

LLANGARRON

1939 - 1945



Second World War

World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It involved the vast majority of the world's nations—eventually forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. It was the most widespread war in history, and directly involved more than 100 million people from over 30 countries. In a state of "total war", the major participants threw their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities behind the war effort, erasing the distinction between civilian and military resources. Marked by mass deaths of civilians, including the Holocaust (during which approximately 11 million people were killed) and the strategic bombing of industrial and population centres (during which approximately one million people were killed, including the use of two nuclear weapons in combat), it resulted in an estimated 50 million to 85 million fatalities. These made World War II the deadliest conflict in human history.

The Empire of Japan aimed to dominate Asia and the Pacific and was already at war with the Republic of China in 1937, but the world war is generally said to have begun on 1 September 1939 with the invasion of Poland by Germany and subsequent declarations of war on Germany by France and the United Kingdom. From late 1939 to early 1941, in a series of campaigns and treaties, Germany conquered or controlled much of continental Europe, and formed the Axis alliance with Italy and Japan. Following the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, Germany and the Soviet Union partitioned and annexed territories of their European neighbours, Poland, Finland, Romania and the Baltic states. For a year starting in late June 1940, the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth were the only Allied forces continuing the fight against the European Axis powers, with campaigns in North Africa and the Horn of Africa as well as the long-running Battle of the Atlantic. In June 1941, the European Axis powers launched an invasion of the Soviet Union, opening the largest land theatre of war in history, which trapped the major part of the Axis' military forces into a war of attrition. In December 1941, Japan attacked the United States and European territories in the Pacific Ocean, and quickly conquered much of the Western Pacific.

The Axis advance halted in 1942 when Japan lost the critical Battle of Midway, near Hawaii, and Germany was defeated in North Africa and then, decisively, at Stalingrad in the Soviet Union. In 1943, with a series of German defeats on the Eastern Front, the Allied invasion of Italy which brought about Italian surrender, and Allied victories in the Pacific, the Axis lost the initiative and undertook strategic retreat on all fronts. In 1944, the Western Allies invaded German-occupied France, while the Soviet Union regained all of its territorial losses and invaded Germany and its allies. During 1944 and 1945 the Japanese suffered major reverses in mainland Asia in South Central China and Burma, while the Allies crippled the Japanese Navy and captured key Western Pacific islands.

The war in Europe ended with an invasion of Germany by the Western Allies and the Soviet Union culminating in the capture of Berlin by Soviet and Polish troops and the subsequent German unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945. Following the Potsdam Declaration by the Allies on 26 July 1945 and the refusal of Japan to surrender under its terms, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August and 9 August respectively. With an invasion of the Japanese archipelago imminent, the possibility of additional atomic bombings, and the Soviet Union's declaration of war on Japan and invasion of Manchuria, Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. Thus ended the war in Asia, cementing the total victory of the Allies.

[Bill Webb. August 2015](#)

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The young men of Llangarron who died in The Second World War

Private Thomas Ronald John Lewis. Army Catering Corps.

Sergeant Kenneth Amos Miles. King's Shropshire Light Infantry

Sergeant John Henry Stevens. Royal Air Force

Gunner Henry Richard Sykes. Royal Artillery

Lt. Col. Myles Thomas Glen Wood. Royal Artillery

Two young men who died in Llangarron.

Ft.Lt. Kenneth Frank Jolly. Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve.

F.O. Walter Dinnathorne Langworthy. Royal Australian Air Force.



The war in the air

The air warfare of World War II was a major component in all theatres and, together with anti-air attack, consumed a large fraction of the industrial output of the major powers. Germany and Japan depended on air forces that were closely integrated with land and naval forces; they downplayed the advantage of fleets of strategic bombers, and were late in appreciating the need to defend against Allied strategic bombing. By contrast, Britain and the United States took an approach that greatly emphasised strategic bombing, and to a lesser degree, tactical control of the battlefield by air, and adequate air defences. They both built a strategic force of large, long-range bombers that could carry the air war to the enemy's homeland. Simultaneously, they built tactical air forces that could win air superiority over the battlefields, thereby giving vital assistance to ground troops. They both built a powerful naval-air component based on aircraft carriers, as did Japan; these played the central role in the war at sea.

The Supermarine Spitfire



20,351 Spitfires were built. Despite the fame of the Spitfire and its association with the Battle of Britain, the Hurricane actually shot down more enemy planes during this battle.

Handley Page Halifax



The Handley Page Halifax was a four-engine heavy bomber model operated by the British RAF during World War II.

Hawker Hurricane



AVRO Lancaster



The war at Sea

The Battle of the River Plate was fought on December 13, 1939, and saw British warships battle the German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee. Fighting off the estuary of the River Plate, Admiral Graf Spee inflicted heavy damage on the British but was forced to seek a harbor in neutral Uruguay. Trapped by British forces after the battle, the Germans scuttled Admiral Graf Spee in the River Plate.



The French Fleet

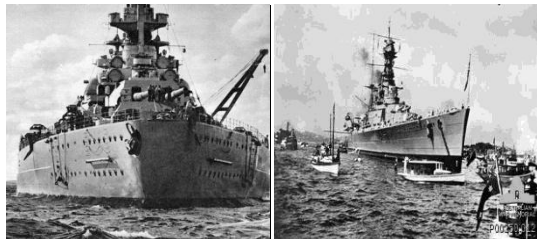
Operation Catapult was conducted on July 3, 1940, when British naval forces attacked the French fleet at Mers el Kebir. Approaching the harbor, Force H demanded that the French fleet come over to the Allied side to prevent its capture by the Germans. When the French refused, Force H opened fire inflicting heavy damage.

The Battle of the Atlantic was the longest battle of the Second World War, beginning from the first day of hostilities and ending on the very last day of the war. It was also the most important battle during the entire

Second World War because the success of every other campaign in every other theater of war depended upon its success. Many experts agree that defeat of the German U-Boats and control of the shipping lanes linking the Allied nations of Great Britain, United States and Canada was a key factor if the Allied nations were to invade occupied Europe and the heartland of Germany itself.

Sinking HMS Hood: Battle of the Denmark Strait

The Battle of the Denmark Strait was fought on May 24, 1941, during World War II. Departing port, the German battleship Bismarck and heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen attempted to break in the North Atlantic to attack Allied shipping. Intercepted by HMS Hood and HMS Prince of Wales, they defeated them in the resulting Battle of the Denmark Strait.



Bismarck

HMS Hood

Day of Infamy: Attack on Pearl Harbor
The attack on Pearl Harbor took place on December 7, 1941, and brought the United States into World War II. Launching from

aircraft carriers, Japanese planes conducted a surprise attack and sunk or badly damaged eight battleships

World War II: Sinking of Force Z

Centered on HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse, Force Z was a naval squadron dispatched to Singapore in late 1941. Commanded by Admiral Sir Thomas Phillips, Force Z sortied in early December to attack the Japanese. On December 10, both of Force Z's capital ships were sunk by Japanese aircraft.

Making History: The Battle of the Coral Sea

The Battle of the Coral Sea was fought May 4-8, 1942, and was a strategic victory for the Allies. In the first naval battle fought entirely with aircraft, Allied naval forces were able to block a Japanese drive through the Coral Sea to Port Moresby. When the Battle of the Coral Sea ended, the Japanese had lost a light carrier while the Allies lost a heavy carrier

Battle of Midway: Turning Point in the Pacific

The Battle of Midway in early June 1942, marked the turning point of World War II in the Pacific. Fighting to the west of Midway, the US Navy attacked and sunk four Japanese aircraft carriers while losing only one of its own.

Rationing in World War Two

Less than a third of the food available in Britain at the start of the war was produced at home. Enemy ships targeted incoming Allied merchant vessels, preventing vital supplies - including fruit, sugar, cereals and meat - from reaching the UK. Because of this, and to ensure fair distribution of supplies, the Ministry of Food issued ration books to every person, and families had to register at one shop. Official rationing began on 8 January 1940 with bacon, butter and sugar. Rations were distributed by weight, monetary value or points. One person's typical weekly allowance would be: one fresh egg; 4oz margarine and bacon (about four rashers); 2oz butter and tea; 1oz cheese; and 8oz sugar. Meat was allocated by price, so cheaper cuts became popular. Points could be pooled or saved to buy pulses, cereals, tinned goods, dried fruit, biscuits and jam.

A healthier nation Digs For Victory

The pioneering Ministry of Food's Dig For Victory campaign encouraged self-sufficiency, and allotment numbers rose from 815,000 to 1.4 million. Pigs, chickens and rabbits were reared domestically for meat, whilst vegetables were grown anywhere that could be cultivated. By 1940 wasting food was a criminal offence. As sugar was in short supply, sweets were rationed from July 1942 to February 1953. An attempt to de-ration them in 1949 lasted just four months, as demand far outstripped supply.

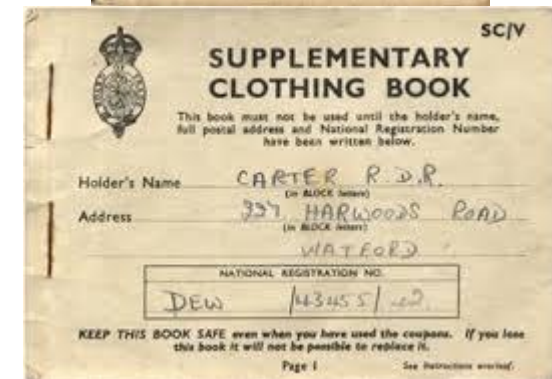
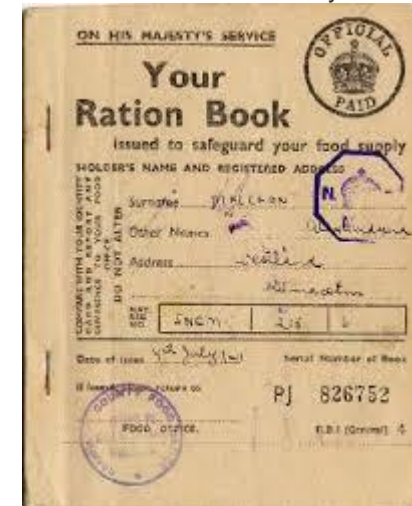
Luxuries were in short supply

Despite the stresses of wartime, the health of the poor improved. People were encouraged to eat protein, carbohydrates, pulses and fruit and vegetables. Babies, pregnant women and the sick were allocated additional nutrients such as milk, orange juice and cod liver oil. Luxuries, including alcohol and cigarettes, weren't officially rationed but were limited and expensive as factories focused on the war effort. It was considered prudent to 'keep in' with the local grocer, who reserved extras for favoured customers. From September 1939, petrol was only available for business or essential purposes. Furniture and clothing became utilitarian: pleats and turn-ups disappeared from trousers and garments were plain. Women painted gravy browning on bare legs as a replacement for silk stockings. Restaurant food was curtailed by price (a maximum of five shillings per meal) and quantity, but eating out was popular with those who could afford it. Local authority-run 'British Restaurants' fed those bombed out of their homes and also provided cheap meals for workers. They were often set up in schools and church halls. By 1944 there were 2000 British Restaurants in London alone.

The resourceful use of rations

The Ministry of Food produced posters, leaflets and also Food Flashes, which were shown to 20 million cinemagoers from 1942 to 1946. Marguerite Patten's cooking tips on the Home Service drew six million listeners daily. Homefront housewives had to be creative: 'mock' recipes included 'cream' (margarine,

milk and cornflour) and 'goose' (lentils and breadcrumbs). Amongst other things, carrots replaced sugar in apricot tart and were also eaten on sticks as lollies. Powdered egg and Spam from the US were mainstays of the era.



The London Blitz, 1940

The appearance of German bombers in the skies over London during the afternoon of September 7, 1940 heralded a tactical shift in Hitler's attempt to subdue Great Britain. During the previous two months, the Luftwaffe had targeted RAF airfields and radar stations for destruction in preparation for the German invasion of the island. With invasion plans put on hold and eventually scrapped, Hitler turned his attention to destroying London in an attempt to demoralize the population and force the British to come to terms. At around 4:00 PM on that September day, 348 German bombers escorted by 617 fighters blasted London until 6:00 PM. Two hours later, guided by the fires set by the first assault, a second group of raiders commenced another attack that lasted until 4:30 the following morning.

This was the beginning of the Blitz - a period of intense bombing of London and other cities that continued until the following May. For the next consecutive 57 days, London was bombed either during the day or night. Fires consumed many portions of the city. Residents sought shelter wherever they could find it - many fleeing to the Underground stations that sheltered as many as 177,000 people during the night. In the worst single incident, 450 were killed when a bomb destroyed a school being used as an air raid shelter. Londoners and the world were introduced to a new weapon of terror and destruction in the arsenal of twentieth century warfare. The Blitz ended on May 11, 1941 when Hitler called off the raids in order to move his bombers east in preparation for Germany's invasion of Russia.



Sept. 7, 1940 - the beginning of the London Blitz

"It was a night when London was ringed and stabbed with fire. They came just after dark, and somehow you could sense from the quick, bitter firing of the guns that there was to be no monkey business this night. Shortly after the sirens wailed you could hear the Germans grinding overhead. In my room, with its black curtains drawn across the windows, you could feel the shake from the guns. You could hear the boom, crump, crump, crump, of heavy bombs at their work of tearing buildings apart. They were not too far away. Half an hour after the firing started I gathered a couple of friends and went to a high, darkened balcony that gave us a view of a third of the entire circle of London. As we stepped out onto the balcony a vast inner excitement came over all of us-an excitement that had neither fear nor horror in it, because it was too full of awe. You have all seen big fires, but I doubt if you have ever seen the whole horizon of a city lined with great fires - scores of them, perhaps hundreds. There was something inspiring just in the awful savagery of it. The closest fires were near enough for us to hear the crackling flames and the yells of firemen. Little fires grew into big ones even as we watched. Big ones died down under the firemen's valor, only to break out again later. About every two minutes a new wave of planes would be over. The motors seemed to grind rather than roar, and to have an angry pulsation, like a bee buzzing in blind fury.

The guns did not make a constant overwhelming din as in those terrible days of September. They were intermittent - sometimes a few seconds apart, sometimes a minute or more. Their sound was sharp, near by; and soft and muffled, far away. They were everywhere over London. Into the dark shadowed spaces below us, while we watched, whole batches of incendiary bombs fell. We saw two dozen go off in two seconds. They flashed terrifically, then quickly simmered down to pin points of dazzling white, burning ferociously. These white pin points would go out one by one, as the unseen heroes of the moment smothered them with sand. But also, while we watched, other pin points would burn on, and

soon a yellow flame would leap up from the white center. They had done their work - another building was on fire. The greatest of all the fires was directly in front of us. Flames seemed to whip hundreds of feet into the air. Pinkish-white smoke ballooned upward in a great cloud, and out of this cloud there gradually took shape - so faintly at first that we weren't sure we saw correctly - the gigantic dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. St. Paul's was surrounded by fire, but it came through. It stood there in its enormous proportions - growing slowly clearer and clearer, the way objects take shape at dawn. It was like a picture of some miraculous figure that appears before peace-hungry soldiers on a battlefield. The streets below us were semi-illuminated from the glow. Immediately above the fires the sky was red and angry, and overhead, making a ceiling in the vast heavens, there was a cloud of smoke all in pink. Up in that pink shrouding there were tiny, brilliant specks of flashing light-antiaircraft shells bursting. After the flash you could hear the sound.

Up there, too, the barrage balloons were standing out as clearly as if it were daytime, but now



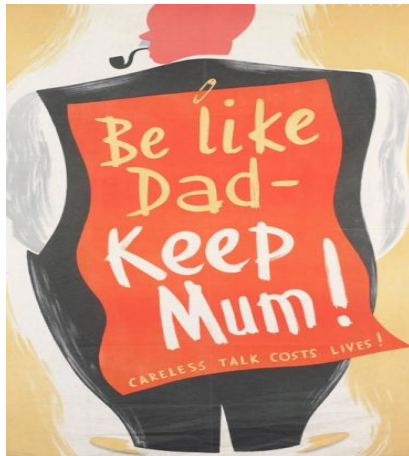
Dec. 29, 1940 - St. Paul's Cathedral emerges from the flames during one of the most devastating raids.

they were pink instead of silver. And now and then through a hole in that pink shroud there twinkled incongruously a permanent, genuine star - the old - fashioned kind that has always been there.

Below us the Thames grew lighter, and all around below were the shadows - the dark shadows of buildings and bridges that formed the base of this dreadful masterpiece.

Later on I borrowed a tin hat and went out among the fires. That was exciting too; but the thing I shall always remember above all the other things in my life is the monstrous loveliness of that one single view of London on a holiday night - London stabbed with great fires, shaken by explosions, its dark regions along the Thames sparkling with the pin points of white-hot bombs, all of it roofed over with a ceiling of pink that held bursting shells, balloons, flares and the grind of vicious engines. And in yourself the excitement and anticipation and wonder in your soul that this could be happening at all.

These things all went together to make the most hateful, most beautiful single scene I have ever known."



The Poster Campaign
Concentrated on the problems of feeding the country and supporting the fighting forces.



Private
Thomas Ronald John Lewis
12/6/1915 – 7/9/1944



Army Catering Corps
Attached to Royal Army Service Corps.

10631902 Private T.R.J.
Lewis Army Catering Corps
Thomas Ronald John (Jack) Lewis (Ted Lane another long term resident of Llangarron said that he was always known as Jack Lewis). He was the son of Thomas Griffith Lewis who had been born at Holms Marsh, Lyonshall,

Herefordshire in the December quarter of 1879. His father was an Agricultural Labourer. Mary Ann Cook his mother had been born in Kington in March quarter 1872. Mary Ann at some stage married someone called Turner (but I cannot trace the marriage) and by the 1901 census she was aged 26 and 'in service' with the Ballard family of Leominster and was a 'widow' Thomas Griffiths Lewis and Mary Ann Turner were married in 1903 In Builth. Stan Fryer (a long term resident of Llangarron) told me that in his youth Thomas Ronald John (Jack) Lewis worked for Reynolds Brothers the bakers. This presumably accounts for his joining The Army Catering Corps.

Thomas Ronald John Lewis was born at 16 Market Hall, Kington, Herefordshire on 12th June 1915. His mother is described as Mary Ann Lewis late Turner, formerly Cook. Her father Thomas Griffith Lewis was a

Private in the RASC (Royal Army Service Corps) and a general labourer.

Thomas Lewis married Dorothy Ada Parker in September quarter 1938 in Bootle Cumberland (Cumbria). Bootle, Cumbria is the site of the Eskmeals (Drigg) gunnery and firing range. If Thomas Lewis was in the services pre-war it is quite possible he served there. Dorothy Ada Parker was born in Croydon. South London on 16th March 1909 she was the daughter of Frederick and Ada Jane Parker at 1911 census they were living at 5 Knoll Rd, Wandsworth, London. Frederick was born in Brighton and was a Jewellers shop assistant and Ada Jane was born in Stoke Newington, London. Following her marriage to Thomas Ronald John Lewis they moved back to Herefordshire/Monmouthshire. By the time of Thomas's death Dorothy Ada Lewis was living in Talywain, Monmouthshire. Dorothy Ada Lewis died in Monmouthshire in January 2000 aged 90 years never having re-married.

Thomas Ronald John Lewis joined the Army. His Regiment was the Army Catering Corps. Until 1941 Regiments had their own cooks who were all trained at Aldershot or Poona (India) from 1941 the ACC was formed as part of the Royal Army Service Corps. (Later from 1965 it became a Corps in its own right). I have no idea how Thomas Lewis became a prisoner of the Japanese but it seems most almost certain that he was captured at the fall of Singapore. Thomas joined the Army Catering Corps was attached to the Royal Army Service Corps and was posted to the Malaya Theatre of War (Singapore). On February 8th 1942 23,000 Japanese invaded Singapore from the Malayan Peninsular and one week later on the 15th accepted the surrender of the island. 138,708 British and Commonwealth soldiers were taken prisoner and 50,000 ethnic Chinese civilians were massacred. More than one third of the British Prisoners died in the Prison Camps. Prime Minister Winston Churchill called

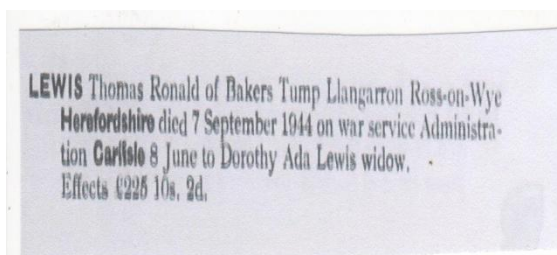
the ignominious fall of Singapore to the Japanese the "worst disaster" and "largest capitulation" in British military history.

Private Lewis was one of those prisoners and was sent to Kanchanaburi Prisoner of war camp in Thailand. The first prisoners of war to work in Thailand, 3,000 British soldiers, left Changi by train in June 1942 to Ban Pong, the southern terminus of the railway. Construction camps housing at least 1,000 workers each were established every five to 10 miles (8 to 17 km) of the route. Workers were moved up and down the railway line as needed. The construction camps consisted of open-sided barracks built of bamboo poles with thatched roofs. The barracks were about sixty metres (66 yd) long with sleeping platforms raised above the ground on each side of an earthen floor. Two hundred men were housed in each barracks, giving each man a two-foot wide space in which to live and sleep. Camps were

usually named after the kilometer where they were located.

In 1942 Kanchanaburi was under Japanese control, it is located where the Khwae Noi and Khwae Yai rivers converge into the Mae Klong river. It was here that Allied POWs, building the infamous Burma Railway, constructed a bridge; an event immortalised in the film *Bridge on the River Kwai*. More than half of the prisoners working on the project died from disease, maltreatment and accidents. When the camp was established in October 1942, the prisoner's first task was to bridge the Khwae Mae Klong above its confluence with the Khwae Noi. Once this bridge was constructed, work on the railway continued towards Burma. The prisoners and civilian workers were treated as slaves and suffered great brutality from the Japanese and Korean guards, as well as having to cope with the heat and diseases of the jungle. Between

December 1942 and October 1943, 60,000 Allied Prisoners of war and 177,000 Tamil, Malay and Burmese worked for the Japanese to build a strategically (for the Japanese) important railway through the jungles of Burma and Thailand. For nearly two hundred kilometres of its journey the railway ran alongside a river called the Khwae Noi or 'little river'. Around 12,500 Allied soldiers and more than 85,000 Asian labourers died during its construction and it became known as the 'Death Railway'. Private Thomas Lewis died in Kanchanaburi on 7th September 1944 and is buried in the war cemetery there. He is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in Llangarron Church.



Due to problems created by climatic conditions in the region the traditional Portland headstones are not used. The casualty's details are instead recorded on bronze plaques mounted on low pedestals.





Kanchanaburi

In Memory of
Private
Thomas Ronald John Lewis

10631902, Army Catering Corps who died on 07 September 1944 Age 29

Son of Thomas Griffiths Lewis, and Mary Ann Lewis; husband of Dorothy Ada Lewis, of Talywain, Monmouthshire.

Remembered with Honour
Kanchanaburi War Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

40032064 Lance-Sergeant
**Kenneth Amos
Miles**

5/12/1915 – 8/7/1944



2nd Battalion.
King's Shropshire Light Infantry

Kenneth Amos Miles

Kenneth Amos Miles was born on 5th December 1915 at 32 High Street, Blackwood, Bedwellty. However his birth was not registered until 15th January 1916 so it looks from the record below as though his birth date was 1916. He was the son of Amos Miles had been born in Peterstow in 1893 and Alice M Davies from

Argoed. Amos had an older sister Elizabeth and a younger brother Henry. Kenneth's mother Alice May Davies had been born in Argoed, Monmouthshire and she had two brothers Tom and William both coal miners (hewers). Her father in 1911 was a Farm Labourer from Lase in Breconshire and a widower Amos Miles and Alice M Davies married in Ross (District) in 1914. Kenneth Amos Miles had four brothers and one sister: Gwendoline A born 1917 in Bedwellty (District). Oswald A Miles born 1920 in Ross (District). Harold R Miles born 1922 in Ross (District). Alfred J Miles born 1927 in Ross (District). Wallace Miles born 1930 in Ross (District) By the time of Kenneth's death his parents were living at Little Kilreague, Llangarron. Private Kenneth. A. Miles joined the 2nd Battalion the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in 1933 and by 1943 had been promoted up to the rank of Lance Sergeant.

A Lance-Sergeant (LSgt or L/Sgt) in the armies of the Commonwealth is a Corporal acting in the rank of Sergeant.

Second World War

The 2nd Battalion KSLI had a much more peaceful start to the war, remaining on duty in the West Indies, where it was to guard Dutch oil refineries in Curacao and Aruba. This very pleasant tour of duty, largely untroubled by the war raging elsewhere, lasted until February 1942 when the battalion began its long homeward journey via New Orleans and New York. Under Lt. Col. Maurice, the battalion spent the next two years undergoing intensive training, much of it carried out in Scotland, to prepare it for its role in the coming invasion of Europe.

Kenneth Amos Miles married Elsie Barker in Knaresborough, West Riding of Yorkshire in March Quarter 1944. Elsie was from a fairly large family and had five brothers and sisters. Ivy, Frank, Albert, Norman and Arthur Barker.

'D' Day 6th June 1944

The 2nd Battalion landed on Queen beach near Hermanville-sur-Mer on "D-Day", 6th June 1944 as part of 185 Brigade of the 79th Armoured Division.
THE PLAN OF OPERATION OVERLORD

The 185th Infantry Brigade was to assemble in the wooded area just north of Hermanville and attack towards Caen with the main road from Hermanville to Caen as its centre line.

The commander of the brigade, Brigadier K. P. Smith, O.B.E., decided to advance with one battalion, the K.S.L.L, up, and the other two battalions, the 2nd Battalion The Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the 1st Battalion The Royal Norfolk Regiment, in reserve.

It was expected that by 'H' hour plus 120 minutes the immediate bridgehead would have been secured by the 8th and 9th Infantry Brigades. The rifle companies of all three battalions were therefore to land at this time in one wave of L.C.I's together with a small battalion headquarters in each case, entirely on foot. The vehicles of all three battalions, which were in the first

main party of which I have spoken earlier, were to land from L.C.T.'s at 'H' plus 240 minutes, and to join the marching men in the assembly area, or if the rifle companies had already left, to follow them up.

The tanks were to be brought in just before the vehicles, the guns would either have landed with the other two brigades or with the tanks, having fired from their L.G.T.'s as they ran in to touch down.

Elaborate sapper plans had been made to clear the beach obstacles, to open the beach exits and to clear the routes of mines ahead of the vehicles. The tanks were to move across country after they left the assembly area and were therefore bound to take a chance over mines.

Once the other two brigades had finished their mopping-up the whole of the divisional artillery was to be in support of the K.S.L.I. firing mainly by observation.

The country was seen to be open rolling cultivated land, rather similar to East Anglia, with a built-up area of rococo villas along the coast. There were three main ridges

between the sea and Caen, which itself lay in a valley. The first was some half a mile south of Hermanville. This was the ridge to be seized by the two assault brigades. The second was two miles further south, with the village of Bieville at its summit. The third was a mile and half further south again and three miles north of Caen, and crowned by the thick wood and village of Lebissey.

THE 'D' DAY BATTLE



Troops assembling on Queen Beach

THE heavily laden men struggled ashore from the L.C.I.'s, helped by ropes which the Navy ran out to the shore and moved off to the assembly area which all the companies had reached by 11.00 hours. One of the L.C.I.'s was hit by shell fire just after

the men had disembarked and sank on the beach.

The load of the men was considerably lessened in the assembly area by dumping there a sandbag carried by each man, containing the gasmask, cardigan and other items which would be needed later. Ninety-five per cent. of these were recovered successfully the next day.

It was clear that this ridge had not yet been captured by the 8th Infantry Brigade, who were held up by a locality to the east of the main road. The enemy opened both small arms and mortar fire on X company as they moved up the slope, in particular a machine gun post on the right of the road was holding the company. The commanding officer, therefore, ordered W company to outflank this post, which they did, and then proceeded down towards Periers sur le Dan, where there was considerable opposition.

It was typical of the complete disregard of enemy fire which Colonel Maurice always showed that when the battalion first came under fire on this slope everyone instinctively went

to ground. A brother officer has related to me, how looking round, and feeling extremely frightened, he saw the Colonel walking up the centre of the road, playing with the chin-strap of his helmet as he always did. He thought, "Well—if he is all right I suppose I shall be too," and got up. The example spread and in a few minutes the men were moving forward steadily.

It was rapidly apparent to both the tanks who had reached the top of the ridge, and to the infantry, who were advancing down the far side, that the battery near Periers sur le Dan, with which it was hoped that the R.A.F. would have dealt, was not only alive but kicking strongly. This battery had the whole of the main road down the south side of the slope under observation and were firing over open sights, thereby preventing either the tanks or the vehicles of support company, which had started to arrive, from going forward.

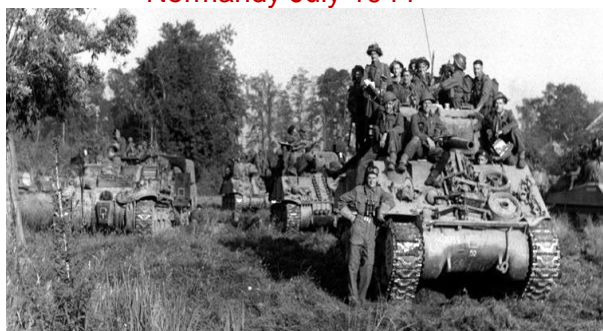
At 14.25 hours the commanding officer, therefore, ordered Major Wheelock to attack this battery with Z company. As the only forward observation officers were with X and W companies it was impossible to

give him artillery support. The battle then fought was both bitter and vital. Major Wheelock took his company close to the battery, which was surrounded by wire. They managed to drive the gunners from the gun emplacements by small arms fire, but the gunners only moved to weapon slits and prevented the company from piercing the wire by heavy machine gun fire. Several times the gunners got back to their guns and started to shell the road, only being stopped by renewed fire from the company. The situation might have been critical had not the company captured a Polish deserter who showed them the way through the wire behind the battery. The gunners then fled, disappearing into the thick woods where they were pursued for some hundreds of yards by the company. The guns were blown up by an R.E. N.C.O., who though badly wounded, succeeded in rendering them all useless.

The commanding officer decided that it was beyond the power of the battalion to take Lebisey that evening. The other two battalions were still back at Hermanville engaged in mopping-up the enemy. The commanding officer, therefore, decided to consolidate the

battalion in the area of Bieville and to withdraw Y company after dark. This was accomplished successfully, the three companies taking up positions on the southern edge of the village, battalion headquarters moving up to the northern edge, while the tanks went back to rally at Beuville. In killed and wounded we had lost one hundred and thirteen Officers and men.

The 2nd KSLI with Staffs Yeo tanks
Normandy July 1944



THE BATTLE FOR CAEN 7/8th JULY

The battle continued around Caen and after a period of hard fighting, the battalion took part in the capture of Caen, by then completely ruined, and of Manneville.

An account of the build up and attack on Caen 7th and 8th July 1944 by 2nd Battalion K.S.L.I in which

Corporal Kenneth Amos Miles died (8th July). I do not know which Coy he was in though, but it does give an idea of the ferocity of the battle.

On Friday evening, July 7th, "W" moved up into the fields north of Bieville, with 7 platoon joining a party under Capt. Aitken (Carrier Pln.), to hold Square Wood for the night, to allow the assaulting Bns. to form up unmolested. With great excitement we watched the enormous force of bombers "softening up" Caen, the smoke and dust rose in the air almost to the height of the planes. Next day the attack went in successfully, and the K.S.L.I, went through the rest of the Bde. on to the bitterly defended open country south of Lebisey, fighting towards Caen. The enemy held on grimly, and casualties were severe. Amongst others, Cpl. Brown was killed and Lt. Broadfoot wounded in Square Wood, and Cpls. Worrall and Ellis and L/Cpl. Grey killed in the "Hill 60" area. The Coy. was magnificently led by Major Slatter, and the C.S.M. did yeoman service, for which he was awarded the M.C. He exploited the PIAT as an anti-infantry weapon with great effect, and

was a great rallier of the more faint-hearted.


Despite our losses, the Bn. went on with 9 Bde. into Caen, and eventually "W" Coy. came to a weary halt amidst the shattered streets east of the cathedral, along the north bank of the canal. The chief menace here was from close range mortaring, and we got used to flopping into cellars at lightning speed. Nine Pln. Commander, Lt. Wright, the last surviving rifle coy. subaltern in the Bn. who had landed on "D" Day, was wounded in the leg by a bomb, but was loathe to be evacuated.

Kenneth Amos Miles was killed on 8th July 1944 in Normandy aged 28. He is buried in La Delivrande War Cemetery, Douvres, France. The Cemetery is about 9 Miles north of Caen.

He is commemorated in the Church at Llangarron.



KILLED IN ACTION



L-SERGT. K. AMOS MILES OF LLANGARRON.



Mr. and Mrs. Amos Miles, of Little Kilreague, Llangarron, last week received the sad news that their eldest son, L-Sergt. Kenneth Amos Miles, had recently been killed in action, while serving in Normandy. L-Sergt. Miles, who was 28 years of age, was married, and with his wife and parents every sympathy will be shared with them in their loss. Deceased was in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and had put in nearly eleven years' service in the Forces, having previously been in the West Indies for over three years. He was well known in the Llangarron district.

Ross Gazette Obituary

In Memory of
Corporal
Kenneth Amos Miles

4032064, 2nd Bn., King's Shropshire Light Infantry who died on 08 July 1944 Age 28
Son of Amos and Alice May Miles; husband of Elsie Miles, of Harrogate, Yorkshire.

Remembered with Honour
La Delivrande War Cemetery, Douvres

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

1401047
Sgt. Flt. Eng.
John Henry Stevens

24/5/1922 – 3/10/1943



44 (Rhodesia) Squadron
Royal Air Force Volunteer
Reserve

John Henry Stevens

John Henry Stevens was born on the 24th May 1922 at Red House, Pencoyd. His parents were Albert James Stevens and Annie Catherine Lloyd. I have been unable to find out much about his father other than he was a journeyman Blacksmith (A

journeyman Blacksmith was one who had finished his apprenticeship had all his own tools and was on his way – journeying- to becoming a Master Blacksmith). (Ted Lane who used to run the Butts Garage knew him as a Blacksmith in the village). John Henry's mother Annie Catherine Lloyd was born in Llandysilio, Cardiganshire in 1903 and her father William was a Roadman with the District Council. She had 5 brothers and sisters:

John Henry Stevens' mother presumably came to the Ross area from Cardiganshire and met John's father and they married in the 1922 in Ross (District). At this point they were living at Pencoyd but by 1943 they had moved to Llangarron.

John (Cocky) Stevens according to Ted Lane was a 'bit of a wild lad', and Stan Fryer (another long term resident of Llangarron) told me he had worked at Longford and Hicks Garage in Ross-on-Wye before the war.



T C Longford's Garage, Cantilupe Rd, Ross-on-Wye. Now Saymor's. Established in around 1924, this was originally Longford & Hicks garage who were motor engineers and it had a "Shell kerbside pump".

John Henry joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve and went into 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron, which was part of 5 Group RAF. By October 1943 the Squadron was based at RAF Dunholme Lodge, Lincolnshire which is about 5 miles NE of Lincoln. It was called Rhodesia Squadron in recognition of the money and support given to the war effort by the people of Rhodesia but by Dec. 1941 one third of the ground crew were Rhodesian.

His aircraft was:

Lancaster III ED433 KM-V.



His aircrew comrades were:

Pilot Officer Hartley Graham Norton
R.A.A.F (Royal Australian Air Force)
No. 416512

Sgt. John Henry Stevens RAFVR No.
1401047

Sgt Ernest Edwin Greenfield RAFVR
No. 1444784

Sgt Reginald George Martin RAFVR
No. 1171555

Sgt Stuart Donald Stait RAFVR No.
1576580

Sgt William Arthur Whalley RAFVR No.
1817321

Sgt F Thompson

John Henry Stevens was a Flight Engineer

Below is a small part of a narrative by Edgar 'Jumbo' Childs DFM who was a Flight Engineer on Lancasters in 1943. This article gives an idea of life on a Lancaster mission.

"Because we were flying at altitude with no real heating to speak of, where outside temperatures could be minus 40C, we had to wear a lot of kit, starting with long johns and long-sleeved vests made from a mixture of silk and wool, our battle dress, a thick white polo neck jersey, sea boot stockings, sheepskin flying boots, bomber jackets, three pairs of gloves - silk, wool and leather - topped off with flying helmets and goggles. Over the top we wore a Mae West lifejacket, a parachute and harness. The gunners also had electrically-heated suits. Whenever we went on ops we were provided with flying rations of two packets of chewing gum, two bars of chocolate, 2ozs of barley sweets, a tin

of Florida orange juice and a thermos flask of coffee.

The barley sugars came in handy because by the time you had been flying for several hours your mouth tasted of rubber from the oxygen masks, so we sucked the sweets to take some of that taste away. As flight engineer, my job was everything mechanical on the aircraft. I would start the engines, and during take-off I would control the throttles once the pilot needed to put hands on the control column. I had to get the wheels up and trim the flaps, and during the flight I kept an eye on all the instruments. It was almost a co-pilot's job, but there was only one control column. I was sufficiently trained that I could fly the aircraft, but if anything happened to the pilot it was nigh on impossible to get him out of the seat in all his flying gear. I never heard of one case where anyone got an injured pilot out of his seat and took over the controls. It was also my job to dispense "window", the strips of foil which we threw out of the aircraft in bundles to confuse German radar.

When we got back we would go for debriefing and then you would look up on the wall to see who was back and

who was missing. Mostly they were just missing, that was all you knew. You didn't know if they had been taken prisoner for about three months. When we went to the Ruhr Valley we would cross the Zuider Zee and you could see ahead of us where the raid was going on, with six or eight cones of 18 to 20 searchlights. And flak going off everywhere. From a distance it didn't really look as if anything could live through it, it was so intense. It was only when you got closer that little gaps appeared.

When another aircraft had been "coned" by searchlights we would fly as close as we could to that one, because it meant that those searchlights were busy and couldn't pick us out. You learned things like that from experience and that was what got you through in the end. It was exciting at times, it was boring at times, it was fascinating - the whole gamut of experiences".

The last flight John Henry Stevens made was at 18.31 p.m. on the night of 3/4th October 1943. It was a bombing raid on the German City of Kassel. The plane a Lancaster III ED433 KM-V

crashed near the target. The plane had a crew of seven, six of them died and are all buried at Hanover War Cemetery and one Sgt Thompson became a Prisoner of War, interned in Camp 4B POW No. 263425.



Headstones of the crew at Hanover War Cemetery

The 3/4th Oct. 1943 raid on Kassel. 547 aircraft took part using H2S Radar the main weight of the bombs fell on the western suburbs and outlying towns and villages.

The Kassel World War II bombings were a set of Allied strategic bombing attacks. The fire of the most severe air raid burned for seven days, at least 10,000 people died, 150,000 inhabitants were bombed-out, and the city centre was 95% destroyed.

The awful thing about the RAF statistics is that John Henry Stevens was only 21 when he died but the 'average' age of Bomber Crews on Lancasters was 22 years.



All Saints Church, Great Steeping.

44 (Rhodesia) Squadron was the first RAF Squadron to be equipped with AVRO Lancasters. Not only did No. 44 Squadron throw all its weight into Bomber Command's relentless assault on German industry, but it also raided ports and U-boat shelters, as well as the Peenemunde V-weapons experimental station and targets in Northern Italy.

- Avro Lancaster - 4,362 sorties (149 lost, plus 22 destroyed in crashes)

Avro Lancaster

Few would question that the Lancaster was the most effective bomber on either side in World War II. -- Marshall of the Royal Air Force Sir Michael Beetham

There can be no better tributes to the Lancaster than those to be found in the county of Lincolnshire. Bearing in mind the importance of the county's airfields to the Lancaster, it is fitting that Lincolnshire is still home to two Lancasters, both of which are available for the public to see. Developed from the Avro Manchester, the Avro Lancaster was the heavy bomber of World War Two.

No. 44 received its first Avro Lancaster, BT308, in late 1941 and became the first squadron to convert completely to Lancasters—flying their first operational missions in the aircraft on 3 March 1942. Total sorties and losses for the war were:

- Handley Page Hampden - 2,043 sorties (43 lost)

The squadron suffered the third highest overall casualties of RAF Bomber Command.

The crews were invariably in their early twenties. A crew member as old as twenty-five would be regarded as ancient.

John Henry Stevens was killed on 3rd October 1943 at Hanover, returning from a bombing raid on Kessel, he is buried in Hanover and commemorated in Llangarron Church and at the Bomber Command memorial in London





In Memory of
Sergeant Flt. Engr.

John Henry Stevens

1401047, 44 Sqn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on 03 October 1943 Age 21

Son of Albert James Stevens and Annie Catherine Stevens, of Llangarron, Herefordshire.

Remembered with Honour
Hanover War Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

790604 Gunner Henry Richard Sykes

1904 – 11/5/1940



1 heavy Regt. Royal Artillery

Henry Richard (Harry) Sykes

(Harry) Sykes was born in 1904 in Llangarron. His parents were George Sykes (born 1866 Llangarron) and Lilly Augusta Sykes (Roberts born Tretire 1871). They were married 1895. 1871 census and George Sykes (Henry's father) was 4 years old and living at Solomons, Llangarron with his

parents Thomas (an agricultural labourer), Thomas' wife Ann and their five children: Lilly Augusta (Augusta) Roberts was living at home in Tretire Mill with her father Richard a Miller from Woolhope and his wife Emma.

1881 George Sykes now aged 14 along with his brother Thomas aged 16 were 'Farm Servants' living at Kilvege, the farm of Thomas Scudamor. Lillie (Lilly) A Roberts was still living at home with her parents at Grist Mill, Tretire and with their children;

1891 George was back living with his family but now at Llangrove. His father Thomas now aged 58 and an Agricultural Labourer, his wife Ann aged 60, their children Joseph now a Waggoner, George was an Engine Driver – Road. And Thomas was a Groom. Emily aged 7 is a scholar. George and Lilly were married in 1895.

1901 census George and Lilly were living at the 'Old Pound' Llangarron with their two daughters Edith and Florrie. George was a Traction Engine Driver and an 'Employer' – a man of substance.

At the 1911 census George and Lilly Sykes were living at Upper Cabbock, Llangarron with their Daughter Florrie and sons Henry Richard (Harry) and Charles. George was a Farm labourer, Lilly was a 'housekeeper' and the children were all at school.

Upper Cabback is now Upper Cabbage just up from the old Butts Garage in the village.. Prior to his time in the army Harry Sykes used to have a 20 seater Bedford bus which he used to go to Abergavenny.

Henry Richard Sykes married Olga Theresa Sayce in 1940 in Abergavenny. Olga was born in 1914 in Monmouth and her father George Theophilus Sayce was a gamekeeper who had been born in Skenfrith in 1890 and her mother Theresa Elizabeth G

Miles had been born in Llanvetherine in 1889.

The Second World War 7906004 Gunner Sykes joined the Royal Artillery and was posted to 1st Heavy Regiment.



7.2" Howitzer of 'Heavy Regiment' RA

The name speaks for itself they were equipped with 'heavy' guns. They were part of the British Expeditionary Force in France order of battle on 9 May 1940, the day before the German forces initiated the Battle of France. They were part of 1 Corps HQ Royal Artillery.

During the Second World War, I Corps' first assignment was again to the British Expeditionary Force where it was commanded by General Dill, and then Lieut-Gen Barker from April 1940. After the Germans broke through Allied lines in May 1940, the BEF was forced to retreat to Dunkirk for evacuation. The GOCinC, Lord Gort, ordered Barker to form the rearguard with I Corps to cover the evacuation, and surrender to the Germans as a last resort. However, the acting commander of II Corps, Maj-Gen Bernard Montgomery, advised Gort that Barker was in an unfit state to be left in final command, and recommended that Maj-Gen Harold Alexander of 1st Division should be put in charge. Gort did as Montgomery advised, and in the event the bulk of I Corps was successfully evacuated. As Montgomery recalled: "'Alex" got everyone away in his own calm and confident manner'.

Battle of France and evacuation of Dunkirk 1940

By May 1940, Europe had been at war for nine months. Yet Britain and France, despite having declared war on Germany in September 1939 following Hitler's attack on Poland, had seen little real fighting. This tense period of anticipation – which came to be known as the 'Phoney War' – met an abrupt end on 10 May 1940, when Germany launched an invasion of France and the Low Countries.

The German plan of attack, codenamed Case Yellow, entailed an armoured offensive through the Ardennes Forest, which bypassed the strong French frontier defences of the Maginot Line. The advance would then threaten to encircle French and British divisions to the north, stationed on the Belgian frontier.

The German offensive quickly overwhelmed Dutch forces, and the bombing of Rotterdam persuaded the Netherlands to surrender on 15 May. And although German forces in the

north encountered strong French and Belgian resistance, the main German thrust through the Ardennes met with tremendous success. French second-rate divisions in the area were not prepared or equipped to deal with the major armoured thrust that developed (the forest and poor roads were thought to make this impossible), and were hammered by incessant attacks by German bombers.



Just four days into the invasion German troops crossed the Meuse river, and had broken through the French lines. Attempts by the Allies to launch counterattacks by air and land either failed with heavy losses, or were thwarted by the pace of events. The British Expeditionary Force, along with the best units of the French army, were still in the north and had seen little fighting. But the German breakthrough to the south now forced them into rapid

retreat to avoid being cut off with their backs to the sea. On 20 May German tanks reached Amiens and effectively trapped the British, who now made for Dunkirk and an unlikely attempt at evacuation to England.

In these desperate circumstances, an evacuation plan known as 'Operation Dynamo' was hastily prepared in Dover by Vice Admiral Bertram Ramsay. His strategy included an appeal for all civilian vessels that could cross the Channel to help ferry the troops from the beaches to larger ships offshore, or to evacuate them entirely. Between 26 May and 4 June - a period during which Hitler halted the advance of his troops on Dunkirk - 200,000 British and 140,000 French troops were evacuated to England. Nine allied destroyers and approximately 200 civilian vessels were lost during the evacuation, and the RAF suffered severe casualties covering the operation from the air.

On 5 June, the Germans swung southwards and French resistance finally collapsed, although not without heavy fighting. On 10 June, Italy opportunistically entered the war on Germany's side. Four days later, the

French capital fell, provoking the flight of the French Government to Bordeaux. The Government capitulated on 25 June, just seven weeks after the beginning of the invasion.

The British 51st Highland Division - stationed in the Maginot Line when the fighting started - was forced to surrender at St Valéry. During the final evacuation of British troops from St Nazaire on the Atlantic coast, the troopship *Lancastria* was sunk with the loss of around 4,000 refugees, British troops and crew. Reluctant to take the risk that the French Navy would end up under German control, Churchill ordered the Royal Navy to present French warships at Mers-el-Kebir with an ultimatum to sail to Britain or to a neutral port for internment. When this offer was rejected on 3 July, British ships bombarded the fleet, killing 1,600 people. Although this operation did much to assure America of the strength of the British purpose, it and the evacuation of Dunkirk did immeasurable damage to Franco-British wartime relations.

Henry Richard Sykes was killed in action between 11th May 1940 and 4th June 1940 his body was never recovered and he is commemorated at the Dunkirk Memorial. This memorial commemorates the more than 4,500 casualties of the British Expeditionary Force who died in the campaign of 1939-40 or who died in captivity who were captured in this campaign and have no known grave.



Dunkirk Memorial

He is also commemorated at the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park.



British casualties between 11th May and 4th June 1940 were:
30,000 killed or wounded
34,000 missing or captured
6 destroyers and over 200 smaller vessels
177 aircraft



The widow of Henry Sykes, Olga Theresa Sykes re-married to Thomas W Evans in late 1943 in Abergavenny, Monmouthshire.

In Memory of
Gunner
Henry Richard Sykes

790604, 1 Heavy Regt., Royal Artillery who died between 11 May 1940 and 04 June 1940 Age 35

Son of George and Lilian Sykes; husband of Olga Theresa Sykes, of Cross Ash, Monmouthshire.

Remembered with Honour
Dunkirk Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Lt. Colonel
Myles T. G. Wood
O.B.E.
1907 – 17/10/1943



121 Field Regiment Royal Artillery

Myles Thomas Glen Wood

He was born in Ireland (Eire) about 1907, (the Commonwealth War Graves Commission gives his age as 36 at the time of his death in 1943). He was also awarded the *Sword of Honour* at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich in 1927, again this would indicate a birth about 1907. He was educated at Marlborough and as Myles's father retired in January 1920 it seems likely that then was when they moved to

Woodfields, Llangarron especially as Myles had a lively social life with the local Hunts, presumably before and early on in his military Career. His father was Lt Col. George Benson Glen Wood D.S.O. He joined the 3rd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers as Second Lieutenant in August 1900 (*London Gazette Aug 10th 1900*). On 4th January 1901 he was seconded for service as mounted infantry in South Africa (*London Gazette Jan 18th 1900*). On 10th September 1901 he and Lt Mackintosh of the Cameron Highlanders led a small party of Mounted Infantry in surprise of very superior force of enemy at Vooruitzicht, Orange River Colony and was 'mentioned in Despatches'. His Great War Medal Card gives his home as Woodfields, Llangarron.

Myles Thomas Glen Wood went to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and trained as an Artillery Officer. He was awarded the prestigious *Sword of Honour* in 1927 (*Sword of Honour is awarded to the Officer Cadet considered by the Commandant to be the best Cadet on the course*). On 1st September 1927 he was appointed as

2nd Lt. to the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

He was Gazetted to the Royal Field Artillery but was then appointed to the Royal Horse Artillery. He was a keen horseman and was selected to attend an Instructors course at the school of Military Equitation, which he passed. He was reputed to have won the Artillery Gold Cup at Sandown and was a keen rider to hounds, riding with the South Herefordshire Foxhounds, the Ross Harriers, the Monmouthshire and various other packs.

In 1934 he went to India and In 1936 Lt. Myles Wood married Mary Eileen Lothian (Polly) Nicholson in Warminster. 'Polly' Wood was the daughter of Major General Octavius.C.Lothian Nicholson, C.M.G., D.S.O. On 1st April 1938 Lt Wood was promoted to Captain (*London Gazette 31st May 1938*) his wife Mary Eileen (who was from Bombay) had a daughter on 8th March 1939, her name was Jennifer Kathleen Mary Wood and she was born in Christ Church, Muttra, New Delhi. When Myles Wood returned to Europe at the outbreak of war his wife and daughter stayed in India and were still there when he was 'Killed in Action'. They returned to

England from Bombay in the “Monarch of Bermuda”, arriving at Liverpool on 13th November 1945.

The Second World War

Shortly after the start of the war he was appointed G.S.O.2 on General Platt's staff and in 1941 Captain (Temp. Major) Wood is in the Middle East and is Personal Staff Officer to the General Officer Commanding (General Platt) at Advanced Headquarters Troops in Sudan and Eritrea. He went throughout the Eritrean and Abyssinian campaigns. On 15th August 1941 he was 'Mentioned in Despatches' and recommended to be an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. The fighting in this campaign was particularly hard, due to later actions the Italians, in the mind of the British public became a 'comic opera type of army but contemporary reports say that those fighting in the Eritrean campaign fought with extreme bravery and were a very dangerous enemy indeed.

By the end of 1942 Myles Wood was a Major (Temp/Lt Col) (Now acting Col.) he was GSO.1 at GHQ M.E.F (General

Headquarters Middle East Forces). In this he was employed on the Planning Staff at G.H.Q. Middle East Command and later appointed Deputy Director of Military Operations, Persia-Iraq with the rank of Colonel.

A GSO 1 was General Staff Officer (1st Class). Usually a Lt. Col or Col. He was in charge of the General Staff Branch responsible for training, intelligence, planning operations and directing the battle as it progressed. Most orders from the General officer Commanding (GOC) were actually written up and signed by the GSO 1.

Myles Wood was again 'Mentioned in Despatches' (above) and was awarded an OBE (Officer of the British Empire) (London Gazette 18th February 1943) *General McCreery wrote "over a period of nine months as GSO 1 (Plans) this officer has done exceptionally good work in a difficult job, involving constant solutions of awkward problems involving not only the army but all three services, He has shown great energy, drive and intelligence and outstanding devotion to duty. Any success in detailed forward planning over the period is almost entirely due to him".* This 'mention in Despatches' refers to the period April 1942 - Jan 1943

McCreery was an expert on the use of light armoured vehicles (such vehicles being the mechanised equivalent of the cavalry of which his regiment had been part). His next posting overseas during the Second World War was as Adviser, Armoured Fighting Vehicles, Middle East (March to August, 1942), where he was General Sir Claude Auchinleck's chief adviser on such matters. There followed spells as Chief of General Staff, Middle East, and then Chief of General Staff, 18th Army Group, North Africa (1942–43).

It was during this latter time that McCreery was Chief of Staff to Field Marshal Harold Alexander, Montgomery's immediate superior at the time of the Second Battle of Alamein, and McCreery had a role in the planning of that battle, in which armoured vehicles played such a significant part.

Later the Middle East Command was reorganised and Myles Wood reverted to regimental duties and was appointed to command a Regiment of medium artillery with the 8th Army in the Desert Campaign (the Desert Rats). Very shortly after this he was appointed

General Montgomery's Chief Planning Officer.

At the conclusion of the North African Campaign he reverted once again to Regimental Duties and was appointed to Command the 121 Royal Field Artillery Regiment which he was still commanding when he fell in Italy.

The West Riding Regiment Royal Artillery (Territorials)



121 Field Regiment went to Iraq in 1941, fought with the 8th Army in North Africa and the American 5th Army in Italy before returning to U.K. to take part in the Normandy invasion as a Medium Regiment with 5.5 inch Gun-Howitzers.

Italy 1943

On 3rd September 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland at Salerno 121 Field Regiment were part of X corps under General Richard McCreery, which then went on to Naples. Myles Thomas Glen Wood OBE died on 17th Oct. 1943. He is

buried in the Naples War Cemetery. The fighting at Salerno and in Operation Avalanche was particularly fierce.

Invasion of Italy - Landing at Salerno:

On September 9, Clark's forces began moving towards the beaches south of Salerno. Aware of the Allies' approach, German forces on the heights behind the beaches prepared for the landings. On the Allied left, the Rangers and Commandos came ashore without incident and quickly secured their objectives in the mountains of the Sorrento Peninsula. To their right, McCreery's corps encountered fierce German resistance and required naval gunfire support to move inland. Fully occupied on their front, the British were unable to press south to link up with the Americans. Meeting intense fire from elements of the 16th Panzer Division, the 36th Infantry Division initially struggled to gain ground until reserve units were landed. As night fell, the British had achieved an advance inland of between five to seven miles while the Americans held the plain to the south of the Sele and gained around five miles in some areas. Though the Allies had come

ashore, German commanders were pleased with the initial defence and began shifting units towards the beachhead.

OCTOBER 1943

Italy - British units of the US Fifth Army entered Naples on the 1st as the Germans fell back, ready to make the Allies fight long and hard for every gain over the next eight months. They were holding the line of the Volturno River in the west and the Biferno River in the east. Meanwhile, they prepared their main defences - the Gustav Line - along the Garigliano and Rapido rivers below Monte Cassino, and on to Ortona on the Adriatic coast. On the west, Gen Mark Clark's Fifth Army managed to fight its way across the Volturno by mid-month and then came up against the formidable defences *in front of* the main Gustav Line. On the east, Gen Montgomery's Eighth Army had to cross a number of well-defended rivers before reaching the Line. By the end of the month he was over the Biferno and starting to cross the Trigno. While the struggle continued, Italy declared war on Germany on the 13th.

Myles Wood died on 17th October 1943 and is buried in Naples War Cemetery. He is commemorated in Llangarron Church



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KILLED IN ACTION

LIEUT.-COLONEL M. T. G. WOOD.
O.B.E., R.A.

The news of the death in action in Italy, of Lieut.-Colonel M. T. G. Wood, O.B.E., R.A., only son of Lieut.-Colonel G. B. G. Wood and Mrs. Wood, of Woodfields, Llangarron, near Ross, during the latter part of October, has been received with sincerest regret by their numerous friends throughout South Herefordshire, and even much further afield. Lieut.-Colonel M. T. G. Wood, who was only 36 years of age, had had a most distinguished military career. He married a daughter of the late Major-General O. C. L. Nicholson, C.M.G., D.S.O., and there was one daughter of the marriage. Both Mrs. Wood and her daughter are in India.

The late Lieut.-Colonel M. T. G. Wood, O.B.E., was educated at Marlborough and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He was awarded the Sword of Honour; gazetted to the Royal Field Artillery; and shortly appointed to the Royal Horse Artillery. He was a keen horseman, and rode several point-to-point winners, also the winner of the Artillery Gold Cup at Sandown. He was selected for a course at the school of Military Equitation at Weedon, in Northamptonshire, and obtained an instructor's certificate.

In 1934 he went to India, was nominated for the Staff College, and shortly after the outbreak of war was appointed G.S.O.2 on General Platt's staff. He went through the Eritrean and Abyssinian campaigns, the Battle of Keren, and was mentioned in despatches, and later awarded the O.B.E. He was then employed on the Planning Staff at G.H.Q. Middle East, and later appointed Deputy Director of Military Operations, Persia-Iraq Force with the rank of Colonel. On the re-organisation of the Middle East Command, he reverted to regimental duty, and appointed to command a regiment of medium artillery 8th Army in the Desert Campaign. Very shortly after he was appointed General Montgomery's Chief Planning Officer.

On the conclusion of the North African Campaign he again reverted to regimental duty, and appointed to command a Royal Field Artillery Regiment, which regiment he was commanding when he fell in Italy. This brilliant young officer was a regular follower of hounds; indeed he gained most of his hunting experience with the South Herefordshire Foxhounds and the Ross Harriers. He also hunted with the Monmouthshire, and various other packs.

LYDBROOK

Ross Gazette 11/11/1943

LETTER

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In Memory of
Lieutenant Colonel
Myles Thomas Glen Wood
OBE
38440, Cdg. 121 Field Regt., Royal Artillery who died on 17 October 1943 Age 36

Son of Lt.-Col. George Benson Glen Wood and Eileen Mary Wood; husband of Mary Eileen Lothian (Polly) Wood, of Bombay. Awarded the Sword of Honour, R.M.A., Woolwich. 1927.

Remembered with Honour
Naples War Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Flight Lieutenant Kenneth
Frank Jolly RAFVR
1917 - 7/1/1944



Flying Officer Walter
Dinnathorne Langworthy
DFC. RAAF
21/2/1913 – 7/1/1944

They were Killed in a flying
accident at Langstone Court,
Llangarron
7th January 1944

Flight Lieutenant Kenneth Frank Jolly and Flying Officer Walter Dinnathorne Langworthy DFC were both killed on 7th January 1944. *They were not from Llangarron but they did die in Llangarron.*

They were flying over Llangarron in a De Havilland Mosquito aeroplane when one of the engines exploded. They were both killed in the crash.

De Havilland Mosquito



Mosquito Mk. B.IV serial DZ356 of 1655 MTU (Mosquito Training Unit) took off 14.45 hrs from Marham, Norfolk. The crew were F/Lt Kenneth Frank Jolly RAFVR (Pilot) and F/O Walter Dinnathorne Langworthy DFC RAAF (Navigator).

The centre plane is De Havilland
Mosquito DZ356



"An elevated view of Marham with some of the based de Havilland Mosquito B.IVs in the foreground, namely DZ353:GB-E, DZ367:GB-J, DZ356:GB-P and aircraft 'K' and 'H'. A Vickers Wellington can also be seen in the far distance."

The Accident

Summary:

Mosquito DZ356 took off from RAF Station Marham near King's Lynn, Norfolk, on 7th January 1944, detailed to carry out a non-operational day training flight. The aircraft crashed at 1530 hours at Langtone Court, Llangarrow, Hertfordshire, 7 miles north of Monmouth, and all the crew were killed.

Crew:

RAF Flt Lt Jolly, K F Captain (Pilot)

RAAF 408157 FO Langworthy, W D DFC (Observer)

Flt Lt Jolly is buried in the St Albans Cemetery, UK.

FO Langworthy is buried in the Bath (Haycombe) Cemetery, Somerset, UK.

A report on the Accident stated : " From eye witnesses accounts, DK356 was flying followed by a second aircraft at a considerable height. There was an explosion from the leading aircraft which resulted in fire and disintegration of the aircraft, Flt Lt Jolly was blown out of the aircraft without his chute which came down and opened out separately. The Observer used his chute although injured, but the canopy was torn and he died soon after the impact. The wreckage was spread over a four mile area with the main body of the aircraft being burnt out completely. Both engines broke away from their mountings while the aircraft was in mid-air There was ample evidence that the reported fire in the air, originated in one of the engines."

Below is from the Australian archives.

Mosquito crash

Date: 08-JAN-1944

Time: 15:30



[de Havilland Mosquito](#)

Type: [FB.Mk.IV](#)

Operator: 1655 MTU RAF

Registration : DZ356

C/n / msn:

Fatalities: Fatalities: 2 / Occupants: 2

Other fatalities: 0

Airplane damage: Written off (damaged beyond repair)

Location: Llangarrow Hereford -  [United Kingdom](#)

Phase: En route

Nature: Training

Departure airport: Marham

Destination airport:

Narrative:

Blew up in air Llangarron Hereford 8.1.44.

Catastrophic failure of engine, aircraft explosion.

Crew:

F/Lt (88240) Kenneth Frank JOLLY (pilot)

RAFVR - killed

F/O (Aus408157) Walter Dinnathorne

LANGWORTHY DFC (navigator.) RAAF - killed

(They have the date as 8/1/1944 when it was actually 7/1/1944)

A number of local people witnessed the accident and rushed to the scene to

see if they could help. Stan Fryer who lived in the village until about 2010 said he met his wife to be at the crash. It made a big impact on the local people.

From an internet website

On the 7th January 1944 F/Lt. Jolly was piloting a Mosquito Mk.IV DZ356) which took off from RAF Marham, Norfolk on a training flight. There was a catastrophic failure of the engine and the aircraft exploded over Langstone Court, Llangarron, Herefordshire. F/Lt Jolly and the navigator, F/O Walter Dinnathorne Langworthy RAAF, were both killed. F/O Langworthy was from Hobart, Tasmania and had transferred from No.97 Squadron. F/Lt Jolly is buried in the St. Albans Cemetery, Hertfordshire, whilst F/O Langworthy is buried in the Haycombe Cemetery, Bath, Somerset.

Flight Lieutenant Kenneth (Ken) Frank Jolly



RAFVR Kenneth Jolly

Was born in St Albans in 1st August 1917. His parents were Frank Jolly and Violet Louise Harris and they had married in 1911. Violet's parents were Edwin and Ann Harris. Ann was from Hertfordshire but Edwin was an Assurance Agent originating from Haddenham in Buckinghamshire. Frank Jolly's parents Charles and Sarah Jolly were Farmers and farmed Butterwick Farm, Colney Heath, St Albans. Charles was originally from

Suffolk and Sarah was from Buckinghamshire. Ken Jolly had one older brother and a younger sister: **Gordon C Jolly** born 1915 in St Albans **Kathleen M Jolly** born 1923 in St Albans.

Kenneth Frank Jolly received his Aviators certificate from the Royal Aero Club on 28th August 1939 as a member of the Bedford Aero Club.

Second World War

On 23rd November 1940 903763 Leading Aircraftman Kenneth Frank Jolly was Commissioned as a Pilot Officer on probation in the *RAFVR for the duration of Hostilities*, with the new commissioned number of 88240.

(London Gazette 20th Dec 1940)

On 20th November 1941 his Pilot Officer Rank was confirmed and he was made Flying Officer. *(London Gazette 23rd December 1941)*

23rd November 1942 he was promoted to Flight Lieutenant *(London Gazette 8th January 1943)*

Kenneth Frank Jolly married Eileen D Trenaman in



Ken Jolly and Eileen Trenaman on their wedding day.

They had one child, a daughter Hazel A Jolly in 1942.

Ken Jolly was a pilot with 1655 MTU (Mosquito Training Unit). This unit specialised in training Mosquito crews. It was part of No. 8 (Pathfinder Force) Group. This prime organisation allowed picked crews from the operational bomber groups to transfer without the delay of conversion to new types of aircraft, but it soon expanded into a completely new Group - No. 8 (PFF) by 8th January 1943, and eventually re-equipped with Lancasters and Mosquitos, the most suitable aircraft for the task. The majority of these were marker units, but the story of the Pathfinder Force would be incomplete without special reference to the Mosquito squadrons of the Light Night Striking Force (LNSF). They specialised in lightning "nuisance" attacks with 4,000lb High Capacity bombs ("cookies") on German industrial centres, and are best remembered for their contribution to the 36 successive night raids made by the LNSF on the German capital early in 1945.

Kenneth Jolly died in the flying accident in Llangarron on 7th January 1944.





Grave of Kenneth "Ken" Frank Jolly who is buried at St Albans Cemetery (the name has now changed from the 'Hatfield Rd Cemetery'.

Following the death of Ken Jolly his widow Eileen D Jolly (Trenaman) remarried to Henry R Wood in Spilsby Lincolnshire in Dec quarter 1945.

In Memory of
Flight Lieutenant Pilot
Kenneth Frank Jolly
88240, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on 07 January 1944

Remembered with Honour
St. Albans (Hatfield Road) Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Flying Officer
Walter Dinnathorne Langworthy
DFC



R.A.A.F

Walter Langworthy

He was born 21st.March 1913 in Hobart Tasmania. His parents were Leslie William Saul and Emma Jane Langworthy and he was married to Elsie Marion Langworthy (Wright) I think she was from Tasmania as her details are on the Tasmanian records but they lived in St Kilda, Victoria, Australia they had two children Robert and Janice. (St Kilda is a suburb of Melbourne). Following the death of Walter Langworthy Elsie married a Mr Close. The family originated in

Devon. In 1801 Joseph Brown of Dittisham, Devon married Damaris Dunnithorne and their daughter Mary Mann Brown married John Langworthy in Dittisham. They in turn had four sons.

Richard Robert Langworthy born 9th April 1826 Dittisham. Stayed in Devon.

Joseph Thomas Philip Langworthy born 15th February 1829. He became a fisherman and moved to Castor, Grimsby, Lincolnshire he married Mary Amelia Johnson and they had a son Walter Dinnathorn Langworthy.

Walter Dennithorne Langworthy born 30th October 1831 in Dittisham is the Walter who became a Mariner and went to Australia (Tasmania).

Robert Henry Langworthy born 22nd February 1835 in Dittisham. He became a Mariner and married Martha Christian in 1862 in Whitehaven, Cumberland. Their Grandson Walter Denithorn Langworthy was born in 1918 and died in 2010 in Whitehaven.

Second World War

No. 408157 Sgt Langworthy was promoted and sometime between 13th and 16th January 1943 Walter Langworthy was promoted from Sgt to F/Sgt. Then between his mission on 18th January and the next on 30th January 1943 Walter Langworthy was again promoted to Pilot Officer. He was then later promoted to Flying Officer.

He became a Flying Officer (Navigator) with the RAAF. He was posted to 97 Squadron which was based at Coningsby in Lincolnshire and were a 'Heavy Bomber' and then a 'Pathfinder' Squadron equipped with AVRO Lancaster bombers.



He was 'gazetted' for the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) on 14th May 1943

when he was serving with 97 Squadron.

Citation for award

Citation :

The Citation for the DFC awarded to the then PO Langworthy of 97 Squadron RAF is as follows : " As Navigator, PO Langworthy has completed many successful sorties against very heavily defended targets in Germany and Italy. On one occasion he had a narrow escape when his seat in the aircraft was riddled with bullets. The aircraft was badly damaged and three members of the crew were wounded. With great coolness, PO Langworthy not only navigated the badly disabled aircraft back to this country but also rendered effective aid to the wounded. His courage and skill have always been beyond praise." (London Gazette 14/5/1943, Page 2156)



Distinguished Flying Cross



. F.O. Langworthy 2nd from right

Below are a few examples of missions by F.O Langworthy

7/8 January 1943 – Essen – Bomb load 1 x 4000lb 10 SBC

W4355T **F/Sgt G.A.West, Sgts R.Kay, W.Langworthy, S/Lt D.S.Watt, M.Griffiths, J.Baker, J.Freedman.** Up 0341 Down 0818. Primary objective reached with cloud over target. Timing was accurate but PFF were 4 minutes late causing us to overshoot on first run. Return run aided by flares but nothing seen after releasing bombs. Heavy flak encountered.

16/17 January 1943 Berlin

R5607X P/O M.R.Cuelenaere, Sgt J.Dean, **F/Sgt W.Langworthy**, Sgts J.H.Clay, G.F.Gower, A.McAlhone, F/Sgt H.Weeks. 1 x 8000lb. Up 1651 Down 0007. Primary target not positively identified. No marker flares observed. Bombed large built up area

after passing over heavy defences. Other bursts seen in same area.

2/3 February 1943 Cologne – Bomb load 1 x 4000lb 12 SBC

R5917K **P/O M.R.Cuelenaere, Sgt J.Dean, P/O W.Langworthy, Sgts J.H.Clay, G.F.Gower, F/Sgt Birtwistle, F/Sgt H.Weeks.** Up 1820 Down 2326. Primary target bombed. Bombed on red marker flares. Own bursts not seen. Large fires seen burning in target area. Flares also observed near target area which appeared to divert attack.

14/15 February 1943 Milan

ED430C **P/O M.R.Cuelenaere, Sgt J.Dean, P/O W.Langworthy, Sgts J.H.Clay, G.F.Gower, A.McAlhone, F/Sgt H.Weeks.** 1 x 4000lb 6 SBC. Up 1855 Down 0415. Primary objective successfully attacked. Bombed built up area thought to be aiming point. Marker flares in same area. Many bursts seen. A concentration of 20 big fires observed in south section of town. Good raid.

21/22 February 1943 Bremen – Bomb load 1 x 4000lb 12 SBC

ED323C **P/O M.R.Cuelenaere, Sgt A.Innes, P/O W.Langworthy, Sgt J.H.Clay, G.F.Gower, A.McAlhone, F/Sgt H.Weeks.** Up 1852 Down 0027. Bremen target attacked. Cloud over target. Big red TI marker seen through cloud. Flashes of explosions seen through cloud. If PFF bombed, so did we.



Langworthy 2nd from left back row.



AVRO Lancaster

This is not an exhaustive list of his missions but gives an indication of the pressure on these young men with only a day between many of these missions over very heavily defended targets. Walter Langworthy at 29 years old would have probably been known by his crew colleagues as 'Granddad'

because the average age of the aircrew was only 21.

97 Squadron then became a Pathfinder Squadron In April 1943 - in time for the Battle of the Ruhr - the PFF's strength was increased by two squadrons, i.e. No. 405 (RCAF) Squadron, flying Halifaxes, which came down from the North of England to take over the new airfield at Gransden Lodge, and No. 97 Squadron, flying Lancasters, and based at Bourn, the airfield on the Cambridge road near Caxton Gibbett. At the beginning of June the Pathfinders gained two more squadrons - Nos. 105 and 139 Squadrons, both of which were flying Mosquitos and were based at Marham. Later in the month Pathfinder headquarters moved down from Wyton and were installed in Castle Hill House in Huntingdon.

1655 MTU was a Training Unit for Mosquitos. It selected exceptional men from bomber squadrons to fly the

Mosquito and was part of the PFF (Pathfinder Force).

F/O Langworthy was flying with 1655 MTU (Mosquito Training Unit) on 7th January with FI/Lt Jolly on a training flight when a 'catastrophic' engine failure caused the aircraft to explode in the air and crash. Both crew were killed.

He is buried in Bath (Haycombe) Cemetery.







LONDON, ENGLAND. 1943-11-23. 408157 FLYING OFFICER W. D. LANGWORTHY DFC, OUTSIDE BUCKINGHAM PALACE AFTER AN INVESTITURE, WITH MRS G. DENNETT (RIGHT) AND LEADING AIRCRAFTWOMAN BLENCH.

In Memory of
Flying Officer
Walter Dinnathorne Langworthy
D F C
408157, Royal Australian Air Force who died on 07 January 1944 Age 30

Son of Leslie William Saul and Emma Jane Langworthy; husband of Elsie Marion Langworthy, of St. Kilda, Victoria Australia.

Remembered with Honour
Bath (Haycombe) Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission