



COGGESHALL ROLL OF HONOUR



1939 - 1945

'We Will Remember Them'



RONALD JACK ARGENT RAFVR

1389316 Flight Sergeant
102 (Ceylon) Squadron Royal Air Force

Ronald Argent was born about 1923, the son of John and Margaret Annie Argent. Before the war he worked at Pettit's Dairy in Little Coggeshall.

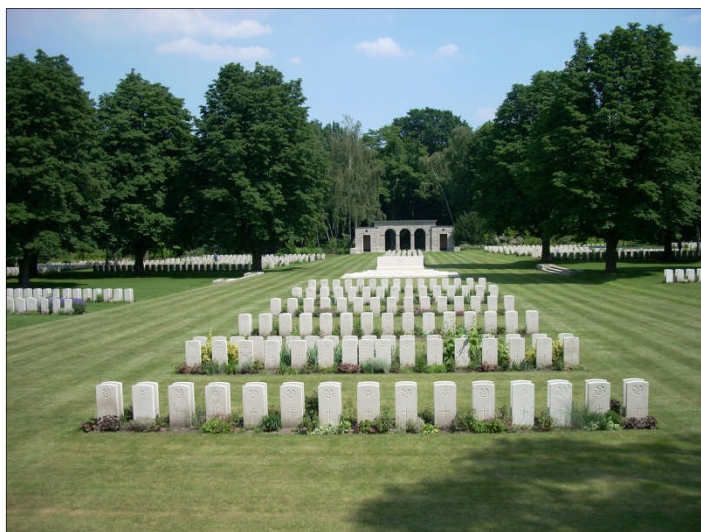
He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and at the time of his death was flying Halifaxes with 102 Squadron RAF out of Pocklington in Yorkshire .

102 Squadron was a heavy bomber squadron and part of No. 4 Group (Bomber Command). It was re-equipped with the Handley Page Halifax in 1942 and adopted by the island of Ceylon in the same year. The Squadron took part in each of the three historic 1,000-bomber raids in May/June 1942 and, later, in the battles of the Ruhr, Hamburg, and Berlin.

On 4th December 1943, Halifax JD303 DY-S was airborne at 00:17 hours from RAF Pocklington as part of a bombing raid on Leipzig. The aircraft crashed at Luderitz, 9 kilometres north-west of Tangerhutte (cause not established). Five members of the crew, including Ronald Argent, were killed and two were taken prisoner by the Germans. Those killed were initially buried on 5th December 1943 at Luderitz. Their graves are now located in the Berlin 1939—1945 Cemetery.

The site of Berlin 1939-45 War Cemetery was selected by the British Occupation Authorities and Commonwealth War Grave Commission officials jointly in 1945, soon after hostilities ceased. Graves were brought to the cemetery from the Berlin area and from eastern Germany. The great majority of those buried here, approximately 80 per cent of the total, were airmen who were lost in the air raids over Berlin and the towns in eastern Germany. The remainder were men who died as prisoners of war, some of them in the forced march into Germany from camps in Poland, in front of the advancing Russians. The cemetery contains 3,595 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 397 of them unidentified.

The Cemetery is located at Heertstrasse 151, 14055 Berlin, Germany.





ALBERT EDWARD BROWN RAFVR

702279 Aircraftman 1st Class
512 AMES Royal Air Force

Albert Brown was born in Coggeshall in 1918, the son of Albert Edward and Ethel Brown (nee Williams). He was baptised at St. Peter-ad-Vincula on 14th July 1918.

The 1911 census records his father as a Carman living with his new wife Ethel at Beards Terrace in Coggeshall. The family were still residing at Beards Terrace at the end of the war.

The 1918 entry in the Baptism Register shows his father as a Private in the East Surrey Regiment, almost certainly awaiting disembodiment at the end of the First World War.

Albert Brown junior was serving with 512 Air Ministry Experimental Station (a secret radar station) which had been located in Tanjong Kupang in Johore, Malaya from December 1941. However, following the Japanese invasion of Malaya on 8 December 1942 and their rapid advance down the peninsula, 512 Ames was withdrawn to Singapore and then, in February 1942, evacuated to Java in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). When Java surrendered to the Japanese on 8 March 1942, Albert Brown, along with thousands of his comrades, went into harsh and degrading captivity. In late 1944 when the Allies advanced back through the region the Japanese withdrew with their prisoners and Albert Brown along with some 650 other POWs, by then in Ambon in the Moluccas, were put aboard the tramp steamer *Maros Maru* destined for Soerabaja in northeast Java. Sadly, due to the atrocious conditions aboard, Albert did not survive the journey and on 28th September 1944 he died and was buried at sea, age 26. He is commemorated on column 439 of the Singapore Memorial.

The Memorial which stands in Kranji War Cemetery, fourteen miles north of the city of Singapore and overlooking the Straits of Johor bears the names of over 24,000 casualties of the Commonwealth land and air forces who died during the Second World War and have no known grave. Those of the land forces died during the campaigns in Malaya and Indonesia or in subsequent captivity, many of them during the construction of the Burma-Thailand railway, or, like Albert Brown, at sea while being transported into captivity elsewhere. The airmen died during operations over the whole of southern and eastern Asia and in the surrounding seas and oceans.





ALAN WALTER CAMP RAFVR

67036 Pilot Officer
22 Squadron Royal Air Force

Alan Camp was born in Rochford, Essex in 1920, the eldest son of Walter Cecil Camp and May Camp (nee Church). His mother was living at 'Mount View' on Colchester Road in Coggeshall at the end of the war. His younger brother Geoffrey, serving with the Fleet Air Arm, was also killed in the war.

Alan joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, trained as a pilot, and at the time of his death was flying Bristol Beauforts out of RAF North Coates in Lincolnshire with 22 Squadron RAF.

At 10:40 hours on 15th June 1941 Pilot Officer Camp and his three-man crew (Sgt W Myles, Sgt B J Conlon and Sgt D G A Briers) took off from RAF North Coates, in company with other 22 Squadron aircraft, for a shipping strike mission to the coast of Holland. The Squadron sighted and attacked a large convoy 30 kilometres north-west of Texel. The flight leader, F/O Gibbs, attacked from the landward side at 12:30 hours and sank the 2,000 ton Danish ship *Hans Droge* but the other two aircraft failed to hit a vessel.

Pilot Officer Camp is believed to have been shot down by a flak ship 10 kilometres west of Texel. He was 20 years old. All the crew was lost and they are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

The Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede commemorates by name over 20,000 airmen who were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North and Western Europe, and who have no known graves. They served in Bomber, Fighter, Coastal, Transport, Flying Training and Maintenance Commands, and came from all parts of the Commonwealth and continental Europe.

The Memorial overlooks the River Thames on Cooper's Hill at Englefield Green between Windsor and Egham on the A308, 4 miles from Windsor.





GEOFFREY BERTRAM CAMP RNVR

Sub-Lieutenant (A)
766 Squadron Fleet Air Arm, HMS Nightjar

Geoffrey Camp was born in Rochford, Essex in 1921, the second son of Walter Cecil Camp and May Camp (nee Church). His mother was living at 'Mount View' on Colchester Road in Coggeshall at the end of the war. His elder brother Alan, serving with the RAFVR was also killed in the war.

Geoffrey joined the Royal Navy and trained as a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm. At the time of his death he was a member of 766 Squadron, which was undergoing a three month operational training course at No.1 Naval Operational Training Unit at HMS Nightjar, the Royal Navy Air Station at Inskip in Lancashire.

Geoffrey Camp was killed on 11th February 1944 as the result of an air crash. He was 22 years old. The other two members of his crew (Sub-Lieutenant David Meats and Leading Airman Norman Dennis) were also killed.

He is remembered on Panel 29 of the Lee-on-Solent Memorial. He and Sub-Lieutenant David Meats are also remembered by a plaque on the War Grave of Leading Airman Norman Dennis in Kilbride Old Churchyard, Lamlash, on the Isle of Arran.

The Fleet Air Arm Memorial consists of a rectangular column of Portland stone bearing the inscription *'These Officers and Men of the Fleet Air Arm died in the Service of their country and have no Grave but the Sea 1939-1945'*.

To each side of this central memorial stone is a wall bearing three recessed panels of Westmorland slate, on which are carved almost 2,000 names. The roll of honour lists of Fleet Air Arm personnel are carved into stone on 43 panels and they are grouped together into small alcoves or bays with 7 panels per bay.

The Memorial is located on the main sea front, near the former principal base of the Fleet Air Arm.





ERNEST HENRY COCHRANE MC

66685 Major
2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Ernest Cochrane was born 3rd February 1913 at Hannover Square, London, the eldest son of Sir Ernest Cochrane 2nd Bt., J.P., and of Lady Cochrane (nee Elsa Dorothea Maria Schumacher). He was educated at Eton College and Gazetted in 1937 as a Lieutenant in the Inniskilling Fusiliers.

His parents divorced in 1933 and Elsa, Lady Cochrane was residing at Old Stoneham, Coggeshall at the time of her son's death. Had he survived, Ernest would have inherited the title and become the 3rd Baronet. As it was, the title was inherited in 1952 by his brother, Desmond, who had survived the war.

Major Cochrane, serving as a company commander with the 2nd Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, was awarded an immediate Military Cross by Field Marshall Alexander for 'Gallant and Distinguished Service' on the night of 20th/21st April 1945, during action around the Fossa Rivaldo Canal near Argenta, Italy. The award was formally announced in the London Gazette on 18th October 1945.

Ernest was reported dead as the result of an accident in Austria on 21st July 1945, whilst on active service. He was 32 years old and is buried at Klagenfurt War Cemetery.

Klagenfurt, the only Commonwealth war cemetery in Austria, was begun in June 1945 by the British occupying forces, who moved graves into it from all over the country. It now contains 589 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War. Between 1950 and 1954, eight First World War graves (three of them unidentified) were moved into the cemetery from small cemeteries at Innsbruck, Mauthausen, Muhldorf and Vienna. At the same time, special memorials were erected to two other First World War casualties whose graves at Muhldorf and Vienna could not be found.

Klagenfurt is the capital of the Austrian province of Carinthia. The War Cemetery lies 3 kilometres west of the city centre and to the east of the Woerther See.





LEONARD WALTER COLLISON

14533949 Private

2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment

Leonard Collison was born on 9th July 1924, the eldest child of Jesse and Florence Collison. He lived at the Cradle House in Coggeshall with his parents, sister Joyce and brother Clem and the family were employed on Gate House Farm. Before the war Leonard was a farm worker and later a Co-op baker's roundsman in Coggeshall.

He was called-up in 1943, at the age of 18^{1/2}, and undertook basic military training in Yorkshire prior to joining the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in the Far East.

At the commencement of the War in the Far East the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment was stationed in India and in position to counter the Japanese advances toward that country. Between 1942 and 1946 the Battalion was with 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade and took part in operations in Burma against the Japanese Imperial Army. On 18th March 1944 the Battalion was flown to Imphal and, on the 21st March, moved to defend Kohima. After a successful operation they returned to Imphal in April and beat off the advancing Japanese. Throughout May 1944 the Suffolks continued their successful guerrilla action against the Japanese.

Leonard was killed in action on 19th May 1944 during operations against the Japanese Imperial Army and is buried in Imphal War Cemetery. He was 19 years old.

There were originally some 950 burials in Imphal War Cemetery, but after hostilities had ceased, the Army Graves Service brought in graves from two smaller cemeteries in Imphal and from isolated positions in the surrounding region. The cemetery now contains 1,600 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.

The cemetery lies 10 kilometres from the airport on the Imphal-Dimapur road (Highway 39) in the Deulahland district of the town.





ALBERT EDWARD COOPER RAFVR

77963 Pilot Officer
35 Squadron Royal Air Force

Albert Cooper was born in 1906 in West Ham, the son of Ernest and Elizabeth Hepzibah Cooper. He joined the Royal Navy as a boy entrant in 1923 and went on to serve for 14 years. He married Daisy May Watson of Braintree in 1927, and ten years later left the Navy to work at Crittalls in Braintree as a window fitter.

In 1940 he volunteered for Service with the Royal Air Force. He was granted a commission as a Pilot Officer for the duration of hostilities, trained as an Air Gunner and was posted to 35 Squadron at Linton-on-Ouse, North Yorkshire.

On 2nd March 1941 35 Squadron was equipped with the new Halifax bomber and eight days later, on 10th March, Halifax L9489 (F- Freddie) set off on its first bombing raid on the French port of Le Havre. The raid was successful, but on the way home the new Halifax bomber was mistaken for an enemy aircraft by a British night fighter and was shot down over Surrey.

Having given the order to abandon the aircraft, the captain, Squadron Leader Gilchrist, left through the escape hatch above the pilot's seat. Sergeant Aedy, a crew member, was severely wounded by shrapnel and was assisted by his fellow crew members and bundled out of the main fuselage door, ensuring his ripcord was pulled as he left. In doing so, second pilot Sergeant Lucas, observer Pilot Officer Arnold, wireless operator/air gunner Sergeant Broadhurst and rear gunner Pilot Officer Cooper left it too late to save themselves, thus sacrificing their lives to save their colleague. The Halifax crashed in the grounds of Merrist Wood Agricultural College and the port inner engine and much of the forward section of L9489 remained in the ground until it was unearthed 55 years later by Croydon Aviation Archaeology Society. The incident was blandly recorded in Squadron Leader Gilchrist's log as: *'Shot down by night fighter (RAF) Aldershot - Guildford area. Sgt Aedy wounded, crew killed'*.

Albert Cooper's mother, Mrs Hollock, lived in Coggeshall Hamlet and his remains were brought to Coggeshall for burial in the local cemetery. He was interred in a War Grave in Coggeshall Cemetery on 18th March 1941 and his name engraved on the town's War Memorial. He was 34 years old.

Coggeshall Cemetery is located at St Peter-ad-Vincula on Church Green in Coggeshall, Essex.





TED CYRIL COPPIN MID, Croix de Guerre

231091 Lieutenant

General List attached to Special Operations Executive

Ted Coppin was born in Brightlingsea, Essex on 20th May 1915, the son of Ted and Harriet Castle Georgina Coppin. The family moved to the South of France during Coppin's youth to take advantage of Ted senior's skills as a captain of luxury yachts. Ted left school, at the age of 14, to join his father's shipbroking and ship's chandler business on the Quai Saint-Pierre in Cannes and became an expert motor mechanic. However, when the Italians occupied south-eastern France the family returned to the UK and settled in Coggeshall, Essex.

Ted volunteered for the Army and joined the Royal Army Service Corps as a private soldier (service number 7639766). Fluent French speaker, In late 1941 he volunteered for the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E) and trained under the alias of Theodore Crowe. A fluent French speaker, he was commissioned in the General List and subsequently became a 'Donkeyman' Circuit (sabotage) Instructor with F Section.

He was infiltrated into France at Cap d'Ail by Felucca *Seawolf* on 11th June 1942 to lead a group of saboteurs; his code name was 'Olivier'. Based in Marseilles, he formed a small but effective team who increased the rate of accidents on the railways and in the rail yards. He was posted as missing by the War Office towards the end of 1942 and was eventually arrested by the Gestapo on 23rd April 1943 at his hotel in Marseille with his courier 'Giselle'. Ted Coppin was tortured in captivity and executed by the Germans on 27th September 1943, age 28 (the place of execution is not known).

He received a posthumous Mention in Despatches from the British and the *Croix de Guerre 1939-1945 avec étoile de vermeil* from the French. A recommendation by F Section for an MBE (Military) was turned down.

He is officially commemorated on the Brookwood Memorial, near Woking, Surrey, on panel 21, column 3. He is listed at the F Section Memorials at Valençay, France and London and on the War Memorial at Coggeshall in Essex. His parents are buried in Coggeshall Cemetery and Ted junior is also remembered on their memorial headstone.

The S.O.E. monument at Valençay symbolises the partnership between S.O.E. and the Resistance in the form of two columns - the black representing the night and the essential secrecy of resistance operations; the white the shining spirit which ultimately triumphed. The two columns are linked by the moon, which brought together S.O.E. and the Resistance in all forms of clandestine operations. Three floodlights at the base of the monument recall the L-shaped flarepath laid out by 'reception committees' to enable aircraft of 161 Squadron, RAF to touch down by night on improvised landing strips. The London Monument takes form of a bust of Violette Szabo GC MBE.



We are indebted to Paul McCue, British military historian and author, for permission to use extracts from the Coppin case history from his latest project 'Roll of Honour of the Valençay Memorial'.



CLAUDE BERT EVERETT

977639 Gunner
147 (Essex Yeomanry) Field Regiment Royal Artillery

Claude Everett was born in Coggeshall on 27th February 1920, the eldest child of Bert William and Sarah Everett. The family lived in Leapers Row, Robins Bridge Road and his father worked as a groom at the Chapel Hotel on Market Hill.

Claude's father died of pneumonia in 1932 and he became a father figure to his siblings, particularly to his youngest sister. He left school at fourteen and worked at Grange Farm until he was mobilised during the war.

When he was 'called-up' he joined the Royal Artillery and was a member of 147 (Essex Yeomanry) Field Regiment serving on the Home Front. He was stationed at Frome in Somerset when the Civil Authorities were notified of his death on 16th August 1943. Tragically, a shell accidentally fell from a shelf in one of the huts, Claude picked it up and it exploded. He was 23 years old.

The family were understandably devastated when on the 16th August 1943 they received a telegram informing them of his death. He was interred in a War Grave at Coggeshall Cemetery on 24th August 1943 and his name engraved on the town's War Memorial.

Coggeshall Cemetery is located at St Peter-ad-Vincula on Church Green in Coggeshall, Essex.





JOHN ROBERT HEDLEY

1017915 Bombardier
38 Battery, 14 Anti-Tank Regiment Royal Artillery

John Hedley was born in about 1903, the son of Robert John Hedley.

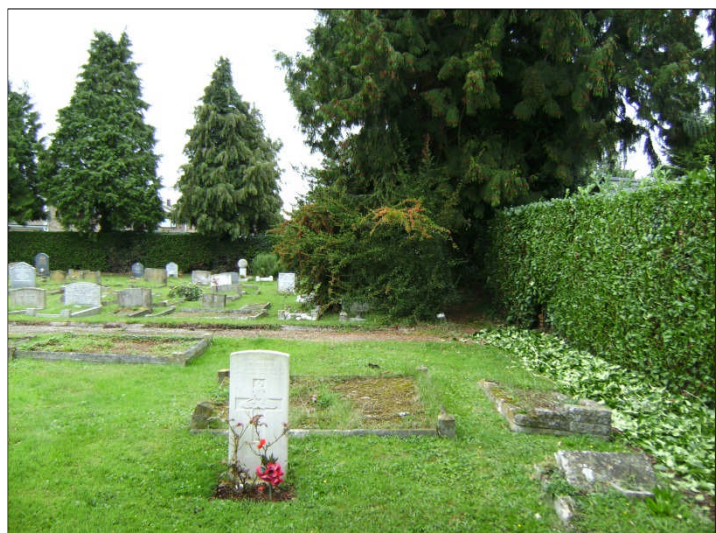
He married Minnie Charlotte Bearman at St. Peter-ad-Vincula in Coggeshall on 31st October 1936. The 1911 census shows her, aged 4, living in Robins Bridge Road with her father John (a bricklayer), mother Florence and three siblings.

The entry in the 1936 Coggeshall Marriage Register records that John Hedley was a Regular soldier, aged 33, stationed at Colchester Garrison and that his father was deceased. He was serving with 14 Anti-Tank Regiment Royal Artillery.

John Hedley died in Coggeshall on 14th January 1943, as the result of his war service. He was 40 years old.

His death was registered by the Coroner with the Civil Authorities in Braintree, Essex. He was interred in a War Grave at Coggeshall Cemetery on 20th January 1943 and his name engraved on the town's War Memorial.

Coggeshall Cemetery is located at St Peter-ad-Vincula on Church Green in Coggeshall, Essex.





JOHN MORLEY HICKS

269885 Lieutenant
H Battery, 2 Regiment Royal Horse Artillery

John Hicks was born in Coggeshall on 9th December 1921, the son of Herbert and Iris Elsie Hicks (nee Platten) and baptised at St. Peter-ad-Vincula on 27th May 1922.

His parents married in Romford in 1910. Iris' father was a Member of the Stock Exchange and Herbert was a Stock Broker. The 1911 census records them living at 'Branwoods', High Street, Great Baddow, together with Herbert's sister (who was visiting) and four servants. The family later moved to Coggeshall Hamlet and were living there when war was declared.

John Hicks attended Charterhouse School in Godalming, Surrey between 1935 and 1939 (Hodgson House). His brother David Nightingale Hicks married Lady Pamela Mountbatten, the younger daughter of the 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

John joined the Royal Horse Artillery, serving with H Battery of the 2nd Regiment. He was killed in action, age 21, on 14th October 1944 during the Italian Campaign and is buried in the Assisi War Cemetery. He is also remembered on both the Coggeshall War Memorial and the Memorial Chapel Panels at Charterhouse School.

On 3rd September 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland, the invasion coinciding with an armistice made with the Italians who then re-entered the war on the Allied side. Progress through southern Italy was rapid despite stiff resistance, but the advance was checked for some months at the German winter defensive position known as the Gustav Line. The line eventually fell in May 1944 and, as the Germans withdrew, Rome was taken by the Allies on 3rd June. Many of the burials in this cemetery date from June and July 1944, when the Germans were making their first attempts to stop the Allied advance north of Rome in this region. The site for the cemetery was selected in September 1944 and burials were brought in from the surrounding battlefields. Assisi War Cemetery contains 945 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.

The Assisi War Cemetery forms part of the locality of Rivotorto in the Commune of Assisi, in the Province of Perugia. It is located at Via Sacro Tugurio - 6080 Rivotorto di Assisi (PG) Umbria





FRANK JOHNSTONE

786517 Gunner
1 Regiment Royal Horse Artillery

Frank Johnstone was born in the Spring of 1908 in Brendon, Devon, the son of Janie Johnstone. The 1911 Census records him, age 2 years, living with his grandmother Sarah Johnstone at Lynway Cottage, Lynbridge, Lynton, Devon.

His marriage to Despina Marica Moskhona in early 1935 was registered in Lexden in Essex and they lived in Kings Cottages in Queen Street. Despina was living at 3 Mortar Cottage in Queen Street at the time of her husband's death but later moved to Stonehouse in Plymouth.

Frank joined the Royal Horse Artillery and saw action in both the France and Belgium Campaigns of 1939/1940.

He died on 17th August 1942 in Poland, age 34, almost certainly when a prisoner of war. He is buried in the Malbork Commonwealth War Cemetery.

The Second World War burials at Malbork are mostly of men who died while prisoners of war in the nearby camps. Stalag XXB was a camp of some size at Malbork itself, Stalag IA was situated at Stablack, between Malbork and Gdansk, Stalag 2A at Starogard, a few kilometres south of Stablack, and Stalag XXA, at Torun (Thorn), about 120 kilometres south of Malbork. When hostilities had ceased, the graves service of the British Army of the Rhine moved the graves from the local burial grounds to this war cemetery, together with other Commonwealth graves in outlying places in the area where their permanent maintenance could not be assured. Malbork Commonwealth War Cemetery contains 232 Second World War burials.

The town of Malbork (formerly known as Marienburg) lies in the north of Poland some 60 kilometres south east of Gdansk. The cemetery can be found at 500-Lecia, 82-200 Malbork, Poland





CHARLES WILLIAM JOSEPH NEWMAN

172752 Pilot Officer RAFVR
61 Squadron Royal Air Force

Charles Newman was born in 1923, the son of Henry Joseph and Annie Mary Newman of Coggeshall. The family lived at 15 Mount Road and he attended Braintree County High School, where he sat and passed the Higher Matriculation. On leaving school he worked in Rayners, the butchers in East Street, while waiting to enlist.

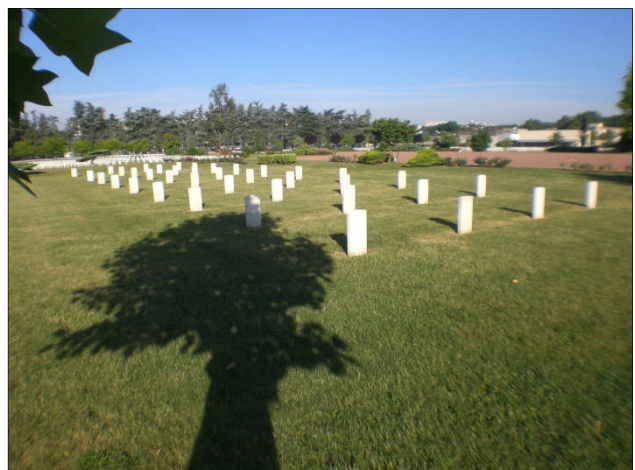
He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, trained as a pilot, and was serving with 61 Squadron RAF at the time of his death.

61 Squadron spent the war as a night bomber squadron with No. 5 Group. During the spring and summer of 1944 Bomber Command's Lancaster Squadrons were under the command of Dwight Eisenhower and spent most of their time supporting the invasion of France.

On 24th April 1944 Lancaster LM359(QR-B), piloted by 20 year-old Pilot Officer Charles Newman, was airborne at 20:55 hours from RAF Skellingthorpe as part of a diversionary raid on Milan, before going on to Munich. In the small hours of 25th April, his Lancaster was shot down by enemy aircraft and crashed at la Chapelle/Thecle, a village near the Swiss border. Charles Newman was killed, but his bravery is remembered in the village of la Chapelle in the form of a book written in French and entitled 'In the Shadow of the Wing'.

He was originally buried, with other members of his crew, at la Guillotiere New Communal Cemetery in Lyon. However, in 1953, the French Authorities sanctioned the creation of la Doua French National Cemetery and the 39 airmen buried at la Guillotiere were exhumed and re-interred in the cemetery at la Doua.

la Doua is a suburb of Lyon on the north-eastern side of the town. Lyon (la Doua) French National Cemetery is on the ring road (Boulevard de Ceinture) which encircles the eastern side of Lyon. The Commonwealth War Graves Plot is in the centre of the southern part in Section C to the left of the main entrance.





CECIL PHILLIPS RN

D/JX 156393 Able Seaman
HMS Jaguar

Cecil Phillips was born in Essex about 1922 and was cared for by Mr and Mrs Rowland who lived in Tilkey and were caretakers of the Congregational Chapel.

He joined the Royal Navy as a boy entrant and attended the Naval Training establishment at HMS Ganges in Ipswich, Suffolk, where he underwent seamanship and basic naval training. He was serving aboard *HMS Jaguar*, a J Class Destroyer, at the time of his death.

In late March 1942 *HMS Jaguar* was, with the *Greek Destroyer Queen Olga*, escort to convoy TA.27 bringing supplies from Alexandria to the 5th Destroyer Flotilla at Tobruk.

At 02:27 hours on 26th March 1942 *HMS Jaguar* F34 was attacked, off the coast of Sidi Barrani in Egypt, by German Submarine U-652 with a spread of four torpedoes. Two of the torpedoes struck in the bow, the ship caught fire and sank almost immediately. Three officers and 190 ratings, including AB Phillips, were lost. Eight officers and 45 ratings were picked up by *HM Whaler Klo* and taken to Tobruk.

Cecil is remembered on Panel 66, Column 2 of the Plymouth Naval Memorial in Devon and his name is engraved on the Coggeshall War Memorial.

The Plymouth Naval Memorial is situated centrally on The Hoe which looks directly towards Plymouth Sound. It commemorates 7,251 sailors of the First World War and 15,933 of the Second World War, who have no other grave but the sea.





VICTOR FREDERICK RUDKIN

2003421 Driver
287 Field Company Royal Engineers

Victor Rudkin was born in Coggeshall in 1919, the son of Frederick and Nina Bertha Rose Rudkin (nee Hunwick). He was baptised at St. Peter-ad-Vincula on 14th April 1920 and the entry in the Register records his father as a cycle agent.

The 1911 census records his father as a cycle agent residing at Orchard Cottages, Coggeshall, with his wife of one year. His shop was located opposite the Cricketers Public House in West Street.

Victor served with the Royal Engineers and was a member of 287 Field Company at the time of his death. 287 Field Company Royal Engineers landed from the USS Mount Vernon (the peacetime SS Washington) with 53rd Infantry Brigade at the Singapore Naval Base on 13 January 1942. During fighting in Johore, the Company lost 21 other ranks (ORs) killed in action or died of wounds, eight taken prisoner and imprisoned in Pudu Jail, Kuala Lumpur and at least one missing. During the subsequent fighting on the island, 287 Field Company incurred a further five fatalities.

Driver Rudkin was captured and later put to work on the infamous Burma-Siam Railway. He died in captivity on 19th January 1944, aged 24 years, and is buried in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand

The town of Kanchanaburi is 129 kilometres north-west of Bangkok and the War Cemetery is situated adjacent to Saeng Chuto Road, which is the main road through the town.

The cemetery is also only a short distance from the site of the former 'Kanburi', the prisoner of war base camp through which most of the prisoners passed on their way to other camps. The cemetery was created by the Army Graves Service who transferred to it all graves along the southern section of railway, from Bangkok to Nieké. Some 300 men who died (most from a Cholera epidemic in May/June 1943) at Nieké camp were cremated and their ashes now lie in two graves in the cemetery. The names of these men are inscribed on panels in the shelter pavilion. There are now 5,084 Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery.





REGINALD THOMAS RUDLIN RAFVR

912084 Sergeant
35 (Madras Presidency) Squadron Royal RAF

Reginald Rudlin was born in Coggeshall in 1914, the son of William Edward and Gertrude Grace Rudlin (nee Wade) on whose memorial stone he is also remembered. The family lived in Stoneham Street, Coggeshall and he was baptised at St. Peter-ad-Vincula on 9th August 1914; the entry in the Baptism Register records his father as a postman.

He joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR) and trained as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner. He was a member of 35 Squadron RAF, which was the first squadron to use the Handley Page Halifax.

Reginald Rudlin had a narrow escape during a plane crash in June 1941. Halifax L9498 had taken off from Linton on Ouse at 22.37 hrs on 12th June 1941 for Operations to Hls in Germany. In the early hours of the morning of the 13th June the crew were returning to base early because of engine trouble and, when they arrived back at Linton on Ouse at 00:30 hrs, the aircraft overshot the runway. The undercarriage is believed to have collapsed and the aircraft was damaged beyond repair: the crew escaped injury.

Sergeant Rudlin was still with 35 Squadron, flying out of Stanton Harcourt, when he was killed on 24th July 1941. Halifax L9527, in which he was flying, was shot down by flak near Angles in France while part of a mission to attack the German cruiser Scharnhorst. He was 27 years old. Four other members of the crew also died that day and the remaining two were taken prisoner by the Germans.

He is buried at Angles Communal Cemetery, Vendee in France. His grave and those of his fellow crew members are the only commonwealth burials in the cemetery. He is also remembered on a monument erected by local villages at the crash site, on salt marshes along the D46b about midway between Angles and Conches.

Angles is a village 36 kilometres south-east of Les Sables d'Olonne. The cemetery lies on the right hand side of the road to Angles (N747), just before entering the village.





GEOFFREY HENTY SAUNDERS

73565 Captain

Royal Army Medical Corps

Geoffrey Saunders was born in Coggeshall in 1909, the son of Herbert and Clara Saunders of Market Hill, Coggeshall and on whose grave he is also remembered. His father was the well-known local Pharmacist with a shop on Market Hill.

Geoffrey's marriage to Ivy Stephens, in the autumn of 1934, was registered in Willesden. He also qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in that year and, following their marriage, the couple lived in London where he was practising as a doctor.

He was appointed to a short service commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1937 and was promoted Captain the following year.

Geoffrey Saunders died from a tropical illness on 9th October 1939, aged 30, whilst serving in India and is buried in the Delhi War Cemetery.

Delhi War Cemetery was created in 1951 when graves from many cemeteries in northern India were moved into the site to ensure their permanent maintenance. Among them are graves from cantonment cemeteries in Allahabad, Cawnpore, Dehra Dun and Lucknow. There are now 1,022 Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War buried, or commemorated by special memorial, in this cemetery together with a number of war graves of other nationalities, mostly Dutch.

The cemetery is located in the Delhi Cantonment about 1kilometre from Brar Square traffic junction.





GRENVILLE HAMMERTON SHAW RAF

22174 Wing Commander
Royal Air Force

Grenville Shaw was born on 4th May 1907 in Windermere, Westmorland, the son of Captain Frank Herbert Shaw RN, a novelist and author, and his wife Florence Hammerton Shaw. The 1911 census records him living at 112 Duchy Road, Harrogate with his parents. They later moved to the 'Limes' in Coggeshall. His father captained a 'Q' Boat in the First World War and later wrote of his experiences.

Grenville was at Loretto, one of Scotland's top independent schools, from September 1920 to April 1924. On leaving School he became an apprentice in a civil-engineering firm in London, but in 1926 gave up this work to take a temporary commission in the R.A.F.

He was later appointed a Flying Instructor at Cranwell, and after a specialist engineering course obtained a permanent commission in 1930. The following year he married Elizabeth M. Stephens at St Neots, Huntingdonshire. He then served for six years on the North-West Frontier of India and took part in operations against hostile tribes, being promoted Squadron Leader in 1936.

He spent much time in training his squadron in night flying and, when war broke out, was looking forward to active service in the air; but in September 1939 he was appointed Chief Engineering Officer, Northern Group, U.K. At Christmas, after being promoted Wing Commander, he was posted to the Empire Air Training Scheme in Canada as the senior engineering staff officer at No.3 Training Command. Here he was particularly engaged in testing out aircraft engines under Arctic flying conditions.

On 27th September 1940, while on a test flight near Ottawa, he lost his life when the aircraft failed to recover from a spin. He was 33 years old. He might have baled-out, but remained aboard the aircraft endeavouring to assist a comrade who was flying with him. Flying Officer D. S. T. Young was also killed in the accident which occurred at Uplands Air Training School, some 10 miles south of Ottawa.

He was buried with full military honours in Montreal (Mount Royal) Cemetery in Quebec, Canada on 30th September 1940.

Montreal (Mount Royal) Cemetery contains 183 Commonwealth burials from the Second World War, most of them forming two war plots in Section G.





HORACE GEORGE THURGAR RAFVR

1266088 Sergeant
14 Operational Training Unit RAF

Horace Thurgar was born in 1909, the son of Arthur George and Lily Thurgar. The 1911 Census records the family living on Grange Hill in Little Coggeshall.

He married Ethel Maud Lake of Woodford Green in late 1935 and the 1945 Electoral Register records her living in East Street, Coggeshall at the end of the war.

Horace Thurgar joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and trained as an Observer. At the time of his death he was serving with 14 Operational Training Unit Royal Air Force.

On the night of 6th June 1942, Hampden L4133, commanded by Pilot Officer R H Broadley, took off from RAF Saltby, for flying practice. During the practice flying speed was lost and at around 13:45 hours the aircraft spun into the ground some 2 miles east of the airfield at Mere Bam, South Stoke, practically on the Leicestershire border with Lincolnshire. All the crew were killed.

Crew:

RAF PO R. H. Broadley (Pilot) – buried in Skirbeck Quarter (St Thomas) Churchyard, Lincolnshire.

RAF Sgt R L Norrie, (Observer) – buried in Sunbury New Cemetery in Middlesex..

RAAF Sgt J D Henning, (Wireless/Air Gunner) – buried in Cottesmore (St Nicholas) Churchyard Extension, Rutland

Sergeant Thurgar's death, age 33, was registered with the Civil Authorities in Grantham, Lincolnshire. He was interred in a War Grave at Coggeshall Cemetery on 11th June 1942 and his name engraved on the town's War Memorial.

Coggeshall Cemetery is located at St Peter-ad-Vincula on Church Green in Coggeshall, Essex.





GEORGE WALKER

789032 Sapper
1 Field Squadron Royal Engineers

George Walker was born in Suffolk in about 1912. He married Sylvia Ethel Green of Coggeshall in the autumn of 1937, the marriage being registered in Colchester, Essex.

At the time of his death Sapper Walker was a member of 1 Field Squadron Royal Engineers, which was part of the British Expeditionary Force involved in the Battle of Dunkirk.

The historic defence and evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from the beaches around Dunkirk, which commenced on 26th May, was continued until 4th June 1940. George Walker was killed two days later, on 6th June, age 28, almost certainly as a member of the rear party.

He is remembered on Column 28 of the Dunkirk Memorial.

The Dunkirk Memorial commemorates more than 4,500 casualties of the British Expeditionary Force who died in the campaign of 1939-40 or who died in captivity or were captured during this campaign and who have no known grave.

The Memorial stands at the entrance to the British War Graves Section of Dunkirk Town Cemetery, which lies at the south-eastern corner of the town of Dunkirk, immediately south of the canal and on the road to Veurne (Furnes) in Belgium.





THOMAS ALEC CROMBIE

T/6209684 Private
Royal Army Veterinary Corps

Thomas Alec Crombie was born in Lincoln in the fourth quarter of 1918, the son of Alexander Crombie and Evelyn Mary Crombie (nee Radley).

In June 1941 he married Joyce Edith Winifred Goodman of Coggeshall, the daughter of Ernest Albert Goodman, a coal merchant and carman, and Ellen Bella Goodman (nee Tall). Joyce had been born in the Spring of 1921. The marriage was registered in Braintree.

Thomas joined the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, and served in World War Two but there is no indication of where he served.

In 1939 on the outbreak of WWII, the 1st Cavalry Division, with 20,000 animals, was despatched to Palestine and it was 1941 before the Division was mechanised. Having been deployed to Palestine, many animals of the Cavalry Division were used, post 1941, for transport duties. In the UK large numbers of animals that had been acquired in anticipation of major operations in Norway were also used for this purpose. In Italy, India and Burma mules played a major role in support of the ground forces. There was indeed a continuing need for the RAVC and it expanded rapidly to meet it on the outbreak of World War Two. The Corps grew from 190 to nearly 4,500 personnel before hostilities were to end in 1945.

He died on 11th May 1947 in Lincoln, undoubtedly as a result of his wartime service, as he is buried in a war grave in Canwick New Cemetery in Lincoln.

He is also commemorated on the war memorial inside the parish church of St Peter-ad-Vincula, Coggeshall, but his name does not appear on the main war memorial on the Recreation Ground.





WILLIAM JOHN HILLS

50475 Flying Officer
97 (Straits Settlements) Squadron Royal Air Force

William John Hills was born in West Ham in 1914, the son of Edward James Hills and Lillian May Greenaway. He married Irene Winifred Catley in the first quarter of 1939 (the marriage being registered in Essex South Western, vol. 4A, page 320). William's wife Irene was living in Ilford, Essex at the time of her husband's death but, following her marriage to Cecil Edward Ebelthite in 1968, moved to Coggeshall.

William Hills joined the Royal Air Force, trained as a Bomb Aimer and at the time of his death was serving with 97 (Straits Settlements) Squadron. In 1943 this Squadron was flying Lancasters out of RAF Bourn, near Oakington, in the 'Marker' role, as part of 8 Group (Bomber Command's Pathfinder Force). Flying Officer Hills was a member of the crew of Lancaster ED917 which in May, June and July of 1943 took part in key bombing raids over Dusseldorf and Cologne.

On 3rd July 1943 Lancaster ED917, piloted by Flying Officer Rembridge, took off from RAF Bourn at 22:35 hours for a raid on Cologne. A total of 635 aircraft took part in the raid and 30 aircraft were lost, including ED917 which was lost without trace. On this particular night the Luftwaffe introduced a new night-fighter unit specialising in attacking aircraft over the target area and claimed 12 bombers shot down over Cologne, of which ED917 could have been a victim. It was 97 Squadron's only loss on the raid.

All the crew were killed and are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, except Flying Officer Parry (the Navigator), who is buried in Rheinburg War Cemetery. Flying Officer Hills name is inscribed on panel 15 of the Memorial: he was 29 years old. He is also remembered on the grave of his wife and her second husband in Coggeshall Cemetery.

The Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede commemorates by name over 20,000 airmen who were lost in the Second World War during operations from bases in the United Kingdom and North and Western Europe, and who have no known graves. They served in Bomber, Fighter, Coastal, Transport, Flying Training and Maintenance Commands, and came from all parts of the Commonwealth and continental Europe.

The Memorial overlooks the River Thames on Cooper's Hill at Englefield Green between Windsor and Egham on the A308, 4 miles from Windsor.

