, William, Merchant Navy	34	Chief Engineer Officer
Groves, Joseph Lewis, Merchant Navy	18	Apprentice
Haigh, Charles Albert, British Army	20	Gunner
Hopper, John William Dawson, Merchant Navy	25	Second Engineer Officer
Isaac, Henry Thomas, Merchant Navy	48	Master
Jeans, Edwin, Merchant Navy	21	Second Officer
Jenkins, Peter John, Merchant Navy	17	Cabin Boy
Jones, Cyril James, RN	26	Able Seaman (DEMS gunner)
Mahoney, Trevor, Merchant Navy	36	Donkeyman
Marsh, Frederick George, RN	26	Leading Seaman (DEMS gunner)
Mitchinson, Charles William, Merchant Navy	46	Electrician
Monk, William Archibald, Merchant Navy	31	Fourth Engineer Officer



Morgan, William Herbert, Merchant Navy	34	Sailor
Owen, James William, British Army		Lance Bombardier (DEMS gunner)
Pett, John Joseph, Merchant Navy	20	Quartermaster
Pickford, Leslie John, Merchant Navy	20	Ordinary Seaman
Pomeroy, Peter, Merchant Navy	18	Second Radio Officer
Trethewy, Arthur, Merchant Navy		Third Engineer Officer
Welsh, James Anthony, Merchant Navy	50	Cook
Wenger, Percival Ernest, Merchant Navy	22	Assistant Steward
Williams, Murray Walker, Merchant Navy	19	Apprentice
Wilson, John Evelyn Ladley, Merchant Navy		

C O D I N G	388	523	659	B	18	43 7	325	171	G.R. H
Nat.	Rank or Rating	Cause of Death	Ship	Age Group	Date of Death	Res.		R. of H List Number	
Record of Death of Merchant Seaman									
Surname: GROVES,				Ship: M/V "CORNISH CITY"					
Other Names: Joseph Lewis				Official No: 161624					
Address: "Lionth" Allendale, Devon N. Father Alfred. s/n.				Port of Registry: Bideford British/Fishing/Foreign					
Birthplace: Birmingham				Country: England		Rank or Rating: Apprentice			
Date of Death: 29-7-43				Place of Death: At sea		Age at Death: 18			
Cause of Death: Presumed drowned.									
Epd by: MAC				Registry Entry: R.A.				Reg. Gen.	
Ckd by: J.C.				Year: 1943		Month: October		Page: 23	

# Cecil Percy KING

<b>Date of Birth</b>	12 FEB 1920	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Georgetown, British Guiana
<b>Class of</b>	1938 Head Boy BAINES	<b>Medals</b>	DFM
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star Medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	17 APRIL 1943	<b>Place of Death</b>	Airplane shot over France
<b>Age at Death</b>	23	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Runnymede War Memorial Panel 125
<b>Regiment</b>	263 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	128999
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Flight Sergeant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl Dec 1938:** Cecil King is studying Law at King's College, London. He plays Rugby for King's 1st XV.

**Gossip Bowl 1939:** John Rendall has been evacuated from Imperial College of Science to University College, Swansea. He is in his third year, with Metallurgy as principal subject. Another "evacuee," Cecil King, from King's College, London, passed 1st LL.B. at Bristol.

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1940:** Flight Sergt C P King is still going strong not many miles from Bath.

**Gossip Bowl July 1941:** Wednesday, January 29th.—The manoeuvres of a rather low-flying Hurricane led us to conclude that our old friend Cecil King was looking us up (or down !).  
Cecil King has worked his way into Spitfires in a minimum time.

**Gossip Bowl July 1942:** We also had a visit from Flight-Sergt. Cecil King, who was doing his training not very far away.

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1943:** We regret to announce that F/o Cecil King, former Captain of the School, was posted as missing some months ago in a daylight sweep over France. He was flying Whirlwinds. No news since.

In the course of many sorties, Flight. Sergeant King has inflicted much damage on enemy targets. He is a skillful and determined pilot whose example has been most praiseworthy. He has destroyed, 1 enemy aircraft. ' London Gazette 29th September 1942

From CWGC: Flying Officer 128999. Died on 17/4/1943 aged 23 and is at the Runnymede War Memorial.

Son of Percy William and Florrie Leacock King of Georgetown, British Guiana.





**BIRTHS ON THE VOYAGE**

NAME OF INFANT	DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	DATE OF DEATH	NATIONALITY

**DEATHS ON THE VOYAGE**

NAME	DATE OF DEATH	SEX	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY	CAUSE OF DEATH

**SUMMARY OF BRITISH AND ALIEN PASSENGERS**

NATIONALITY	Adults of 12 years of age and over		Children between 1 and 12 years		Infants
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
British Subjects	2	2	1	2	
Aliens					
Total	2	2	1	2	
Total Number of Adults					4
Total Number of Children between 1 and 12 years					2
Total Number of Infants					0

**INCOMING PASSENGERS**

Returns of Passengers brought to the United Kingdom in ships arriving from Places out of Europe, and not within the Mediterranean Sea.

SHIP'S NAME	OFFICIAL NUMBER	STEAMSHIP LINE	REGISTERED TONNAGE	MASTERS NAME	PORT OF ORIGIN
S/S ALEXANDRA	14755	Reder Line	1007	Thomas Jones	From: Liverpool

Date of Arrival: 18 OCT 1917

**NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF PASSENGERS**

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Port of Origin	Passenger Name	Age	Sex	Rank or Profession	Service or Occupation	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Place of Birth	Place of Residence
Liverpool	Brown, Edith S.	1st	44		Doctor	Doncaster	Doncaster		
-do-	Brown, Alice Reid	-do-			Serv	-do-	-do-		
-do-	Brown, Katherine J.	-do-			Teacher	-do-	-do-		
-do-	Stee, Vivian F.	-do-	17		Private School	-do-	-do-		
-do-	King, Cecil F.	-do-	17		Student	-do-	-do-		
-do-	Coates, Walter	-do-	24		Civil Servant	-do-	-do-		
-do-	McDonnell, Archibald	-do-	40		Plumber	-do-	-do-		
-do-	Paul, Edward	-do-	25		Plumber	-do-	-do-		
-do-	Ellis, Walter E.	-do-	24		Clerk	-do-	-do-		
St. Lucia	Shortness, William	-do-	40		Engineer	-do-	-do-		
-do-	Shortness, Barbara	-do-	30		Serv	-do-	-do-		

Shipping entries to prove that both Cecil King and Peter Vivian Dias were travelling back to the UK from their home country of British Guiana. British Guiana was the name of the British colony, part of the British West Indies (**Caribbean**), on the northern coast of **South America**, now known as the independent nation of Guyana (since 1966)

From Forces War Records:

<b>Nationality:</b>	British
<b>Information:</b>	SON OF PERCY WILLIAM AND FLORRIE LEACOCK KING, OF GEORGETOWN, BRITISH GUIANA.
<b>Gallantry Awards:</b>	<p><b>Distinguished Flying Medal</b></p> <p>Established on 3rd June 1918 the Distinguished Flying Medal (D.F.M.) was awarded to Non-Commissioned Officers and personnel of the Royal Air Force.</p> <p>This D.F.M. was awarded to the recipient, Cecil Percy King, to recognise valour, courage or devotion to duty performed whilst flying in active operations against the enemy.</p> <p>The D.F.M. was later extended - during the Second World</p>



War - to similarly cover the Air Arms of the Army and Fleet.

Citations for the D.F.M. were published in the London Gazette.

His DFM was gazetted on 20 June 1942 when he was a flight sergeant. He was reported missing on 18 April 1943 when his Westland Whirlwind aircraft (P7117 of 263 Squadron) failed to return from a night attack on railway sidings at Isigny St Lo in northern France. It is presumed he came down in the Channel.

The ORB for 263 Sqdn (PRO AIR27/1548) says that King was very much the oldest member of the Squadron having been in it for twenty-five months (a rather long single tour of operations). Three of 263 Sqdn's aircraft did not return from operations that night.

## **Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve during World War 2**

### **More information about Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**

Formed: 1936

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When war broke out in 1939 the Air Ministry employed the RAFVR as the principal means for aircrew entry to serve with the RAF. A civilian volunteer on being accepted for aircrew training took an oath of allegiance ('attestation') and was then inducted into the RAFVR. Normally he returned to his civilian job for several months until he was called up for aircrew

training. During this waiting period he could wear a silver RAFVR lapel badge to indicate his status.

By the end of 1941 more than half of Bomber Command aircrew were members of the RAFVR. Most of the pre-war pilot and observer NCO aircrew had been commissioned and the surviving regular officers and members of the RAFO filled the posts of flight and squadron commanders. Eventually of the "RAF" aircrew in the Command probably more than 95% were serving members of the RAFVR.

During 1943, the decision was taken by the Air Ministry to raise an order for members of the RAFVR to remove the brass and cloth 'VR's worn on the collars and shoulders of officers and other ranks (respectively), as these were viewed as being divisive. No similar order was raised for members of the Auxiliary Air Force, who retained their 'A's on uniforms at that time.

From 263 Squadron flight records

23 July 1942: Operation Rhubarb: Blue Section (1) Flight Sergeant King (2) Pilot Officer Currie. Blue 1 turned left at Landivisiau and fired at a lorry on the Morlaix road, seeing hits on its Radiator. Blue 2 was last seen with four other aircraft near the French coast. (Blue 2 Pilot Officer Currie, is missing and believed to be killed in action).

11 September 1942: His Majesty the King was graciously pleased to honour F/Sgt, (now Pilot Officer) C.P. King by conferring upon him the Distinguished Flying Medal, in recognition of his many and varied exploits against the enemy and of the steady example he had given to the other pilots of the squadron.

The night of 17 April 1943 :

At night, nine aircraft sought out targets in almost the whole seaward and landward occupied area which is within the Squadron's range from WARMWELL. Flying Officer Philip HARVEY, [Flying Officer Percy King](#), D.F.M, and Flying Officer Basil Courtney ABRAMS did not return. [KING](#) was very much the oldest member of the Squadron having been in it for twenty-five months (a rather long single tour of operations). ABRAMS and HARVEY had been, like BREARLEY, with us for nineteen months. These four seemed the backbone of the Squadron.

Flying Officer HARVEY and Flying BREARLEY were the Deputy Flight Commanders of "A" and "B" Flights respectively. Nothing more is known of the three beyond what is stated on Form 541.

Again it is not a all possible to set down here in brief what we felt about them. HARVEY, the son of the Bishop of Cashel, was a person of rare charm and goodness. He had been married for five weeks. [KING and](#)

ABRAMS were close friends of each other, but they were equally the boon companions of the rest of the Squadron. The four were typical of the varied origins of our pilots. They came from CANADA, EIRE, BRITISH GUIANA and SOUTH AFRICA respectively.

The link to the entire flight log for 263 Squadron:

<http://263squadron.weebly.com/uploads/9/2/1/7/92171046/air271548.pdf>



# Maurice Alexander William LEE

<b>Date of Birth</b>	22 DEC 1919	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Maymyo, Upper Burma
<b>Class of</b>	1936 BAINES	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Battle of Britain Clasp
<b>Date of Death</b>	31 DEC 1940	<b>Place of Death</b>	Battle of Britain. Airplane crash in bad weather,
<b>Age at Death</b>	21	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	St Marys Cemetery in Cray Plot E. Div. 3. Grave 123
<b>Regiment</b>	72 Squadron, 421 flight	<b>Service Number</b>	742796
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Sergeant Pilot
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Ian Lee, Class of 1935	<b>Ancestry</b>	3 brothers and one sister
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	





**Gossip Bowl July 1941:** Maurice A Lee was born at Maymyo, Upper Burma, on December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1919 and the next year came home to Ireland, returned to the East in 1921, and remained there till his father's retirement in 1923. Until 1927 he resided in Ireland and it was on September 14<sup>th</sup> of that year that he and his brother Ian came to Prior Park, the family having come to live in Dorsetshire. He was then almost eight years of age and was the youngest boy in the Junior School.

His father, Lt-Col A W H Lee, had formed a very true estimate of him as a schoolboy: "He was I fancy an average boy," he writes, "clever if not very studious, and able to hold his own with others in class if not a great athlete." In the School records he is down as 1<sup>st</sup> in his years in second and third Forms, and in Fourth Form he was placed in the Honours List of Junior Oxford Locals with Distinction in Latin. He was awarded the Bronze Association Medal in St Peters and was placed First in Religious Knowledge. In his leaving year he was successful in Oxford School Certificate with exemption from London Matriculation. In other spheres he took his part, though less brilliantly than in his studies. Thus we find he was top in Billiards in Junior School, was "placed" in High Jump in the class 11-13 and later played for his House (Baines) in Rugger. Thus truly he was a good student but by no means a "swot" and when it came to games, athletics and swimming his happy nature was more out for fun and enjoyment than for the keen restraint which gains the prizes. Training for games was not fast enough for one who had a special attraction for "speed" and even in his studies he wanted to "get there" quickly – fortunately his native ability enabled him to attain his goal.

When he left school he went as an Apprentice Aircraft Engineer to Messrs Vickers at Weybridge and before war broke out he joined the RAFVR as a Sergeant. He had started to train and had been to camp once, when he was embodied in the RAF on the outbreak of war – although many weeks passed before he was called up to commence his training – at an EFTS. He finally qualified as a Sergeant Pilot in August 1940, gaining his wings, and was in action against the Luftwaffe for the first time on the fourteenth of the same month and many times after. On October 15<sup>th</sup> he was wounded in the air and after his recovery from hospital returned to duty. It was on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1940, barely ten days after his twenty first birthday, that his end came when landing in very thick weather after an operational flight. His rank was Sergeant, and true to his character he had no aspirations to a Commission, preferring to continue serving with those comrades with whom he had gone through those happy days of training on land and in the air.

*Yet his Squadron Leader had intended in the present year to have recommended him for a Commission.*

*His father in writing to Brother Roche makes his own the lines from Macbeth where Siward was told by Rosse that –*

*“Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier’s debt,*

*He only liv’d but till he was a man;”*

*“ Had he his hurts before?”*

*“Ay on the front.”*

*“Why then, God’s soldier be he!*

*Had I as many sons as I have hairs*

*I would not wish them to a fairer death.”*

*Worthy father of a worthy son! Yes, Maurice died nobly in a noble cause! May God reward his splendid sacrifice and that of so many others of our boys, with the glory of heaven, “When death shall be no more.”*

*Requiescat in Pace.*

**Gossip Bowl, July 1941** *School Notes: Yet its griefs fail not to arouse in us our native sympathy for those who suffer, for those who die, and for those left alone to grieve. The year 1940 was almost ended, the thirty-first day of the twelfth month had just dawned when good-humoured Maurice Lee was dashed to death.*

*There is a consolation in its suddenness, there is an exhilaration in its dash and daring, there seems almost a suitability in its manner for one so young, so happy-go-lucky, so innocently ready to pass from earth to heaven. Yet we grieve that never again in this gloomy world shall we hear his merry laugh or gaze upon his smile-wreathed face.—With hearts divided between sorrow for his loving parents and admiration for his supreme sacrifice we leave him in God's embrace and murmur Requiescat in pace.*

From CWGC: Maurice Lee service number 742796 died at 31/12/40 at the age of 21. He is buried at St Marys Cemetery in Cray.

Son of Lt Col Alex Henry Lee and Kathleen Theresa Lee of Ridgeway, Somerset.

From Forces Records:

<b>Nationality:</b>	British
<b>Information:</b>	SON OF LT.-COL. ALEXANDER HENRY LEE AND KATHLEEN THERESA LEE, OF RIDGEWAY, SOMERSET.

## **Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve during World War 2**

### **More information about Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**

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members of the RAFO filled the posts of flight and squadron commanders. Eventually of the "RAF" aircrew in the Command probably more than 95% were serving members of the RAFVR.

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# William Edward LUNDON

<b>Date of Birth</b>	JAN 1923	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Dublin
<b>Class of</b>	1940 BAINES	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	6 JUNE 1942	<b>Place of Death</b>	Engine trouble, plane crash in Ireland
<b>Age at Death</b>	19	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Kilcrumper Cemetery, Ireland. Grave 383
<b>Regiment</b>	Hurricane Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	120530
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Pilot Officer
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl July 1942:** *The youngest of our war heroes, Bill Lundon, who was born in Dublin in January 1923, only child of Mr and Mrs Tom Lundon, was brought to England when a year old. Mr Tom Lundon is one of the few remaining members of the old Irish Parliamentary Party; he was for ten years MP for East Limerick, which his father had also represented in the House of Commons. Bill received his early education at the Cardinal Vaughan School, Kensington, and came to Prior Park in January 1936 at the age of thirteen.*

*He made good progress in his studies and maintained a place well up in his class to the end of his school life. He was rather literary than mathematical, and in the School Certificate Examination obtained the mark "A" in English Language, English Literature, Latin and French, and secured exemption in Matriculation. As a debator he was good and was a strong support to his House – Baines' – which was the runner-up for the House Debating Shield in 1940.*

*In games also he was proficient; he was in the Rugby XV in 1939, and 1940 found him in both the Hockey and the Cricket XI's. Music also had its charms for him – he was a promising student of the piano.*

*He left Prior Park in July 1940, his intention being to become a Veterinary Surgeon. However, after one term at the College he decided on his eighteenth birthday to volunteer for the RAF as air crew. He passed for this and was called up for training in June 1941. His wish was to become a fighter pilot, and though ordinarily rather an easy going young person, Bill was filled with such keenness and enthusiasm for his work that he tried for and obtained very high marks in the examinations during the various stages of his training. He passed out of SFTS in April 1942 with his "Wings" and Commission. Ranked as "above Average" he was posted to a Hurricane Squadron, but on July 6<sup>th</sup> through engine trouble, crashed to his death.*

*His Wing Commander described him as one who appeared to have a natural gift for flying and for whom he had predicted a brilliant future in the air; he added that the Service and the Country could ill afford "to lose such a man at such a time."*

*In Bill Lundon was the making of a good all-round man, with the sturdiness of his ancestors and their same strong faith and edifying practice of his holy religion. The straightforward, honourable and religious sentiments of his boyhood and youth will have secured for him the Eternal Rest which he and we wish and pray for.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1942** in School Notes:

*Last February Bill Lundoŋ called to see us. He gave the boys an interesting talk about life in the R.A.F. About the same time Peter Rose, R.A.F., visited us also. Both have since made the supreme sacrifice. R.I.P. They have had our prayers, and we also extend our deepest sympathy to their bereaved ones.*

*It was on the same day as the Sports that Peter Rose was killed, and on the following Tuesday Flt.-Lieut. Bill Lundoŋ met his death. It was indeed a sad week, for in its course also died Joseph Hayward's mother and Don McMillan's father. May the Lord have mercy on their souls.*

From CWGC: Pilot Officer service number 120530. Date of death 06/06/1942 ( this is different from the GB entry) and he is buried in Kilcrumper Cemetery, Ireland.

PRIOR PARK 1st XI., 1940



T. C. LEAMAN,						7 THE CORRIDOR, BATH.
W. E. Fallon	R. F. Camacho	J. C. Pardo	J. N. Green	F. J. Taylor	P. J. Zammit	
W. E. Lundoŋ	M. H. Morgan	D. J. Nugent (Capt.)	E. J. Farniglett	D. S. Hardy		
	Played 3	Won 3	Goals for 19	Against 5		

From Forces War Records:

**Commemorated:** Ireland, Republic of

**Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve during World War 2**



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# Alfred A J MAHONY

<b>Date of Birth</b>	15 June 1918	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Madras, India
<b>Class of</b>	1936 CLIFFORD	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	29 MAY 1940	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in Action at Dunkirk, France
<b>Age at Death</b>	22	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	DUNKIRK MEMORIAL Column 7
<b>Regiment</b>	3 Searchlight Bty Royal Artillery	<b>Service Number</b>	74529
<b>Service</b>	Army		Second Lieutenant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Simon Beck



**Gossip Bowl July 1940:** *Old Boys will be very glad to learn that our many Old Boys who were fighting in France and Belgium have been evacuated safely with two exceptions, Lt John Mahony, RA, reported “missing”, and Mons Goor.*

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1940:** *Yves Goor, son of the Belgian Minister at Dublin, is safe and well in Belgium. Lieut. John Mahony is also still, we regret to say, among the missing*

From CWGC:

Alfred Adrian Mahony, Second Lieutenant, 74529. Died 29/05/1940 at age 22 he was in the Royal Artillery and fell at Dunkirk where he is remembered on the Memorial there. Son of Major J S Mahony and Blanche A Mahony of Ealing, Middx.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Fate:</b>	Presumed Killed in Action
<b>Incident Details:</b>	Reported to War Office Casualty Section for the 24 hours ending at 09.00.
<b>Incident Date:</b>	26/01/1942
<b>Information:</b>	Casualty List No. 730. Date of casualty shown on original source as 29/05-02/06/1940. Previously shown on Casualty List No. 226 as Missing, date not reported.
<b>Duty Location:</b>	France
<b>Battery:</b>	3rd Search Light Battery
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	WO417/2
<b>Royal Artillery during World War 2</b>	

## **More information about Royal Artillery**

Before the Second World War, Royal Artillery recruits were required to be at least 5 feet 4 inches tall and men in mechanised units had to be at least 5 feet 8 inches tall. In 1938, the Royal Artillery Brigades were renamed Regiments. In the Second World War over a million men were serving in over 960 Gunner regiments. With the coming of peace the Gunners reduced to 250,000 men and 365 batteries in 106 regiments.

At the beginning of 1939 the regular and TA strength of the Royal Artillery totalled about 105,000. In mid 1943 the RA reached its peak strength, some 700,000 strong (about 26% of total British Army strength and about the same size as the Royal Navy), including about 5% officers, in some 630 regiments, 65 training regiments and six officer cadet training units.

These included 130 regiments converted from TA infantry and yeomanry often retaining their previous regimental title as part of their artillery unit designation as well as badges and other accoutrements. However, the strength of the field branch (including anti-tank) in mid 1943 was about 232,000. The Regiment suffered some 31,000 killed during the course of the war.

Of the 630 or so regiments about 240 were field artillery, excluding about 60 anti-tank.

At the end of the Second World War, the RA was larger than the Royal Navy. In 1947 the Riding Troop RHA was renamed The King's Troop RHA, and in 1951 the appointment of regiment's Colonel-in-Chief became Captain General. Following the end of National Service and the Cold War, the Royal Artillery fell further to its lowest strength since the 1820s; 14 Regular and 7 Territorial Artillery Regiments.

## **The Royal Artillery Prayer**

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
Who dost everywhere lead thy people in the way of righteousness,  
Vouchsafe so as to lead the Royal Regiment of Artillery,  
That wherever we serve, on land or sea or in the air,  
We may win the glory of doing thy will  
Amen

ALLEN D.W.M.	RING F.
FAULKNER H.F.	SMITH L.
HALFORD T.N.	SOUTER R.
HALL A.D.	THOMPSON G.
NEVILLE-CLARKE S.	LANCE-SERJEANT
ROCHESTER R.W.	BENCE R.
SECOND LIEUT.	CREFFIELD C.A.
CLERKE N.J.	GREENWAY R.W.
EDWARDS F.B.	HEAVISIDE W.
GARDNER D.L.	KELLY F.
HINCHLIFFE R.W.	MORGAN A.E.
HYMAN A.G.	O'REGAN C.J.F.
LLOYD C.	PIERCE E.W.A.
MAHONY A.A.	REYPERT A.W.E.G.
SCOTT R.N.C.	SWINDLE H.
SWEETMAN D.M.	WRIGHT R.
WEIR I.McC.	BOMBARDIER
WARRANT OFFR.II	BAIRD S.
BARR W.	BATES J.
SMITH A.E.	BETH J.
WARRANT OFFR.III	BINKS A.
SMITH W.S.	BLAKEY H.
RTY C.	BROOKES F.E.J.
	BROOKS S.F.



## John Berchmans ‘Bertie’ MINCH

<b>Date of Birth</b>	29 JULY 1890	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Athy, County Kildare, Ireland
<b>Class of</b>	1908	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	8 NOV 1942	<b>Place of Death</b>	Delhi
<b>Age at Death</b>	52	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Delhi War Cemetery 6 G 6
<b>Regiment</b>	RAMC	<b>Service Number</b>	14417
<b>Service</b>	Army		Lieutenant Colonel
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>	yes	<b>Children</b>	One son
<b>School census</b>	1901	<b>Additional researcher</b>	



### ***Gossip Bowl 1931:***

Major J. B. Minch, R.A.M.C., International Rugby Player, writes us in his usual interesting style—on this occasion from Palestine, where he is M.O. " I have a large area here from Haifa—Nazareth—Tiberias, on to Rospina, and to the borders of Trans Jordania. The whole place is as Biblical as ever and nothing is developed under the indolent rule of the Turk. Having seen the historical places, the place becomes monotonous. Where the land of milk and honey comes in I don't know. " The Jews are well entrenched

here and are, as usual, making money. The whole plain of Armageddon—^—an enormous expanse where we shall all be judged—is filling up rapidly with Jewish Colonies—so the end of the world had better hurry up ! " I like the Arab, he has not changed, and rides about on a donkey still and uses the most obsolete agricultural instruments. " I think Haifa will be a huge port in years to come. A magnificent harbour is being built. The Shell Oil Co. have established a huge depot, and if the pipe line to tap the Irak oil is carried to Haifa, rapid prosperity is bound to follow. " Mount Carmel I found of much interest. Convents and Monasteries are many, and here visitors may stay at reasonable rates. The view to be obtained from Carmel is reminiscent of the Bay of Naples. Mount Carmel is much cooler in hot weather than Haifa, and is undoubtedly becoming a very popular tourist resort. At Haifa, clever speculators are buying up property and foreshore sites. Nor are the Germans behind in this direction In Jerusalem most opulent 277 hotels, with London prices, are springing up. The Directors of these are hoping to attract many Americans during the tourist season. I can foresee now, with the Jordan harnessed, the place soon losing most of its biblical appearance. " The European population of Nazareth is about seven, including three officers, so you can easily imagine what a hilarious time I have ! "

**Gossip Bowl July 1941:** *Several Old Boy doctors are serving in the R.A.M.C., R.A.F., or R.N. Among them Col. Gerard Petit, M.C., Dr. Patrick England, Major James Lavery, Dr. Paul McCarthy, Dr. Terence Banwell, Dr. Terence McGinn, Major J. B. Minch, Col. Shea, Col. Arthur Hamilton.*

**Gossip Bowl 1942:** *LIEUT.-COLONEL JOHN BERCHMANS MINCH, R.A.M.C.*

*John, son of M. J. Minch, Esq., J.P., M.P. for South Kildare, was at Prior Park 1898—1901. He graduated M.B. at the National University of Ireland in 1914 and was commissioned Lieut. R.A.M.C., September 1915. He took a regular Commission in 1919, was promoted Major in 1926, and Lieut.-Colonel in January, 1938. He was a keen rugby player and was centre three-quarter for Ireland in the seasons 1913—14. He was a very fine horseman, a good cricket and tennis player—in fact an all-round sportsman. For Prior Park he had a particular affection and at his last leave from India he called a few times and offered to give lectures to the boys, but as his time was limited they could not be arranged.*

*In the Magazine for December, 1929, Col. Minch refers to many of the masters and boys of his day. " The President was Brother Strahan. In St. Paul's were Brs. Stapleton and Noonan. In St. Peter's Br. Mac (I don't remember the rest of his name), one of the dearest and kindest men that ever lived."*

*"In your journal," he continues, "I see Col. Creagh mentioned. Yes, I served in the Leicester Regiment with him in Delhi. . . I also see the name Canning. I remember a Canning in my time known as Tom Canning, who could hit a cricket ball. . . Tollemaches, yes, charming lads, one Rex was a great friend of mine. . . A redhaired lad called Bush.... a greathearted pugnacious fellow, had an encounter with Br. Dunne, but they became great friends. . . I believe he won the M.C. and D.S.O. and was killed in the war [1914—18]."*

*"The Music Master, I think his name was Neury [Nourry] whose sons were there, kept half a cricket bat up the chimney and when you played a wrong note hit your knuckles for six every time !"*

*Major-General W. Brooke-Purdon, O.B.E., M.C., wrote thus to the family : "The news of the death of Lieut.-Col. J. B. Minch, R.A.M.C. saddens the hearts of his many friends in and out of the Corps, and their deepest sympathy will go out to his wife and son."*

*"Paddy was one of the real 'characters' of the Corps and stories of his doings and sayings were many and varied, and the recounting of any of them always seemed to draw out the story of a fresh one. He was a first-class all-round sportsman having represented Ireland at rugby football in 1913 and 14 and at cricket having played for the Gentlemen of Ireland. He was also a member of the Barbarians. Like most Irishmen he was fond of a horse and did a lot of racing—some of it very successful and most of it amusing, both as an official and as an owner in India and Malta ; as a rider to hounds he had few superiors, his eye for country, horsemanship, and thrust keeping him well to the front. Even in later years, when increasing weight and finding suitable mounts became more difficult, he carried on, his brother Mat (O.P.P.), an Irish M.F.H., sending over suitable animals from Ireland which Paddy kept at the head of the hunt."*

*At golf he was an amusing companion for anyone who did not take the game too seriously, and at times he and his wife were worthy opponents for most people. As a friend 'Paddy' was beyond compare ; loyal and affectionate. May his soul rest in peace."*

*His sister says of him that he remained a schoolboy at heart till the end. He had all spiritual comforts in his last illness—his death was happy and peaceful.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1954:** *Several readers have enquired if Jim O'Connor is the first Old Boy to get an International Rugby Cap. The answer is in the negative, for in 1912 Prior Park was represented on the International Rugger field by two stalwarts, one was Ned Delaney who led the 'Second' invincible Springboks and the other, his opposite number in the Irish XV, Bertie Minch, later Colonel in R.A.M.C. The following may be of interest. The first of the Springbok's games*



*was against Ireland at Lansdowne Road, Dublin. The South Africans came with a tremendous reputation but Ireland were determined not to be awed. During the titanic struggle which followed with the whole Irish team putting up a magnificent defence against the fiercest Springbok attacks two players were seen on the ground and tackling in a manner not provided for in the book of rules. The referee gently chided them and shortly afterwards, the game ended in a Springbok victory.*

*At the banquet for both teams at the Shelbourne Hotel our two opponents by mere coincidence were seated side by side. There was no mistaking the athletic giant Delaney with his shock of red hair and the tall, handsome fair-haired Minch. The latter looked closely, at his erstwhile opponent and said, 'I think we have met before'. 'I should think so' uttered the former. 'My name is Delaney.' 'Minch is mine', and 'Would you be the 'Sambo' Delaney who was my bosom friend in St Peter's in 1900 ?' 'And would you be the Bertie Minch whom I used to "duck" in the swimming bath ?' They embraced—glasses clinked and all was forgotten.*

*Both left Prior Park at the dissolution in 1902, one returned to his native Kimberley and the other to Dublin and they meet years afterwards in a 'scrap' in the mud on a playing field in Dublin. Strange things assuredly do happen!*

From CWGC: Lt Col Minch, service number 14417, died on 8/11/1942 and is buried at the Delhi War Cemetery

Lieutenant Colonel John Berchmans Minch was the second son of Matthew Joseph Minch MP JP of Rockfield House, Athy. His father was Member of Parliament for South Kildare from 1892 to 1903 and owned Minch Malt, the largest maltsters in Ireland, at Athy. He was educated at Prior Park College Bath and graduated MB BCh at the National University of Ireland in 1914, and was also a Bachelor in the Art of Obstetrics. He was an all round sportsman, a fine horseman, a good cricketer and tennis player. He represented Ireland at Rugby football in 1913 and 1914, and at cricket having played for the Gentlemen of Ireland. He was also a member of the Barbarians.

Lieutenant Colonel John Berchmans Minch was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps Special Reserve on 15 September 1914 and mobilized on 30 September. He was promoted Captain on 1 April 1915 and took a regular commission on 1 November 1919. During the Great War he served in the operations against the Mohmands and Swatis, being awarded the 1914–15 Star, British War and Victory Medals.

His obituary in the Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps describes him as one of the real characters of the Corps.



Paddy was one of the real characters of the Corps and the stories of his doings and sayings were many and varied and the recounting of any of them always seemed to draw out the story of a fresh one. Like most Irishmen he was very fond of a horse and did a lot of racing, some of it very successful and most of it amusing, both as an official and an owner in India and Malta. As a rider to hounds he had few superiors, his eye for country, horsemanship and thrust keeping him well to the front. Even in later years, when increasing weight made finding suitable mounts more difficult, he carried on, his beloved Matt, sending over suitable animals from Ireland, which Paddy kept at the head of the hunt. At golf he was an amusing companion for anyone who did not take the game too seriously, and at tennis he and his wife were worthy opponents for most people. As a friend Paddy was beyond compare; loyal and affectionate.<sup>1</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel John Berchmans Minch of Curzon Park Chester died in India on 8 November 1942. He was buried at Delhi War Cemetery. He left a widow and a son.

### **Service Record — John Berchmans Minch**

28 July 1914 Start of the Great War.

4 Aug 1914 Britain declares war on Germany.

15 Sept 1914 Obtained a Special Reserve (SR) Commission as Lieutenant RAMC.

30 Sept 1914 Mobilised to 31 October 1919 (5 years 47 days).

1 Apr 1915 Appointed Captain RAMC SR.

1915–1921 Served on the North West Frontier British India and in the operations against the Mohmands and Swatis.

1 Nov 1919 Granted a Permanent Regular Army Commission as a Captain RAMC antedated to 15 March 1918 but with no extra pay or allowances for the period of antedate.

1923–1927 Served in India.

15 Sept 1926 Promoted Major RAMC.

6 Nov 1929 Birth of a son at the Louise Margaret Nursing Home Aldershot to Dorothy Minch wife of Major J B Minch.

Dec 1930–Dec 1931 Served in Palestine.

Malta 10 Dec 1931 Arrived from Palestine.

Malta June 1932 Elected Captain of the Cricket Team.

Malta 12 July 1933 Home leave.

27 Oct 1933 Returned from leave.

Malta 1934 On garrison duty.

Malta 2 Aug 1935 Home leave.

Malta 3 Sept 1935 Returned from leave.

Malta 25 Nov 1935 Returned to England.

8 Jan 1938 Promoted Lieutenant Colonel RAMC.

1938–1939 Commanding Officer British Military Hospital Madras.

1939–1941 Commanding Officer British Military Hospital Wellington.

1941 Commanding Officer British Military Hospital Ranikhet.

1941–1942 Commanding Officer Prisoner of War Camp Hospital India.

8 Nov 1942 Died in India; was buried at Delhi War Cemetery.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Resided Country:</b>	Eire.
	Casualty List No. 985. Previously shown on Casualty List No. 976 as Dangerously Ill 30/10/1942.
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	WO 304/20
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Britain
<b>Place of Death:</b>	India
<b>Royal Army Medical Corps during World War 2</b>	

## **More information about Royal Army Medical Corps**

Formed: 1898

The Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) is a specialist corps in the British Army which provides medical services to all British Army personnel and their families in war and in peace. Together with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, the Royal Army Dental Corps and Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, the RAMC forms the British Army's essential Army Medical Services.

The RAMC does not carry a Regimental Colour or Queen's Colour, although it has a Regimental Flag. Nor does it have battle honours, as elements of the corps have been present in almost every single war the army has fought. Because it is not a fighting arm, under the Geneva Conventions, members of the RAMC may only use their weapons for self-defence. For this reason, there are two traditions that the RAMC perform when on parade:

Officers do not draw their swords - instead they hold their scabbard with their left hand while saluting with their right.

Other Ranks do not fix bayonets.

Unlike medical officers in some other countries, medical officers in the RAMC (and the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force) do not use the "Dr" prefix, in parentheses or otherwise, but only their rank, although they may be addressed informally as "Doctor".



# John Joseph Patrick O'BRIEN

<b>Date of Birth</b>	24 APRIL 1911	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Wallasey, Cheshire
<b>Class of</b>	1927	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	22 JUNE 1941	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action. Egypt
<b>Age at Death</b>	30	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Alamein Memorial in Egypt. Column 77
<b>Regiment</b>	13 Corps Ammunition Park Service Corps	<b>Service Number</b>	T/221778
<b>Service</b>	Army		Driver
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Oswald O'Brien, Class of 1931		
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	





**Gossip Bowl Dec 1939:** Jack O'Brien was a native of Wallasey on the banks of the Mersey. He was born on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1911, and in December 1922 came with his brother Oswald to St. Brendans in Clifton. When Prior Park was re-opened in September 1924 he was one of the seventy five boarders who transferred from St Brendan's. It was destined to be for him a trying term as a week or two after the opening he was down with a severe attack of diphtheria and had to be sent to the Isolation Hospital which fortunately is quite near to the College, and for a time it was very doubtful if he would recover. However, by careful nursing he was got round and after a lengthy period of convalescence resumed his school course.

He was a good sport and in rugby and cricket was in the school teams. In athletics particularly he was prominent and won many prizes as sprinter. He was well forward in his studies also and got his School Certificate in 1927. Amongst his class fellows he was a great favourite.

When the war broke out he joined up and was sent overseas in 1941 and on 22<sup>nd</sup> June the same year he was killed in action. He was first reported as "missing" but later the War Office informed his father that it was officially assumed that he had been killed. May he rest in peace!

To Mr O'Brien and his family we offer our very sincere sympathy.

On CWGC: John Joseph Patrick O'Brien as a driver T/221778 in the Royal Army Service Corps and is buried at the Alamein Memorial in Egypt. Son of Arthur Patrick and Florence E O'Brien.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Information:</b>	Parents: Arthur Patrick and Florence E. O'Brien, of Wallasey, Cheshire.
<b>Rank:</b>	Driver
<b>Service Number:</b>	T/221778
<b>Battalion:</b>	13 Corps Ammunition Park
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Britain

## **Royal Army Service Corps during World War 2**

### **More information about Royal Army Service Corps**

#### **THE ROLE OF THE RASC.**

Military Training Pamphlet No23 Part 1.

The role of the RASC in the field falls into two main parts, supply and transport.

Supply.

Supply embraces the provision of food, petrol and lubricants, fuel and light, hospital supplies and disinfectants.

Transport.

Transport is concerned with the conveyance of the above supplies, together with ammunition, engineer stores, ordnance stores and post, from railhead, or from base if no railhead exists, to all units of a field force.

In addition RASC units are provided for the carriage of infantry, tanks and heavy bridging equipment. The mechanical transport of medical and certain other units is also found and operated by the RASC.

To enable these services to be undertaken effectively, the RASC are responsible for the provision, repair, and maintenance of their own mechanical transport.

General Transport Companies are allotted to divisions for the transport of ammunition, supplies and petrol. Similar companies are allotted to higher formations and for employment in Line of Communication areas as required.

Personnel of the RASC are trained to fight as infantry and RASC units are responsible for their own local defence.

#### **DIVISIONAL RASC**

The role of the RASC companies was to keep the front line units supplied. In order to do this there were three different operations which were carried on simultaneously.

By the end of the campaign it was usual to have a company assigned to

supplies, another to petrol and a third to ammunition. Early in the campaign it was more usual to have companies serving brigades and have those companies each assign a platoon to supplies, petrol and ammunition. Clearly the brigade company allowed the brigade to operate independently and was well suited to the rapid advances of armoured divisions. In the large, and often fairly static, armies of the winter of 1944/45 the commodity company was more efficient. The supply system was overhauled in the autumn of 1944 when it became common for transport from army level to deliver to division refilling points and thus cut out a stage of loading and unloading.

The transport of supplies.

The transport was divided into two echelons which operated a two day turn around system. The major item was rations. These were fairly constant and were delivered daily. Because there were slight variations in the strength of units from day to day each unit had to make a ration return stating how many rations would be required in four days time. There was always a days rations with the unit, a days rations on the second line transport and a third days rations on the third line transport so that the rations being requested today would leave railhead tomorrow.

- Supplies would be delivered to the divisional refilling point by corps transport units.
- Empty lorries would travel in convoy to the divisional supply refilling point and collect supplies. The lorries from each brigade would load the supplies for their own brigade.
- Loaded lorries would travel, preferably by a different route to avoid congestion, from the divisional refilling point to the unit supply points where units first line transport would collect the supplies. There would usually be a rendezvous point where the lorries for each brigade were met by motorcyclists who guided them to the supply point which might have moved or might be difficult to find in the dark.
- Once unloaded the supply lorries would collect any salvage in the form of returnable crates, cans, sacks etc. and then return.
- Somewhere on the return route was a reporting centre manned by the echelon commander and personnel and vehicles from company

headquarters. Here the section and platoon commanders would report that their mission was complete. Here they could also get refreshment and repairs before returning to a company headquarters for rest and a meal.

- Company Headquarters would be sited close to the divisional refilling point and clerks would be provided to check the items being loaded by relief crews. Clerks and loaders would also be provided by the third line transport to handle items being unloaded. Supply Platoons were also available to assist with supply matters.

The transport of petrol.

The system for the transport of petrol differed from that for supplies because all petrol was alike and was not perishable. There was no need for two echelons working a two day turn round.

- Supplies of petrol were delivered to the divisional petrol refilling point by corps transport where it was held on wheels until collected by the divisional transport as required. The corps RASC held a reserve sufficient to move the entire division 25miles.

- Forward of the divisional refilling point was a holding point where the second line transport held a reserve on wheels sufficient to move the entire division 50 miles. Second line vehicles also ran a shuttle service from the holding point to unit supply points so that petrol was always available when required.

- On return journeys lorries should carry salvage in the form of empty jerricans. All petrol was in cans and a 3ton lorry could carry 160 jerricans.

- There was less need of clerks, although deliveries were monitored so that fresh supplies could be ordered.

The transport of ammunition.

The system for the transport of ammunition was similar to that for petrol. Again the loads were not perishable and demand fluctuated. However petrol and ammunition were always kept separate. This was an absolute rule since ammunition was usually safe to handle and



transport but petrol fires would cause it to explode.

- Supplies of ammunition were delivered to the divisional ammunition refilling point by corps transport where it was held on wheels until collected by the divisional transport as required. The corps RASC held a reserve.
- Forward of the divisional refilling point was a holding point where the second line transport held a reserve on wheels. Second line vehicles ran a shuttle service from the holding point to unit supply points where ammunition was always available.
- On return journeys lorries should carry salvage in the form of empty ammunition boxes and cases, packing tubes, and shells that have been unpacked but not used. This latter made it necessary for lorries returning to the divisional filling point to be diverted to a salvage depot where returned ammunition could be handled by RASC personnel.
- A General Duties platoon was available to assist with loading and unloading ammunition.
- It was a principle of ammunition supply that it should move forward automatically and need not be indented for. Clerks were required to record amounts issued, and units made returns of ammunition expenditure, so that replacement stocks could be provided.
- At times of heavy artillery ammunition expenditure divisional lorries could deliver direct to gun lines and dump ammunition on the ground.

Note: The term railhead can also cover Beachhead and or Airhead.

The divisional transport units should not be considered in isolation. In fact there was a smooth overlapping system in which corps or army units delivered supplies to the divisional units. At the divisional refilling points there were both corps and divisional personnel who worked very closely with each other. At the other end of the divisional transport system there were unit echelon lorries operating under brigade control waiting to receive loads from the brigade transport companies RASC.

The system was sufficiently flexible to cope with rapid movements. When fighting units advanced many miles a day the supply system was able to maintain a steady flow. In the advance petrol was essential and the supply was ensured by

- vehicles starting with full tanks,
  - by units transport carrying a refill,
  - by the RASC company reserve on wheels moving just behind the units,
  - by the shuttle of RASC lorries keeping the rolling reserve replenished
- 



# Lawrence Beresford O'REILLY

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1918	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Chittagong, Bengal
<b>Class of</b>	1935 BROWNLOW	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War Medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Air Crew Europe Star
<b>Date of Death</b>	10 JULY 1941	<b>Place of Death</b>	Shot down by flak
<b>Age at Death</b>	23	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Boulogne Memorial
<b>Regiment</b>	7 Squadron Bomber Command	<b>Service Number</b>	62292
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Pilot Officer
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl 1935:** He was awarded the Sir Seymour Hicks Prize for Elocution.

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1940:** Beresford O'Reilly has abandoned his Veterinary Course in favour of the R.A.F. which is more in his line.

**Gossip Bowl July 1941: Postscript:**

**We regret to announce the death on military service of P. O. Beresford O'Reilly. R.I.P.**

**Gossip Bowl July 1941:** Beresford O'Reilly who was at the Royal Veterinary College, London, before joining the RAF is now a fully fledged Pilot Officer in a Bomber Squadron. He passed out second place after completing his training in S Rhodesia.



From CWGC:

Pilot Officer 62292, date of death 10/7/1941 at age 23. He was in RAF volunteer Reserves and is buried and on the Boulogne Memorial. Son of Lawrence Bernard and Florence Ester O'Reilly from Harrow, Middx.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Incident Details:</b>	Shot down by flak and crashed into the sea off the Pas de Calais during a raid on a power station at Chocques.
<b>Incident Date:</b>	10/07/1941



<b>Incident Time:</b>	10.30
<b>Duty Location:</b>	Chocques
<b>Station:</b>	<a href="#">Raf Oakington</a>
<b>Aircraft Mark:</b>	I
<b>Aircraft Code:</b>	MG-
<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Stirling
<b>Aircraft Serial:</b>	N6017
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Boulogne Eastern

# Ralph Paul Joseph OSBORNE

<b>Date of Birth</b>	15 SEPT 1916	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Weston super Mare
<b>Class of</b>	1933	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Africa Star
<b>Date of Death</b>	15 JULY 1940	<b>Place of Death</b>	Air crash in Libya
<b>Age at Death</b>	23	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	CAIRO WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERY P. 237
<b>Regiment</b>	216 Heavy Bomber Transport Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	40741
<b>Service</b>	RAF		Pilot Officer
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl July 1936:** Fred Simmons and Ralph Osborne worthily represent Prior Park at Oscott. Fred hopes to receive the sub-diaconate in September. Ralph enters upon the study of Theology.

**Gossip Bowl July 1938:** Ralph Osborne is enjoying the sunny skies of Egypt where he has a commission in the R.A.F.

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1938:** Another of our airmen who has got his "wings" is Ralph Osborne, stationed at Abu Sueir, Egypt.

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1940 School Notes:** In July last in Libya Pilot Officer Ralph Osborne met his death in an accident when a plane in which he was a passenger crashed into an escarpment as it was returning from a bombing raid. He was killed outright, though fortunately the pilot was only wounded and has recovered. To his sorrowing parents we offer our sincerest sympathy in their loss and our congratulations that it was in the service of his King and in a noble cause that their son lost his life.

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1940:** The sad news of the death of Pilot Officer Ralph P J Osborne reached us as our last number of the Magazine was in the press, and we were consequently able only to insert a short notice stating the event.

Ralph Paul Joseph Osborne was born at Weston-super-Mare on September 15<sup>th</sup> 1916, and at the age of thirteen came to Prior Park in January 1930. He was studious and even-tempered, a pleasant companion and popular with his classfellows. He did well at his examinations, gaining in 1931 second Honours in Junior Oxford Locals with Distinction in Latin and French; in 1933 he again got Distinction in the same two subjects and a School Certificate with Honours. At Sports, 1932, he was first in 100 yards (over 15) and in 1933 was included in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey and was first in the Long Jump (over 15). These attainments show that he was well developed in body and mind when in July 1933 he bade farewell to the College which he visited frequently during his years at Oscott. He was, however, not cut out for the priestly life and with regret left Oscott in 1937 and early in 1938 joined the RAF, was trained at Yatesbury, getting his Commission later in the year and doing his advanced training at Abu Sueir on the Suez Canal. He was then posted to the 216 Heavy Bomber Transport Squadron in Heliopolis and Cairo and was with them nineteen months till his death. In November 1939 he came home with a crew of five, one other officer as second pilot and three other ranks, and took out a new "Bombay" as Captain of Aircraft. They left on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1939, in very bad weather and made a forced landing about

100 miles this side of Marseilles. The French people treated them splendidly and they enjoyed their short stay in France. "We understood", writes his father, "that by this time he was senior Pilot Officer of the Squadron and first pilot on this very large machine. Since then I understand that among other jobs they patrolled the pipe line to Irak. Ralph also flew General Wavell, the C-in-C, on a tour of the Egyptian Defences on one occasion, but as you know he was naturally reticent and we shall never know of some of his most interesting experiences....

It appears however, that on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1940, he was returning from a night bombing raid presumably in Libya, when the plane struck an escarpment twenty five miles south of Mersa Matruth. We have since learned that on this particular raid he was acting as second pilot, presumably there was a senior officer in charge and piloting the machine. He and the wireless operator are recovering from their injuries but Ralph and the rest of the crew were killed outright. He was buried in the Military Cemetery at Cairo by the Catholic chaplain.

The Commanding Officer of the Squadron, Wing Commander Chichester, wrote me a short note saying that "His quiet manner and great good nature had endeared him to all ranks." Flight-Lieut. Boyd who wound up his affairs told us that he had reason to know that he was good at his job and 'a great loss to the Service' and that the sales of his effects 'reflected his great popularity with his Squadron.'

My wife has had two delightful letters from a French family who had entertained Ralph a good deal and they speak very highly of him and say he was the happiest man they had ever met.

"His devotion to his mother was something to be wondered at and his remarkable unselfishness made him very much loved not only by us but by all his friends and relatives. Our great grief is compensated largely by a great pride. He gave his splendid young life for us all."

This last paragraph of Mr Osborne's letter expresses the feelings of all of us who knew Ralph at school – his unselfishness was outstanding and has had its reward in the generous prayers offered for the repose of his dear soul by his masters and comrades both at Prior Park and at Oscott. His generosity in giving his life for his king and for us all will surely be remembered by the King of Kings in rewarding one who lived such a good life and died such a noble death. RIP.

From CWGC: Pilot Officer 40741. Died on 15/7/1940 at 23. From 216 Squadron in RAF. Buried in Cairo. Son of Ralph and Veronica Osborne.





# John Constantine PEDRAZZINI

<b>Date of Birth</b>	15 SEP 1906	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Cardiff
<b>Class of</b>	1924/5	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	18 JUNE 1944	<b>Place of Death</b>	Direct hit from bombing on HQ in Greenwich
<b>Age at Death</b>	37	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Brookwood Military Cemetery 25 D17
<b>Regiment</b>	901 Balloon Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	847696
<b>Service</b>	Royal Air Force		Sergeant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Ambrose Class of 1926		
<b>Married</b>	May Adams in 1937	<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



901 squadron was based in Woolwich, Abbey Wood and Kidbrooke In London. 5 flights of 9 balloons recorded.

Coming to terms with the “Bumble Bomb”:

*London was now experiencing the worst of the V1 onslaught, as the Germans despatched up to a 100 rockets a day at the capital. For obvious reasons the true scale of the devastation they were causing could not be acknowledged publicly. Measures to combat them were urgently introduced. The anti aircraft defences around London were beefed up.*

*Meanwhile the German double agents working for British intelligence were feeding back false reports of where they were landing. By leading the Germans to believe they were landing north of London it was hoped to induce them to reduce the range – so they would actually fall south of London, rather than the intended target area of central London.*

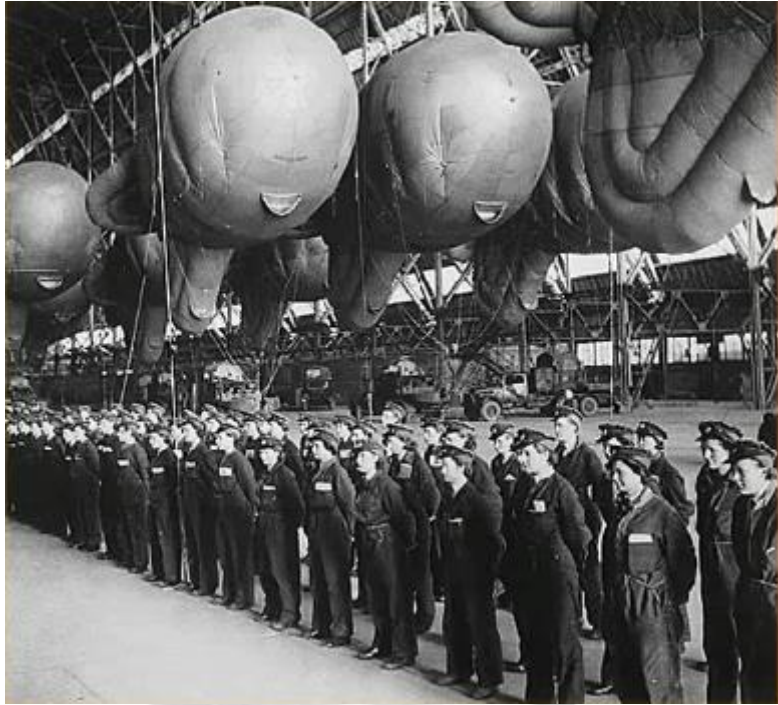
Excerpt from World War II Today: <http://ww2today.com/18-june-1944-coming-to-terms-with-the-bumble-bomb>

Records on digital archives that John or Ambrose transferred from St Brendans in 1924. But later on in the GB it states that when Ambrose visited in 1938, that Jack (John) was doing well in Birmingham.

Son of Constantine and Mary Adelaide Pedrazzini; husband of May Pedrazzini, of Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire







At 0410 hours, on 18 June 1944, a V1 bomb made a direct hit on his station hut.

The Operational Records Book for this states:

**" 18/06/44 at 04.10**

**901 Squadron H.Q. demolished by enemy aerial action.** 863491 T/Cpl Dodds, P., 840009 T/Cpl Eldridge E., 840084 Leading Aircraftman Gent, E.S.B., were killed whilst on duty.

355294 T/W/O Waterman, E.T., in the performance of his duty was seriously injured.

2 W.A.A.F. Corporals and 1 Leading Aircraftwoman were injured, also 1 R.A.F. Corporal and 1 Aircraftman."

*(It is to be presumed that the injured Corporal mentioned above was Henry Sydenham.)*

Percy Dodds was age 32, the son of Benjamin and Jessie Dodds, of Portsmouth; husband of Mabel Amy Dodds, of Southsea.

Ernest Robert Eldridge was age 45, the son of Robert and Eliza Eldridge; husband of Adelaide Esther Eldridge, of Welling, Kent.



Ernest Sidney Burrup Gent was age 32, the son of Alfred Ernest and Maude Gent; husband of Leiber Carrie Maude Gent, of Streatham, London.

Frederick Thomas Waterman was age 40 died from wounds two days later and was the son of Thomas Christopher and Louisa Waterman; husband of Marguerite Annie Waterman, of Fareham.

The O.R.B. does not mention it but the death occurred on the same day of 847696 Sergeant John Constantine Pedrazzini, age 37. He had left his home at 70 Fairwater Grove, Cardiff and embarked at Southampton on 27th April 1929 on the S.S. Arabic bound for Halifax, as a 3rd Class passenger giving his occupation as "Salesman" and intending to live permanently in Canada.

He returned to 28 Edwards Terrace, Cardiff, via Liverpool on 1st November 1931, as a 3rd Class passenger on S.S. Athenia, he had previously been in Montreal, Canada, occupation given as "Salesman" but returned to live permanently in Wales where he had been born. He joined the R.A.F. 901 Squadron and was killed presumably in the same raid, he was the son of Constantine and Mary Adelaide Pedrazzini; husband of May Pedrazzini, of Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

# Geoffrey Peter PIKE

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1915	<b>Place of Birth</b>	
<b>Class of</b>	1932 BROWNLOW TBC	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Aircraft Europe Star
<b>Date of Death</b>	3 MARCH 1941	<b>Place of Death</b>	Shot down over Brest
<b>Age at Death</b>	26	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Runnymede Panel 50
<b>Regiment</b>	115 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	902481
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Sergeant
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Patrick E Pike		
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Paul Kemp



**Gossip Bowl July 1941:** *Geoffrey Pike who had been listed as missing early in March last (1941) has been definitely stated to have lost his life at that time. He has been engaged on a bombing expedition over Brest and on the return journey was in wireless connection with his base but failed to reach land. An observer corps had seen a plane dive into the sea at a time which proved to be about half an hour after the wireless message; a launch was sent out but no trace could be found. It is assumed that as his machine was observed at a considerable distance from his headquarters it must have been damaged by gun fire and he was making for the nearest land.*

*Geoffrey had left Prior Park in July 1932 and had passed School Certificate the previous year. He was a member of the Council of the Sodality, was in the College XV 1931-1932, was a good student, a pleasant companion and always ready to take his part in any sporting expedition that was afoot. It is a very great satisfaction to us and a great source of consolation to his family that he had always lived up to his religion – this is the only thing that brings permanent content in life, and is the only thing that matters at death. May he rest in peace.*

The German cruiser Admiral Hipper in dry dock at Brest in February 1941 (Photo taken by PO J D Chandler of No.1 PRU RAF).



She was the target for the raid on Brest by 54 aircraft of Bomber Command among them Wellington R3279 flown by Sgt/P G P Pike. She had arrived at Brest on 15 February 1941 after commerce raiding operations in the Atlantic and the RAF were determined that she should not leave. However she slipped out of Brest on 15 March and returned to Germany unnoticed.

From CWGC: Sergeant Pike, 902481 died on 03/03/1941, age 26. He was RAF Volunteer Reserve with 115 Squadron and is commemorated at the

Runnymede memorial. Son of Lt Col Cuthbert Joseph Pike CBE, DL and Dorothy Margaret Pike of Hook, Hampshire.

Pike is also commemorated on the village war memorial at Hook in Hampshire.



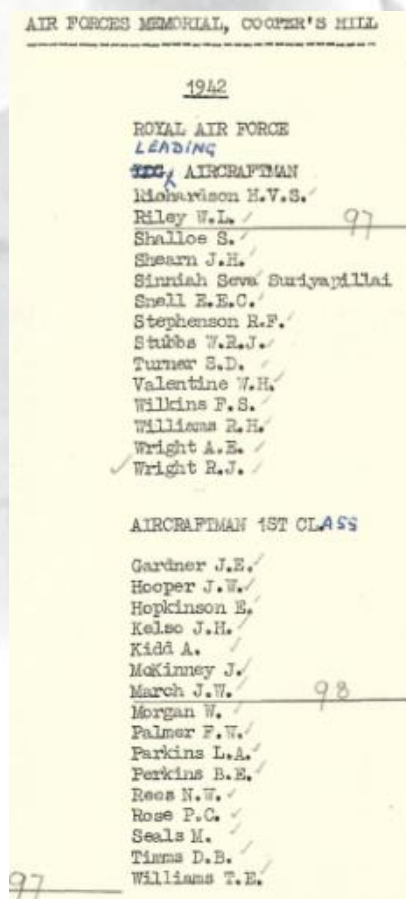
From Forces War Records:

<b>Information:</b>	SON OF LT.-COL. CUTHBERT JOSEPH PIKE, C.B.E., D.L., AND DOROTHY MARGARET PIKE, OF HOOK, BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE.
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Runnymede Memorial



# Peter Cecil ROSE

<b>Date of Birth</b>	22 MAR 1922	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Dorchester
<b>Class of</b>	1939 CLIFFORD	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Air crew Europe Star
<b>Date of Death</b>	26 JUNE 1942	<b>Place of Death</b>	Airplane collision over Lough Stranford
<b>Age at Death</b>	20	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Runnymede Panel 98
<b>Regiment</b>	808 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	1199495
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Aircraftsman 1 <sup>st</sup> Class
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	George H, Class of 1929		
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl July 1942:** Last February Bill Lundon called to see us. He gave the boys an interesting talk about life in the R.A.F. About the same time Peter Rose, R.A.F., visited us also. Both have since made the supreme sacrifice. R.I.P. They have had our prayers, and we also extend our deepest sympathy to their bereaved ones.

Since writing about Peter Rose, R.I.P., a letter has come from his dear mother. It is of a personal character. She enclosed a picture from Peter's Prayer Book. This little print he received in St. Peter's during March 1936.

**Gossip Bowl July 1942:** Born at Dorchester on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1922, Peter Cecil Rose was the second son of Mr and Mrs G S Rose, who business premises – The Dorset Press – are in that town. For a few years Peter attended the local Grammar School and at the age of thirteen passed in September 1935 to Prior Park where his elder brother Captain George H Rose, RA had been a few years previously. He took his part in games and sports and developed into a good Rugby player, but never to the neglect of his studies. During his holidays he used to play with the West Dorset Rugby Club, of which his brother was a member. He left school in July 1939. Shortly afterwards he became a member of the Weymouth Sailing Club and became the owner of a Falcon in which he won his second race.

In order to equip himself to take his part in his father's business he entered the London School of Printing, but owing to the outbreak of war the course was cancelled and he was shortly afterwards enrolled in the RAF, but was not called up till December 1940. He had his last home leave in March 1942 and in June lost his life as a member of a crew in a non-operational flight.

His Wing Commander has written of him: "He was a type we can ill spare. He was popular among his comrades and his loss is felt by all."

His character is well summed up in the Dorset county Chronicle: "Noteworthy traits in his character were courtesy and consideration for others. He was highly esteemed by all with whom he was associated.... Hosts of friends lament the loss of a young life so full of promise." May he rest in peace.

From CWGC: Aircraftman 1<sup>st</sup> Class 1199495. Died on 26/06/1942 and commemorated in the Runnymede memorial. He was in the RAF Volunteer Reserve with the 808 Squadron.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Fate:</b>	Lough Stranford
<b>Incident Details:</b>	Death on war service presumed. Missing when Fulmar X8801 collided with another Fulmar X8804 whilst carrying out section attacks and dived into Stranford Lough. Four killed.
<b>Command:</b>	Fleet Air Arm
<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Fulmar
<b>Aircraft Serial:</b>	X8804
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Runnymede Memorial

# Bernard Thomas RYAN

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1906	<b>Place of Birth</b>	
<b>Class of</b>	1926	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	30 MAR 1944	<b>Place of Death</b>	Ship was torpedoed out of the water in Italy
<b>Age at Death</b>	38	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Portsmouth Naval Memorial
<b>Regiment</b>	HMS Laforey	<b>Service Number</b>	105569
<b>Service</b>	Royal Navy		writer
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Dennis J Ryan, Class of 1925	C B Ryan, Class of	
<b>Married</b>	Mary Theresa Ryan (nee Harvey)	<b>Children</b>	daughter
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Paul Kemp





**Gossip Bowl July 1945:** Bernard, brother of Lieut. C B Ryan RAPC and Denis who is serving in the REME, entered St Brendan's in 1921 and left Prior Park, July 1926. He was a promising and industrious student as well as a fine sportsman, always prominent in athletics, rugby and cricket. When he had passed the School Certificate an opening presented itself in the National Bank, and he at once accepted it. Later he was on the staff of the branch at James Street, Liverpool for a few years before he joined the Navy. He sailed the seas in the *Laforey* which was constantly in action along the Italian coast, sometimes fighting it out with the shore batteries, otherwise she was engaged in convoy duties; it was in that role that she met her end. Hit in a vital part she sank quickly, leaving few survivors. That was at the end of March 1944, when Bernard's family got word that he was "reported missing, assumed dead", and a month later they were informed he "was missing, assumed dead." His death was a sad loss as he left a wife and daughter. His life was a good one and he set a fine example of what a Catholic should be and so was well prepared for his death. A good death is the reward of a good life. May he rest in peace!

From CWGC: Bernard Thomas Ryan, service number P/MX 105569 served as a writer on the *HMS Laforey*. He is commemorated at the Portsmouth Naval memorial. Son of Thomas Ryan and Elizabeth Ryan (nee Bowen) and husband of Mary Theresa Ryan (nee Harvey) of Heswell Cheshire.

**Research Notes:** Normally he would have worked in the stores or the ship's office. At "action stations" he would have been in a damage control party or assigned to passing ammunition.

*HMS Laforey* was an L class destroyer leader ("leaders" were slightly bigger than other ships of their class and had command facilities to control a destroyer flotilla) built by Yarrow and launched in February 1941. She had an extremely active war, participating in the heaviest of the naval war in the Mediterranean.

In March 1944 she was still in the Mediterranean, supporting the landings at Anzio under the command of Captain H T "Beaky" Armstrong DSO, DSC RN- one of the Royal Navy's great destroyer captains and tacticians.

On 24 March she was deployed for night interception and anti-submarine patrols with *HMS Grenville* (Lt Cdr R Hill DSO RN). On 25 March they engaged a number of E-boats after picking them up on their radar. *Laforey* then returned to Naples. She deployed for another patrol off the west coast of Italy on 28 March and on 29 March she attacked the

German submarine *U-223* (Oberleutnant zur See Peter Gerlach pictured below)



which had been detected by HMS *Ulster* north of Palermo, in company with the destroyers *Tumult*, *tuscan*, *Urchin*, *Hambledon* and *Blencathra*. The search lasted until 30 March, when after sustaining several hours of depth charge attacks, *U-223* surfaced, and was then attacked by the destroyers with gunfire at a range of 1,500 yards (1,400 m). *U-223* fought back and was able to fire three torpedoes which struck *Laforey*. She sank quickly, resulting in the loss of most of her company, including her captain. There were only 65 survivors out of the 247 on board. *U-223* was sunk soon afterwards, and the survivors from *Laforey* and *U-223* were picked up by *Blencathra*, *Hambledon* and *Tumult*. The position of *Laforey*'s wreck is 38° 54'N, 14° 18'E. In the confusion *Laforey*'s survivors became mixed up with those from *U-223* in the water with the result that some of them had to go to some lengths to prove their "British-ness" when picked up.

The subsequent Board of Enquiry found that when *U-233* surfaced *Laforey*'s ship's company were not at "action stations" but still at "defence stations". This meant over half the crew were asleep or resting on their messdecks. This undoubtedly contributed to the high number of casualties and the crew's inability to save the ship. The Board also concluded that Armstrong's decision to illuminate *U-223* with the searchlight gave Gerlach a perfect aiming mark. The Commander in Chief Mediterranean accepted the Board's findings but decided not to proceed against *Laforey*'s senior survivor with court martial proceedings.

What had gone wrong? Armstrong was clearly not at his best. But then, he was probably mentally exhausted, having been in almost continuous combat since 1939. My hypothesis (Paul Kemp, Class of 1977) would be that when he heard *U-223* was coming up, he thought she was surfacing to surrender- he did not expect Gerlach to fight back.



After the pounding *U-223* had received it would have been reasonable to suppose that her crew were completely demoralised. But "Beaky" Armstrong was not a specialist anti-submarine warfare (ASW) officer. He was surface guns and torpedoes specialist. A specialist ASW officer from Western Approaches command would not have made the same mistake. He would have turned bows-on to the target (to minimise his profile) and then rammed it.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Information:</b>	SON OF THOMAS RYAN AND OF ELIZABETH RYAN (NEE BOWEN); HUSBAND OF MARY THERESA RYAN (NEE HARVEY), OF HESWALL, CHESHIRE.
<b>Rank:</b>	Writer
<b>Service Number:</b>	P/MX 105569
<b>Ship:</b>	<a href="#">HMS Laforey</a>
	<p><b>Hms Laforey during World War 2</b></p> <p><b>More information about HMS Laforey</b></p>

# William Anthony SHEIL

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1880	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Ireland
<b>Class of</b>	1898	<b>Medals</b>	CBE and DSO
<b>Campaign medals</b>			
<b>Date of Death</b>	29 APRIL 1945 CWGC or 6 MAY 1945 GB	<b>Place of Death</b>	Car went over a landmine in Bremmen
<b>Age at Death</b>	65	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Reichswald War Cemetery 61. D. 2
<b>Regiment</b>	Royal Artillery	<b>Service Number</b>	1141
<b>Service</b>	Army		Brigadier- General
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>	yes	<b>Children</b>	3
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	



**Gossip Bowl July 1945:** *BRIGADIER-GENERAL W. A. SHEIL. Brigadier-General William A. Sheil, C.B.E., D.S.O., whose death at the age of 65 (INCONSISTENT WITH CWGC) occurred on the 6th May, 1945 (INCONSISTENT WITH CWGC), was a well-known breeder of racehorses and had many successes in steeplechasing events.*



*A son of the late Mr. Leonard Sheil, Greenmount, Clonsilla, Dublin, he was educated at Prior Park and adopted a military career. He is survived by his wife and three children. A brother, the Rev. Leonard Sheil, S.J., is at present in Sligo.*

The following details are on the Army Roll of Honour 1939-45.

DEATH AT BRANCH - Other Corp  
REGIMENT/CORP - Staff, (Colonels & above), except:  
RAMC,RAOC,REME & RAPC  
BRANCH AT 1/9/39 - Royal Artillery  
REGIMENT/CORP - Royal Artillery  
SURNAME - Sheil  
CHRISTIAN NAME - William  
INITIALS - W.A. CBE, DSO & bar  
RANK - Brigadier  
NUMBER -  
BORN - EIRE  
RESIDENCE - Wiltshire  
DATE DIED - 29/4/45  
THEATRE OF WAR - Western Europe Campaign, 1944-45.  
Thurs 21 Oct 1943  
Bar to D.S.O.  
Major(temp Lt - Col) William Anthony Sheil D.S.O. (1141)  
Royal Regiment of Artillery (res of OFF)  
(Consilla, Co Dublin)  
He was also a jockey and race horse owner, who won the RA Gold cup at Sandown in 1932, onboard his own horse Pay Day  
The name of these barracks is mis-spelled on this website. The base of 51st (Highland) [Infantry Division](#) from 1945 - 46 was named after Brigadier William Anthony (Jerry) **Sheil**, C.B.E., D.S.O and Bar, R.A.

An Irishman from Dublin, he joined the Army via the R.M.A., Woolwich in 1915, and served in France from April, 1918. After the war, he became Adjutant of the Army School of Equitation and retired in 1935, but rejoined in 1939. He was in command of the 10th Field Regiment, R. A., in France in 1940, and was evacuated from Dunkirk. He then trained and fought with 128th Field Regiment, 51st. Division, from El Alamein (where he was awarded his first D.S.O.) to Sicily (where he was awarded the bar to his D.S.O.). Returning to Britain, he was appointed C.R.A., and went to France with the Division in June, 1944. The 51st Division fought through France, Holland and Belgium into Germany. He was appointed C.B.E. in March, 1945.

[On 29th April, just nine days before the end of the war in Europe, he](#)

attended a conference at Reesum, a village east of Bremen. On the way back he changed places with his driver, who was tired. The jeep went over a mine and, while his driver escaped with minor injuries, Brig. Sheil was killed. He is buried in the Reichswald War Cemetery.

Belville

You're right. It was 127 Field Regiment, R.A., who occupied the barracks at Verden first. I have found a letter in the Sheil archives which explains the naming of the barracks. It is by Leonard Aitkenhead to Jerry Sheil's daughter, Helen Nunn, in August, 1982:

*"I am able to give you the answer as to the naming of the barracks quite simply and within my own knowledge for at the time I was D.A.A. and Q.M.G. at H.Q.R.A. 51st Division. For the occupation role the Division was spread over a fairly large tract of land to the south of Bremen. H.Q.R.A. with its own five Regiments and two extra Regiments under command, plus a mass of army troops in support, occupied a narrow but elongated zone stretching from Rotenburg to the East to Diepholz to the West. 127 Field Regiment were in Verden, which had been a German garrison town. They were, therefore, put into barracks and were given the new barracks built in Hitler's time (the older barracks were again occupied by the German army). 127th were our only unit in barracks.*

*After we were all settled in, 21st Army Group made a policy decision that the barracks could be given a name, if approved. We had the one barracks and thought it appropriate that they should be named after your father, in memory of him. We put up a case and it was quickly approved. The barracks were accordingly named Sheil Barracks while 127th were still occupying them. As the division was put into "suspended animation" about April/May 1946, I would think the barracks were named around the Autumn of 1945."*

This comes from a book of photographs, newspaper cuttings and transcribed letters made up by his grand-daughter for the use of the officers at Verden, so that they would know why the barracks were so named. There was also a photograph of Jerry Sheil in the hall of the Officers' Mess, which was returned to the family, with the book, when the barracks closed.

# Robert William SLOAN

<b>Date of Birth</b>	27 NOV 1914	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Broken Hill, Australia
<b>Class of</b>	1932 CLIFFORD	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign Medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	17 JAN 1941	<b>Place of Death</b>	Accident during flight practice
<b>Age at Death</b>	26	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Upavon Cemetery Row F, Grave 2
<b>Regiment</b>		<b>Service Number</b>	89812
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Pilot Officer
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	John Sloan, Class of 1936		
<b>Married</b>	Barbara Florence Sloan nee Fisher	<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	





### **Gossip Bowl Dec 1940: POSTSCRIPT**

*Since going to press we have learnt with deep regret of the deaths of Rt. Rev. Abbot Hurley, O.S.B. (O.P.P. —), and Flying Officers Maurice Lee and Robert Sloan. May they rest in peace. Memoirs will appear in the next number of the Magazine.*

### **MARRIAGES.**

*Surgeon-Lieut. Terence Barwell in August. He and his wife called at Prior Park on their honeymoon.*

*Pilot Officer Robert Sloan to Miss Barbara Fisher of Clifton, Bristol, in December.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1941:** *A dweller in many lands but a Britisher all the time Robert W Sloan was born at Broken Hill, the famous Australian mining town – his father was a mining engineer – and spent there the early years of his life to the age of ten and no doubt owed much of his fine physique to that sunny land.*

*He came to London in June 1924 and some weeks later left with his parents for Italy. He then spent three years at Cave del Presil, an historic mining town in the Corinthian Alps close to the borders of Austria and Jugoslavia. He attended school there and became proficient in German and Italian, the languages of the district. Among the snow and ice of these mountains he became an expert with ski and skate, receiving instruction in the former from the ski experts of the Italian Alpini; and during the summer months scaled most of the highest peaks of the district.*

*But his education called for attention. He and his brother John were brought to England by their father and mother, and Bob was placed at Prior Park in September 1927, but John did not enter the College till three years later. Bob used to spend his holidays in Italy so he became an experienced traveller before his school days ended; in fact he crossed the Channel quite forty times in all. The broken nature of his schooling was a decided barrier in his studies and prevented him from attaining the success his talents deserved. As might be expected from a well developed lad he was keen on sports and games, and took off prizes in various athletic items; in Rugger he was outstanding and in his final year was in the School 1<sup>st</sup> XV. His position as Treasurer of the College Radio Society was a very active and keen one giving successful lectures and demonstrations on quite an ambitious level.*

*Bob was a great favourite. His keenness, his evenness of temper, his cheery manner, and his eternal readiness for fun, excitement and school-boy plots and plans made him beloved by his companions, who felt that he was a leader amongst them – a leader with brains and good sense.*



*He left the College in December 1932 and had a holiday in Italy. While there he visited Rome and had the happiness of being received in audience by the late Pope Pius XI. Returning to London at the end of the year 1933 he attended the London College of Pharmacy and towards the end of the following year came to Bristol to take up a position with Messrs. Buxton and Co of Queen's Row, in order to learn the practical side of the Chemist business. In May 1935 he was concerned in the purchase of the business which he managed until he joined up with the RAF. He did considerable flying with the civil Air Guard during 1938 and in July 1939 was selected for a short service Commission in the RAF. This however, was cancelled at the outbreak of war and he joined up with the RAF VR and trained in various camps in England and Scotland during 1940, receiving his Commission as Pilot Officer in December. He came home on seven days leave at Christmas and was married on Boxing Day, and left some days later to take up a Flying Instructor's course but lost his life on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1941. The accident occurred during low flying practice, the plane being pulled over a belt of trees crashed into the hill on the other side. The plane was in charge of a Canadian Pilot Officer who had 1700 flying hours to his credit having flown civil planes all over Canada before the war. Since both officers lost their lives no further light could be thrown on the cause of the accident.*

*His being chosen for training as a Flying Instructor showed his power of leadership was recognised. The promise of boyhood was fulfilled elsewhere also for we find him managing the tour to Scotland of the British Bombers Ice Hockey Club during 1938 – a tour intended originally for Switzerland but cancelled. He was as early as 1937 a most popular member of the Clifton Club of whose 1<sup>st</sup> XV pack he was an outstanding member, possessing splendid physique and skill. Though not a member of Bristol University he toured with the Rugby team more than once; he was also a member of Clifton Rowing Club. He was well fitted bodily and temperamentally to share in any game and to lead when leading was needful.*

*As an Old Prior Parker, and of course a member of the Association – even a member of its committee – he was prominent in the annual Rugby matches, Old Boys vs School, and keen on everything that concerned the good of the College or the benefit of the Association. The members of the Committee at their last meeting expressed their very great regret at the accident which deprived the Association of so prominent, loyal and useful a member.*

*Bob Sloan is a name not likely to be soon forgotten at his school, by the Old Boys or by those who were privileged to be called his friends. To his*

*parents the remembrance of so good a son, so efficient in business, so loving at home and so loved by the many who knew him – all these must be an abundant consolation and a fruitful source of happy memories. They can feel that a great volume of prayer has been offered for the repose of his soul, and that many a time again will be repeated the Church's hallowed but simple prayer for the dead – “May he rest in peace.”*

From CWGC: Pilot Officer 89812 from RAF volunteer Reserves is buried in Upavon Cemetery. Son of Samuel Hugh and Catherine Ann Sloan of Clifton Bristol. Husband of Barbara Florence Sloan of Clifton. Died on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1941.

**PRIOR PARK 1st XV., 1931.**



A. W. Kelly	W. B. Canning	G. P. Pike	N. A. White	R. W. Sloan	C. F. Howell	R. J. Osborne
I. H. Kendall	T. E. Fogarty	P. J. Leahy (Capt)	D. A. Ryan (Vice-Capt)	A. J. Fonseca	S. P. Clements	
	P. T. McCarthy			T. G. Hughes		



**Information:**

SON OF SAMUEL HUGH AND CATHERINE ANN SLOAN, OF CLIFTON, BRISTOL; HUSBAND OF BARBARA FLORENCE SLOAN, OF CLIFTON.

**Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve during World War 2**

**More information about Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**

Formed: 1936

The RAFVR was formed in July 1936 to provide individuals to supplement the Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) which had been formed in 1925 by the local Territorial Associations. The AAF was organised on a Squadron basis, with local recruitment similar to the Territorial Army Regiments. Initially the RAFVR was composed of civilians recruited from the neighbourhoods of Reserve Flying Schools, which were run by civilian contractors who largely employed as instructors members of the Reserve of Air Force Officers (RAFO), who had previously completed a four year short service commission as pilots in the RAF. Navigation instructors were mainly former master mariners without any air experience. Recruits were confined to men of between 18 and 25 years of age who had been accepted for part time training as Pilots, Observers and Wireless Operators. The object was to provide a reserve of aircrew for use in the event of war. By September 1939, the RAFVR comprised 6,646 Pilots, 1,625 Observers and 1,946 Wireless Operators

When war broke out in 1939 the Air Ministry employed the RAFVR as the principal means for aircrew entry to serve with the RAF. A civilian volunteer on being accepted for aircrew training took an oath of allegiance ('attestation') and was then inducted into the RAFVR. Normally he returned to his civilian job for several months until he was called up for aircrew training. During this waiting period he could wear a silver RAFVR lapel badge to indicate his status.

By the end of 1941 more than half of Bomber Command aircrew were members of the RAFVR. Most of the pre-war pilot and observer NCO aircrew had been commissioned and the surviving regular officers and members of the RAFO filled the posts of flight and squadron commanders. Eventually of the "RAF" aircrew in the Command

probably more than 95% were serving members of the RAFVR.

During 1943, the decision was taken by the Air Ministry to raise an order for members of the RAFVR to remove the brass and cloth 'VR's worn on the collars and shoulders of officers and other ranks (respectively), as these were viewed as being divisive. No similar order was raised for members of the Auxiliary Air Force, who retained their 'A's on uniforms at that time.





# Robert Dennis SULLIVAN

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1911	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Terenure, Co Dublin.
<b>Class of</b>	1932	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	Aircrew Europe Star
<b>Date of Death</b>	20 FEB 1944	<b>Place of Death</b>	Bombing raid of Berlin
<b>Age at Death</b>	33	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Runnymede memorial. Panel 209
<b>Regiment</b>	77 Squadron	<b>Service Number</b>	138898
<b>Service</b>	RAFVR		Flight Officer
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			Check Edmund Forde – died days apart on same Berlin bombings
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	

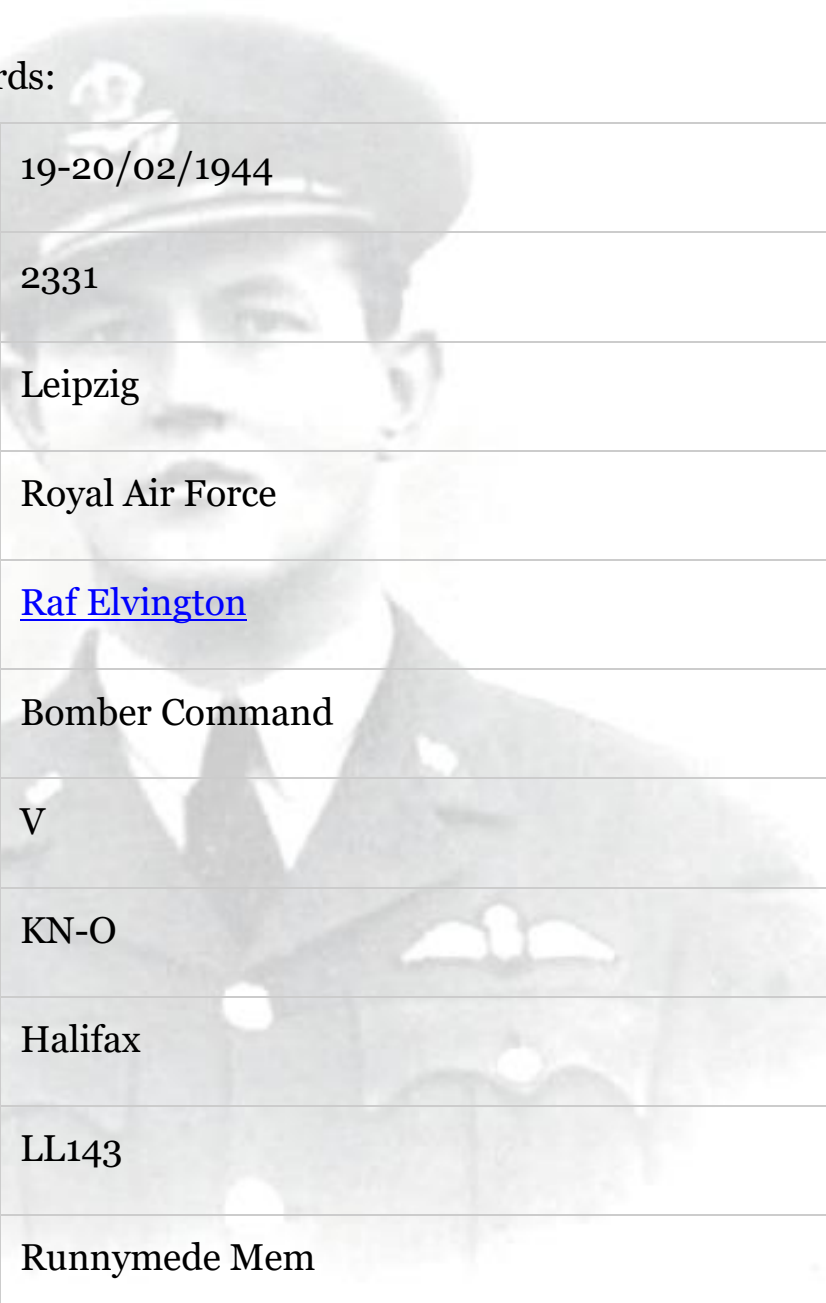


***Gossip Bowl July 1944:*** Flight Officer Bob Sullivan has been posted as missing after a bombing raid in Berlin.

From CWGC: Flying Officer 138898 died on 20/02/1944 was in RAF Volunteer Reserves with 77 Squadron and is now commemorated at Runnymede memorial.

Son of Sergeant A M Sullivan QC and Helen Kerly Sullivan of Terenure, Co Dublin.

From Forces War Records:



<b>Incident Date:</b>	19-20/02/1944
<b>Incident Time:</b>	2331
<b>Duty Location:</b>	Leipzig
<b>Service:</b>	Royal Air Force
<b>Station:</b>	<a href="#">Raf Elvington</a>
<b>Command:</b>	Bomber Command
<b>Aircraft Mark:</b>	V
<b>Aircraft Code:</b>	KN-O
<b>Aircraft Type:</b>	Halifax
<b>Aircraft Serial:</b>	LL143
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Runnymede Mem

**Raf Elvington during World War 2**

**More information about RAF Elvington**

Formed: 1940

Disbanded: 1992

The base was originally a grass airfield within No. 4 Group. In the early 1940s the airfield was entirely reconstructed with three hardened runways replacing the grass. The base was re-opened in October 1942 as a station for 77 Squadron RAF and along with RAF Melbourne and RAF Pocklington was known as "42 Base". The squadron had a strength of approximately 20 aircraft and initially used the twin engined Armstrong Whitworth Whitley medium bomber although this was quickly replaced by the Handley Page Halifax four engined heavy bomber which was being introduced. 77 Squadron suffered heavy losses during its time at Elvington with over 500 aircrew killed, missing or taken prisoner and almost 80 Halifaxes lost as it played a major part in the Battle of the Ruhr and the bombing of Berlin.

In May 1944 77 Squadron re-located to the newly opened RAF Full Sutton and was replaced at Elvington by two French squadrons, numbers 346 "Guyenne" and 347 "Tunisie" who both played a leading part in the bombing of Germany. Elvington was the only airfield in the United Kingdom used by the remainder of the Free French Forces, they also flew Handley Page Halifax heavy bombers until they moved to Bordeaux in October 1945 where they became the basis for the new air force of liberated France. In September 1957 a memorial was unveiled in Elvington village dedicated to the two French squadrons. After the war the 400-acre (1.6 km<sup>2</sup>) airfield was transferred to 40 Group Maintenance Command until 1952 when it was greatly enlarged and extended for use by the United States Air Force.

The United States Air Force built a new 3,094 m (10,152 ft) runway, which was the longest in the north of England, and a huge 19.8 hectare (49 acre) rectangular hardstanding apron as well as a new control tower to turn Elvington into a "Basic Operation Platform" which would have operated as a Strategic Air Command (SAC) dispersal airfield. After spending £4 million the airfield never became operational as a SAC base and was abandoned by the US Air Force in 1958. In the early 1960s the Blackburn Aircraft Company, now part of British Aerospace used the runway for test flights of the Blackburn Buccaneer. Elvington retained its status as an RAF relief landing ground and was used by the

RAF flying training schools at RAF Church Fenton and RAF Linton-on-Ouse until the airfield was finally closed in March 1992.

### ***Battle of Berlin. November 1943 to March 1944***

From 77 Squadron History <https://77squadron.org.uk/history/77-squadron-history-1937-1945/>:

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1943 Air Marshal Arthur Harris wrote to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, saying that

“We can wreck Berlin from end to end if the U.S.A.A.F. will come in on it. It will cost between 400-500 aircraft. It will cost Germany the war.”  
*[quoted in the official history v.ii, page 190].*

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 1943 the Battle of Berlin commenced, although for tactical reasons many other targets were included, the period is usually referred to by this name.

During the battle 16 major main force raids were mounted against Berlin and 16 against other targets, in addition numerous small diversionary raids were also carried out. 77 Squadron participated in five of the main force raids against Berlin.

Whilst Harris had indicated to Churchill that the USAAF should participate, this was not in fact a feasible proposition. The 8AAF was a ‘daylight’ force, the various squadrons flying in formation to form a vast aerial armada. This was an essential part of the strategy against fighter aircraft, and it could only take place in daylight. Before setting forth from East Anglia up to two hours often elapsed since take-off before the armada set off for Germany. This time coupled with the small window of opportunity arising from the reduced hours of daylight during winter made the carrying out of 8AAF raids on Berlin was virtually impracticable. In addition of course formation flying was often impossible during winter due to heavy cloud. It was not until the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1944 that 8AAF escorted by long range fighters managed an attack on Berlin.



However they did carry out raids on many other less distant targets during this period.

During the “battle” Halifax II and V aircraft, with which the Squadron was equipped, suffered a greater loss rate than any other aircraft type.

According to data in the official history, “*The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany, 1939-1945* “, in December 1943, January 1944 and February 1944 within the whole command 149 aircraft of these types were lost on 1526 sorties, an overall loss rate of 9.8%. Had aircrews continued operating Halifaxes at this loss rate it is estimated that only one aircrew in 22 would have completed a tour of 30 operations.

During the three months December 1943, January and February 1944 the squadron carried out 14 raids involving 143 sorties but lost 19 aircraft on operations and 1 in an accident, giving the terrible overall loss rate of 13.3%. Casualties amounted to 103 aircrew killed or missing believed dead and 35 taken prisoners of war, one evaded capture, and 7 were killed in an accident. The Squadron strength dropped to almost half its establishment and replacements were not coming in fast enough from the Heavy Conversion Units to rebuild it to strength.

Whilst during January and February 1944 the squadron only took part in five raids on German targets the losses incurred were particularly severe.

With a total of 16 aircraft missing on these five consecutive raids the average loss rate for the squadron was 20.7%. The estimated probability of a crew participating in all five raids and surviving them was only 31%, that is about 1 in 3. In these five raids the squadron’s casualties were 87 aircrew killed and 26 taken POW, a total of 113.

Following the raid on Leipzig ACM Sir Arthur Harris withdrew Halifax II and V aircraft from operations against German targets, and 77 squadron was no longer participating in the Battle of Berlin.

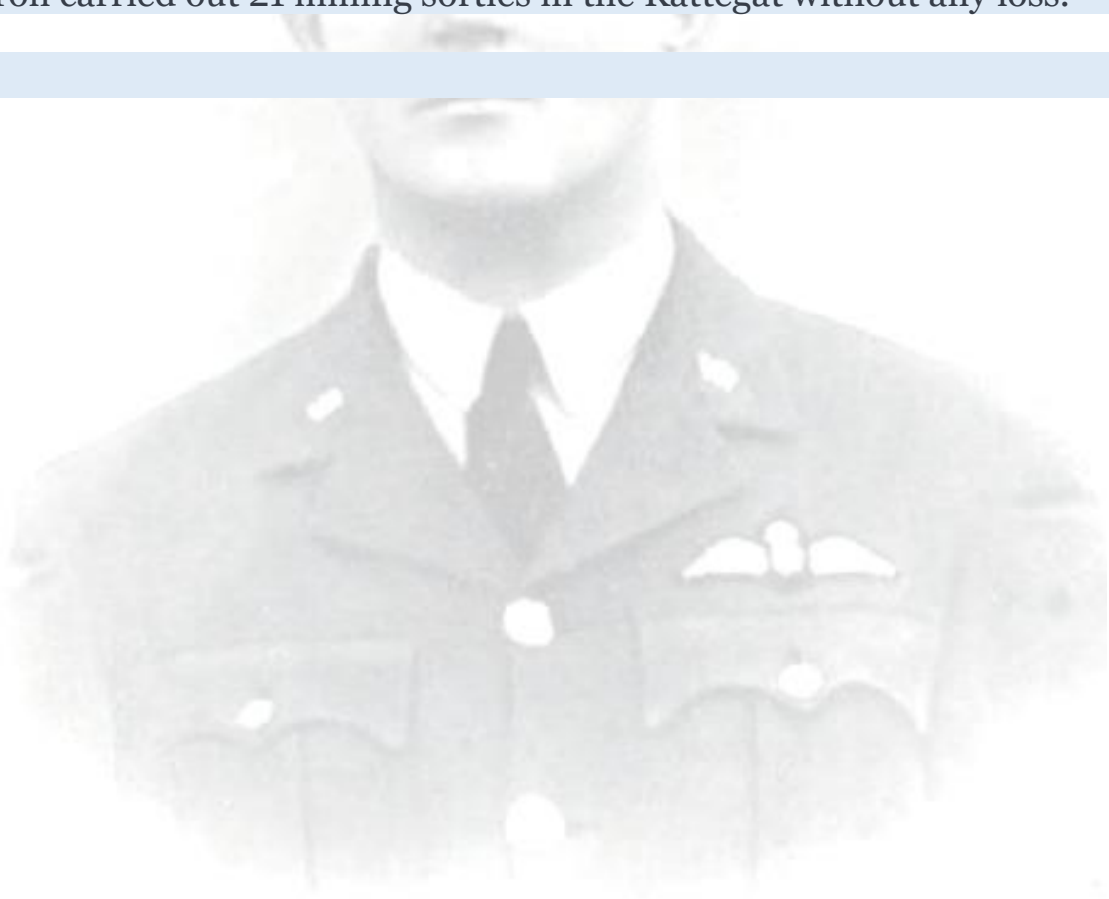
The effects of bombing, on both German war production and civilian morale, was slow but cumulative. However the results were rarely measurable by intelligence with confidence and aircrew had to frequently return to targets which in the first instance had seemed demolished or at least devastated. Generally aircrew looked towards completing their tour of 30 operations rather than the imminent surrender of Germany. The pre-war Douhet concept of mass bombing leading to devastation, followed

by unconditional surrender, never materialised either after the Battle of Britain, or later in Operation Pointblank.

During Operation Pointblank an increase in strength and improvement in technology in the Luftwaffe fighter arm occurred in spite of attacks on the German aviation industry, this led to higher allied losses than originally expected. However overall this advantage had only been achieved by Germany considerably reducing its production of bomber aircraft, and its ability to retaliate by bombing targets in the United Kingdom.

Nevertheless although Operation Pointblank did not achieve the unconditional surrender of Germany to the Allies, which was predicted by Air Marshal Harris, it unquestionably substantially weakened Germany and was considered by many, including Field Marshal Kesselring, to be the main factor which contributed to victory by the Allies by May 1945.

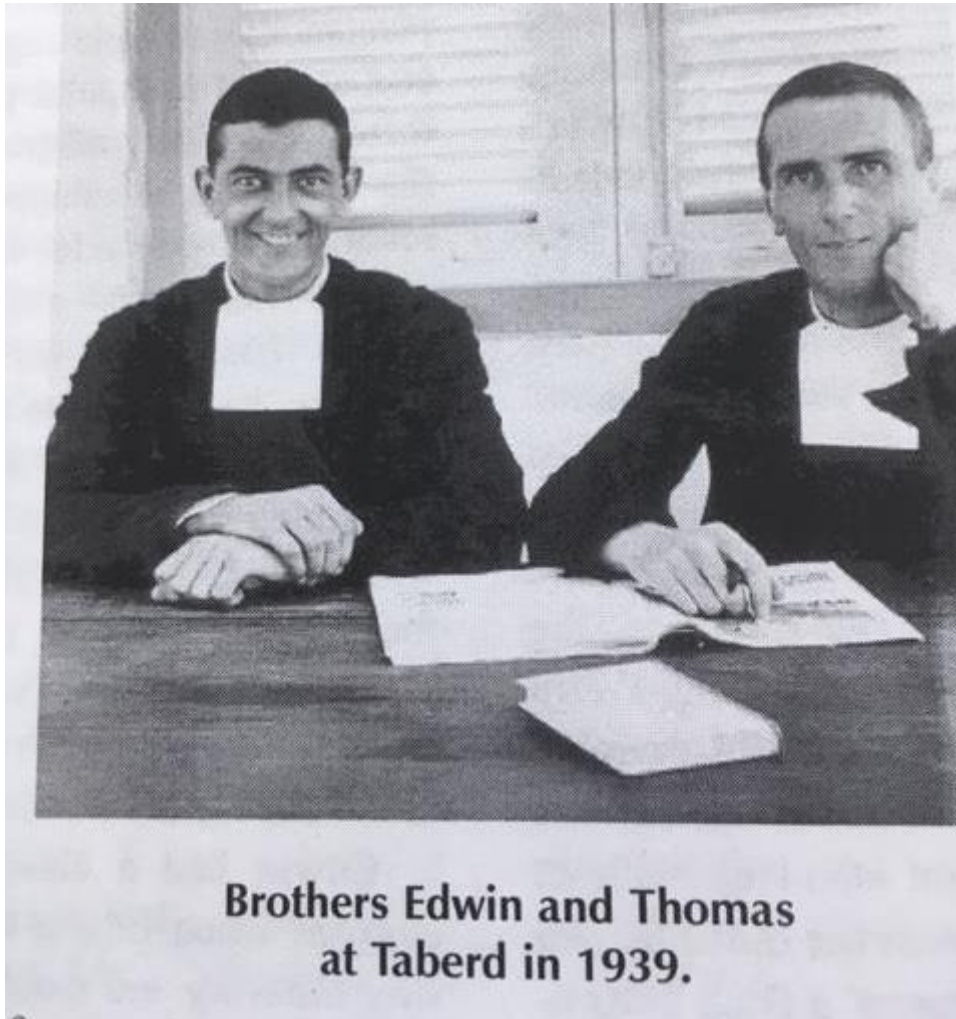
After being taken off German targets on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of February the squadron carried out 21 mining sorties in the Kattegat without any loss.



# George Richard TODD

<b>Date of Birth</b>	23 APRIL 1912	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Cardiff
<b>Class of</b>	1930	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Date of Death</b>	01 JULY 1945	<b>Place of Death</b>	Executed by Japanese as POW
<b>Age at Death</b>	32	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Hue, Vietnam
<b>Regiment</b>		<b>Service Number</b>	
<b>Service</b>	De La Salle brother		Known as Brother Thomas More
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Thomas Francis "Frank", Class of 1925	Edward "Sparks", Class of 1924	
<b>Married</b>	No	<b>Children</b>	No
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Martin Milling (nephew) and Peter Wood, St Joseph's College, London





**Gossip Bowl Dec 1936:** *We offer our sincerest sympathies to Frank, Eddie and Dick Todd on the death, as a result of a motor accident, of their brother Ambrose (R.I.P.). He was a beloved character, was a scholar of Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he was reading for a Medical degree. He was a regular member of this year's Cambridge Golf Team.*

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1937:** *Dick Todd made his Perpetual Profession in the De la Salle Order at Dover on October 7th last. Next month he proceeds to Shanghai to be one of the pioneers of a new foundation in that city.*

*Eddie Todd, also of the De la Salle Order, is on the teaching staff at St. John's College, Southsea*

**Gossip Bowl July 1938:** *Brother Thomas More (Dick Todd) writes from his new missionary base—Maison de la Salle, Nhatrang, Annam, French Indo-China. "Nhatrang is a wonderful place. The climate is a perpetual English August, brightened up by a constant and refreshing breeze both day and night. We are surrounded by jungle and*



mountains— the haunts of wild boars, tigers and wild deer. I am staying in the Scholasticate here and giving daily English lessons to two groups of Annamite monks who are very enthusiastic in the study of English. I am waiting to push on to Zi-Ka-Wei and in the meantime working up the Chinese language to fit me for my future mission. I sleep like a log on a bed of the same material and the absence of a mattress is the cause of the lack of insomnia.

Indo-China is what a French veteran called (with pardonable tautology) *Un paradis terrestre sur terre*. There is only Prior Park that can for beauty vie with it." Of Prior Park the poet writes :—

" Beauty still is here :

States fall, arts fade, but nature doth not die."

We shall print an interesting Article by Brother Thomas in next issue.

### **Gossip Bowl Dec 1938: NHATRANG PISCATORIAL**

If you say " Knee-at-trong " as it looks in English, with the normal speed and accent of " exactly " you will say " Nhatrang " as well as any native. And if you have a Times or Harms-worth Atlas, with an index of some half a million names in it, you are well on the way to finding Nha-Trang in two pieces. The search should end in Annam, on the coast of the China Sea, about half way between Saigon and Hue\ Nhatrang is the chief town in the province of Khan Hoa. There may be five thousand inhabitants and there may be three times as many. Nobody knows. The Annamites are prolific; their houses can go up and down like mushrooms, and they all fit in like books in an ill-kept bookcase. The population is mainly Annamite, but generally cosmopolitan.

Cochin Chinamen and Tonkinese, Cambodians and Indo-Chinese nomads come and go just as the trade winds bring them. The number of Europeans alone can be given with some degree of certainty. There are certainly some twenty now in residence.

The interests of the town are almost as various, and could feed a nib of almost any quality. The magnetic nature would give his " thrill of exaltation " to a Pater, and the mountains and the jungle win a Kipling. Any journalist could make a leader of the tiger that ate a woodman here a week ago, or the deer that ate our papaws up last night. The merest man might make his quips quite quotable, and I must ride my pen upon the snaffle when it gets loose among the Nhatrang fish.

There are, indeed, plenty of them. The oceanographic museum on the promontory at the other end of the bay displays a living collection of great variety—all caught by the Nhatrang fishermen. They bring hi specimens of all shapes and sizes between the dragon-fish and the

*nasty stinging medusa, the deep sea shark and the common fishshop shrimp. And of almost every colour also. Two weeks ago they had a shoal of blue ones no bigger than a normal British beetle, and bright as any azure hi the sky. A tank near by contained two fishy football teams with red and white and black and yellow jerseys. One can see there, too, a fine display of shell-fish, sea-shells and countless coloured corals.*

*All these are picked up, caught or collected within the region of the Nhatrang bay. It is a fairly large inlet which must be five miles wide at least, though it seems but half that distance. There are numerous islands, generally uninhabited. On the mainland there is no better " quoin of vantage " for fishing than our promontory, as the typhoon signal placed here seems to testify. But one must go down to the beach to examine the shipping.*

*The ordinary fishing junks are flat-bottomed craft of very hard wood, which the Annamites build themselves upon the shore. In spite of the almost primitive methods of construction the ships are a wonderful mixture of elegance and solidity, and their sailing speed could qualify for Cowes. The average size is from twelve to twenty feet, and broad hi proportion. The boats sail fairly low upon the water, but rise high at the prow to take the big waves headlong near the shore. One broad high sail of dry leaf matting is usually sufficient, but junks with a small one extra are not uncommon. The same material as that of which the sails are made covers the junk underneath, made waterproof by a coat of tarry varnish.*

*As the boats go off in the morning hi groups of two or three, a cloud of smoke from each reveals the rice pot, and preparations for a breezy breakfast. The N.E. monsoon sometimes blows so strongly that the imprudent fisherman is threatened with the disaster of the Nun's Priest's mariner, when " Ship and man both to the bottom wente." But that depends upon the days, and the Annamite fishermen are certainly clever sailors. I have seen as many as seventy-five junks together sweeping like swans upon the deep blue water with the glaring sun above in a bright blue sky. The warm monsoon was blowing them home like a hurricane; but the surface of the sea was hardly troubled. There is always a fine fresh breeze to enliven things, and the fishermen have rarely recourse to oars. They are quite familiar with the art of tacking. The same wind that takes the flotilla out brings it home again, with the never-failing haul of various fishes.*

*The night manoeuvres are even more malefic, at least as far as fishy feelings go. The same fires that serve to heat the rice pots are used*

*to lure the fishes to destruction. The junks get into a fighting line, each with the fire burning in the prow, and all the fishes that come near their fifty yard nets come into them. From time to time, especially during the "Tet," which is the month-long feast of the New Year, the Annamite fishermen let off noisy fireworks at all hours of the night and early morning. That warns the evil spirits off the waters. The market prices prove the methods successful. Apart from the oysters and other shellfish, which are almost given away, you may buy a fish as big as a cod for twopence. A small slice can season an Annamite's rice for a hearty meal, and the bit dried in the sun upon the roadside has an appetizing value unsuspected. A dainty piece of shark's fin is not unusual, though you'd have to go to Binh Dinh for a bird's nest. Only yesterday a fisherwoman sold us a shark's jaws she was carving—as big when open as the seat of a chair. The men had caught two in the afternoon, but as they were expensive we took one only. It cost us just five cents, which means a halfpenny.*

*The Nha Trang sharks have due respect for bathers—the three feet babies only come out shorewards. And the Nha Trang beaches need not fish for compliments. At Hue" last year, in the poetic capital, they were proclaimed the finest of the country. The climate too is worth its reputation—the very best in Annam for the Annamites. What's more, the welcome here will be warm as the waters for any old Prior Park man on the China way.*

*But no doubt you all have other fish to fry.*

*REV. BR. THOMAS MORE (Dick Todd).*

*Gossip Bowl July 1940: HUE, SPRING CITY*

*Tourists are told that there are three places in Indo-China they must not fail to visit, under penalty of being classified as mere travellers, Hue, the Bay of Along, and Angkor. Hu6 is called the Spring City. It is the political and sentimental capital of Annam, but unlike the other Indo-Chinese capitals, such as Hanoi, Saigon, Phnom-Penh, it has kept its distinctive local character. The other cities are mainly French, American, Chinese—goodness only knows what. Hu6 is Annamite.*

*The influence of the Chinese culture is still predominant, and the capital is full of mandarins and learned men whose knowledge is measured in hundreds of Chinese characters, and whose importance may be judged by their silk trousers and umbrellas, their sedate bearing and the inscribed plaques of ebony they wear upon their chests.*

*Geomancy had more to do with the choosing of the city site than political economy. Hu6 is on the Song-Huong-Giang, the River of Perfumes. It is ten miles from the sea and no good as a port. But the celestial currents are canalized by the islands of the Blue Dragon*



*and the White Tiger, and bordered by greenest shrubbery and tallest flamboyant trees; a mountainous chain enfolds the limpid waters; the air is filled with living melancholy. And so on—as long as you like. You can see what happens. Most of the Annamite poets come from Hue in the Trochees. The Emperor Tu-Dere, who died in 1883, and who is said to have planted a beard in his unfertile chin, spent his time torturing Christians, hating Frenchmen, and writing poetry about Hue. He proclaimed it superior to all the cities of the Empire and called it "marvellous" through lack of inspiration.*

*There is no doubt about its being special. It is curiously quiet (except when the actual Emperor churns up the River of Perfumes in his speed-boat) and of catching melancholy. One feels there is an indefinable urging to lie down on one's back and look at the sky, to make poetry—softly—or recite somebody else's, and generally feel insipid. The slowly-flowing tidal river helps that, and perhaps accounts for it. Without the river Hue would lose its savour. Where it flows past the city it is somewhat wider than the Thames at London Bridge. It rises with the tide and flows so calmly that it seems a lake. There are stiff breezes sometimes for all that, and the boatmen have to cross the river diagonally while those who row against the stream seem almost at a standstill. The gampan, small house-boats, are manned (or more often womaned) by vigorous rowers, generally two on each boat—fore and aft—with an oar each. They row standing, moving the left leg forward one pace and back again in a slow monotonous swing. They can go on for hours like that, even against a stiff current. Little kiddies help their mothers, falling into step and putting their minute weight behind the oar.*

*The water is shallow and warm, as it seems to be everywhere in this country; and the boatmen are in and out all day. The Brothers' school has a couple of landing stages and a fine place for bathing, where you can get any depth up to ten feet and diving boards to match. Boating is popular, and not a few boys arrive at school via the river. The ferry tariff is half-a-cent by the official gampan—which means you can get across three or four times for a farthing. It takes about five minutes each way, but as the boatman often insists on waiting for a full load of passengers one may be more than a quarter of an hour getting across.*

*But Chinese indifference to time is not the biggest failing of the boatmen and their wives. They do not only keep you waiting. They "sing" at night and in the early hours of the morning and wake you up. There is no time to their song, no chorus, and apparently no words. Just a succession of long, wailing, plaintive sounds, often unfinished and with a*



*collapse from time to time in the middle of a high-pitched wail—a la Gracie Fields. It makes one feel quite creepy.*

*That's the general note of the whole place and one must not stay too long. It is depressing. The river seems to distil a sunny cheerlessness. The lovely scenery and monuments of ages past but still living, 1 icathe an air of incense burnt before the " Goddess sage and holy "— a rather close atmosphere in a town of tombs and pagodas, where people dream among ancestral shades.*  
*REV. BRO. THOMAS MORE (Dick Todd).*

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1943:** *Br. Thomas More (Dick Todd) has been interned by the Japs in Indo-China. He is hopeful of being repatriated in a few months' time. His homecoming will be a welcome and happy event.*

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1945:** *A few weeks before their defeat the Japanese threatened death to all Christians. Hence "Dick" Todd and a few others of his Congregation sallied forth in an effort to reach the British lines. Unfortunately he has not been heard of since – however, there is still hope when one remembers the nature of the country in the Malay States.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1946:** *Born 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1912, George Richard Todd was the youngest of three brothers who entered in September 1922 the boarding department of St Brendan's, Bristol, which was transferred to Prior Park in September 1922. He left the College in July 1925. A younger brother Billy who had not been at Prior Park was a student at Cambridge and in a motor accident there was killed. The eldest of those who attended Prior Park, Frank, became a doctor and surgeon and at the early age of twenty-four was elected FRCS. His career was full of promise but at the outbreak of war he at once joined up and within a few weeks was killed in Paris in a collision with a military lorry. He had been that morning at Mass and Communion- his daily practice.*

*Dick had become a De La Salle Brother and his mission field was Saigon. His religious name was Brother Thomas More. He and some of his brethren were imprisoned by the Japs, but on the eve of their defeat being under the threat that they were all to be shot some of them including Dick made their escape in March 1945 but unfortunately four of them were recaptured and shot out of hand. This was on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1945. The son of a native who had fed them came a few days later and wrapped their bodies in mats and buried them. Thus Mr and Mrs Todd mourned the loss of a*

*third son, but ever with Christian fortitude and religious acceptance of the Holy Will of God. The remaining brother Edward ("Sparks" he was known at School) is the only remaining son. He is also a brother of the De La Salle order.*

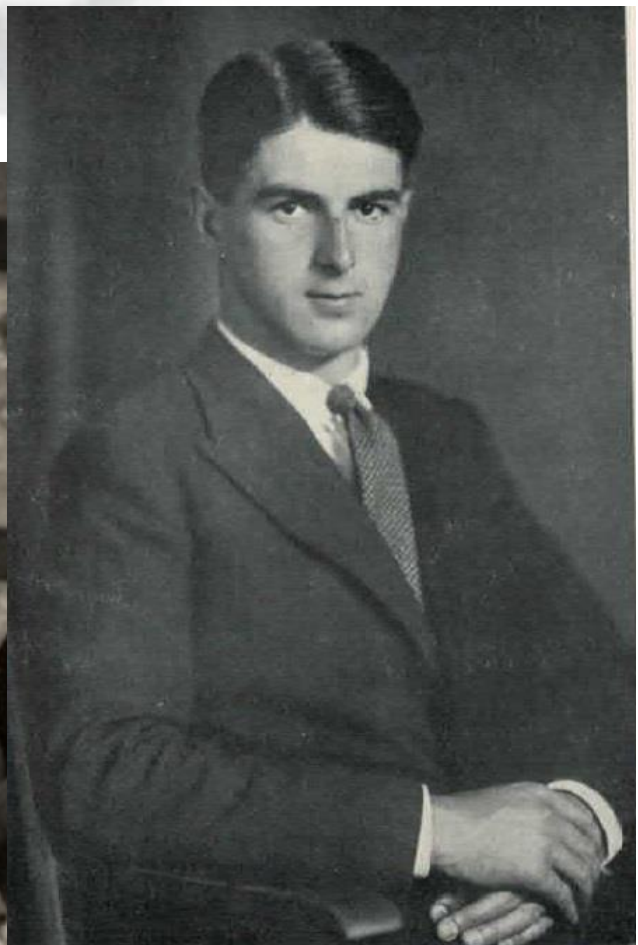
*All three brothers were regular correspondents with Prior Park – they never lost their love of their old School. As recorded elsewhere in this issue of the magazine their father died rather suddenly quite recently leaving Eddie, his sister and mother to mourn over and pray for Billy, Frank, Dick and their father. They may be assured of the College prayers that God may have mercy on the souls of their dear departed ones and pour the balm of consolation into the hearts of those left to mourn their losses. RIP.*

Peter Wood (Head of Faculty) from St Joseph's College, London contacted Prior Park College as a researcher because George Richard Todd was a teacher at his school after leaving PPC.

Brother Edwin and Brother Thomas More(Dick Todd) went to Saigon (now Vietnam)together, in June 1938. Brother Edwin and Thomas escaped from their POW camp, in about March 1945. They were recaptured some weeks later- Brother Edwin was put back into the POW camp, whilst Brother Thomas was shot and killed ( he was buried in the De La Salle cemetery in Hue, Vietnam) on 1 July 1945.

# Thomas Francis TODD

<b>Date of Birth</b>	SEPT 1908	<b>Place of Birth</b>	London
<b>Class of</b>	1925	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star Medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	01 DEC 1939	<b>Place of Death</b>	Car accident in Paris
<b>Age at Death</b>	31	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Trepot.
<b>Regiment</b>	6 General Hospital RAMC	<b>Service Number</b>	93591
<b>Service</b>	Army	<b>Rank</b>	Major
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	George Richard Todd, Class of 1930	Edward Todd, Class of 1924	
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	





### **Gossip Bowl Dec 1933:**

Our heartiest congratulations to Frank Todd, who is on the staff of Guy's Hospital, on obtaining his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons at the early age of 23, and only a year and a half after qualifying. Is this a record ? This is a fitting climax to years of unremitting toil. Frank has been, during all his years as a student, a true exemplar of the motto " Labor omnia vincit."

**Gossip Bowl Dec 1939:** *"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1, 21). This text came to our minds when we heard of the tragic and, to human reasoning, the untimely death of Major Thomas Francis Todd on December 1<sup>st</sup> at the age of 31. That it was God's Will is the only and sufficient answer to the question why such a young life and promising career should be cut short. It was in this spirit that Frank's parents, brothers and sister, though overwhelmed with grief, accepted the heavy cross from the hand of God. Fiat voluntas tua is the refuge as well as the strength of those in sorrow or suffering.*

Major Todd, when in the back seat of a car on the way to his Headquarters, was struck on the head by a "stationary" lorry which suddenly moved into the road as the driver of the car had swerved to pass it out. His skull was fractured, he was rendered immediately unconscious and died before reaching the nearby hospital. What made the sad accident more poignant for the parents was that Frank's youngest brother was killed in exactly similar circumstances three years ago when travelling with the Cambridge University Golf team of which he was a member.

Thomas Francis (Frank) Todd, born in London, September 1908, was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs F E Todd. Mr F E Todd was Inspector of Taxes in Kilkenny, his wife (nee Shearman) was a native of Kilkenny. Shortly after their marriage Mr Todd was transferred to England.

Frank, with his brothers Eddie and Dick, was educated at Prior Park; he came to the College (then at St Brendan's, Bristol) in 1919, and having passed his Matriculation he proceeded in October 1925 to his medical studies at London University and Guy's Hospital. In Prior Park he was remarkable for his ability, assiduity and keen interest in his work – he always led his class. In games, though not a star, by determination he became quite good at cricket, tennis and Rugby; and in athletics he was ever a trier and would enter for events even when he knew he had no chance of being placed. It was quite usual when Frank was running in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> in a race to hear his companions say good humouredly "Here comes



old Todd” – but he was impervious to such banter; he was the essence of good humour and yet he took everything seriously, whether study, class, recreation or his prayers. It was these characteristics of keenness for success and freedom from self-consciousness, combined with native ability, that made his career so outstanding in brilliance.

At the age of twenty-three he took his MB and MS. The next year he passed the FRCS examination, but as he was a year too young he had to wait before being elected to the fellowship at the early age of twenty-five. The previous year he had taken the post of Ship's Surgeon on SS Pagu for a three months' voyage to Rangoon. In the Indian Ocean a sister ship signalled that an urgent case on board required a surgeon. They were 600 miles away but met in mid-Ocean the next morning. Dr Todd was transferred to the other ship and successfully performed the operation for acute appendicitis.

He held the usual appointments at Guys and was Demonstrator in Anatomy there. At twenty-five he was Resident Surgeon at Preston Royal Infirmary, and the next year became house surgeon at the Christie Hospital and Holt Radium Institute, Manchester. In 1935 he commenced practice as a consulting gynaecologist in St John Street – the Harley Street of Manchester. He was also appointed gynaecologist to three hospitals, was on the honorary staff of the Christie Cancer Hospital, where he was a Research Fellow, helped to establish the Medico-Legal Society of Manchester of which he was the first honorary secretary, was a Member of Gray's Inn, London, and was shortly to have entered for the Bar examination.

His reputation in other countries brought him frequent invitations to visit the Curie Institute in Paris and such other places as New York, Chicago, Vienna, Copenhagen and Stockholm, to study radium in its applications to his own sphere of research and other methods of treatment.

In 1939 the British Medical Association awarded him the Hunterian Lectureship, and a repetition of that honour had been offered to him for 1940. He read a paper on “The Relief of Intractable Pain” before the Physiological Section of the British Association in Dundee on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939, for which he was highly complimented by the President. On coming from the hall the placard “WAR” caught his eye; he remarked: “For the past five years I have been working hard to relieve pain. Now they are going to fill the world as full as possible with agonising pain.” He felt he must go at once to the front and do his best to continue his work of mercy in relieving the pain of the wounded. He volunteered for the front September 2<sup>nd</sup> and with the rank of major was sent to the base hospital in

*France. Little did he think that he was never again to see his home and friends, little did he imagine that his career which so far had been phenomenal was to be brought so suddenly to a close. That he left a fragrant memory behind him is made evident by the universal sympathy shown by all who knew him or even knew of him, and it must have been a great consolation to his family to receive such numerous and sympathetic letters. We can here give only a few quotations from them:*

*From the Chaplain, Rev J A Larkin, OSB, CF: "It was a terrible shock to all of us but I am sure you will be consoled to hear that Frank served my Mass and went to Holy Communion on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> of December. I saw a great deal of him here and he was often at Communion during the week as well as on Sundays. As he lay in the coffin with a rosary in his hands he looked as happy in death as he did in life. He died before reaching the hospital but was anointed conditionally and given the Last Blessing.*

*"I went all over the area and collected the other priests with the result that we were able to have a full sung Requiem mass with the Absolutions afterwards. It could not have been carried out with more beauty, and caused a profound impression on all present."*

*From Rev Clifford Howell, SJ, CF (before the War at Holy Name, Manchester): Most often we talked deeply of medico-moral and philosophical problems; and in the course of many hours of such discussions I feel I obtained an insight into his mind and character which he permitted to very few. I believe I was one of those privileged few who knew the real Frank that lay underneath the exterior he presented to the world at large. And what a dear good lovable fellow he was – he had a great heart and a noble soul as well as a brilliant mind. I loved his hatred of things that were mean or small or petty, his loathing for cant and hypocrisy, even his impatience with the sometimes senseless trammels of restrictive convention."*

*From Brevat-Colonel J O Thomas RAMC: "I feel that I should let you know how deeply we all sympathise with you in the tragic loss of your brilliant and fine son, and trust that you may find comfort in the knowledge of what he has accomplished in a short life – for life is to be measured not in years, but in deeds.*

*"He was brought by ambulance to our Mess shortly after the accident – as we were nearest – and was seen at once by one of our surgeons, but death must have been almost instantaneous....*

*"...As you know your son rested in the little Chapel where only a few hours before his death he had made his last Communion – that must be an*

unspeakable comfort to you. The funeral on Tuesday was attended by a large number of officers and men, including many French officers – some of the senior officers from hospitals over 20 miles away. The Requiem Mass was most impressive, the slow march to the British Military Cemetery (from the last War kept in perfect order) and the service at the graveside were equally impressive. Rain had been almost incessant, but for a few hours at the time of the funeral it cleared and the sun was almost bright.”

From the Secretary, Manchester and District medico Legal Society: “...We held a meeting on Saturday last and our President Jude Leigh spoke of the real sense of grief which we felt. It has been said of Frank that professionally he had stolen a march of ten years on his colleagues. But for us there was a more personal side. He knew famous people, and more important still – famous people knew Todd. It was this happy faculty of making friends with everyone whom he met that enabled the Society to be formed. He was the first Secretary, and only the tremendous amount of time and energy which he gave unstintingly enabled the formation to proceed to its successful conclusion. We all admired and loved him.”

From Lieutenant Vincent Chadwick, a close friend and doctor of Manchester: “We’ve had such happy days and evenings congregating in the billets...he lies peacefully quiet, and I am sure still happy, in the tiny chapel in the farmyard where yesterday he served, communed and worshipped. I met him as he came from his devotions, as I went on duty. He died truly in the faith he loved and cherished. He was clean and pure, so do not grieve.”

The golden opinions which he gained amongst his contemporaries of the medical profession will best be seen from the following appreciation reprinted (with permission) from The Catholic Medical Guardian for January 1940. This will form a fitting close to our brief sketch of the career of Frank Todd, a worthy Old Boy of Prior Park and a worthy member of the Prior Park Association.

An appreciation by Mary Cardwell MD

“There are individuals who seem so much the embodiment of life, that it appears impossible to believe that death will take them from our midst. And Frank Todd (‘TF’ to his friends) was one such. Vital, alert, never seeming to rest, following science wherever she could offer him fresh knowledge, using the modern means of travel, by sea and by air, always cheery and full of enthusiasm, always thrusting for adventure into the unknown, always interesting and attractive – such a one was ‘TF’, now



*lying quiet, and at peace in the little bit of French soil which God chose to be his last resting place.*

*Frank Todd possessed the power of friendship to an abundant degree, and he was so loyal and constant, that he rarely lost a friend by any misunderstanding. In his company, we are stimulated to thought, to speech, and to laughter, and a friend writes truly about him that, 'by his death it is as if a bright light were put out. There are many who will be aware of the shadows which this has left.'*

*By general practitioners he was regarded as a trustworthy, courteous and competent specialist, one who was above intrigue or base motives, one in short, worthy of complete confidence.*

*His patients worshipped him, and after his death, offerings for Masses for his soul were given by at least fifty poor people upon whom he had operated during his life in Manchester.*

*Todd hated insincerity in any form, and sometimes this made him appear intolerant in scientific discussion, but he was, in fact, very humble intellectually, and any appearance of an intolerant attitude was but the manifestation of a mind which always sought for truth. Similarly, he hated ostentatious piety or obvious philanthropy, and only a few close friends knew of his charity to the poor – a charity which would insist that shoes be newly repaired, and suits be sponged and pressed, before ever they should be given away. He was a man of deep religious feelings, but he hid these successfully under an exterior of twentieth century savoir faire, and of social accomplishment, and yet, morning by morning, winter and summer, and weary though he often was, he attended mass, and received Holy Communion in the Catholic Church near his rooms. He went to mass because the Church told him that it was the best way to worship God. To be at Mass with him was a lesson in profound recollection.*

*He lived his brief life abundantly and happily, but his intimates knew he anticipated an early death. His phenomenal success seemed to him too great to endure for a long lifetime. Probably a truer reason was, that , only half recognised by himself, his intellect craved for something that life could not give – that perfection, which is God.*

*He spent his last few weeks in war service on soil very dear to him, for he loved France with an ever increasing love, and he was popular and happy, and made many friends amongst his fellow officers.*

*Death came to him on the first Friday in December, swiftly and instantaneously, but it did not find him unprepared. On that morning, as*



*on many mornings before, he had served mass and received Holy Communion in the little Catholic Church near to his hospital, and soon, the day being still young, he was called to his reward.*

*‘TF’ left a great professional reputation behind him, but when human fame has dimmed, as it must, he will be long remembered by many, because he put first things first, and whatsoever came to his hand he did with all his might, and with all his strength.*

*May his soul rest in peace.”*

From CWGC: Thomas Francis Todd, Major, service number 93591 died on 01/12/1939 at the age of 31. He is buried at Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Trepot. He was the son of Frank Ernest and Margaret Mary Todd of Stockport, Cheshire.

**Prior Park College 1st XV.. 1924-5.**



F. Todd (*Hon. Sec.*), G. Scullard, M. Barwell, L. Grimshaw, B. Hickman, G. MacManus, D. Campbell, J. Nott, W. Devanney, B. Torney,  
W. Whitehead, W. Ball, D. Ryan (*V.-Capt.*), S. Canilla (*Capt.*), B. Birmingham, C. Lavery, A. Pedrazzini,  
P. England, H. Canning

**Played 6. Won 6. Points for 115. Points against 18.**

## From Forces War Records:

<b>Resided Town:</b>	Manchester.
<b>Information:</b>	SON OF FRANK ERNEST AND MARGARET MARY TODD, OF STOCKPORT, CHESHIRE. M.S. (LOND.), F.R.C.S.
<b>Rank:</b>	Major
<b>Rank (2nd):</b>	Acting Lieutenant Colonel
<b>Battalion:</b>	6 General Hospital
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	WO 304/20
<b>Commemorated:</b>	France
<b>Place of Death:</b>	France and Belgium Campaign, 1939/40

### Royal Army Medical Corps during World War 2

#### More information about Royal Army Medical Corps

Formed: 1898

The Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) is a specialist corps in the British Army which provides medical services to all British Army personnel and their families in war and in peace. Together with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, the Royal Army Dental Corps and Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, the RAMC forms the British Army's essential Army Medical Services.

The RAMC does not carry a Regimental Colour or Queen's Colour, although it has a Regimental Flag. Nor does it have battle honours, as elements of the corps have been present in almost every single war the army has fought. Because it is not a fighting arm, under the Geneva Conventions, members of the RAMC may only use their weapons for self-defence. For this reason,

there are two traditions that the RAMC perform when on parade:

Officers do not draw their swords - instead they hold their scabbard with their left hand while saluting with their right.

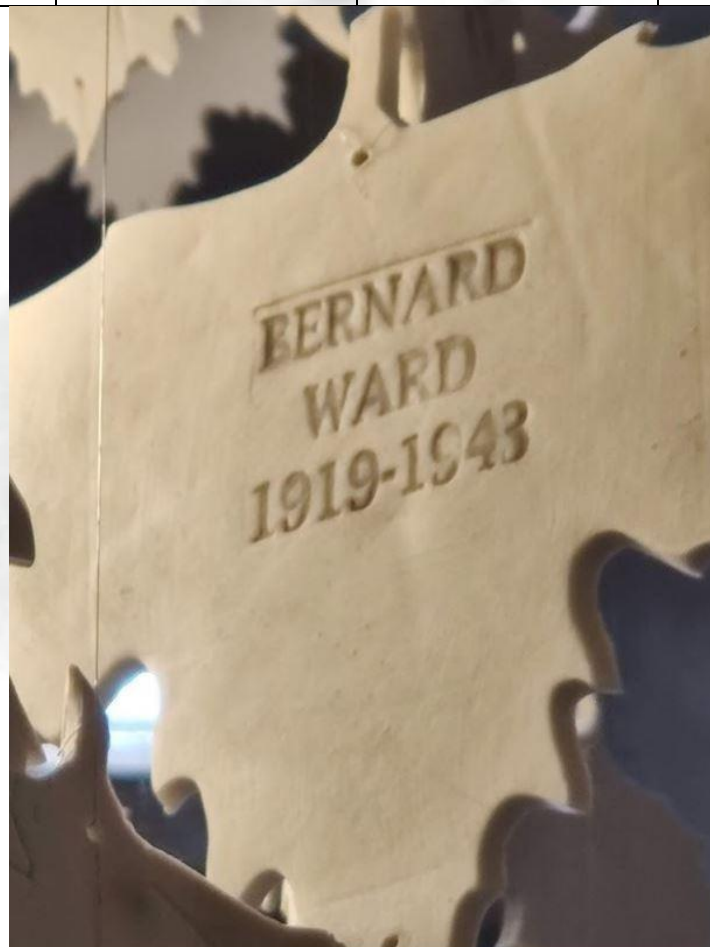
Other Ranks do not fix bayonets.

Unlike medical officers in some other countries, medical officers in the RAMC (and the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force) do not use the "Dr" prefix, in parentheses or otherwise, but only their rank, although they may be addressed informally as "Doctor".



# Bernard Harry WARD

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1919	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Norwich
<b>Class of</b>	1937 BAINES	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	23 JUNE 1943	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in action storming of Mandalay
<b>Age at Death</b>	24	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand
<b>Regiment</b>	Royal Norfolk 6th Battalion	<b>Service Number</b>	5776821
<b>Service</b>	Army		
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>			
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Paul Kemp





**Gossip Bowl July 1944:** *Bernard Ward was commissioned in the Gloucester Regiment on St. Patrick's Day ! He is now temporarily attached to the Worcester Regiment in India. His father served with the Gloucesters in the last war, so it is a case of Bernard walking in his father's footsteps.*

**Gossip Bowl July 1945:** *Lieut. Bernard Ward writes cheery news from Burma where he is with the famous "Dagger" Division. He was in the storming of Mandalay. He still writes in his old humorous vein. He relates that he felt a bit of a bully—he is now 6ft.3in.—after capturing a Jap who weighed seven stone. He felt like a fisherman who had caught a very small fish and did not know whether he should throw him back into the sea or take him home and give him to the cat!*

Research by Paul Kemp: 6th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment was a TA battalion raised around Norwich. In the Second World War it was part of the 53rd Infantry Brigade (Brigadier C L Duke) as part of the 18th Infantry Division. For the first two years of the war the battalion was employed on coastal defence duties in the UK. In the summer of 1941 the Division under the command of Major-General Merton Beckwith-Smith, sailed for the Middle East and then Singapore. The Chiefs of Staff, recognising that Singapore was a lost cause, recommended that the division be not committed to Singapore but held in India. Churchill (who had other priorities) overruled them. The battalion arrived in Singapore on 5 February 1942, losing much of its equipment when the troopship *Empress of Asia* was bombed and sunk in the approaches to Singapore harbour. The battalion suffered a further loss when its commanding officer, (Lieutenant Colonel Ian Lywood) was hospitalised with malaria. He was later murdered by the Japanese in the massacre at the Alexandra Hospital). On 15 February 1942 Lieutenant General Ian Percival (GOC Singapore and probably the least inspiring general in the history of the British Army) ordered the surrender of the British garrison at Singapore and so the battalion became prisoners of war. They had been in Singapore for 10 days.

The men were first held at Changi on Singapore Island but as the Japanese began to build the Burma Siam Railway, over 61,000 British, Dutch, Australian and American prisoners of war were moved north to act as forced labour: 12,621 of them died, a casualty rate of 20%. A critical factor was that many of the British doctors had little or experience of tropical medicine and thus were ill prepared to cope with the diseases which presented themselves. By comparison, the Dutch forces who did have doctors experienced in tropical medicine had a casualty rate of less than half the British and Commonwealth forces. Of the 1800 men in the 53rd Inf Bde (2nd Cambridgeshire Regiment and 5 & 6th Norfolks), over 600 died.

Casualties were buried where they died in impromptu cemeteries. After the war Graves Registration Units located these cemeteries, exhumed the dead and had them reburied in three large CWGC cemeteries at Kanchanaburi, Thanbayuzayat, and Chungkai..

From CWGC: Service Number 5776821. Buried in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand. Son of William Henry and Mildred Mary Ward of Sprowston, Norfolk.

From Forces War Records:



<b>Birth Town:</b>	Norwich.
<b>Nationality:</b>	British
<b>Information:</b>	Parents: William Henry and Mildred Mary Ward, of Sprowston, Norfolk.
<b>Battalion:</b>	6th Battalion
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	WO 304/9
<b>Commemorated:</b>	Britain
<b>Place of Death:</b>	Far East

## **Royal Norfolk Regiment during World War 2**

### **More information about Royal Norfolk Regiment**

Formed: 1935

Disbanded: 1959

The Regiment was first formed in 1685 by Henry Cornwall as Henry Cornwall's Regiment of Foot during the Monmouth Rebellion, when James Scott the 1st Duke of Monmouth (the eldest illegitimate son of

Charles II and the current King's nephew) unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow the unpopular King James II but his small force was swiftly put down at the Battle of Sedgemoor.

In 1688 Prince William of Orange was invited to take the throne by the English Lords and upon his arrival in England James II abdicated. However, the Regiment's new colonel Oliver Nicholas refused to pledge his allegiance to the new King William III and was replaced by John Cunningham as colonel. The Regiment was soon in action against its old King when James II attempted to regain his throne and fought at the Battles of Londonderry, Boyne, Aughrim and the Siege of Athlone and Limerick. In 1751 the traditional system of naming Regiments after the current colonel was simplified with a number assigned according to the Regiments precedence; therefore Stewart's Regiment became the 9th Regiment of Foot.

The Regiment went on to serve during the Seven Years War (1754–1763) and took part in the Capture of Havana moving to the Florida in 1763 after hostilities ceased and remained there for six years. Only 300 men remained in 1763 of the 1,000 who had set out a year earlier, only 20 of which had been killed in action, the remained were casualties of malaria and yellow fever which ravaged all of the Regiments in the West Indies at the time. During the American War of Independence the Regiment were part of Major General John Burgoyne's ill fated force until 1777 when he surrendered at his whole army Saratoga and remained prisoners of war for three years.

In 1782 all British Regiments without Royal titles were awarded county titles in order to aid recruitment from that area therefore the 9th became the 9th (East Norfolk) Regiment of Foot. During the Napoleonic Wars the 9th fought at Roliça, Vimiero and Corunna before participating in the disastrous Walcheren Campaign. The Regiment returned to the Peninsula to fight at the Battles of Busaco, Salamanca, Vittoria, at the Siege of San Sebastián, and at Nive. The Regiment went on to served during the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842) and the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–1846) as well as fighting at the Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War (1853–1856). In 1857 it was deployed to Japan stationed at Yokohama to assist in the opening of that port for international trade.

In 1881 as part of the Childers Reforms which restructured the British

army into a network of multi-battalion Regiments. The 9th managed to avoid amalgamation with another Regiment and became the Norfolk Regiment. The Regiment was awarded the Royal title in 1935 as part of the King George V silver jubilee celebrations becoming the Royal Norfolk Regiment. The Regiment went on to serve during Third Anglo-Burmese War (1885-87), Anglo - Boer War (1899–1902) and two World Wars.

In 1959 the regiment was amalgamated with the Suffolk Regiment to form the 1st East Anglian Regiment. This was further amalgamated in 1964 it was further merged with The Royal Leicester Regiment, The Norfolk and Suffolk Regiments, The Duchess of Gloucester's Own Lincolnshire Regiment and the Northampton Regiment to form the Royal Anglian Regiment.





# James Douglas WILLIAMS

<b>Date of Birth</b>	1918	<b>Place of Birth</b>	Chippenham
<b>Class of</b>	1935 Head Boy BAINES	<b>Medals</b>	
<b>Campaign medals</b>	War medal 1939-1945	Star medal 1939-1945	
<b>Date of Death</b>	12 JAN 1945	<b>Place of Death</b>	Killed in Action. Burma
<b>Age at Death</b>	27	<b>Memorial Ref</b>	Taukkyan War Cemetery in Burma
<b>Regiment</b>	Royal Artillery	<b>Service Number</b>	73020
<b>Service</b>	Army	<b>Rank</b>	Major
<b>Siblings at Prior</b>	Richard Williams, Class of 1942		
<b>Married</b>		<b>Children</b>	
<b>School census</b>		<b>Additional researcher</b>	Simon Beck



**Gossip Bowl July 1945:** *“In January 1928 James Douglas Williams entered Prior Park. He was son of Major C S Williams, head of the brakes department of Westinghouse Works, Chippenham. James was killed in action in Burma on the 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1945. His brother Richard went as Lieut. to France on “D-Day” and shortly afterwards contracted diphtheria, and a form of paralysis of one side of the body supervened; he is now restored to health but still in hospital. Thus the bereaved parents had a very heavy burden of sorrow and anxiety, and very wide sympathy went out to them.*

*“Jim” had a distinguished course at school. He was “Captain of the School” in his last year, a member of the Sodality, Captain of the Rugby XV in 1934 and of Hockey XI in 1935. He passed into Woolwich in 1935 and was commissioned in the Royal Artillery, went to France on the outbreak of the war, and was evacuated from Dunkirk. He was made Captain and about June 1943 he went overseas to Burma and then was appointed Major. Just a few weeks before his 28<sup>th</sup> birthday he was killed. He was married but left no family.*

*To his parents, wife and brother we tender our very sincere sympathy. May his dear departed soul rest in the peace of God!”*

From CWGC: Major James Douglas Williams, service number 73020 died in Burma on 12/01/1945 whilst serving Royal Artillery. He is buried at the Taukkyan War Cemetery in Burma.

PRIOR PARK XI., 1935.



D. M. Fleming    F. H. Fox    J. L. Pardoe    J. D. Williams    R. Mavrel    J. H. Sloan  
J. H. O'Neill    L. R. O'Reilly (Vice-Capt.)    S. P. Clements (Capt.)    L. A. Lee    W. P. Foster  
F. H. Carloto

Played 6, Won 4, Drawn 1, Lost 1.    Goals for 30, Goals against 9.

RESULT OF GERMAN TOUR. Played 6, Won 5, Drawn 1, Goals for 27, Goals against 4.

From Forces War Records:

<b>Rank (2nd):</b>	Acting Lieutenant Colonel
<b>Regiment 2:</b>	Royal Indian Artillery
<b>Battalion 2:</b>	attd. 10 Battery, 4 Field Regiment,
<b>Archive Reference:</b>	WO 304/6
<b>Place of Death:</b>	Burma

## Royal Artillery during World War 2

### More information about Royal Artillery

Formed: 1716

The first recorded use of cannon on the battlefield was by Edward III at the Battle of Crecy in 1346 during the Hundred Years' War. Up to the eighteenth century, artillery 'traynes' were raised by Royal Warrant for specific campaigns and disbanded again on their conclusion. This changed on 26 May 1716, when by the Royal Warrant of George I two regular companies of field artillery, each 100 men strong, were raised at Woolwich, leading to the title "Royal Artillery" (RA) which was first used in 1720.

On 1 April 1722 these companies were expanded to four, and grouped with independent artillery companies in Gibraltar and Minorca to form the Royal Regiment of Artillery, commanded by Colonel Albert Bogard. In 1741 the Royal Military Academy formed in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich (RWA). The regiment expanded rapidly and by 1757 there were 24 companies divided into two battalions, as well as a Cadet Company formed in 1741.

During 1748 the Presidential Artilleries of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, India were formed and then in 1756 saw the creation of the Royal Irish Regiment of Artillery. The Regiment grew to 32 companies by 1771 organised into four battalions, as well as two Invalid Companies

comprising older and unfit men employed in garrison duties. 1782 brought the move of the Royal Artillery to RA Barracks (front parade) on Woolwich Common.

The Napoleonic Wars saw the need to provide fire-support for the cavalry so a formation of Horse Artillery was created in 1793 with two troops of Royal Horse Artillery (RHA) being raised, joined by two more in November 1793. The Royal Irish Artillery was absorbed into the Royal Artillery in 1801 to produce twelve RHA troops and a hundred RA companies in 10 battalions. Before 1825 batteries had been called after their commander's name this was to cease and RA batteries known by a number and RHA batteries a letter. During 1805 RWA moved to Woolwich Common for all RA and RE officers.

The Crimean War saw the increase of the Royal Artillery to 199 batteries and in 1855 the abolition of the Board Ordnance, which had until then controlled the Royal Artillery. Thereafter the regiment came under the War Office along with the rest of the army. A School of Gunnery was established in Shoeburyness, Essex in 1859. In 1862 the regiment absorbed the artillery of the British East India Company – 21 horse batteries and 48 field batteries – which brought its strength up to 29 horse batteries, 73 field batteries and 88 heavy batteries.

On 1 July 1899, the Royal Artillery was divided into three groups: the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery comprised one group, while the Coastal Defence, Mountain, Siege and Heavy artillery were split off into another group named the Royal Garrison Artillery. The third group continued to be titled simply Royal Artillery, and was responsible for ammunition storage and supply. The RFA and RHA both dressed as mounted soldiers, whereas the RGA dressed like foot soldiers. The First World War brought with it a massive expanse of the Royal Artillery. By 1917 there were 1,769 batteries in over 400 brigades totalling 548,000 men.

In 1920 the rank of Bombardier was instituted in the Royal Artillery. The three sections effectively functioned as separate corps. This arrangement lasted until 1924, when the three amalgamated once more to become one regiment. The Royal Horse Artillery, which has always had separate traditions, uniforms and insignia, still retains a separate identity within the regiment, however, and is considered, by its members at least, to be an élite.



Before the Second World War, Royal Artillery recruits were required to be at least 5 feet 4 inches tall and men in mechanised units had to be at least 5 feet 8 inches tall. In 1938, the Royal Artillery Brigades were renamed Regiments. In the Second World War over a million men were serving in over 960 Gunner regiments. With the coming of peace the Gunners reduced to 250,000 men and 365 batteries in 106 regiments.

At the beginning of 1939 the regular and TA strength of the Royal Artillery totalled about 105,000. In mid 1943 the RA reached its peak strength, some 700,000 strong (about 26% of total British Army strength and about the same size as the Royal Navy), including about 5% officers, in some 630 regiments, 65 training regiments and six officer cadet training units.

These included 130 regiments converted from TA infantry and yeomanry often retaining their previous regimental title as part of their artillery unit designation as well as badges and other accoutrements. However, the strength of the field branch (including anti-tank) in mid 1943 was about 232,000. The Regiment suffered some 31,000 killed during the course of the war.

Of the 630 or so regiments about 240 were field artillery, excluding about 60 anti-tank.

At the end of the Second World War, the RA was larger than the Royal Navy. In 1947 the Riding Troop RHA was renamed The King's Troop RHA, and in 1951 the appointment of regiment's Colonel-in-Chief became Captain General. Following the end of National Service and the Cold War, the Royal Artillery fell further to its lowest strength since the 1820s; 14 Regular and 7 Territorial Artillery Regiments.

### **The Royal Artillery Prayer**

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
Who dost everywhere lead thy people in the way of righteousness,  
Vouchsafe so as to lead the Royal Regiment of Artillery,  
That wherever we serve, on land or sea or in the air,  
We may win the glory of doing thy will  
Amen

*Research of the Prior Park Magazine for references to J D & R Williams and their parents 1931 - 1955.*

*ENGINEERING AS A PROFESSION. By C. S. WILLIAMS, M.C., A.M.I.Mech.E., M.I.R.S.E. Chartered Mechanical Engineer. Having, in the course of my professional life, been approached by many youths and parents for advice as to the qualifications necessary to become an Engineer and being surprised at the lack of knowledge displayed by so many as to the necessary preliminary equipment for such a career, I am tempted to give my views to the Prior Park Magazine for the benefit of any Prior Park boy who is considering the adoption of the profession of Engineering after leaving the College. Many fail to recognise the high degree of attainments necessary to secure even moderate success in a varied and difficult profession and the intense competition to secure vacancies in the Engineering ranks.*

*I have on many occasions been approached by parents of boys with no other equipment than an elementary school education who are anxious to make " little Johnnie " an engineer. Obviously such equipment is useless for the higher branches of the profession, and the most such candidates can hope for (unless endowed with phenomenal ability and the capacity for studying for many years combined with the consumption of much " midnight oil") is to become in course of time, if lucky, a foreman or charge hand in one or other of the practical sides of the craft. Twenty-five years ago the usual method of training was for a lad, after leaving school at about the age of sixteen, to become apprenticed to a firm of Engineers for a term of years, usually five. During this apprenticeship he was taught the practical side of the craft, starting work at six o'clock in the morning and spending his evenings during the winter months in studying at a Technical College and at home to acquire a knowledge of the technical side. During this period his premium was usually returned to him in the shape of pocket money. This was a fatiguing method and had the serious disadvantage of leaving the lad to acquire his technical knowledge during the time when his friends were spending their evenings in a more congenial manner. It left little or no time for proper recreation. In spite of its defects this old apprenticeship method produced many eminent engineers. Another method was to enter a Technical College as a day student and undergo a three years' course for a Certificate in Engineering,*

afterwards obtaining practical commercial experience with an Engineering firm. Most of these colleges were inadequately equipped on the practical side to do much more than give a smattering of practical knowledge, although frequent visits to Power Stations and factories helped to give students knowledge in this particular. On the technical side they were excellent. Comparatively few entered the profession at a more mature age after training at a University. Both methods outlined above persist to-day and are available to those who are unable to avail themselves of a university education. The first method indicated is a hard path to tread, and many fall by the way through disinclination to make the necessary effort to study at night after working all day. Owing to the school leaving age being nowadays in the neighbourhood of 18 years, the second method has to a great extent given place to a regular University Course. Since the war the more usual method of entering the technical ranks of the profession is by training at one of the Universities and taking a B.Sc. or equivalent degree in Mechanical Science, subsequently serving a brief term in a works to acquire a working knowledge of the practical side. This method has the advantage of equipping the embryo engineer with a thoroughly mathematical training enabling him rapidly to grasp the underlying principles of the work he is called upon to undertake.

There are still differences of opinion amongst Engineers as to which of the methods outlined is capable of producing the best results, and whilst there are good and bad of each sort the author is of opinion that the University graduate will in the near future almost eliminate the other types from the higher ranks of the profession. Those of us who were trained under the older systems will doubtless find that the experience gained over a course of years will enable us to hold our own, but for the rising generation of Engineers a University degree will carry more weight than a long apprenticeship with a somewhat promiscuously acquired technical training. This theory is borne out by a perusal of advertisements for young engineers in the technical journals which almost unanimously call for candidates with a University degree. My advice, therefore, to the budding engineer is to persist in his studies, particularly on the mathematical side (unwelcome advice to many), and if possible enter a University with a view to securing a degree in Engineering. This applies to every branch of the profession—Civil, Mechanical and Electrical—the basic requirements of all three being identical, for in practice the three branches overlap time and again. A word of warning. If you want a "soft job" or expect to make a large fortune steer clear of Engineering. The remuneration of an Engineer is only moderate when compared with other learned professions, and competition for jobs is keen. Young engineers are being turned out by the Universities in large numbers, and the state of

*Engineering trade in common with many others of the country's industries leaves much to be desired. Still we all hope there are better times coming, and to those who like it there are compensations in work that is interesting, varied and most essential for the well-being and comfort of modern civilisation.*

**Prior Park Magazine Jul 1935 :** *We congratulate James D. Williams on his success at the recent Examination for Entrance to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Jim Williams is one of our " Ancients." He entered St. Peters in January 1928 and he has come along systematically to the top of the Senior House. His success at the Woolwich Entrance Exam, places a very appropriate crown on a consistently good school career. We wish him abundance of success in the future.*

#### **THE HOCKEY TOUR IN GERMANY.**

*In response to an invitation of Dr. K. F. Lauer, President of the German Hockey Association, to English Public Schools to take part in the Schools International Tournaments, the Prior Park College 1st XI accompanied by three reserves and a master left England for Germany in April 1935. Festivals were held at Coblenz, Bremen, Jena and Berlin. The tournaments were played continuously from Good Friday to Easter Monday, some fifty teams comprising German, Danish and English sides taking part. We decided to take the fullest advantage of our visit, the first occasion on which a Prior Park Athletic team in its hundred years of association with sport had embarked upon a Continental tour. Through the kind co-operation of Dr. Lauer we were enabled to extend our visit and a number of fixtures were arranged for us along the Rhine as far south as Mannheim. Below is given a table of our movements :—*

*April 17th.—Arr. Cologne 10.49 Pm - Night at Cologne.*

*April 18th.—Sightseeing Cologne. Dep. Cologne 3.15 p.m. Arr. Coblenz 4.33 p.m.*

*April 19th—22nd.—Tournament at Coblenz (Guests of Coblenz).*

*April 23rd.—Dep. Coblenz 9.53 a.m. Arr. Mainz 11.19 a.m. Sightseeing Mainz (Cathedral). Dep. Mainz 7.24 p.m. Arr. Frankfurt 7.57 p.m. Guests of I. G. Sportverein, Frankfurt-On-Main.*

*April 24th.—Sightseeing at Frankfurt (Goethehaus, etc.). Match against I. G. Sportverein.*

*April 25th.—Dep. Frankfurt 9.35 a.m. Arr. Heidelberg 11.00 a.m. Sightseeing at Heidelberg (Castle, University, etc.). Dep. Heidelberg 7.03 p.m. Arr. Mannheim 7.08 p.m. Guests of Mannheimer Turngesellschaft.*



*April 26th.—Sightseeing at Mannheim (Castle, Planetorium, etc.). Match against Mannheim Club.*

*April 27th.—Dep. Mannheim 8.24 a.m. Arr. Bingen 10.04 a.m. Dep. Bingen (with Rhine steamer) 10.55 a.m. Arr. Cologne 6.0 p.m. Guests of the Hockey Club, Leverkusen.*

*April 28th.—Match against Leverkusen. Dep. Leverkusen 2.30 p.m. Arr. Cologne 3.45 p.m.*

*April 29th – Sightseeing at Cologne*

*April 29th.—Dep. Cologne 4.24 a.m. Arr. London 4.27 p.m.*

*Results of Games.—Played 6, Won 5, Drew 1. For, 27 goals. Against, 4 goals.*

*April 19—H. C. Erkelenz ... Won 10—1)*

*April 21—H. C. Ludensheider ... Won 6—0 ) Coblenz Tournament*

*April 22—H. C. Kaiserlautern ... Won 4—1)*

*April 24—Frankfurt, I. G. Sportverein Drawn 1—1*

*April 26—Mannheimer Turngesellschaft Won 4—0*

*April 28—Hockey Club, Leverkusen Won 2—1*

*We had some delightful hockey in the Coblenz Tournaments amid brilliant sunshine. The results of our games indicated above were undoubtedly a true reflection of the run of play. We began our first match in magnificent style. The long outward journey seemed to have produced no ill-effects, and in almost every department we completely outplayed our opponents. In tackling and ball control we had much the better of all the games and our inside forwards were particularly outstanding. The German sides generally and more particularly Leverkusen were remarkably fast, and this together with the extraordinary stamina they seemed to possess partly compensated in a few cases for what they lacked in the finer points of the game. German hockey has still much to learn but there can be no doubt that with their natural qualities and quickness of bodily movement, and in a country where so much regard is given to physical fitness, in a number of years they will be more than a match for foreign clubs. Situated at the junction of rivers where the Moselle joins the Rhine and lying at the foot of mountain ranges covered with woods and vineyards, one could never tire of the grandeur of surroundings such as these. There were few places of interest in the neighbourhood that we did not visit. We crossed to the ancient fortress of Ebernbreitstein, we heard Mass at the ninth century Romanesque church of St. Caslor, and on one occasion when we*

*had taken a morning cruise down the Rhine we landed at Stolzenfels to make a precipitous ascent to the ancient castle, in Imperial days a favourite residence of the Kaiser.*

*On most evenings there was some function arranged for our entertainment. A big supper was held one evening at which about two hundred boys attended. The walls of the great hall in which we were assembled were draped in the Nazi and Imperial colours, everywhere interspersed with Union Jacks. Vocal solos, dancing and gymnastic displays were all features of the entertainment, and we ourselves were called upon to sing some English melodies. We were in Coblenz on Hitler's birthday. There were great rejoicings and the unswerving loyalty of the populace was everywhere in evidence. Bands and contingents of Guards and Storm Troops marched through the town. The streets were gaily decked in the black, white and red flags of the Fatherland, and there was scarcely a private house or public building to be passed anywhere that did not fly two flags each at least one yard square. We certainly had a novel experience on this occasion, for we were asked to take part in a procession to the Sports Ground. We marched a fair distance, were given military commands and eventually brought to attention lined up alongside scores of others inside the Grounds. There we were delivered a long speech in German by a Dr. Scholtze who dealt at some length with the national life of Germany. In the course of his speech he said that no greater birthday present could be Hitler's that day than the knowledge that the youth of our two great nations were greeting each other on the field of sport. Remaining standing at attention with right arms raised in the Nazi salute we joined in the singing of the German National Anthem.*

*From Coblenz to Mainz—a survey of the cities' proudest shrines— and thence to Frankfurt ! We were welcomed at Frankfurt station by a large number of players and officials of the Frankfurt I. G. Sport verein. The I. G. Sportverein is the Sports Club belonging to the wealthy Company which corresponds in most respects to our Imperial Chemical Industries. They manufacture chemicals, cements, cameras and a thousand other products. We were shown over their administrative buildings in Frankfurt. We were guests at Frankfurt at the private houses of the various members of the Club, and everyone had a wonderful reception. We were taken for a tour of the city and visited most of the places of interest, the Government Buildings, the newly completed Stadium and Sports Ground and also the house where the famous Goethe spent most of his life. A musical member of our party could not refrain from playing the " Isle of Capri" on Goethe's piano, whereupon the guide remarked "It is very old ! "*

Another interesting visit was to the Great Road which runs through Frankfurt and extends from Hamburg to the south. This road is a straight line throughout its course ; it is used for motor transport only and there are no roads leading into it. Work on this road is one of the government's schemes by means of which the substantial reductions in unemployment have been effected. The I. G. Sportverein were of course an adult side and one that had visited our country on a previous occasion. They proved to be our strongest opposition of the tour, and under the most adverse weather conditions we drew the match. This game was most amusing to watch. The ground was deluged and after ten minutes' play it was almost impossible to distinguish one side from the other. There were occasions when a number of players were literally digging for the ball beneath a pool of water when it was already in play in another part of the field. From Frankfurt we travelled to the ancient University town of Heidelberg and thence to Mannheim. Our team showed its first indications of fatigue in this game but succeeded quite comfortably in forcing a win on a very fast ground.

The most outstanding feature of the industrial city of Mannheim is its layout in chessboard fashion. If all European towns were modelled on this system it would appear impossible for a stranger to lose his way. We found a visit to the Planetarium the most interesting. This is entirely a modern scientific device in which the relative movements of stars and planets may be represented by projections of spots of light on a dome-shaped ceiling. The entire heavens were reproduced by thousands of these spots of light of varying intensity, and their movements in a night were indicated. This is one of the most recent mechanisms and was placed at the service of astronomical science by a prominent German astronomer and physicist. We commenced our return journey from Mannheim. Some of us boarded the Rhine steamer at Bingen, and after the best part of a day spent moving along the most beautiful of Europe's waterways we arrived again in Cologne.

Our next game was at Leverkusen, some ten miles away. Here we succeeded in winning our last match, although by now a very weary side, and thus completing an unbeaten record. We left Cologne for Ostende at 4.24 on Tuesday morning. The trip had certainly been an enormous success from the pleasure we derived from it but there is still another aspect which it would be doing an injustice to disregard. In our travelling we experienced no trouble or unpleasantness of any kind. Officials were only too ready to make our travelling as easy as possible. Nor did we experience any difficulty with language. Much to our own discredit we found most of our German friends able to converse in our own tongue.



*With luncheons, parties, dinners and sightseeing our time was well occupied. It was very gratifying on some occasions when taking our seats in a restaurant to hear the German bands turn over to English music. The hospitality we received could leave nothing to be desired. Every consideration was given to our tastes and requirements and at every place we visited we met a friendliness and kindliness that abounded in plenty. A. V. KENT.*

*N.B. There is no record of who actually went on this tour other than a later reference to R Masurel (a French national) having been there. However it is reasonable to assume that the party would have been the PPC Hockey 1st X1 plus reserves.*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1935 : Session 1935-36***

*Captain of School)*

*Captain of Rugby) J D Williams*

*House Captain (Baines) of Games)*

*Vice Prefect, Sodality of Mary Immaculate)*

*Jim Williams, last year's School and Rugger Captain, has joined his unit at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. Our best wishes go with him.*

***DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM.***

*J. D. Williams.—Large number of metallic ores. Buttons of Royal Corps of Signals.*

*NOTES ON THE XV. WILLIAMS, J. D. (Capt.).—Captained the side well. A good hooker and scrummager, good in the line-out; opens up the game intelligently. He has had the honour of captaining the XV for two unbeaten seasons.*

***Prior Park Magazine Jul 1936 : Prior Park Association Medals.—St. Paul's : James D. Williams.***

*We hear that Jim Williams is working successfully and steadily towards the top at Woolwich. We expect to hear that he will be picked for the 'shop' in the annual Rugger match against Sandhurst next term.*

*We are most grateful to the following who contributed to the Sports' Prize Fund:—Mr. G. Rimmer, Mrs. Williams, Mr. J. H. Canning, Mr. R. H. Curties, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Barnes, Messrs. T. C. Marsh & Co., Mr. W. H. Axford and others.*



*Jim Williams is forging ahead at Woolwich. He plays rugger for the " A " XV. He is now joined by John Mahony who plays for his Co. XV. We hear that he studies a little now and then!*

***Prior Park Magazine Jul 1937 :*** *Jim Williams has passed out of Woolwich and is now in the Royal Artillery.*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1937 :*** *Jim Williams is at Larkhill with the Royal Artillery.*

*PRIOR PARK v. OLD BOYS. The Old Boys as usual started off at a rare pace and gave the School some anxious moments. The School relieved the pressure by judicious touch kicking. Some mid-field play followed—the Old Boys press and almost score through G White. Prior Park forwards use their feet to effect and take play to mid-field where Mulcahy sets his threes going and King zig-zags through the centre to score a try which Jones converts. After the kick out the Old Boys' threes make a determined onslaught. B. England, receiving on the left wing, outstrips all opposition to open the Old Boys' scoring. The kick just failed. The Old Boys started a passing movement in their own twenty-five. Molony intercepts and running with great determination scores in the corner. This try was not converted. The Old Boys, stung by this reverse, set up another fast attack and P. Ryan on the right wing completes a good round of passing by an uncovered try. Half-time : Prior Park 8 ; Old Boys 6. It was evident from the opening of the second half that the Old Boys were determined to wipe out arrears. This they quickly did when P. Ryan scores again. The Old Boys are now one point ahead. The School are not to be denied, and start a series of three-quarter attacks. From one of these A. O'Sullivan threads his way along the left touch line, eluding several defenders and scores a try which King converts with a good kick. From this to the end the Old Boys put all they knew and could into the game. Time after time would the England, Daly, White, Ryan line hurl itself upon our line, but each time to meet only a rock-like defence. The whistle sounded the end of one of the most thrilling games of the series. Prior Park 13 ; Old Boys' 9. Old Boys' XV.—B. England ; P. Ryan, D. Ryan, R. Sloan, B. Canning; M. Lee, H. Ferreira ; P. McKeigue, I. White, G. White, D. Fleming, T. O'Neill, J. Daly, J. Ryan, B. Osborne, J. D. Williams.*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1938 :*** *The following played for Old Boys v. College on November 6th :— Tom White, P. Ryan, J. Daly, B. England, H. Rose, R. Sloan, B. Rimmer, J. D. Williams, M. Lee, I. Lee, T. O'Neill, D. Fleming, J. Pardoe, A. Searle, P. McKeigue,*

***Prior Park Magazine Jul 1940***

## *ST. PAUL'S FROM DAY TO DAY*

*Thursday, June 6th.—A surprise holiday. We had the pleasure of a flying visit from Capt. J. D. Williams, R.A., safely home from Dunkirk.*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1940*** : *Jim Williams, R.E., went to France a 2nd Lieut, and returned a Captain. Congratulations on rapid promotion.*

***Prior Park Magazine Jul 1941*** : *The inter-House debates began on Sunday, February 16th, when Brownlow's proposed, against Baines', "That up to now the war has brought more good than evil to this country." Messrs. J. R. Brotherton, D. D. Lyons and R. E. Williams represented Brownlow's, and Messrs. D. J. Brotherton, T. Wade-West and I. H. Curties defended the interests of Baines'.*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1942*** : *We congratulate Richard Williams on having passed the examination for Late Entry Cadets of the Royal Navy. However, he later switched over to the Royal Engineers.*

*Richard Williams is booked for a University Commission Course in Engineering and is doing a course on his own at present with his father "in the works."*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1943*** : *Jim Williams is now a Major in R.A., and second in command of a Katin Regiment, India. His brother Dick has completed his course at Cambridge and is in the R.E.—O.C.T.U*

***Prior Park Magazine Dec 1951*** : *ROLL OF HONOUR, 1939-45 The following Old Boys were killed in action in the Second World War. Three were School Captains—W. de Freitas, J. D. Williams and C. P. King; others were House Prefects, members of the School teams, athletes, scholars or just 'ordinary' boys passing quietly through the classrooms of St Peter's and St Paul's. But all were ready, when the call came, to defend the right, and to Serve their King and Country in their dire need. Others came back when the guns were silent. But these had made the supreme sacrifice, and yielded up their young lives on land, or sea, or in the air: We mourn their loss, cut off hi the flower of their youth ; and we pray earnestly for their eternal repose. Surely they stand not in need of our prayers, for they have all shown that love than which none is greater, in laying down their lives 'for their friends'. Their names are inscribed, we are sure, in the 'Book of Life'. And they are honoured in Bath's Golden Book for which we thank Very Rev. Canon P. V. Hackett, St John's. It is intended to inscribe their names on a memorial tablet to be displayed in the new Study Hall in St Paul's. The President earnestly requests that any correction or omissions be notified to him as soon as possible, so that the 'list may be complete. DE*

*FREITAS, W. A. A. O'BRIEN, J. P. BIAS, P. O'REILLY, L. B. EDWARDS, L. F. OSBORNE, R. J. FORDE, E. PIKE, G. P. Fox, P. ROSE, P. C. GORDON CANNING, C. J. RYAN, B. GROVES, J. SLOAN, R. W. KING, C. P. TODD, G. R. LEE, M. TODD, T. F. LUNDON, W. E. WILLIAMS, J. D. MAHONY, J.*



*Photo from Simon Beck who visited the grave in 2017.*



## **A BOY'S WARTIME EXPERIENCE**

### **(EXCERPT FROM THE BATH BLITZ MEMORIAL PROJECT.)**

I was 11yrs old and the year was 1940. My two brothers, Tony and Dennis and myself were attending Widcombe Junior School. Our summer holidays that year were overshadowed by talk of the believed inevitable invasion of Great Britain by the German forces. France had fallen and the Battle of Britain was taking place.

At our ages it was both an exciting and scary time. I can remember the local Home Guard being very active at that time, but everyone tried to carry on as normal as possible. It could not have been easy for most adults in those uncertain days.

We were all aware that a German invasion was likely because we had witnessed the Home Guard and the Air Raid Wardens carrying out their training. Heaps of stone and timber had been spaced at intervals in the fields to foil the enemy gliders and paratroopers, and there were road blocks everywhere. I used to read the daily papers avidly in those days, about the bombing of London and other cities.

At 11 years of age I was the eldest, my brothers being ten and eight. One of our favourite 'playgrounds' at that time was Prior Park gardens. We and our friends played on the lake and in the woods regularly. When the staff and pupils were on their August vacation, we were left free to roam. There was in those days, an old punt at the side of the lake. We used to cut sticks from the woods, sharpen them to a point and try spearing fish from the boat, (we never caught anything). The punt had a leak at one end so we made our young friend Robert stuff one of his socks into the hole and also used a tin can to bale the water out.

We could also swing from the creepers that hung down from the trees, playing at being 'Tarzan'. You might say that this was how this particular event came about. It was whilst we were swinging around in the woodland that my brother Dennis, scraping his foot along the rough ground, exposed part of an iron ring in the undergrowth. On clearing away the earth, we found the ring was attached to a wooden hatch cover.

Of course, being curious we pulled the cover up and discovered a deep shaft with a vertical wooden ladder going down about ten feet. More and more intrigued we went down the ladder and at the bottom was a dug out room measuring about 8ft by 5ft. At one end of the room was a table and



on it, in the gloom, Tony found a storm lantern. I always had matches in my pockets in those days so I lit the lantern.

We looked around in great surprise. There were chairs around the table, and along one wall were about four bunk beds. The biggest shock we had though was discovering guns and ammunition in boxes along the opposite wall. Then Tony shouted, "Hey, this lamp was made in Germany!" There it was clearly stamped on the lamp. So that was it, we had discovered a German spy hideout! But what were we supposed to do? Well we all decided that we had to inform the police. The newspapers were full of stories about German sympathizers in those days, called "Fifth Columnists". I thought we had discovered one of their spy holes.

So, covering up the pit and hiding it as before, we set off. Bath Police Station was in Orange Grove in those days, next to the Empire Hotel. It had formerly been used as the Fire Station. All four of us crept into the front office of the station. We could just about look over the counter at a police sergeant who looked, to us, about ten feet tall. "Well, what do you lads want?" He bellowed. "Please sir, I think we have discovered a German spy hideout" I said to him. "Oh yes, and where is this hideout" he said.

So we explained what we had found at Prior Park, and by this time quite a few more policemen had gathered around us. We must have been quite convincing because, although they didn't have a clue about what we were telling them, they contacted our parents to let them know where we were, then took us in a police car back to Prior Park. Having proved to them that we had indeed found a secret hideout, they took us back to a waiting room at the station.

Although at the time, Ron and his friends thought they had found a German spy hideout, it is almost certain that what they had discovered was the Operational Base of the **Admiralty No 4 Patrol** of the Auxiliary Units. See also COMMENT below.

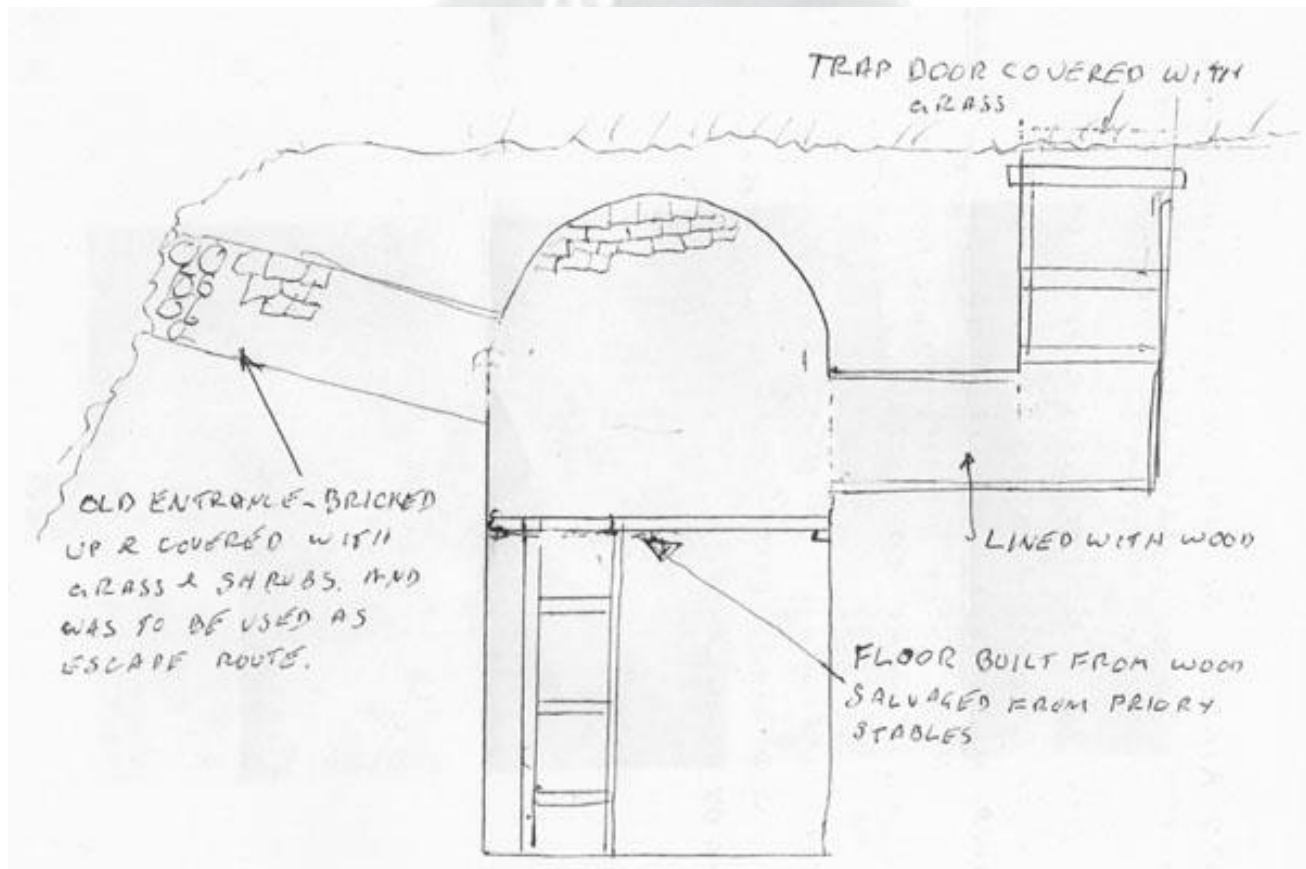
After a little while, we were interviewed again in the presence of Major Lock, who was the officer in charge of the local Home Guard. We knew of him because he lived in a house on Widcombe Hill. But the Major admitted that he was also unaware of the hideout we had found. Eventually we were allowed to go home after solemnly swearing that we would not divulge anything about the whole affair. And also vowing that we would not go into Prior Park woods again. Of course, our parents had to know what had happened and they must also have been cautioned to keep mum about it.

All of us involved in this escapade kept our silence about it, and in fact, it remained almost forgotten for nearly fifty years. Only in recent years have

we mentioned anything, after the story of Winston Churchills' secret army came out. An informal army of local, trustworthy, and countrywise men and women was formed to harass the enemy had they actually managed to invade the British Isles. About two years after this episode, we did return to the woods at Prior Park, but were unable to find any evidence of the hideout.

RON FROST

## COMMENT

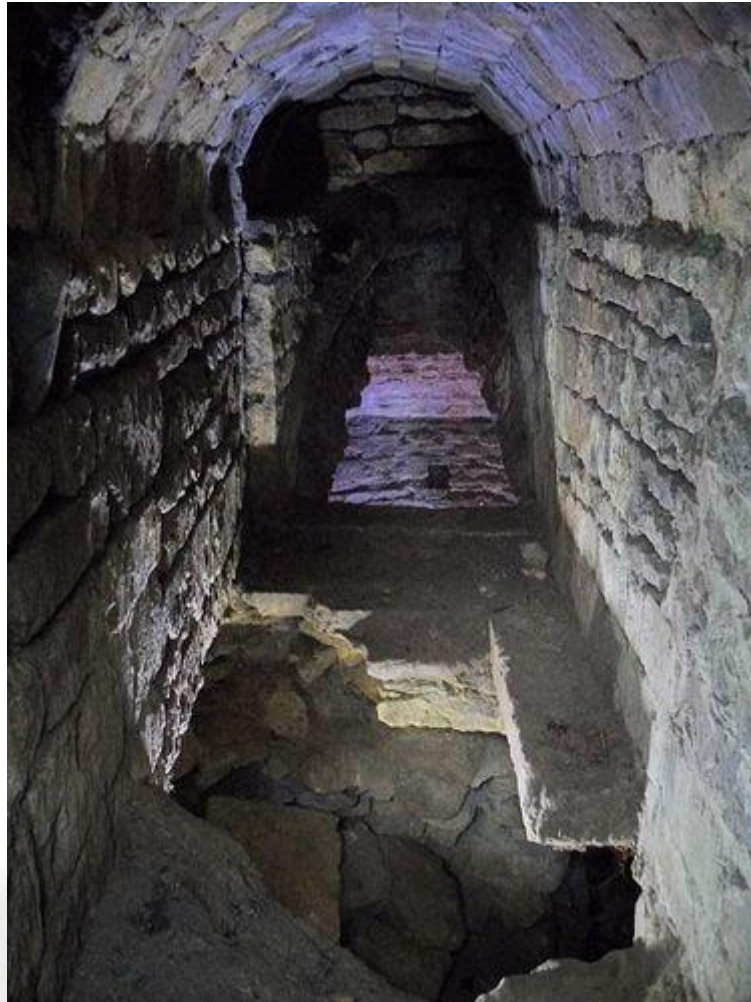


After Ron's story went on the website, I received an e-mail with some additional information from someone identified only as "Harry" about the hideout that Ron and his friends had found.

The structure was originally the Ice House for Prior Park. When it was converted into an Operational Base a new entrance was dug because the original would have been too difficult to camouflage. Harry's sketch is on the right, which was supplied with the following explanation of the status of the hideout at the time Ron found it.

**This was when the threat of invasion was over. We had removed all explosives several weeks before this, and I am afraid the camouflage over the entrance had been neglected after that.**

I understand that the Ice House has been restored as part of the recent work on the Prior Park gardens, although there are no intentions of opening it to the public. But until this story was published, the archaeologists were unaware of its use as an Operational Base, and were baffled by the holes and occasional brackets on the walls (which had held the Operational Base structures) because no Ice House functions could explain why they were there. Ron's story enlightened them.



### **Admiralty 4, Prior Park Auxillary Unit Patrol**

British Résistance Archive: <http://www.coleshillhouse.com/admiralty-4-bath-auxiliary-unit-patrol.php>

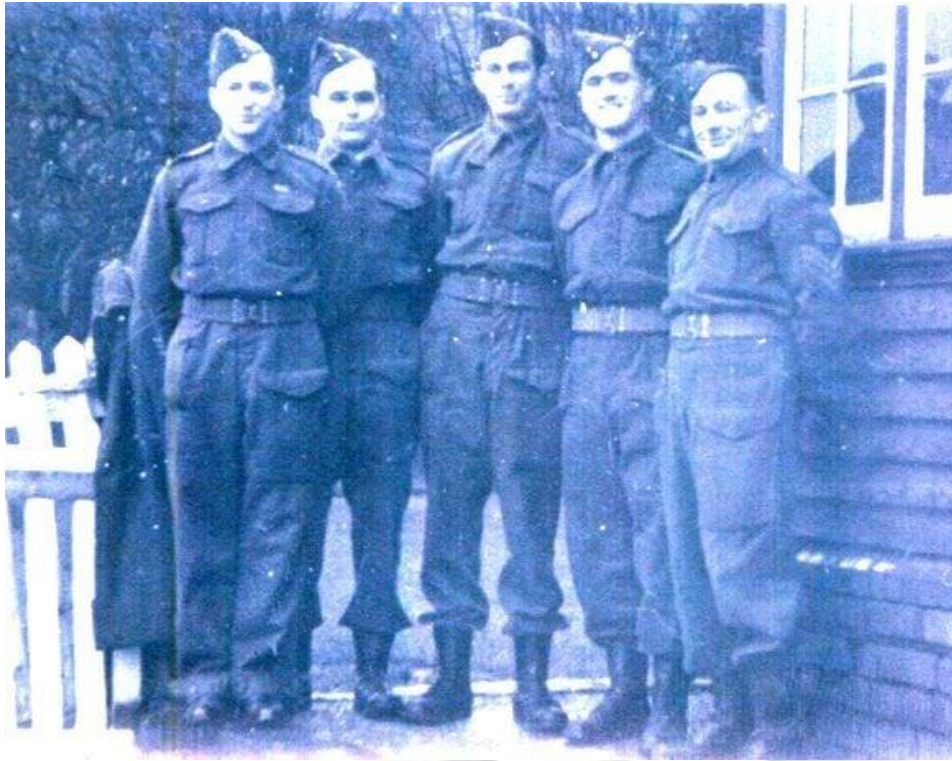
**Patrol members:** When war was declared a section of the Admiralty headquarters were moved to Bath. Initially scattered around the city making use of requisitioned hotels, they eventually moved into more suitable locations such as at Fox Hill and purpose built military hutments at Ensleigh, Landsdown Road.

Most of those working with the Admiralty were billeted locally, either with families or in hostels.



There were five Admiralty patrols, Number 1 at Kelston Park, 2 at Langridge, 3 at Warminster Road, 4 at Prior Park and 5 at Newton Park, Newton St. Loe.

All five Admiralty Patrols were recruited from those working for the Admiralty so there was a high turnover of patrol members as men were posted elsewhere through work.



The Patrols OB was located to the SE of the centre of Bath.

Harry Banham remembers building a drop down entrance shaft and using the ice house “entrance” as an escape tunnel. This version is corroborated by Ron Frost who found the OB as a child. He recalls an iron ring attached to a wooden hatch cover covering a deep shaft and a wooden step ladder leading down about 10 feet to a dug out room with four bunks and a table. He remembers finding guns and ammunition.

In a newspaper interview in 1996, Bert Masters described the OB as a “noisome” place. He recalled the dank, damp smell and especially the spiders.

What the patrol constructed whether it be entrance or exit, has been filled in.

When the OB was discovered by school boys ( Ron Frost) they thought they had found a German spy hideout or something to do with the black market. They rushed to tell the police. The police informed the land owner



and the Patrol found themselves on a raft of charges from trespass to damage of property to theft of timber. ( The timber used to build the shaft had been “acquired” from the landowners stable.). When the Intelligence officer for Somerset, Ian Fenwick, arrived to deal with the situation, he had a quiet word with the land owner. Being a retired Lt Colonel, the owner allowed the Patrol whatever they wanted and dropped all charges. Ron and his brothers were told NEVER to speak of it again !

**Patrol Targets:** Possibly RAF Colerne as Bert Masters talked of a big break in there and it is known the other Admiralty Patrols were involved.

**Training:** Admiralty 4 trained with the other Admiralty Patrols and sometimes along with the “City of Bath” Patrols. Initial training was carried out in local quarries. On one exercise they even trained with sections of the cadet force from one of the local public schools when there was 80-100 men involved.

The Patrols were sent to test the defences of the local RAF Station, all the men gained entry and plastered the aircraft with “destroyed” notices. The commander was even held at gun point in his office. All RAF leave was cancelled for 2 weeks.

A training target was a disused water mill on an island in the River Avon. No 4 Patrol approached via a long heavy plank. Another patrol choose to rope themselves together and crawl along the weir.

Bob Bennett remembers leading the patrol crawling along in the shadow of a field hedge. Turning, he found they had been followed by a group of curious cows.

Later, training became more commando like ie climbing cliffs and swinging over ravines.

**Weapons and Equipment:** Gelignite, plastic explosives, fuses, detonators. Also Colt, Tommy and Sten guns which they were told was a gift from New York Police Department. Phosphorous bombs came later and Bob Bennett can remember being trained with sticky bombs but not being issued with them.

They were also given a G licence for petrol, camouflage paint and the all important rubber boots.

The Admiralty Patrols also had a central explosives / arms store in an out building at The Royal School, Lansdown Road and according to Harry Banham another one built into the bank of the car park of The Ensleigh estate.

There was a shooting competition on 20th Feb 1944 at Monkton Coombe between the Admiralty Patrols. A resounding win for Patrol 4.

Bert Masters joked the Auxiliars in his Patrol were “Middle-class types... not swede bashers !” Masters was the explosives expert in the group.

Bert married his wife the day before war was declared and his daughter was born just before the Blitz. Aware that any knowledge of his activities would put their lives in danger he never breathed a word to them. They only learnt the real truth when Bert was interviewed by the Mail on Sunday in 1996.

He recalled “ We were more or less told if anything happened, we'd be on our own. We did the spit and polish stuff because it kept up the fiction we were Home Guard but our REAL job was to keep our heads down – until invasion.

Any man who tells you he was not afraid is a liar”

Bert Masters stayed with the Admiralty and at retirement was a chief draughtsman. Though aware, in later years, he was eligible for the defence medal, the lack of recognition never bothered him.

### **A letter from one of the Patrol members**

*Nov 1994*

*Dear Sir or Madam,*

*You may have seen or heard about the Auxiliary Units which were operating throughout the country during the last war. We have recently held an anniversary luncheon at Coles Hall, near Highworth, Swindon to celebrate 50 years from our being “stood down.”*

*These units, patrols of seven men, very well armed and trained and supplied with substantial quantities of explosives and other devices, would have gone underground if the German army had landed over here. Our job would have been to harass and sabotage their supply lines. I have enclosed a newspaper article (not attached), which was published shortly after our get together.*

*There were several Operational Bases in the countryside around Bath, one was on Bathampton Downs in the wood nearby and my own OB was in the old ice house in Prior Park College grounds – we were searching for a suitable place to excavate and in which to build a shelter for seven men and our supplies when we uncovered the entrance to this old “Ice House” used by the monks of the old priory. We emptied it and*

*built platforms inside for our living areas – the timber came from the old tennis courts up near the Bradford Road. All this work was carried out in complete secrecy – except the Prior who was informed by Army GHQ and who gave us his blessing to carry on.*

*We assumed the role of Home Guards as a cover for our time spent away from home and our wives and families. We trained with the army units – later SAS – and carried on with our normal jobs during the day.*

*Early this year (1994) I made a visit to the grounds of the College and was surprised to see the huge amount of work being carried out – I feared the old historic ice house might have been destroyed – I was unable to clamber down the slope to the lake ( now aged 82) to check on this but phonecalls to the Nat Trust shop told me that you knew of its existence and that it was included in your tours of the College, Palladian bridge and grounds.*

*I now regret that we damaged the inside of the structure to get our floor timbers into the walls. I was most impressed by the quality of the original building in red brick and lined with Bath stone for insulating qualities.*

*I excavated an escape hole near the base and we constructed an escape tunnel out through towards the lake. Whilst doing this at about 2 am, the roof collapsed onto my colleagues back, pinning him down and I had to dig this out to free him – we succeeded by 6am – home for a wash and to work.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Jack Dennis*

# The Fallen Memorial

James Murphy-O'Connor ( Headmaster 2009-2019) was the driving force behind a new memorial for all the Lost Boys that had been found.

The Fallen memorial was created by local Bath artist, Mary-Jane Evans, a ceramic specialist in 2018. Each of the largest leaves is named with one of the Fallen. Their full name and dates on each. There is room on the installation to add further leaves as they are found, it can grow and evolve as the research continues. The most profoundly beautiful aspect of this art is the movement and creation of music as the soft breeze captures the leaves. They gently brush against each other and meditative, wind chime melodies are emitted adding to the contemplative effect of the overall piece.

In November 2018, on Remembrance Day, relatives of the lost boys were invited to celebrate the new installation. Families travelled, literally across the world to join in. From the 21 names on the original memorial we now have the stories of 38 men. We will remember them.





# The Outbreak of World War II

1939-1943

## Chronological life at Prior

During the opening weeks of the war many schools were evacuated to “safe areas”, normally in the country away from factories, aerodromes or “sensitive” Research areas. On **12 October 1939**, Mr Bendall, H.M.I called to discuss the possibility our granting the new Gymnasium Block for the use of a school being evacuated from London. The Br Superior General approved of giving the building an annual rent of £500. This decision was conveyed to Mr Bendall on the **31 October 1939**. Mr Bendall, H.M.I, called again and said the school he had in mind was a Catholic Girls Secondary School. The Superior, Br Doyle, pointed out that it was assumed that a boys school would occupy the new building and the he feared that the Superior General and the Bishop would not approve of a girls school. Both were informed of the proposed move and both objected as expected, and so the matter was dropped.

**January 1940** was a very cold month. The big lake near the Palladian bridge was frozen with a thick coating of ice, and people came there to skate. The middle lake was not frozen. The question of the requisition of the College was again raised by the Office of Works. In a letter on the **4 February 1940**, Sir Patrick Duff wrote: “I was hopeful that it might not be necessary for me to requisition the College buildings....Up to now it has been possible to avoid disturbing you in any way, although many schools slightly more suitably situated for the Admiralty requirements had not been so fortunate....

Meanwhile, Admiralty staffs in Bath have been growing enormously as a result of the pressure put upon that Department, by the intensification of the war at sea..... It is only in such an extremity I am writing to say I have no option but to ask you if you would come and discuss the issue with the First Commissioner at the earliest date you can manage.”

As a result of this letter, the Superior and the Bishop, went to Whitehall on **Feb 9 1940** and met the First Commissioner, Mr Ramsbottom, and Sir Peter Duff. Once again the history of the College was reviewed and the question of the College Chapel and its use by the public was pressed and as an earnest of our willingness to help the Admiralty we suggested their having the use of the new Gymnasium and Classroom block, provided they would confine themselves to that section of the College. An

agreement was reached on this basis, the question of rent to be settled later.

The New Block was not quite finished at the time, but the Admiralty put through "Priority" claims on men and material. The work was completed by **May 1940** and a section of the Admiralty Accountancy staff was settled in the New Block, and by **16 May** the Admiralty occupied the whole of the new teaching block.

By **14 Feb 1940** the carving of the five bays and pilasters on the south aisle of the College Chapel was completed. On **4 March 1940**, Br Francis O'Connell was brought to St Marys Hospital, Bristol suffering from pneumonia. By **19 May** the new toilet block at St Pauls was completed. This was situated near the Boot Room and the changing rooms for Games.

On **24 June 1940** the First Air Raid warning sounded in Bath at 1.30am. The "All Clear" sounded 2.5 hours later at 4.00am. On **29 June**, the College Chaplain became very unwell. We are not told what was the problem but he was replaced by Rev Fr J Rea.

This year owing to the War Conditions, the Brothers took their summer holidays at Ilfracombe in North Devon. They stayed at the boarding school, adjoining the convent at Torr Park where they were well provided for by the Community. A number of the Brothers from the Northern Houses came to Prior Park for their holiday this year. However, during August, bombs were dropped in Bath and the surrounding area.

**On 13 August 1940**, the Brothers since they did not earn a salary, were exempt from Income Tax and this came into effect on this day. All property also was made free of tax, except "land tax" which was a small sum. As a result the Brothers received a refund of the tax which they had paid since 1 April 1940. This money was used to extend the heating system in St Pauls which was then centrally heated throughout. As a safety measure in the event of air raid, the pupils sleeping on the top floor of St Pauls had their beds moved to the play rooms and the Old sacristy in the Church. The small boys in St Peters were taken to the Mansion where they occupied the Academy Hall and the adjoining bedrooms.

**On 15 September 1940**, Rev Bro J J Strahan, former President of Prior Park College, died in Artane. RIP

On **6 October 1940**, a prominent Old Boy and a good friend of the College, Lt Colonel W R Chichester, passed away. RIP

**10 October 1940** a fire alarm system operated from the Mansion Hall, was fixed in St Peters and St Pauls Colleges. On **24 November 1940**, the first very heavy air raid on Bristol took place. The fires could be seen from the Portico of the Mansion. On **2 December 1940** a further very heavy raid took place in Bristol. As a result of this raid nine Brothers from the St Brendan's community came to sleep in Prior Park. On the **13 December** radiators were fixed in the large parlour and Reception Room of the mansion. On the **15 December** the Brothers from St Brendan's came for their 8 days Christmas retreat at Prior Park. On the **29 December** troops slept in beds on the ground floor of St Pauls and they also occupied the rooms until the end of the Christmas holidays, the **14 January 1941**. During the Autumn of 1940 much time and material were used in fixing hundreds of Black out curtains and shutters were also used, where these existed. When the air raid siren warning was given, all the pupils and staff went from St Pauls to the basement rooms under the Mansion and the Peterites to the Arched passages joining the classrooms and the playrooms.

On **16 January 1941** Bath had its 400<sup>th</sup> air raid warning. High explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped near Tiverton. Bath had its first casualties. Incendiary bombs fell in the College grounds, near the Palladian bridge, and in the adjoining fields at 2.45am. On the morning of **17 January 1941**, the main raid was on Bristol. The all clear went at 5.40am. From **Christmas 1940 until May 1941**, air raid warnings sounded almost every night and occasionally two or three times per night. The Brothers were fire watching every night and watching over the pupils and the buildings. Bombers and fighters, bomb explosions, anti-aircraft fire and searchlights were familiar to all. On **8 May 1941** Rev Fr B Madden succeeded Dr J Rea as Chaplain to the College. No formal prize giving took place this year. The President distributed prizes to the boys in St Pauls study. No invitations to parents were issued. The Sports Day was held on **7 June 1941** but there were no prizes beyond the House Trophies. In spite of the fact that there were no official invitations quite a number of boys parents were present.

On **8 June** Fr Sexton S J came to conduct the boys retreat, which took place 9, 10 and 11 of June. On the Feast of Corpus Christi, the usual Blessed Sacrament procession took place. There were a large number of visitors including more than one hundred girls evacuees from a Catholic Secondary School. There were many nuns with them.



The Brothers who could get travelling visas went to Ireland for their holidays. Those who failed to get visas went to Ilfracombe. Br Cecilius Clay from Gibraltar, was evacuated to Prior Park from Gibraltar on **1 August 1941**. On **16 September 1941**, Her Majesty, Queen Mary, visited Prior park. The Duke of Gloucester also called.

On **29 October 1941**, a letter was received from Mr A King, solicitor, informing us that HMO of Works was prepared to pay an annual rent of £609.19.6 for the new Gymnasium block. This sum was agreed to.

On **7 December 1941**, Peter Lambert was received into the Church. On **15 December** the Brothers from Bristol, Brentwood and Plymouth came to Prior Park for their annual Christmas Retreat. The Brothers from Plymouth remained on for a week after Christmas. Plymouth being the main Naval port and dockyard in the SW of England came in for a very severe “carpet bombing programme” at this time. The School was eventually so badly damaged that the School community – pupils and Brothers – were evacuated to Buckfast Abbey, where they remained until the end of the war.

Br Benedict O’Sullivan who had been quite unwell for some time, went into St Marys hospital where he stayed until **20 January 1942**.

On **5 March 1942**, HM, The Queen Mother, accompanied by her daughter, Princess Mary, and Viscount Lascelles paid another visit to Prior Park.

On **2 April 1942**, Mr Owens, Bath City Engineer, called on the Headmaster. He sought permission to draw on the waters of the Lakes for “fire-fighting” should the need arise. This request was granted. The Engineer undertook to clean out the pond in the Rookery wood to provide an emergency water supply. This was done by the Corporation workmen. At the earnest request of the Bath Corporation, arrangements were made to let them have a room in the Basement of the Mansion for use by the Civil Defence Committee as an Emergency Headquarters. The Corporation had the room painted, gas and water laid on and they also installed their own telephones.

**Saturday April 25 1942** (account by the President, Br Baptist Doyle):

“The night of April 25 1942 will long be remembered by those who were resident in Prior Park, at that time. It was the night of the first deliberate raid on Bath – we had become accustomed to the wail of the sirens, the noise of the guns, the familiar throb of the German bombers. So far,



however, these were things which did not disturb us. On this night, however, the sirens sounded at 11.20pm. As there was always the possibility of “stray bombs” falling, Brothers J S Roche, Borgia Ryan and Baptist Doyle went out on the portico. At first there was some gun fire over the Eastern approaches to the City, as enemy planes approached the City, from that direction. Within three minutes, flares were floating down over Bath, illuminating the city and district. We realised immediately that we were in for trouble. The alarm bells were set ringing in St Peters, St Pauls and the Mansion. These aroused the Brothers, the domestic staff and two boys – **Anthony McCarthy and James Murphy-O’Connor\*** who had returned early – before the end of the Easter holidays. As Mr Gregory, his wife and family who resided in the Lodge had not come to the Mansion, it was thought that they had not heard the sirens. Accordingly, Br Francis O’Connell went to the Lodge to warn the family. Br O’Connell then returned to the Mansion. He had just reached the Hall when a very large, heavy bomb came hurtling down and exploded on the grass bank outside the steps of St Pauls College and to the Mansion side. Br Edmund Burke ( Ned Burke as he was known affectionately by the Brothers) had remained in his room at the top of St Pauls, had a narrow escape. The explosion brought down the plaster of the ceiling, whilst the door and its frame was blown in right across the room! The window was also blown out! He was fortunate to get away without serious accident and he made his own way over to the shelter of St Peter’s.”

“Some ten minutes later another cluster of bombs was heard falling nearby. One fell on the path leading to the Lakes, about 100 yards below St Peters. Fortunately this bomb did not explode. It was removed later by the Bomb Disposal Unit. A second bomb exploded in the front field near the oak tree, a third on the lower drive but on the Prior Park Farm side of the road, and a fourth on the farm lands. Two exploded in the big Lake. The raid, which was carried out in three phases with intervals of about an hour between them lasted until 5.15am. All through the night, bombs were falling round about.!

“At dawn there was an opportunity of seeing something of the damage. It was found that every window in St Paul’s College and in the College Chapel, and in the Errington Corridor was blown into tiny pieces. The Eastern half of the steps outside St Paul’s were blown up, and the balustrading about these steps had totally disintegrated. Pieces were later found in Rookery woods. The balcony over the entrance to St Paul’s was destroyed. Inside the ceilings were down in the Errington corridor leading to St Paul’s and in the Arcades. The ceiling of the South Aisle of the Church was down as was most of roof of the Church!

“In St Paul’s the roof over the Study, bedrooms and dormitories was blown off. The Library cases were wrecked and in the bedrooms and dormitories, the furniture was blown to splinters. The ceilings were down, the walls cracked and the doors were wrecked in almost every case from their jambs. In the “new Block”, windows, door and partitions were wrecked. However, in the main, the building stood up very well to the blast.”

### **Sunday 26 April 1942:**

“Sunday night saw the raids over Bath once more. It was an eerie sight to watch the portico hundreds of incendiary bombs bursting into flame on the north western side of the City. The raid lasted just a little over an hour and apart from broken glass caused by blast, the College escaped further damage.!

“Two boys were due back to School on 29 April but owing to the extent of the damage we were unable to receive them on that date.”

On the days following the raids, the Brothers worked very hard all day long in removing plaster, glass, slates, tiles, debris of all kind, covering what was left of the window frames with cloth and in making and hanging temporary doors etc. Through the kindness of Colonel Rogers – the owner of the Priory – some members of the Home Guard assisted in removing desks from the study and in bringing down beds. By the end of two weeks, the Mansion and the classrooms were put in order to receive the boys and the parents were notified that the college would reopen on **15 May**. All reported back to School. Not one failed to turn up.

Things were very difficult this term. The boys sleeping in the Mansion had to wash each morning in the shower room at St Paul’s. The classrooms were draughty, but fortunately the weather was good. Moreover, the boys took it all in a cheerful spirit and as part of their share in the war effort. The boys co-operated with the Staff in every way. They were deserving of the highest praise.

“On **4 June 1942**, the Corpus Christi procession was held as usual but owing to the damage to the College Chapel we had Exposition in the Mansion Chapel. There were the usual “benedictions” on the lawn and under the portico.” Quite a considerable number of people attended. On the evening of this day the Army Bomb disposal experts removed the unexploded bomb which fell near the Palladian bridge, on the night of **3 May 1941**! On **5 June** the Mayor of Bath, Mr A Bateman, called to the College and visited the classes in St Paul’s and congratulated the pupils on their wonderful spirit.

On **27 June 1942**, the temporary repairs to the College Chapel were now complete and Holy Mass was celebrated here once again – the first time since the air raid on Bath in April 1942. The erection of the new tabernacle together with the marble throne and canopy and the fixing of the new stations of the cross in the College Chapel were completed. The work was executed by Messrs Boulton of Cheltenham. The cost of the work was met by Right Rev William Lee, Bishop of Clifton at a cost of £399.18

*\* Note that on contacting the previous Headmaster (2009-2019), James Murphy-O'Connor, about the fact that his father had been one of the two boys on site during the bombing, his response was: After the events of that night in April 1942 dad sent a card to his parents.. it read*

*'Dear Mum & Dad  
House took direct hit- all well.  
Please send more money for tuck  
Love James'*

*Oh the innocence of youth!*



## **Excerpt from *The Phoenix* by Peter Cornwell and Denis Clarke: Prior Park Under Fire**

### **Chapter 10.**

For those with eyes to see the shadows of war in Europe were again gathering. Although Prior Park had not, as a school community, lived through the 1914-18 War, its old boys certainly had, so, along with all other schools, it carried its scars in the shape of those memorial tablets which spoke louder than words of that appalling loss of young life. Armistice Day 11 November was every year a poignant occasion solemnly observed. Even those who had escaped with their lives by no means escaped unscathed. Many were damaged physically or mentally. Sir Denzil Cope was said to have had 'his nerves shattered by all the scenes of suffering he saw.' His experiences gave him 'an intense feeling for the suffering of humanity' which he would gather and offer up in his daily attendance at Mass. The shrinking of the survivors of that war from the very thought of another one cannot be underestimated. An uncle of the writer had been a Navigator with the Flying Corps, was shot down and endured the privations of a prisoner of war. His nerves were also shattered and, unable to face the prospect of another war, took his own life. As the shadow became clearer and ever more unavoidable, there was an edge to the College's 11 November commemoration, as it gathered for the silence and the recitation of the psalm *De Profundis*.

But how aware was the little world of Prior Park of this threat? How were young Catholics viewing the rise of Mussolini in Italy, of Hitler in Germany and what did they make of Franco's overthrow of the democratically elected government of Spain? Stephen Weetman, then a seminarian at the English College in Rome, wrote: 'Fascism, amongst the many good things it achieved, caused the Church once more to be respected.' This was, of course, after Mussolini had exchanged his early virulent anti-ecclesiastical views for the practical wisdom of seeking a more peaceable accommodation with the Vatican. This was achieved by the Lateran Treaty of 11 February 1929. *L'Osservatore Romano* declared that through this Treaty 'Italy has been given back to God and God to Italy.' Certainly the relationship established by it seemed to be of advantage to both parties. It is hardly surprising that a seminarian, who later became a much respected and loved lay teacher at the College, should, at this time, be flirting with Fascism. After all many others were doing the same and there was the respected Catholic weekly *The Tablet* declaring 'the great hearted' Mussolini to have 'shown himself an



intellectual giant' and Pope Pius XI calling the dictator 'the man whom Providence has sent.' When the highly successful black athlete Jessie Owens was booed by the Nazi racist crowd at the Berlin Olympics in 1936, which was thought to have been 'the most unpleasant crowd before which athletes have had to compete', *Prior Park* magazine provided an apologist. These complaints, wrote one old boy, were a great exaggeration 'admittedly the succession of Negro victories must have been galling to a German crowd, but if Jesse Owens and others did not get a welcoming roar, they were certainly greeted with polite if perfunctory clapping'! Another old boy, M.T. Coyne travelling in the Rhineland as late as 1938, claimed that the German people were not interested in politics and commended 'the delightful cleanliness of Germany' which compared favourably with what he called 'the squalor' of Belgium. In 1939 there came the sad report that two old boys, Jose Frois and Felipe Berge, had been killed in action fighting under Franco in the Spanish Civil War.

All this reflects the rather uncritical Catholic dalliance with right-wing extremism of that period. This clearly sprang from the perception that the real threat was the Red menace of the Soviet Union. All enemies of the USSR, it seemed, must be friends of the Church. Moreover were not these dictators providing just what an authoritarian church insisted that people needed – order and firm discipline? Had not Pius XI favoured what he called 'Catholic totalitarianism' and were not 'family values' safer under Mussolini than any government of the left? Catholics bred for heel-clicking obedience to absolute church authority failed to detect some of the maggots in these apples, for instance that Mussolini, while discovering the uses of being a Catholic, saw none in being a Christian. The startling distinction in his mind is instructive. Christianity, he rightly perceived, inescapably had its roots in Judaism and that he could not be having. Hitler, with his naked neo-paganism, was always more difficult for Catholics to take, while Franco, like Mussolini, was easier. Faced with the appalling slaughter of priests and nuns by the left in Spain, it was at least tempting to turn a blind eye to Franco's ruthless use of torture and executions and throw in one's lot with this version of 'Catholic totalitarianism'. As we have heard in our own time, cannot a few human rights be traded in for the sake of security and national unity? So when the College debated the motion 'Dictatorship is superior to Democracy' it was not surprising that the latter won by only the narrowest of margins.

But not even the clouds of euphoria emanating from the Lateran Pact could altogether dispel those of war. The school magazine carried an article on how to lay sea mines and gave news of Dennis Branigan engaged in building destroyers at Cowes. Although Seymour Hicks played the 'cheerful chappie' seeing it to be a 'duty to be merry' and exhorting his contemporaries to 'join the laughing optimists', in September 1938 the College had to come down to earth and face the serious business of fitting gas masks. But then in a trice these could be laid aside for had not Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain come back from Munich waving his piece of paper and assuring all that there would be 'peace in our time'? Prior Park, along with most of the nation, was eager to believe the good news. On 19 October the College Debating Society added its endorsement of the policy of appeasement by overwhelmingly passing the motion 'Mr Chamberlain deserves well of his country'. So it was back to life as usual. A Philatelic Society was founded and the school museum acquired a lump of lava from Vesuvius, some mosquitoes (dead) from Shanghai and silkworm cocoons from Milan. As if to crown this mood of reassurance old Queen Mary visited the College again, this time accompanied by the Duchess of Kent to whom the seven-year-old Peter Levi presented a bouquet of flowers said to be 'nearly as large as himself.' All things must be well.

Some of the old boys though were waking up to reality. A group came to the College to debate with the young on the issue of compulsory National Service in the armed forces. The pupils seemed altogether more complacent than their elders whom they judged to be 'suffering from nerves' and whom they rebuked for seeming 'to think war inevitable.' With a Government 'alert and mentally fit' the younger generation saw no need of National Service – 'the voluntary scheme' they loftily declared 'was sufficient'. It took an old boy at the Prior Park Association dinner to declare: 'Today we are living in the age of Hitler and things are by no means as safe as houses.'

All of which, of course, was to prove to be the case in the following year. 1939 began with heavy snow, the delight of every schoolboy, so there was the excitement of snow balling and tobogganing in the valley. On 10 February Pope Pius XI died and the school gathered around the wireless to listen to his Funeral and again, after the election of his successor Pacelli as Pius XII, to the papal Coronation Mass. But during the school summer holidays the nation went to war and the College came back for the autumn term praying 'for victory of right over wrong.' This year there was to be no

Guy Fawkes party on 5 November and the Armistice Day celebrations a few days later seemed 'particularly depressing' as they gathered 'to remember those who gave their lives in the war to end war.'

This was the period of the so-called 'phoney war' when nothing much seemed to happen. 'War', the school magazine rather jauntily proclaimed, 'does not seem to press heavily on the nerves but provides many topics of conversation.' Yet the authorities had to admit that the time had come to 'tackle the blackout business seriously' and the first trial air raid assembly was held. The war was also to impinge on the end of term arrangements. Boys travelling by train were confronted by an 'emergency' rail timetable so had to rise to catch what was available at what they described with distaste as 'an unearthly hour'. But still, before the term ended, spirits were raised by a concert organised by the indefatigable Norah Hodges and the newly-acquired elocution master Hedley Goodall. It starred Peter Levi as Snow White.

During 1940 the reality of war was inescapable. Out in Buenos Aires Dr Michael Petty found himself having to tend the wounded of HMS Exeter and HMS Ajax after their clash with the Graf Spee. Michael Rea, a seminarian at St Sulpice in Paris, was hurriedly evacuated to Bordeaux, while the ebullient Seymour Hicks was appointed controller of ENSA, the body devoted to bringing entertainment and good cheer to British troops throughout the world. The New Year began with bitter cold. On 21 January 20 degrees of frost were recorded and by the 29th trees were splitting with frost and the telegraph wires were down. Without the telephone and shivering in the cold, the College felt like the nation, bleak and isolated. There was even the admission that 'vitality had been brought to a low pitch'. Br Doyle's sepulchral words captured the mood – 'darkness has descended on Europe. The old world is in an appalling condition. Treachery and injustice, death and destruction are abroad.' Yet staff and pupils braced themselves and embarked upon an activity which was to become central to school life during the war, the collecting and chopping of firewood.

At this time of national crisis a typical school worry arose – with the nation 'engaged in a life and death struggle' was it really appropriate to hold a Speech Day? In the end it was decided that the path of duty decreed that the event should go ahead precisely to defy any 'mood of



defeatism' and to show publicly that Prior Park at least would not let 'the war get us down.' So the presiding Bishop Lee was able confidently to announce that 'God would give us victory in the war because what were we fighting for but the recognition of him and his Kingdom?' And then to show that the College itself was 'doing its bit' for the war effort, he announced that the new teaching block had been handed over for the duration of the war 'to the Civil Service to help them continue the great work they are doing for us and for our world.' Behind all of which lies a story, told by the late Mgr Jim Kelly with some gusto, which speaks volumes about the character of Bishop Lee.

Way back in 1939 the warning had been given that Prior Park might have to be requisitioned or made to share its site with a Catholic girls' secondary school. The Bishop and the Brothers united to object to both proposals. Indeed, if anything the prospect of the dilution of this all-male world seemed more dreadful than that of requisitioning. For a while both fates were avoided. But in February 1940 Sir Patrick Duff of the Office of Works wrote of the Admiralty's great need for further accommodation in Bath where it was now based. The threat was no longer a distant one. Seeing this Bishop Lee promptly moved into action. Sweeping up Br Doyle, and armed with a cunning plan in his head and a bottle of whisky in his bag, the Bishop and the Brother embarked upon the train to London, there to confront the Minister in his lair. Battling his way firmly through secretaries to the august presence, the Bishop presented his case. Was not the nation, he argued, eager for the United States to come to the Allies' aid at this time? But, as the Minister well knew, there were many Roman Catholics in that country and it would not play well with them if it were known that the British Government had closed down a leading Catholic school. Of course the College was more than eager to do anything in its power to assist the war effort and, as it happened, there was a brand new teaching block in the process of being built but this process had ground to a standstill because of wartime building restrictions. Were the Minister able to lift these restrictions then, of course, the Admiralty would have for its use a brand new building. What could be better? The Minister saw the wisdom of the Bishop's plan and agreed to a solution which provided government with what it needed, saved the College from being requisitioned and ensured the completion of the new teaching block – all of course in the national interest. So the Bishop was able to produce from his bag that bottle of whisky to celebrate with the Minister such a happy arrangement!



The pace of war increased during 1940. On 26 May there was a much needed national Day of Prayer for the British Expeditionary Force in Flanders. On 10 June Italy joined Germany in the war against the Allies and on 25 June at 12.30 am Prior Park experienced its first air raid warning. As the threat became real, beds were moved in St Paul's to the ground floor. The imposition of Double Summer Time, as a means of what they called 'daylight saving', meant even darker winter mornings. This in turn, for an institution with such large buildings, presented difficult 'black-out' problems. How was the school to satisfy sharp-eyed ARP wardens and prevent its conspicuously sited buildings from becoming a beacon for incoming enemy bombers? The problem was solved by a simple adjustment to the school's day, which was now to start an hour later.

Against this gloomy background, the Debating Society had a re-run of its 1938 debate on Chamberlain's policy of appeasement. Suffice it to say that the school's earlier favourable judgement was decisively reversed and nobody seemed to have a good word to say for the unfortunate Neville Chamberlain. Despite Bishop Lee's careful playing of the American card in his encounter with Sir Patrick Duff, the same Debating Society concluded that 'it was not advantageous to England for the USA to enter war on our side.' The very thought of England being in need of outside help seemed to be distinctly unpatriotic. A further curious debate was held at this time on the motion that 'up to now the war has brought more good than evil to the country'. Those who held this bracing view pointed out that the war had at least solved the unemployment problem, brought national unity, 'ensured thrift, a balanced diet, sound living and high thinking' – above all it had 'raised interest in religion'. However, those who took the contrary view bemoaned the damage being done to the fabric of society. Social barriers were being swept away, there was an increased 'tendency to socialism' and heavy burdens of taxation had been laid upon the people.

News of old boys became increasingly news of their lives and deaths. Early in the war the DFC was awarded to Flt Lt Billy Drake. He was to prove one of those rare pilot war heroes, ever more decorated for his gallantry, who lived to survive the hostilities. John Banwell, an ambulance driver, had a close escape at Dunkirk. But not so lucky were Pilot Officer Ralph Osborne, Maurice Lee and Bob Sloane. The latter died just ten days after his twenty-first birthday and a week after his wedding.

Brian Smith who was a pupil at that time recalls Br Hayes having to make frequent formal announcements of the deaths of former pupils, to which would always be added a prayer for the repose of their souls. On the home front the war drew nearer. In January 1941, planes returning from one of those many Bristol raids off-loaded incendiary bombs which fell close to the Palladian Bridge. That was followed in May by a high-explosive bomb, which never went off but left a large crater a few yards from the same bridge. But there were consolations both of a secular and spiritual nature. Queen Mary, by now evacuated to Badminton, paid her fourth visit to the College, this time accompanied by the Princess Royal and Viscount Lascelles. The Corpus Christi celebrations of 1941 were actually bigger and better than ever. This was mainly due to the presence of ever-larger numbers of Convent girls flooding in from schools which had been evacuated to the Bath area. Whatever the Brothers may have feared from the propinquity of the feminine, the boys seem to have appreciated it.

Before dispersing for the Easter holidays in 1942, the College celebrated Palm Sunday as a day of Prayer for Peace. So it was mercifully, while the boys were on holiday, that there came the great Bath raids over the weekend of April 25 and 26. Br Doyle describes how on the Saturday evening the sirens sounded at 11.20pm. Nobody thought much about it for by now this had become a fairly usual occurrence with German bombers passing constantly on their way to Bristol. But with the ever-present possibility of stray bombs falling as they had done in the recent past, Brothers Doyle, Roche and Ryan were dispatched to their usual posts on the Portico to keep an eye on things. Gunfire was to be heard over the eastern approaches to the city and within three minutes something ominously unusual happened – flares began to descend over Bath. That was the moment when the fire-watchers realised that they were in for more than a few stray bombs for the flares showed that Bath itself was being targeted. Alarm bells were set ringing throughout the College and Br O'Connell was dispatched to the lodge to warn Mr Gregory, the caretaker, and his family. Just as the Brother was returning, a bomb exploded on the grass bank outside St Paul's. Meanwhile Br Burke, never a man to be unduly disturbed by air raid warnings, was sitting in his room in St Paul's. He had ignored the ringing bells and was quietly absorbed in his correspondence. Within a trice he found the ceilings descending on him, the door blown across the room and the windows blown out. The Brother emerged unscathed. Ten minutes later another cluster of bombs

fell, one a hundred yards below St Peter's and two in the big lake. This first Bath raid continued until 5.15 the following morning.

Br Doyle writes of the aftermath: 'At dawn there was an opportunity of seeing something of the damage. It was found that every window in St Paul's, in the College Chapel and in the Errington Corridor was blown into tiny pieces. The eastern half of the steps outside St Paul's was blown up and the balustrading about these steps had totally disintegrated.' The balcony over the entrance to St Paul's was destroyed. Inside, the ceilings were down in the Errington Corridor leading to St Paul's and in what were then called the 'Arcades', the area which has now been converted into the Roche Housemaster's flat. The ceiling of the south aisle of the Chapel was down as was most of its roof. In St Paul's itself there was damage to the roof and to the dormitories – 'ceilings were down, the walls cracked and the doors wrenched from their jambs'. Across the way the brand new teaching block suffered similar blast damage.

The following night there were further raids on Bath. The Brothers watched from the portico 'hundreds of incendiary bombs bursting into flame on the North Western side of the City.' The raid this time lasted just over an hour and the College escaped further damage. But down in Bath there was devastation. It is estimated that some 275 tonnes of bombs were dropped on the Bath area during these two nights, 2495 buildings were destroyed or seriously damaged, 400 people were killed and 357 badly injured. Out at the Haycombe Cemetery a sombre line of headstones can be seen marking where 207 of the victims were buried. Four churches were completely destroyed and, included among the further seven badly damaged, was St John's Catholic Church which had received a direct hit on the presbytery. Two curates stood together that night, Fr Sheridan and Fr Jim Kelly. As they saw the mayhem closing in these two priests gave each other conditional absolution. When the bomb dropped Fr Sheridan was killed along with the housekeeper and her family. Fr Kelly used to tell the tale of how he was at once dispatched by his Parish Priest to the Police Station, then in Orange Grove where Brown's restaurant now is, to inform the authorities of the situation at St John's. Through fire and falling masonry Fr Kelly advanced to the station desk with his news. Not to be ruffled or hustled the Sergeant simply replied: 'Well Sir, we shall want that in writing!'

Back up at Prior Park the Brothers gave thanks that the boys had been away on holiday and then set to work to restore some order to the chaos.



It meant 'covering up what was left of the window frames with cloth and making and hanging temporary doors.' These were the days when teachers were expected to be able to turn their hands to almost any task. By the end of two weeks they were able to inform parents that the College would be able to re-open on 15 May. All pupils duly reported back on that day. Naturally it was not a very easy term. Washing arrangements were complicated and classrooms draughty. But it was mercifully the summer term and the weather was good. Moreover schoolboys actually enjoy some disruption of the deadly order of school routine. The Mayor of Bath made a point of visiting the College to congratulate it on 'playing their part in the war effort' with such 'grit and determination.' But not surprisingly the Corpus Christi celebrations in June had to be somewhat cut down.

As the school magazine put it, the war continued 'to inflict itself on us at every hand's turn. Not a day passes that its horrors, its griefs, its inconveniencies do not loom large.' Pupils from this era speak with feeling of the cold and hunger they suffered. Rationing was severe and school food austere. Approach to the Refectory was heralded, a contemporary writes, 'with the odours of boiled cabbage, culinary garbage and domestic smells'. At breakfast there was porridge, which had 'the consistency of rubber' which was followed by something cooked, a sausage maybe or a rasher of bacon or a few slices of polony from the famed Bath pork butchers Spears. The breakfast highlight of the week was the Sunday hot pork pie from that same shop. At midday there was the main meal of such delights as corned beef fritters or fish pie made from herrings in tomato sauce. All was accompanied by lashings of overcooked vegetables. Some judged that it was the cooking which actually made the food so unappetising. For tea there was bread and a pat of margarine with the same for supper but with a glass of milk instead of tea. The writer remembers at this time eating such a school supper, though with hot cocoa rather than milk, while doing his prep. Drops of melted margarine had to be kept from sullyng the Latin prose. Such a diet was supplemented by 'tuck' brought from or sent by post from home. These were typically things like pickles, golden syrup, baked beans and cake.

It was of this period in the College's life that the poet Peter Levi wrote in his autobiographical fragment *The Flutes of Autumn*. This was the time when he and his contemporaries met and chatted with the parachutists camped on the cricket field just before Arnhem. With his brother Anthony, Peter Levi had been sent to Prior Park before the war. He was



then aged six! Their father took them on a tour of Catholic schools. Stonyhurst, he thought, looked like a prison while it was rumoured that at Beaumont the young took to drink. In the end it had to be Prior Park, which won purely in virtue of its magically wonderful setting. It was from this that the future poet reckoned that he had received his most important education in landscape, architecture and wild flowers. Here was 'an artificial paradise running gently to seed'.

But he found nothing gentle in the rest of his schooling. 'The landscape I loved with a passion' but the Brothers he came to hate. 'What did I hate about the Brothers so much?' he asks and replies that it was 'the scrubbed, healthy, uncomprehending faces of the younger ones, the touches of Catholic anti-Semitism, their fanatical hatred of female sexuality, their physical intolerance. They differed from the school bullies in a school where bullying was as organized as mealtimes, only in age and authority.' The history and the politics, which the Brothers taught, Levi judged to be 'wickedly prejudiced and crazy.' Brian Smith, a contemporary, also found the teaching left much to be desired. 'Learning' he writes 'was very much by rote and one was made to learn by the threat of a whack on your hand if you didn't. We were not given the opportunity to think or reason for ourselves and I left school with virtually no knowledge of music, the arts, economics or politics.' It was not until after the war in 1947 when Sidney Ash joined as a lay member of staff, that he says that he encountered 'the first teacher that I ever remembered who treated me as an intelligent person in my own right.' And Smith echoes Levi's judgement on the Brothers fear of sexuality. 'There was no sex education at that time' he writes and adds that they were 'constantly told that perfection in life was to become a celibate priest.'

The young Levi was bullied and bored. And that is what drove him to escape 'into the woods, to hide and to read and read' or 'run away to Bath to the junk shops and tea shops, the Dickensian back streets and the architecture.' The charge of 'brutality and boredom' will ring bells with many of those who had to live through public school education at this time. In truth the war and post-war period were times of cold, hunger, inadequate teaching, and unbelievable dreariness. With most young and able men away in the services, tired and sometimes rather deranged old men manned the teaching barricades and proved only too willing to delegate responsibility for discipline and order to mindless thugs who were turned into prefects. Life tended to be nasty, brutish and alas not

short. Once the younger men emerged from the war and were fed into the system, for most schools there was a dramatic change for the better. The trouble is that such excuses cannot be really made in the case of Prior Park. The younger Brothers were sturdily Irish and therefore safe from recruitment to the British forces.

Brian Smith's judgement of the Brothers is somewhat more genial than is Levi's. Even Br Dunne who dispatched class miscreants into the stationery cupboard with the cry 'Into the Press!' seems to have been redeemed by his passion for cards which made him turn the Saturday morning RI lesson into an opportunity to introduce the boys to contract bridge. Br Hayes, known to the boys as Daisy, was a fierce censor of magazines being especially careful to cut out the daily Jane strip in the Mirror and even advertisements for ladies' underwear, but Brian Smith found him a kind man, who of an evening would sit with them before a blazing fire to talk to them over their hot Oxo. Although he had a sharp and fierce eye for any bullying, other juvenile misbehaviour would as likely have him rubbing his forehead in despair, crying 'Boys, boys, boys!' Certainly there were those touches of staff eccentricity which often make school life tolerable for the young. There was the lay teacher, the bald-headed, shortsighted Mr Kenny who owned a budgerigar which accompanied him in a cage to meals and to classes. The fact that he and Br Hayes had a long-standing feud only added a touch of spice to it all. Mr Miller, the industrial chemist, who, because none of the Brothers was able to teach the subject, came to the school two evenings a week to teach Chemistry to a select few, was fondly remembered for his 'fund of dirty jokes' which accompanied a brew up of Heinz tomato soup over a Bunsen burner. Brian Smith recalls that the soup acquired a slight flavouring of hydrochloric acid.

But the casual brutality and generally uncivilized nature of the school, which Peter Levi found, was certainly not unique to the world of the Christian Brothers. However, many for whom these days bring painful memories were grateful to find a safety valve, for in a society in which while clear dangers came from outside, life within was quite secure for the young. This meant that they did not have to be for ever watched and controlled with anxious care so that there were opportunities to escape from the restrictions and the hardships, to explore whether the countryside or the fascinations of town and city.

The war continued to take a more terrible toll on former members of the College. Wing Commander Wilfred de Freitas was killed in the Libyan campaign and William Edward Lundon flying his Hurricane crashed to his death. Late in the war in the Far East, Bernard Ward was to die in the storming of Mandalay, while Major James D. Williams was killed in Burma. Of course there were those who escaped unscathed and increasingly be-medalled. Billy Drake earned a bar to his DFC, while Major John Burnett won both the DSC and MC for his intelligence work in Burma. Another upon whom fortune smiled was Lt Denis Gilmer who, having, as one of the Desert Rats battled in tanks in North Africa, then had to fight up through Italy. As time went by things distinctly improved for him. The school magazine was able to report that he 'has changed residence from sleeping in tanks, tents and less commodious abodes in the African desert for a fine billet' and finally, when the war ended, it finds him living it up in some well-deserved luxury near Lake Como.

Back at the College there was still time to debate the value of the 'old school tie'. Supporters of the said tie were clear that class distinctions should be carefully preserved for, they argued, 'authority comes naturally to the sons of the well-to-do' and were not all good 'Empire builders, old school tie men?' It is re-assuring that there were those who could see through this comfortable belief and challenge a tradition 'fostered by the rich to fool the masses'. 'Intelligence and merit' it was argued 'should be the key to advancement, not money and social position.' Was it a straw in the wind, a sign of changing attitudes that it was these critics of the 'old school tie' who won the debate? For, of course, the war came to an end to signal something of a social revolution. The hero Winston Churchill was swept from office in the 1945 General Election and Clement Attlee led a reforming Labour Government. What would the future now be for those 'old school tie' assumptions and for places like Prior Park which nurtured them?

But now for the moment time was made to celebrate the nation's victory in Europe in May 1945. Those celebrations tended to be limited by the austerities of the day. The author's prep school managed to lay on batter puddings and golden syrup for breakfast and an extra opportunity to bathe in the afternoon. Prior Park ran to a Missa Cantata in thanksgiving for victory and a chanted Te Deum on the Sunday after VE Day. Brian Smith writes: 'we had a day off school and we descended on Bath in the morning, not that there was much to do as it was a general holiday and

the shops were shut'. In the evening there was a bonfire and the setting off of some fireworks. Billy Drake DFC with bar, DSO, DFM with eleven other pilots led the vanguard of 300 aircraft in the flight over London to commemorate the Battle of Britain. An emaciated Leslie Budding emerging from a Japanese POW camp was a visible reminder of the cost of it all.





Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:  
Only remember me...

**Christina Rosetti**



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