

MILITARY DEATHS FROM THE BATTLE DISTRICT 1939-45



This article cannot be more than a simple series of statements, and sometimes speculations, about each member of the forces listed. The Society would very much appreciate having more information, particularly from their families.

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INTRODUCTION

This is not a military history, though the main strands of the campaigns are as relevant as are anything that can be found of direct relevance to the deaths of those concerned. History is a key for anyone who might produce further information.

Here we attempt to identify and to locate the 132 men (and one woman) of the forces who died, who are known to have been associated in some way with Battle and its nearby parishes: Ashburnham, Bodiam, Brede, Brightling, Catsfield, Dallington, Ewhurst, Mountfield, Netherfield, Ninfield, Penhurst, Robertsbridge and Salehurst, Westfield and Whatlington.

The Second World War had an even wider geographical spread of activity than the First, due to two 1914 allies – Italy and Japan – being in alliance with Germany. This meant major military action in north Africa etc, Italy and east Asia. In addition, after 1940 France was no longer an ally, being forced into the German camp, so its widespread colonies were also targets for the remaining allies.

The information below is arranged by theatre of war: Europe up to the end of 1940, north Africa etc and the Mediterranean, Italy, western Europe after 1940, Asia and the north

Atlantic. For the army this is relatively simple; for the Navy and the RAF things are more difficult. In some cases – for example when a man died of wounds – it might be not clear where those wounds were inflicted, and therefore a final section deals with those who died who served in the UK or whose details remain unknown. The circumstances in which some men died might be classified differently but in these cases a choice has had to be made. To help find individuals an index of names and theatres of war is given at the end. Each death is taken in date order within each campaign.

The aim of the article is to take each of the campaigns and to try and identify and describe the men who died in them. Addresses are local, and come from various dates; sometimes they are of a parent.

In some cases it has not yet been possible to explain the man's association with the Battle district. Some are mentioned as locals in CWGC records or appear on memorials or are buried in churchyards but so far there is no hard evidence to support their inclusion, which is not to be doubted. This means a final section for those who cannot yet be assigned to a particular theatre or are not yet positively connected to the area. 'Battle memorial' is taken to be that in the Memorial Halls.

Each table contains abbreviations, and they should be interpreted as follows:

AA	Anti-aircraft	RA	Royal Artillery
Bn	Battalion	RAC	Royal Armoured Corps
BOAC	British Overseas Airways Corporation	RAF	Royal Air Force
CMG	Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George	RAFVR	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve
Coy	Company	RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
CWGC	Commonwealth War Graves Commission	RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross	RE	Royal Engineers
DFM	Distinguished Flying Medal	Regt	Regiment
DSO	Distinguished Service Order	RNAS	Royal Naval Air Service
HAC	Honourable Artillery Company	RSR	Royal Sussex Regiment
HQ	Headquarters	SSRF	Small Scale Raiding Force
		SAS	Special Air Service
		SOE	Special Operations Executive
		Sqn	Squadron

References to a particular area – for example 'Battle area' means the registration district rather than the town alone. Births in particular might have happened before the date given, which is that of registration.

The records for each parish are given in an annexe, and there is an index by surname showing the theatre of war and the date of death.

EUROPE 1939-40

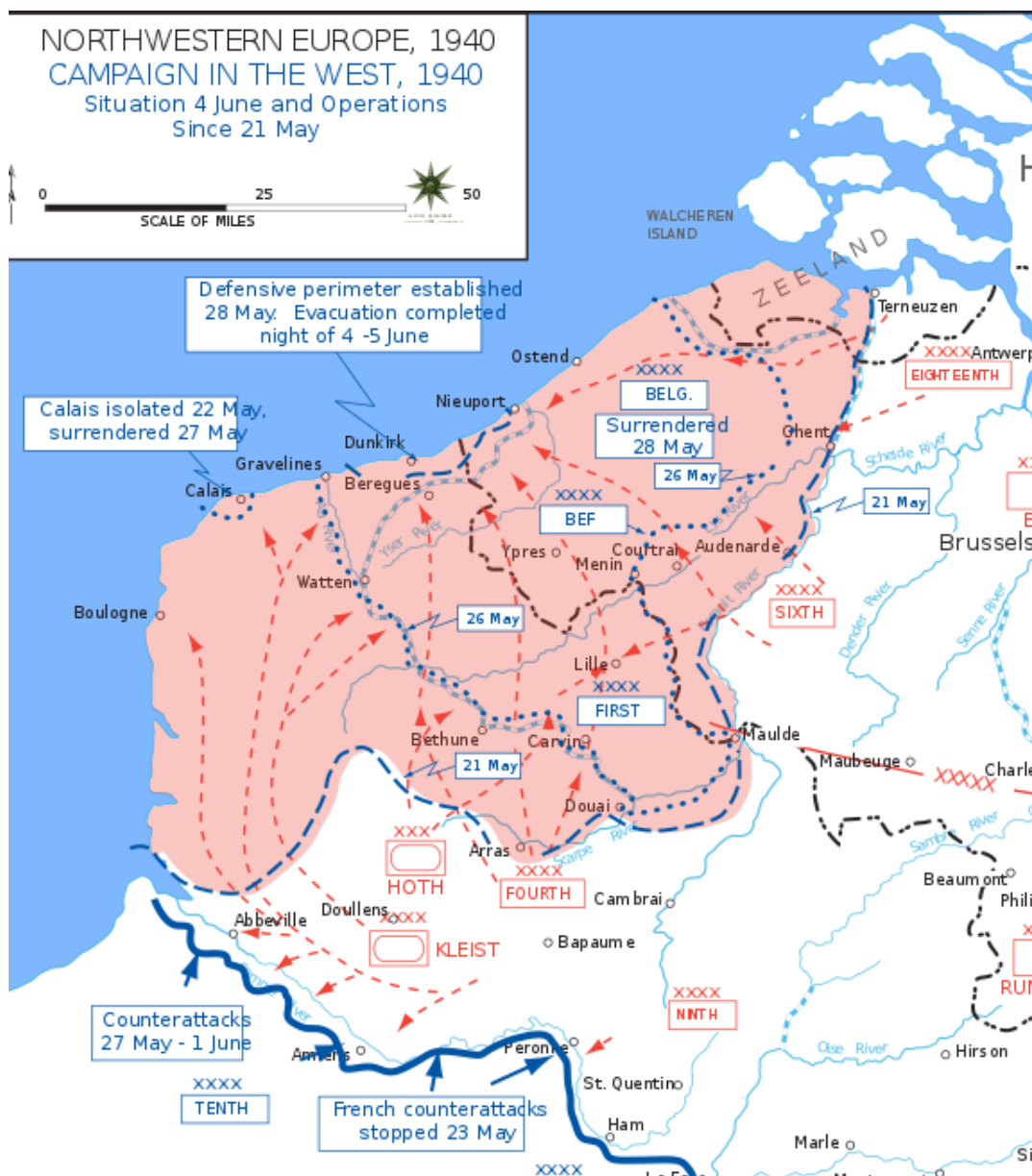
The Commonwealth, less the Irish Free State, declared war on Germany on 3/4 September 1939. There followed what was known as the *phoney war* although it was far from phoney in Poland and there was considerable action at sea and in the air. This phase ended with the German invasion of Norway on 9 April 1940.

Barton, Frank William

Rank etc	Birth	Death	Burial and memorials
Flight Lieutenant/Pilot 34213, 107 Sqn RAFVR.	1913, Brentford area, Middlesex	04.09.39	Sage War Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany. Battle Memorial.
Barton was part of a light bomber squadron attacking the German port of Wilhelmshaven. The aircraft was the Bristol Blenheim IV. This was the first British air raid of the war but it failed: of the four bombers sent out three were lost and one returned with its full load of bombs. CWGC records his parents as Frank Ernest Barton and Elsie Lucy, at Ferring.			

On 10 May 1940 Germany invaded Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and France, leading to the surrender of all four countries within six weeks.

For Britain the major result of the attack was the expulsion of her forces from the European mainland, the great majority of them leaving by way of Dunkirk. The retreat to the ports was



Map of the final stages of the retreat. Its rapidity, and the small area left to the Allies around Dunkirk, can easily be seen. From Wikipedia.

rushed and barely coherent. It is understandable that, as with the overwhelming German attack in 1918, surviving officers did not have the time or the knowledge to keep up to date the records of those killed.

It can be seen at once that the Royal Sussex suffered seven of the twelve deaths. Most were of the 5th Battalion. This had landed at Cherbourg on 8/9 April and moved swiftly towards part of the likely front. Its HQ was at Conteville, almost 20km north-east of Abbeville. They entered Belgium just after the German attack had begun, and on 20 May their first encounter began with the enemy, at Wortegem where they had dug trenches. Two days later they were on the retreat, first to Courtrai and then to Saint André near Lille. From there it was a full treat to Bray Dunes just east of Dunkirk, from which they were evacuated on 27 May. This battalion was accompanied by the 2nd Battalion.

Fuller, Thomas Frederick

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Private 6396360, 2 Bn RSR	1911 Netherfield	10-28.05.40	Hazebrouck Communal Cemetery, Nord, France.
Fuller was killed in the rapid withdrawal towards Dunkirk, along with many Royal Sussex men. Hazebrouck Communal Cemetery is well behind Dunkirk and some 35 km southward. He was part of a Netherfield family that had sent several men to the First World War and had suffered three deaths in it. His father Stephen (1885-1944) had served as a Private in the 6th Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and had been wounded in the third battle of Ypres in 1917; he was discharged before the war ended. In the 1911 census he is recorded as an assistant engine driver at the Mountfield gypsum works. His mother was Annie (Ballard, 1889-1964). Born at Battle, in 1911 she was a servant in the house of Frank Mathis at Upper Lake. Thomas had married Violet Muriel Grace (Jennings, 1909-82) of Netherfield in 1937, and they had one son. Like so many war widows she remarried after the war.			

Ellis, Frederick Charles

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Private 6401939, 7 Bn RSR	1918 Ticehurst area	20.05-09.06.40	Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. Crowhurst memorial.
By 20 May the 7th Battalion of the Royal Sussex were just outside Amiens when they were attacked by the 1st Panzer Division. They were poorly armed, and even with good supplies a Panzer attack would probably have succeeded. A brave defence led to the end of their ammunition and they surrendered in the evening. Of 581 men only 70 survived. One of the deaths was of Frederick Charles Ellis of Crowhurst. He is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, well south of Boulogne and near the coast, along with his comrades. His brother George would follow him to the grave in north Africa etc in 1942. Although CWGC has his death as within the period 20 May to 9 June it is almost certain that he fell on the first of these dates. Ellis was unmarried. His parents were John Ellis (1885-1965) and Florence Annie (Butler, c1886-1968).			

Jolley, Norman Thomas

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6400741, 7 Bn RSR	1921 Ticehurst area	20.05-20.06.40	Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. Robertsbridge Memorial.
CWGC report Jolley's death in the very wide margin of 20 May to 20 June. His birth seems to have avoided all records, and one is left with the conclusion that he may have been adopted and his name changed. His father, as recorded by CWGC, was Ephraim Jolley (1884-1965), of Chatham, who in 1911 was recorded as a boilermaker's labourer and on his enlistment in 1914 as a carter. He served in the Labour Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, then in the Labour Corps, reaching the rank of sergeant, before being given an early discharge for physical unfitness early in 1918. He had spent some 15 months in France. Norman's mother was Emily (Baker, 1887-1962), who came from Robertsbridge. She married Ephraim at Hoo in Kent in 1908. Later the address was given as The Retreat, Robertsbridge.			

Noakes, Charles David

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Sapper 2091385, 265 Field Coy, RE	1901 Battle	20.05.40	Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France. Battle Memorial.
<p>According to CWGC, the first death in the retreat of 1940 with a supposedly firm date was of Charles David Noakes, one of the older men on our list, born at Battle in 1901. He died on 20 May 1940. He was probably at or near Rouen in this period. His body was never recovered, so his name is on the Dunkirk Memorial. Despite the name, his father Gilbert George Noakes (1865-1943) was not of the well-known tanning family of Battle; he was a confectioner and baker. In 1894, at Hastings, he had married Sarah Ann Russell of Robertsbridge (1861-1926). Charles was unmarried. The parental address was 7 Western Avenue, Battle.</p>			

Brett, Jack

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6400726, 2 Bn RSR	1916 Hastings	21.05.40	Bertenacre Military Cemetery, Flêtre, Nord, France. Mountfield Memorial.
<p>Bertenacre Military Cemetery, Flêtre, is about 35 km south east of Dunkirk. Brett's father is not recorded and nor on the public record is that of his mother except that CWGC gives her name as Brett; there were several Bretts of Mountfield in the 1911 census but the census records no female by that name there who was of an age likely to have a child at the turn of 1916/17, and too many in Hastings.</p>			

Fletcher, Thomas Charles

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Corporal 6399540, 5 Bn RSR	1920 Netherfield	22.05.40	Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, East Flanders, Belgium. Battle Memorial.
<p>Fletcher's father was William Ewart Fletcher (1887-1945), a domestic gardener in 1911. His mother was Eliza (Harris, 1888-1930). They married in 1917. Their address was 7 Mount Street, Battle.</p>			

Taylor, Thomas John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6398600, 5 Bn RSR	1916 Rye area	22.05.40	Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, East Flanders, Belgium. Ninfield Memorial.
<p>The Adegem cemetery has many graves from the recovery of the west in 1944/45, but others were transferred there. Tracing any of this family is difficult. It is possible that his father Thomas John died in 1918 and his mother three years later. We are only a little clearer with his wife. CWGC record her name as Nora May but no such marriage can be found, though a family website gives her maiden name as Mitten. If this is so then she was born in 1918 and a daughter was born at Hastings in 1940, very shortly before her father's death. She appears to have remarried. But even Thomas's birth in about 1915 does not appear in the records; the same family site says that it was at Rye in March 1916, and that the marriage was in the Battle area in September 1939.</p>			

Turner, Ronald Arthur

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6401339, 5 Bn RSR	1920	22.05.40	Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, East Flanders, Belgium. Ashburnham Memorial.
<p>Turner was born at Ashburnham early in 1920 and died unmarried. His father, Charles Frederick Turner (1891-1963) served in the First World War in his civilian occupation as a baker, in the ASC; he saw no overseas service. In 1914, in the Battle area, he married Annie Isted (1889-1972), also of Ashburnham. There is no certain trace of Charles's death. On Charles's discharge papers his address on discharge is given as Brownbread Street.</p>			

Tew, Thomas Martin Percy

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant 9 Queen's Royal Lancers (RAC)	1915 West End, London	23.04.40	Evreux Communal Cemetery, Eure, France. Brightling Memorial and church.
<p>For the next death we move away from the Dunkirk area and find someone much better known – because his father Thomas Percy Tew (1876-1953) was a major landowner. The Tews had made their money from banking and came from Yorkshire: their bank was Leatham, Tew and Co, which was bought by Barclays in 1906. The elder Thomas had married Constance Mabel Greenall (1873-1940) in Cheshire in 1901; he left just under £200,000. She too was wealthy: her father, the Rector of Grappenhall near Warrington, was a scion of the family that ran successful breweries in south Lancashire.</p> <p>The family home was Brightling Park, once the home of 'Mad Jack' Fuller. A plaque in Brightling church records Tew's death. Evreux Communal Cemetery is well south of Rouen and not on the route to Dunkirk. His regiment was a tank regiment equipped with light tanks, and was in the process of a defensive withdrawal towards Brest. Light tanks were hardly useful against what the Germans had.</p> <p>Tew had only just married when he went out to France, to Rosemary Hope Heale of Guildford (1914-96), born in India. She later married into the Grissell family, into whose hands Brightling Park passed after the death of Tew's father in 1953.</p>			

Egerton, Charles Ralph

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Major 36354, 98 Field Regt (Surrey and Sussex Yeomanry) RA	1907 West End	25.05.40	Terlincthun British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. Mountfield Memorial.
<p>Egerton was of the family of Mountfield Court. Terlincthun British Cemetery is at Wimille, just a little north of Boulogne, where the Germans were rapidly pushing northward towards Dunkirk.</p> <p>The Egerton family will be fully described in another essay. At this point it may be sufficient to note that they came to Sussex from Tatton Park in Cheshire, a great house near Knutsford still in private ownership and now open to the public.</p> <p>Charles was the youngest son of Charles Augustus Egerton, the owner of Mountfield Court (1846-1912, who had married Lady Mabelle Annie Brassey (1865-1927) in 1888, daughter of the man who became the first Earl Brassey and a considerable presence in the area. It was through her that the Egerton family, to their misfortune, inherited Normanhurst Court at Catsfield, which they pulled down in 1953. Charles's elder brother Edward was old enough to join the First World War, where he died of wounds in 1918. In a macabre sense, then, Charles was following a family tradition – but so many did. Charles had moved from the family estate by the time he died, to Sparrows at Wineham a little north of Henfield.</p>			

Hartigan, John Wyndham

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Captain 66153, 2/5 Bn Sherwood Foresters	Age 25 years	26.05.40	Oignies Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.
<p>Oignies cemetery may be in the Pas de Calais but it is a fair way from the coast, being south of Lille.</p> <p>Hartigan's father, Marcus Michael Hartigan (1878-1964), was born at Clogheen, County Tipperary. He had a distinguished military career. Educated at Nottingham, he moved to South Africa etc in 1897, took part in the war of 1899-1902 and then joined the South Africa etcn Constabulary, rising to be Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Eastern Division of Cape Province. On the declaration of war in 1914 he began to raise his own regiment – Hartigan's Horse – beginning recruitment of fellow policemen at Grahamstown on 15 January 1915 and filling all vacancies by the end of the month. The regiment took part in the defeat of the German forces in South West Africa etc. He moved back to Europe in 1917 and joined the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Munster Regiment, fighting in France. In 1918 he was awarded the DSO twice and is listed in directories as having also been awarded the CMG. In 1936 he remarried after the death in 1933 of his first wife Eileen Wyndham Murphy, whom he married at Johannesburg in 1903. He lived at Bexhill up to his death, after several times moving around south-east England.</p> <p>CWGC have Hartigan's parents as living at Battle. Marcus was in Surrey in 1939.</p>			

King, Frederick William Joseph

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 5379521, 1 Bn Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry	1912 Bristol	27.05.40	Wervik Communal Cemetery, West Flanders, Belgium.
<p>King died on the day after Hartigan. His grave at Wervik is also well inland, just inside Belgium and due north of Lille. King's battalion was involved in heavy fighting on 26-28 May along the Ypres-Comines canal and burial at Wervik is consistent with his having been killed in that fighting. His battalion was to be evacuated from Dunkirk but it had suffered some 300 casualties.</p> <p>King seems to have come from a Bristol family. His father Ernest King (1879-) and mother Alice (Brown, 1878-1940) were both from there and married there in 1907. CWGC locates the parents at Battle.</p> <p>His wife was Hilda Mabel Stentiford (1914-76), and they married at Battle in 1938. They had one child.</p>			

Whitmarsh, Edward Francis

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6400853, 5 Bn RSR	1915 Hailsham area	12.06.40	Ninfield churchyard extension. Ninfield Memorial.
<p>Whitmarsh was the last in this disastrous army roll-call. He died at hospital in Wakefield in the West Riding on 12 June, presumably invalided out. Edward's father Percy (1886-1960) was a farm labourer at the time of the 1911 census, living at Ashburnham; his mother Florence Mary (Morris, 1891-1949) was then a parlourmaid at Bexhill. They married in the Battle area in 1914 and both later lived at Ninfield.</p>			

There were of course deaths in the west during the rest of 1940 but none in the army. The first was **Albert Percy Whiteman**, in the RAF.

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Aircraftman 334948, RAF.	1898 Brightling	28.05.40	Runnymede Memorial. Brede Memorial.
<p>Whiteman died in the evacuation of Ostend. He was on board SS <i>Abukir</i> which was sunk by a torpedo from a German E boat. He had had essentially a reconnaissance role in the days of the German invasion of the Low Countries and France.</p> <p>Whiteman was of farming stock. His father George Henry Whiteman of Warbleton (1853-1927) is recorded in 1911 as farming at Netherfield Place Farm; he died at Sunbeam Farm, Broad Oak. His wife Sally (Beaney, 1858-1925) was from Burwash. They married in the Hailsham area in 1873. Albert Percy was born at Brightling in 1898, where presumably his father was then farming. He married Edna May Pearce in 1926 (born 1902); there appear to have been no children. She died locally in 1989.</p>			

Leatherby, Frederick Ernest

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Seaman D/JX 136867, HMCS Fraser.	1916 Acton, Middlesex	25.06.40	Brede Memorial.
<p>The Navy was actively involved in the withdrawal from France, and not just at Dunkirk. The Germans pressed on southwards, to reach the Spanish border south of Bordeaux in June. This meant that many people would be trapped if not rescued, and to the British the priority was the British citizen, not overlooking anyone who might have been able to contribute to the war effort, militarily or in intelligence. Many French and foreign citizens had left Paris and other places for the south west, hoping in many cases to be allowed to escape into Spain. The Royal Navy ran a rescue effort to take as many of them away from France as possible, and the obvious port was Bordeaux, by way of the long and wide Gironde estuary. The conditions of the time, with the German positions unknown and the French forces not necessarily on the Allied side, meant that absolute discretion was required.</p>			



On 25 June, three days after the French surrender, HMCS *Fraser*, a destroyer launched as the *Crescent* in 1930 and transferred to the Canadian navy in 1936, took part in such a rescue operation. The flotilla moved without lights and necessarily at some speed. This was fatal for the *Fraser*, which in the darkness was rammed by the sister ship *Calcutta* and broke into three pieces. 118 men were saved from the

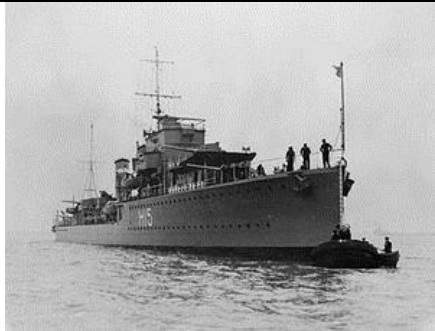
HMCS Fraser

Fraser, but 45 died. Among them was Leatherby.

Leatherby was the son of a plumber of Fulham, Robert Leatherby, born in 1895, who was killed in action in 1918; his mother was Kate (Toms) (1897-1992). They had married at Uxbridge in 1915. Kate married again. Frederick's connection with the Battle area remains obscure. His name is on the Brede memorial.

Simpson, Frederick Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Stoker 1st Class P/KX 91653, HMS <i>Narwhal</i> .	1919 Portsmouth	23.07.40	Portsmouth Naval Memorial.



On 22 July the submarine HMS *Narwhal* left Blyth, Northumberland, for the Norwegian coast. Norway had fallen to the Germans earlier in the year and represented a major threat to Britain. The purpose of the voyage was to lay mines off Kristiansand on the southern Norwegian coast, a fortified port and on a major shipping lane. Unfortunately the *Narwhal* did not reach its destination. On the next day, while some 125 nautical miles east of Aberdeen, it was attacked by a German Dornier acting on

HMS Narwhal

signals intelligence sent to it. (It may be the only time in the war that a British submarine sank as a result of enemy signals intelligence.) The *Narwhal* was reported overdue at Blyth on 1 August. This is the official date of Frederick Edward Simpson dying, though it is much more likely to have been some days earlier. Simpson was unmarried.

Simpson appears to have been born at Portsmouth in 1919. His parents (Thomas Simpson and Annie Boxall) have not yet been traced. A Thomas Simpson died at Whatlington in 1954. His probate says that his wife was Elsie; a pair of the right name married at Hastings in 1942. CWGC have them living at Battle.

Gamblen, Reginald Arthur Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Stoker 1st Class P/KX 76085, HMS <i>Esk</i> .	1906 Harting, Midhurst	01.09.40	Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Battle Memorial.



HMS *Esk* was an E-Class destroyer engaged in laying mines off the Dutch coast. There were four such ships at about 40 nautical miles north-west of Texel island; one hit a mine itself and had to be evacuated; *Esk* went to help and also struck a mine. Shortly afterwards she blew up and sank. Some men were rescued but 127 died, Gamblen among them.

Gamblen's family were Hampshire people: his father was Henry Edward Gamblen of Petersfield (1858-1936) and his mother Louisa

HMS Esk

(Trimmer, 1862-1912) of Priorsdean; they married at Petersfield in 1886. The 1911 census has Henry as a builder's carter and the family are at Havant. CWGC have Reginald's mother as Mary rather than Louisa, but there seems to be no record of Henry marrying again.

Gamblen's claim to the Battle memorial rests on his having married a Battle woman in 1937: Kathleen Esther (Gower, 1910-2000), who in 1911 was living at 2 Florence Cottages. There were no children. She remarried in 1943 and her death is recorded as having taken place in Liverpool.

Newton-Clare, John Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Pilot Officer 33492, 144 Sqn RAF	Age 20 years	06.07.40	Runnymede Memorial.
<p>Newton-Clare was commissioned in December 1939. His squadron was based at Hemswell in Lincolnshire. On the night of his death it was bombing Hamburg and in his return Newton-Clare's plane ditched in the North Sea.</p> <p>He was son of Edward Thomas Newton-Clare (1881-1944), born in Wiltshire, who served in the RNAS in the First World War and was awarded the DSO. A careful researcher of Dallington, however, gives his title as <i>Major</i>. In 1918 he married Aileen Yvonne Marianne Swann (1890-1969), from a military family. She was to die at Eastbourne. At Dallington they lived at Pankhurst Farm, Battle Road, Dallington. Their son was probably born on Trinidad.</p>			

Doulton, Michael Duke

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Flying Officer (Pilot), 601 Sqn RAF.	1909 Wandsworth	31.08.40	Salehurst churchyard.
<p>Doulton was heavily engaged in the Battle of Britain, when his squadron was flying Hurricanes and Spitfires. At the time of his death it was based at RAF Debden, Essex. Early in the war the squadron was known for its wealthy and flamboyant members, but that had begun to change by the time that he died. He was a mechanical engineer by profession and reputed to be the tallest pilot in the RAF; he had first served in the RAF in 1931-36, and joined the Air Ministry in 1938 to help prepare factories for the production of aero engines for the forthcoming war. He was called up to the RAF on 24 August 1939, moving to 601 Squadron in June 1940. He was shot down over the Thames estuary on 31 August and reported missing, and his whereabouts were unknown until 1984. Then a Hurricane was found at Wennington near Romford; his remains were in the cockpit.</p> <p>Doulton's father was Orrok Mills Doulton, a potter living near Wandsworth Common and part of the well-known pottery family. Born at Kingston in Surrey, he served in the First World War as a Lieutenant in the Nottinghamshire Yeomanry. He died at Bournemouth in 1922, of influenza according to one account. He and his wife Catherine May (Duke, 1881-1958) were married in 1905 and lived latterly at Windmill House, Clapham Common.</p> <p><i>Michael Duke Doulton</i></p> <p>Michael Doulton married Carol Christie (1917-2006), born in the USA, who remarried after his death. They had one posthumous child; news of the pregnancy arrived on the day that her husband was reported missing. She worked at the Battle bookshop for some years.</p>			



NORTH AFRICA ETC AND THE MEDITERRANEAN including the Middle East

The campaign in north Africa etc, which began in 1940, had two aims. They were to secure the Suez Canal and to ruin the Germans' ally Italy. In the end it succeeded in both, though at a heavy cost; and the Germans were badly defeated too. The other main interest in the Mediterranean was for Greece, which was invaded by the Italians late in 1940. Mussolini's disastrous intervention brought the British to Greece, and meant that very shortly the Germans would be there too. The British finally withdrew on 1 June 1941, the withdrawal being the only wholly successful operation in the history of their intervention.

The Canal was essential to Britain. If the Axis powers were to secure Egypt they would have immediate access to the oil of the Middle East; it was partly to secure an oil supply that the Germans would soon make their move on the Soviet Union. Loss of the Canal could also

open up India and would have allowed direct land contact with the Japanese, which in 1940 was a possibility rather than a real threat. (The Japanese did not join the war until December 1941.) The Italians, who declared war on Britain in June 1940, were at first better equipped than the British in the area, and they controlled not only Libya to the west of the Canal but Ethiopia and Eritrea to the south, across the Red Sea from Aden. British Somaliland, at the southern end of the Red Sea, was bordered by Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland to its south and was quickly taken by the Italians in 1940; French Somaliland, by that sea, was unlikely to cause any problem to the Italians. An attack on the Canal from the Red Sea had to be prevented.

However, the first death from the Battle district was in Palestine.

Ashburnham, Anchitel Fleetwood

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant 56688, RASC	1911 Hastings	20.12.40	Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel. Brede Memorial.
<p>Ashburnham died of a short illness, as his death notice in <i>The Times</i> states. He is buried in the Ramleh War Cemetery near Tel Aviv. Ashburnham was a professional soldier, commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Sussex in August 1933 after passing out from Sandhurst; he later became (Temporary) Major in the RASC. Born in May 1911, Ashburnham was heir to his father's baronetcy, and a very distant relative of the family of Ashburnham Place; the lines had diverged in the seventeenth century. His father was Sir Fleetwood Ashburnham (1869-1953) and his mother Elfrida (Kirkley, 1883-1953) of County Durham. Ashburnham married Kathleen Marjorie Willett late in 1938; she was the daughter of Lt Col Wilfred Willett of Scaynes Hill. They had no children. Kathleen was born in County Dublin late in 1909, where no doubt her father was on military duty; in 1911 the family were in County Kildare. She does not appear in later records for England and Wales.</p>			

Three days after the Italian declaration of war on Britain the Italians carried out an air raid on a base in Kenya, which led to the British invasion. This was a difficult campaign, and they soon established a bridgehead in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan but then reverted to a defensive posture.

The main attack was against northern Eritrea, along the coast. This is difficult country (as the British had found in the invasion of 1867, further south). Keren was the first objective, a town about 120 km inland. The battle lasted 53 days, and ended on 31 March 1941.

Goldsmith, Percy

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6399120, 1 Bn RSR	1915 Uckfield area	27.03.41	Keren War Cemetery, Eritrea. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<p>He was 25, the son of Edward Goldsmith (1876-1957), who was described as an agricultural labourer in the 1901 and 1911 censuses, living at Waldron where he was born; and of Esther Ellen (Funnell, 1877-1967), born at Brighton. They married in 1910 and both died at Hastings. His battalion had been based in Palestine at the outbreak of war and moved to Egypt before being taken further south. The connection with Robertsbridge remains unclear.</p>			

Tutton, Michael William Leonard

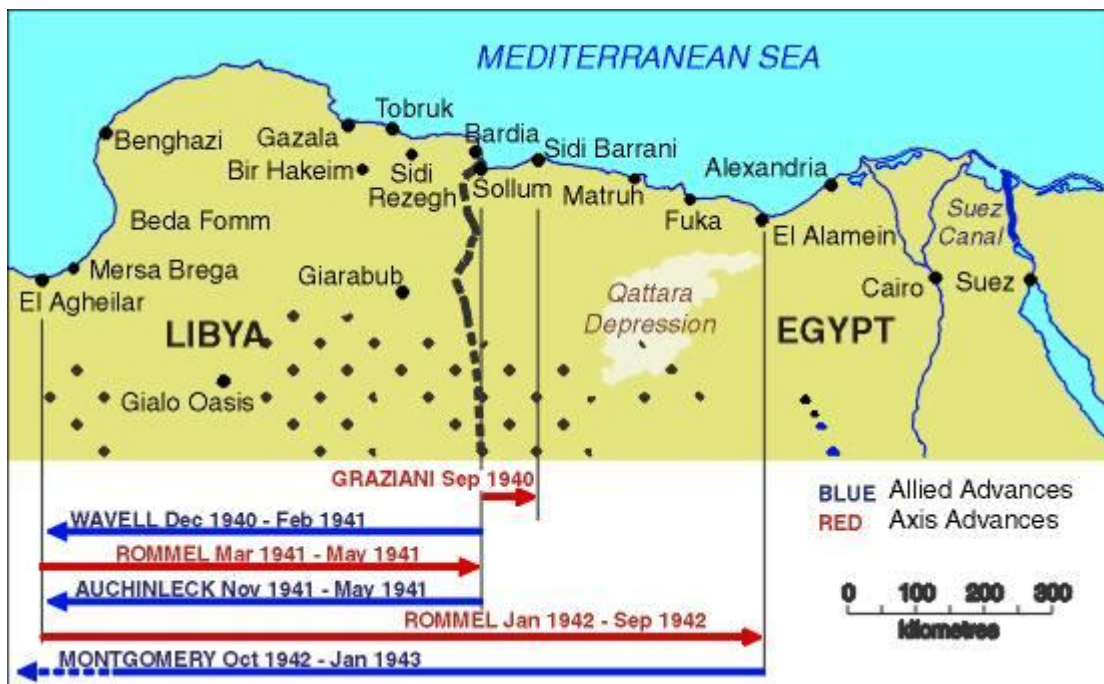
<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Captain 221153, General List	1913 Tavistock area	12.11.41	Asmara War Cemetery, Eritrea. Dallington Memorial.

Tutton was the other local death in the Ethiopian campaign. He was fatally wounded in action. CWGC state that he was killed in action near Keren, but he was fatally wounded in a battle with Italian forces near Gondar. He is buried in the Asmara War Cemetery in what is now again the capital of Eritrea. Tutton was in Eritrea because it was the nearest theatre of action to where he worked: after his Oxford degree he became a District Officer in the Tanganyika Territory, a former German colony mandated to Britain by the League of Nations and now the main part of Tanzania. He had been born at Tavistock in 1913.

Tutton came from a distinguished family: his father Alfred Edwin (1864-1938) was a chemist, graduating at Imperial College and specialising in the properties of phosphorus. He was made FRS in 1899, but by then had been appointed Government Inspector for Schools in Oxford. His wife Margaret Ethel (McLannan, 1878-1942) lived at Yew Arch, Dallington. This is a large house in The Street that sold for £1.2M in 2012.

The campaign in north Africa etc proper was of three phases: first, the British advance westward from Egypt to drive back the Italian army based in what was then the Italian colony of Libya; then after German intervention a fighting retreat to Egypt, leaving behind the city and port of Tobruk, which ultimately had to surrender; and last the battle of Alamein (23 October to 11 November 1942) and the consequent advance to remove the Axis powers from Africa etc altogether, leading to the invasion of Italy. The Axis powers finally surrendered in north Africa etc on 13 May 1943, and the Allies moved on into Italy.

It was late in September 1940 that the major Italian force was driven back and the British took some 130,000 prisoners. The advance reached the outskirts of El Aghela on the Gulf of Sirte but the Germans intervened, and around Easter 1941 the British were forced back towards Egypt. They then counter-attacked, re-establishing effectively their old front line by early 1942. They were then forced back again, dangerously close to Alexandria, to El Alamein at the narrow gap between the Qattara Depression and the sea.



This is the eastern half of the north Africa campaign, showing in outline the pushes made by either side. From <http://jamesonrosemont.tripod.com/oliverrsite/>

Burgess, William Thomas Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Corporal 6087770, 2 Bn Queen's West Surrey Regt	Aged 27	21.01.41	Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, Libya.
<p>Burgess's regiment arrived in Libya on 11 January 1941. We do not know where he died, or in what action. Acroma is a few kilometres east of Tobruk. His association with the Battle district was at least through his wife Elsie Florence (Dengate, 1914-65), who was born at Battle, probably at Telham Farm. They married at Bromley in Kent in 1936 and she remarried after his death.</p> <p>His father was Thomas Burgess, a farm labourer (born near Alresford in Essex in 1889) and his mother Lydia (Quennell, born near Midhurst in about 1884); they married in 1908. In 1911 they are recorded as being at Singleton near Chichester. CWGC records them as of Battle.</p>			


Skinner, Walter

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Driver T/195447, 922 General Transport Coy RASC	1914 Battle area	03.02.41	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Battle Memorial.
<p>Skinner's father was William Skinner and his mother Mary. So far it has been impossible to trace them from public records; the nearest possibility is to locate them at Beckley, where the father was a jobbing gardener. In the autumn of 1938 Walter married Lilian Mary (Hallett, born at Brighton in 1914) in the Battle area; they had no children and she remarried in 1948. She died in the Hastings/Battle area in 2000.</p>			

Crichton, Thomas

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6286152, 1 Bn East Kent Regt	About 1921	10.05.41	Ismailia War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. Bodiam Memorial.
<p>Crichton's burial at Ismailia, by the Suez Canal, does not necessarily indicate a death nearby, because the cemetery received the remains of servicemen from other areas. It was well behind the lines, even when the Germans reached El Alamein.</p> <p>Crichton was the son of Gillies Crichton, born at Markinch in Fife in 1892, and his wife Hannah.</p>			

Hughes, Evan Griffith

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant RNVR, HMS Gloucester.	1913 Stockport, Cheshire	22.05.41	Plymouth Naval Memorial. Battle Memorial.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="flex: 1;">  </div> <div style="flex: 2; padding-left: 10px;"> <p>Hughes died when HMS <i>Gloucester</i> was sunk in an overwhelming attack by German aeroplanes to the north of Crete. <i>Gloucester</i> was an up-to-date light cruiser launched only in 1939, but it had been attacked and damaged at least three times and on this occasion it was alone; it was off the north coast of Crete to stop the Germans sending reinforcements to the troops they had just landed</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HMS Gloucester</i></p> </div> </div> <p>on Crete by air. Of the 807 men on board only 85 survived.</p> <p>Hughes came from a prosperous family: both he and his father left substantial sums and he was a barrister. His father was a pharmacist, born at Salford in 1884 and dying at Telham in 1935. In 1913 he married Jessie Ligat, daughter of a mill manager, at Stockport in Cheshire and in 1911 they were both living at Hazelgrove outside the town. She was a Scot, born at Rutherglen in Lanarkshire in 1884, and dying in the High Peak district of Derbyshire in 1976. Evan married Beryl Laird in 1938; there appear to have been no children. His Sussex address was Pine Hill, Crowhurst.</p>			

There was then some calm in the local army records, until November. The two deaths then were both from the 1st Battalion of the Royal Sussex. This was in the period in which the British had established a new front line and were defending it. The two men are both buried in the Halfaya Sollum Cemetery in Egypt. CWGC report that the cemetery is some 12 km from the Libyan border and is adjacent to Halfaya Pass, the scene of heavy fighting in 1941 and 1942: “all of the graves in the cemetery were brought in from the surrounding area, including military cemeteries at Sidi-Barrani, Buq Buq, Fort Capuzzo, Bardia, Minquar el Zannan, and Camerons Burial Ground at Nibeiwa”.


Chatfield, Cyril Donald

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6403883, 1 Bn RSR	1916 Tonbridge area	22.11.41	Halfaya Sollum Cemetery, Egypt. Battle Memorial.
<p>Chatfield was son of Reuben (1876-1924, died on Thanet) of Yapton near Bognor (then not <i>Regis</i>), who served in the Metropolitan Police in various places from 1898 to 1924, reaching the rank of Sergeant, and his wife Ethel Clara (Payne, 1884-1952, died at Eastbourne); they married at Kingston in Surrey in 1905. Their son's connection with Battle was through his wife Gladys (Stonestreet), born at Battle in 1917. There were no children. In 1947 she remarried, to Frederick Jennings (her mother's name was Jennings, so he could have been her cousin) but she died in September 1948. Her address was then given as 18 Wellington Gardens, Battle.</p>			

Creasey, Frederick William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6403926, 1 Bn RSR	1916 Hailsham area	24.11.41	Halfaya Sollum Cemetery, Egypt. Ashburnham Memorial.
<p>It is hard to escape the conclusion that Creasey and Chatfield died in the same extended engagement. In 1911 Creasey's father Arthur was recorded as a waggoner on a farm at Ninfield, where he was born in 1887; his mother Caroline Kate (Bryant, 1884-1983) was of Hooe. They had married in 1906. When the CWGC came to make their records of the dead they were recorded as living at Ocklynge, at the northern end of Eastbourne. No marriage can be traced for Frederick with any certainty.</p>			

Marden, Jim

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Signalman C/JX 143316, HMS Barham.	1918 Bromley, Kent	25.09.41	Chatham Naval Memorial. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Marden's was the last local death of 1941. He was on HMS <i>Barham</i> when it blew up in the Mediterranean on 25 November, having been hit by three torpedoes from a German submarine. <i>Barham</i> had seen a lot of action. Launched in 1914, it had survived the Battle of Jutland, a submarine attack off Scotland at the end of 1939, the Battle of Dakar against the Vichy French in 1940 and the Battle of Matapan against the Italians. She had been frequently repaired and updated. <i>Barham</i> was on the lookout for Italian ships coming to reinforce their army in Africa etc. When it sank 860 men died (and two later from wounds); there were 337 survivors. Marden's father James (1892-1977) was a farmer at Hayes in Kent; he was to die at Hurst Green. His mother was Alice Amelia (Smith, 1891-1964), who would die at Hastings. The connection with Robertsbridge remains unclear.</p> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The magazines of HMS Barham exploding.</i></p>			

Blyth, Charles Ernest John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Aircraftman 933810, 5 Sqn, RAFVR, with 5 Supply and Transport Command	1916 Bromley, Kent	21.02.42	El Alamein War Cemetery. Ewhurst Memorial.
<p>The first airman to die in this theatre of war was Charles Ernest John Blyth ('Blythe' on the memorial) of Ewhurst, where his father was landlord of the Castle Inn (now the White Dog). Blyth died in that difficult period when the Commonwealth forces were fighting a rearguard action, under siege in Tobruk and establishing a new line elsewhere (which, however, was to be broken by Rommel's advance into Egypt later that year).</p> <p>Blyth's parents were both born in 1886 – Charles Samuel Quare Blyth at Croydon and Ethel Maud Jackson at Knockholt in Kent. They married in 1908. In 1911, living at Bromley, he is described as a draper's porter; we do not know when he took up the trade of a publican. He died at Ewhurst in 1946, and his wife at Bromley in 1972.</p>			

de Glanville, Robert Bertram

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Temp Captain 138973, 1 Regt, RHA	1918 Kandy, Ceylon	02.06.42	El Alamein Memorial. Ewhurst Memorial.
<p>de Glanville had enlisted on the day the war broke out, 3 September 1939, and was immediately commissioned as Second Lieutenant. By 1942 he was Temporary Captain, and was killed in a tank battle near Bir Harmat where the British front line lay, a little east of Tobruk. He had married Joan Mary Davidson at Finchley in August 1940. Born in 1916, she died in Hertfordshire in 1958.</p> <p>His father, Bertram George, was a member of the Ceylon Civil Service from 1908, but had come home before 1937. He is recorded as petitioning for bankruptcy in that year, when he was a schoolmaster carrying on business and residing at Warren Hill, Beachy Head Road, Eastbourne. He had been at Worcester College, Oxford and had risen to senior positions in the Ceylon Civil Service, finally as Chairman of the Colombo Port Commission, Chair of the Municipal Council of the city and Mayor. He had married Kathleen (Kitty) Ievers (sic) of the Irish land-owning family but based in Ceylon, and he was one of four brothers. She was to die at Hastings in 1960. Her husband appears to have died in 1943.</p> <p>His address was Morgay, Junction Road, Cripps Corner.</p>			

Rommel's Operation Sonnenblume, aimed at pushing the British back to Egypt, began on 6 February and lasted until 25 May. Tobruk fell to the Germans and Italians on 8 April.

Pocock, Edward Bertram


<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Rifleman 5575529, 1 Regt, Rifle Brigade	1920 Battle	09.04.42	Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma, Libya. Catsfield and Ninfield Memorials.
<p>Knightsbridge War Cemetery, Acroma is about 25 km west of Tobruk, towards Benghazi. Pocock was unmarried. His father appears to have been Edward Thomas Pocock, born at Catsfield in 1890, who in 1911 was a stockman on Burnt Barns farm at the western end of the parish. He died in 1961. Pocock's mother was Daisy Potter. His brother Ronald was to die in 1944.</p>			

Barnes, Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Gunner 850514, 107 Regt RHA (South Nottinghamshire Hussars)	1920 Netherfield	06.06.42	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Battle Memorial.
<p>By June the Axis forces were pressing hard towards Egypt; they were stopped only in July, some 140 km from Alexandria. Barnes's unit was almost completely destroyed at the battle of Knightsbridge, when it</p>			

resisted an overwhelming attack by German Panzers. Like most men, Barnes came from an ordinary background – his father Arthur Edward Barnes (1896-1974) was a labourer. In 1913 he married Gertrude Hepton (1896-1978).

Quaife, George Thomas

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Chief Petty Officer P/J 93794, HMS Medway.	1902 Battle area	30.06.42	Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Catsfield Memorial.
 <p>HMS <i>Medway</i>, a submarine depot ship, was sunk by an enemy submarine off Port Said. It had been sent to Alexandria in 1940 but was regarded as non-essential in the face of a probable German advance to the city. All non-essential vessels and people were ordered to leave, and <i>Medway</i> was carrying 1135 people on a journey to establish a new base at Beirut. Only 30 people died in the sinking, but among them was Quaife. Quaife had joined the navy in 1918 and had served once more before re-joining at the beginning of the war.</p> <p>His parents were Frederic (1871-1960), in 1911 a stockman on a farm living at Catsfield Green, and Minnie Louise (Kemp, 1873-1923) of Brightling; they had married in 1896. CWGC record George Quaife as marrying Winifred Mary, but the marriage and her details have not yet come to light; it appears that she married his brother Frederick instead.</p>			

By the time of the next local death the front line had stabilised. Both sides were preparing for a further attack, but the Germans were beginning to have supply difficulties. Sporadic fighting continued, including the battle of Alam El Halfa in early September when Rommel, aiming at driving the Commonwealth forces back before they could receive even more reinforcements, sent a force round the south of the British lines; it failed and withdrew.

Ellis, George William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6401112, Catering Corps, att 5 Bn RSR	About 1920	07.10.42	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Crowhurst Memorial.
<p>Ellis may have been wounded at Alam El Halfa, but artillery and aerial action continued after the battle. Ellis was from Crowhurst, and was brother to Frederick, killed in the retreat to Dunkirk in 1940. Formally he was in the Catering Corps. He was married and had a child but so far any details of his wife Louise Blackford, married in 1941, have not been found. Ellis's parents were John Ellis (1885-1965), a general labourer in 1911, and Florence Annie (Butler, c1886-1968).</p>			

The battle of Alamein began on 23 October and resulted in a Commonwealth victory on 11 November, when Rommel drew back his forces. Counting two deaths after 11 November, which may have been due to wounds, there were seven deaths local to Battle in this period.

Lyle, Peter Anthony

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant 184152, 4 Bn RSR	1917 Hastings	27.10.42	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Battle Memorial.
<p>Lyle's battalion had fought at Alam El Halfa and was now doing so at Alamein. His name is on the Battle Memorial but the connection is not known. He was born at Great Dunmow in Essex and married at</p>			

Hastings; his wife Marjorie was from Great Totham, about 20 km east of Dunmow. His father was William Stacey Lyle (1887-1940) and his mother Marjorie Helena (Whittaker, 1893-1946). They married in 1913.


Beale, David John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6400575, 5 Bn RSR	1921 Hailsham area.	27.10.42	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Ashburnham Memorial.
Beale's father was George Beale (1888-), in 1911 a farm labourer living at Park Cottages, Dallington. His mother was Eliza (Budgen, c1881-1924). They married in the Battle area in 1908.			


Crouch, William Cyril

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Corporal 6395785, 2 Bn RSR	1910 Netherfield	03.11.42	El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt. Battle Memorial.
Crouch's battalion had also fought at Alam El Halfa and was now doing so at Alamein. Crouch is unusual in this account because he was not only married but had two children. His wife was Beatrice May (Stevens, died 1983) and they married in 1937. She remarried after his death. His parents were Charles John Crouch (1873-1956), in 1911 a labourer living in Netherfield Road, Battle, and Sarah Elizabeth (Jennings, 1874-1962). They married in the Battle area in 1895.			

Hewson, Ian Dennis

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Able Seaman C/JX 158853, HMS Martin.	1923 Lewisham, Kent	10.11.42	Chatham Naval Memorial. Battle Memorial.
	HMS <i>Martin</i> was a destroyer torpedoed near Algiers as she was covering the Allied landings there. Only 63 men survived; 161 died. Hewson had been born at Lewisham in 1923; his parents are listed as Arthur Thomas Hewson (1869-1931) and Ivy Vera (Siarey, 1903-1989). No marriage can be found for Arthur, and Ivy's first marriage appears to have been in 1936. He died at Hastings in 1968, and she at Westfield in 1989.		
<i>HMS Martin</i>			

Hills, Ronald Stanley

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Able Seaman C/SSX 21980, HMS Avenger.	1908, Leyton, Essex	15.11.42	Chatham Naval Memorial. Battle Memorial.
			
<i>HMS Avenger</i>			
Five days after Hewson, Ronald Stanley Hills died, another Able Seaman. HMS <i>Avenger</i> was an escort aircraft carrier, returning from giving protection to the landings in north Africa etc. Between 8 and 10 November she provided 60 fighter missions before leaving for Gibraltar, her mission accomplished. But on			

15 November, a little west of Gibraltar, a German submarine torpedoed her. One torpedo was enough, and she sank. Only twelve men survived. Hills died.

Hills was unmarried. He was born at Leyton in Essex in 1908, the son of John William Hills (1873-1943) and his wife Harriet Rebecca (Wood, 1875-1953). In 1911 John was working in the waggon depot of a railway. They both died in south-western Essex, and it has not yet been possible to establish a link between their son and Battle.

Errey, Norman Wilfred

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Gunner 6098982, 11 Regt (HAC), RHA	1920 Battle	14.11.42	El Alamein Memorial.
Errey was born at Battle but his father was from St Leonards and his mother from Lewes; they were married at Battle but both died at Hastings. Errey had twelve siblings. His regiment fought at both Knightsbridge and Alamein, and one suspects from the dates that he died of wounds. He was unmarried. His father was William Thomas Errey (1871-1948), a labourer, and his mother Rose Elizabeth (Unstead, 1875-1953); they married in 1896.			

Goodsell, Thomas Albert

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 14208663, 6 Bn, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt.	1919 Rye area	30.11.42	Medjez-el-Bab Memorial, Tunisia. Brede Memorial.
Goodsell was killed in action more than two weeks after Errey, the last to die that year from the Battle district. His battalion was part of Operation Torch, aimed at pushing the Axis forces out of Tunisia and Algeria. The Allies invaded Algeria by landing large numbers of troops from 8 November, just as British forces were pressing on from the east. Unfortunately Goodsell's family cannot be fully identified. His father William Henry Goodsell (1882-1977) may have been a domestic gardener. His mother was Elizabeth Emily (Crouch) and they married in 1916. Goodsell did not marry and lived at Broad Oak.			



Map of the western part of the north Africa campaign, showing Tunisia in particular.

There were six deaths from the Battle district in 1943 in the north Africa etc campaign, all but one from the army, which continued up to the German surrender on 13 May. Malta was relieved, the Germans and Italians having to concentrate their efforts on Africa etc; the last air raid on the island was on 20 July.

Crump, Jack

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 5504534, 1/4 Bn, Hampshire Regt	1918 Rye area	15.03.43	Oued Zarga War Cemetery, Tunisia. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>Oued Zarga War Cemetery, about 80 km west of Tunis, was just behind the limit of the winter advance, and Crump may have been killed as this advance proceeded. Crump was born late in 1918, probably at Peasmarsh where his father Thomas Crump (1882-1968) was a farmer at Dinglesden farm; his mother was Elizabeth Rose (Mewett, 1886-1972) of Brightling, a farmer's daughter. They married in 1911. Their address was later Brook Lodge, Sedlescombe.</p> <p>Jack married Ellen (Lister, 1912-1950) in the Battle area at about Easter 1942, less than a year before he died. Ellen had been born in the Rye district; there were no children. After her husband's death she remarried in 1945 but died only five years later, at Tonbridge.</p>			

Scotcher, Sidney

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Driver T/252147, 235 Corps Troops Coy RASC.	1904 Baldslow	07.01.43	Brookwood 1939-45 Memorial. Ninfield Memorial.
<p>The Ninfield Memorial records the death of C Scotcher of the RASC. CWGC data do not have such a man, but they do have a Sidney Scotcher of that regiment, with a wife in Bexhill, and the information here refers to that man.</p> <p>Scotcher died at sea. He was on SS <i>Benalbanach</i> carrying men from the Clyde to north Africa etc when she was attacked by an enemy aircraft north-east of Algiers. She blew up and sank, and 410 men were lost. He was the son of Thomas Scotcher of Ashburnham (1856-1924). In 1911 he was a miller's loader at Hastings, where he was to die. In 1893 he married his wife Sarah Anne (Bignell, 1870-1934) of Hailsham; she died in the Battle area in 1934.</p> <p>In 1927, in the Battle area, Sidney married Kathleen Amy Bradley, born in the Lewes area in 1906. They had four children.</p>			

Masters, Charles Douglas

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6398584, 15 Bn, Queen's Royal Regt (West Surrey)	1917 Battle area	28.03.43	Medjez-el-Bab Memorial, Tunisia. Ewhurst Memorial. Whatlington Memorial.
<p>Masters had formerly been with 5th Battalion of the Royal Sussex; he had been wounded at Dunkirk and had transferred regiments on his re-entry to active service. In 1911 his father George Masters of Udimore (1875-1926) was recorded as a farm labourer at Whatlington; his mother was a Sedlescombe woman, Agnes Harriet (Morris, 1882-1966); they married in 1906. Both were to die at Hastings. The CWGC say that Agnes was from Westfield. Charles's brother Leonard was to die in Burma in 1945.</p>			

Two of the following men were buried at Enfidaville War Cemetery in Tunisia, about 100 km south of Tunis. CWGC states:

By mid April 1943, the combined Axis force was hemmed into a small corner of north-eastern Tunisia and the Allies were grouped for their final offensive.

The Eighth Army attack on the position at Enfidaville on 19 April captured the village, but strong resistance meant no further progress was possible. Attacks further north met with

greater success and Tunis fell on 7 May, Bizerta on the 8th. By 11 May, the position at Enfidaville was surrounded and resistance ceased on the following day.

Most of those buried at Enfidaville War Cemetery died in the final battles from March to the beginning of May.

Heasman, Leslie Ernest

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6403877, 1 Bn RSR	About 1918	28.04.43	Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia. Crowhurst Memorial.
Heasman was killed in action in Tunisia He was the son of Ernest Heasman of Isfield (1890-1967) and Edith Florence (Akehurst, 1889-1970) of the Lewes area, who married in 1916. They or their son must have lived in Crowhurst to qualify for entry on the memorial there, though it is not yet clear where or when. The parents, married in the Uckfield area in 1916, both died at Bedford. According to the 1911 census, Ernest was then a farm labourer living 'near the mills' at Isfield.			

Ferguson, Douglas Charles

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Corporal 6398937, 44 Reconnaissance Corps, 7 Bn, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt	1917/18	10.05.43	Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia. Ashburnham Memorial.
The public records of the UK show nothing certain of this man. He died at a time that seems to be connected with the final fighting at Enfidaville, where he is buried. He was 25.			

Strachan, Alistair David

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Driver T/180261, RASC	About 1908	14.08.43	Medjez-el-Bab Mem, Tunisia. Brede Memorial.
Strachan's origins are hard to place. His father was James Keith Strachan (c1875-1942), who died in the Battle area, and his mother Mary Ann. In 1939 he married Heather Grace Butler (1915-99) at Bexhill and they had one child. She was from the Rye area and died locally to Battle.			

Forward, Victor Frederick William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Aircraftman 1st CI 1238260, 178 Sqn RAFVR.	1923 Uckfield	20.10.43	Benghazi War Cemetery. Ewhurst Memorial.
Forward died accidentally: he drowned while swimming in the sea at Appollonia (now Susa) in Libya. His father was Victor James Thompson Forward (1898-1975), born in the Ticehurst area and dying at Bexhill. He married Alice Maud (Paine, 1898-1975) at Crowborough in 1919. They later lived at Prawles Farm, Ewhurst.			

Bryson, Hugh Ferguson

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Flight Sergeant (Pilot) 1315187, 458 Sqn RAFVR	1921 Pewsey, Wiltshire	31.10.43	Malta Memorial. Salehurst.
Bryson's squadron was formed at Williamstown, just north of Newcastle in New South Wales, and arrived in England in August 1941. It flew Wellington bombers and at the time of Bryson's death it was based at Bone on the Algerian coast. It had spent some months bombing targets in night flights over the ports of			

Germany, France and the Low Countries and was moved to El Shallufa in Egypt in 1942 and to Tunisia in June 1943. It then moved to Bone in October, engaged in attacking enemy ships. We do not know precisely what happened to Bryson or even the date of his death (CWGC have it as 2 November, but this is likely to be the date on which his plane was confirmed as missing and death was presumed) but it was probably shot down over the Mediterranean.

Bryson's father was Robert Bryson (1894-1986), who died in the Battle/Hastings district and his mother was Jeannie (Houston, 1893-1991). They married in 1920.

Wilson, Dorrien Guy Corbin

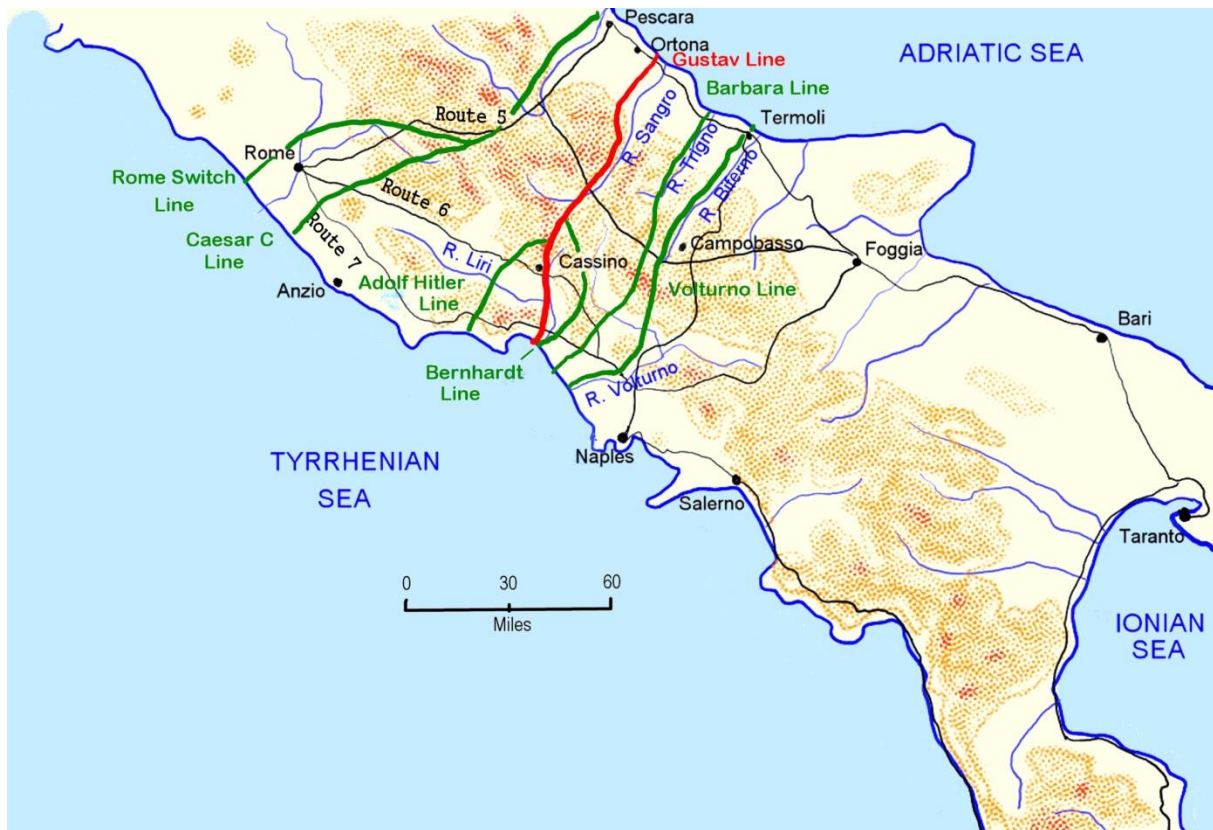
Rank etc	Born	Died	Buried/memorial
Flying Officer J/27643, 78 Operational Training Unit RCAF	1914	17.08.44	Enfidaville War Cemetery, Tunisia. El Alamein Memorial. Crowhurst cemetery.

Wilson appears in the CWGC and Canadian records but without a note of his squadron. However, we know from other sources that his Wellington was lost in the Mediterranean, some 30 km from the coast of Palestine. Family details cannot be traced, or his connection with Crowhurst, where he is buried.

By the time that Wilson died the Allies had already taken Sicily and invaded mainland Italy. This is our next theatre of war.

ITALY

Since the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 Italy had been in a confused state. Mussolini was forced to resign in July and taken into custody (though he was later seized by the Germans and set up the puppet Italian Social Republic in German-occupied territory). The first Allied



The main Italian campaign, showing the successive German defence lines. By Stephen Kirrage.

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1459537>

invasion of the mainland was by British forces in the far south on 3 September 1943, the day on which the Italians made their armistice with the Allies. The British were unopposed and could march northwards at a steady rate. On 9 September, however, the Allied landings at Salerno a little south of Naples were hotly contested by the Germans although they had insufficient troops to win the day. Thereafter the Germans were pushed northward to a succession of well-prepared defensive lines until their surrender on 2 May 1945. The Italian campaign was very costly in lives on all sides: the Allied forces, the Germans, Mussolini's forces, the anti-fascist partisans and, worst of all, the civilian population.

Dench, Arthur Thomas

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Guardsman 2617582, Grenadier Guards and SAS	1909 Eastbourne	05.10.43	Cassino Memorial, Lazio, Italy. Catsfield Memorial.



Dench was the first man local to Battle to die in the Italian campaign. The fact that he was in the SAS is itself a tribute to him. His commemoration at Cassino is misleading: the battle there did not start until the following January and he was killed in the battle for Termoli on the Adriatic coast, further north. Arthur's parents were from Surrey. His father Arthur Dench (1875-1945) was from Effingham by Dorking and his mother Kate (Whittington, 1875-1972) was from Croydon but had moved south, marrying at Eastbourne. Both died in the Battle area, presumably at Catsfield. In the 1911 census the father was a labourer. Arthur married Marjorie Joyce Fincham from Romney Marsh in 1933. She had been born in 1912 and did not remarry after Arthur's death; she died in the Hastings/Rother area in 1979. There were no children.

Arthur Thomas Dench

Woodgate, Jack Victor Raymond

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Serjeant 6400877, Reconnaissance Corps	1919 Ticehurst area	03.12.43	Cassino War Cemetery, Lazio, Italy. Robertsbridge Memorial.

Woodgate was probably born at Salehurst. Like Ferguson above, who died in Africa etc, he was in the 44th Regiment, Reconnaissance Corps. At the time of his death the Allies were approaching Monte Cassino and the Gustav Line created by the Germans, though the battle there had not yet begun. Woodgate's parents were Charles William Woodgate of Salehurst (1874-1956), recorded as a farm labourer in 1911, and Caroline (Akehurst, 1879-1952) of Bexhill. They were married late in 1899. Their son Jack did not marry.

Spray, Albert Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Fusilier 6405800, 8 Regt (City of London) Royal Fusiliers	1921 Battle	03.12.43	Cassino Cemetery, Lazio, Italy. Battle Memorial.

Although Spray was born at Battle his father was from Hastings. He was Solomon Albert Spray (1895-1975). He married Helen (Knight, 1896-1983) in 1921. The younger Spray was unmarried.

Newton, Alfred Jeremy Grantham

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lt 197025, 24 Field Regt, RA	1921 Chelsea	08.02.44	Anzio War Cemetery, Lazio, Italy.
<p>As with others in this account, we know more about Newton because of his parentage: he was the son of a baronet: Sir Harry Kottingham Newton (1875-1951), second baronet of The Wood and Kottingham House, of Westfield Place. The first baronet, his father, was a City businessman and his title came from Queen Victoria in 1900, shortly after he had organised a military volunteer scheme for the South Africa etcn war. He died unexpectedly in 1921 after taking a drug for indigestion that was subsequently shown to have contained strychnine, which always provided a particularly nasty way to go. It was clear that someone had introduced the drug into his prescribed medicine, but the culprit was never found. His son Harry, Alfred's father, was a Conservative MP from 1910 to 1922. When he died he left just under £200,000, hardly a small sum in 1951.</p> <p>Harry married Myrtle Irene (Grantham, 1900-1977) in Chelsea in 1920, and Alfred was born there in the following year. He was the heir to the baronetcy, and a brother became heir after his death. His mother died at Ringmer.</p> <p>From evidence supplied by the CWGC it must be that Newton died in the landing at Anzio early in 1944, which did not achieve a breakthrough until May of that year.</p>			

Hall, Ralph

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Serjeant 822961, 2 Field Regt, RA	1913 Lewes area	19.02.44	Anzio War Cemetery, Lazio, Italy.
<p>The invasion at Anzio there was still continuing, and one might suppose that he was part of it; but his regiment is reported to have arrived in Italy rather later and it is not listed as contributing to the invasion. Hall's parents cannot be fully identified, other than that his father was William H Hall, probably born in 1892 and his mother Lilian Alice (Ward), born in the Battle area. They married at Lewes in 1913 but Lilian died at Epping.</p> <p>Ralph married Constance Vera (Monk, 1914-2008) of Northiam early in 1940, and they had one daughter in 1942 and a second late in 1944, after he died. She later remarried and died in the Rye area in 2008.</p>			

Robins, Cyril Jack

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Corporal 5506959, 1 Bn Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt	1915 Battle	14.05.44	Cassino War Cemetery, Lazio, Italy. Battle Memorial.
<p>The Cassino monastery position had still not been taken by the time that Cyril Jack Robins died there on 14 May 1944, though there were only four days left before the Germans were forced to retreat from it. Robins was the second of two brothers to die in the war; his younger brother Charles had already died serving on HMS <i>Hood</i>. Like Albert Spray, Cyril Robins is in the Cassino War Cemetery, a testament to the bitter fighting that took place for Monte Cassino. Robins had married in 1940; his wife was Clara Lydia Emily (Russell), born at Battle in 1911, who would not remarry and died at Hastings in 1970. They had one child.</p> <p>Robins's father William Thomas Robins (1876-1951) was born at Ravensthorpe near Northampton. His burial record at Battle lists him as a retired police inspector. He married at Eton in Buckinghamshire in 1901; his wife Margaret (Valentine, 1880-1945) was from North Runcton in Norfolk. They are both buried in Battle cemetery.</p>			

Bell, William John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lance Corporal F/16408, 2 Field Coy, Royal Canadian Engineers	1918	07.06.44	Cassino War Cemetery, Lazio, Italy.
William John Bell was Canadian and appears in the Canadian war records as having been born in 1918. He may well have died of wounds, because the Canadian forces had a period of rest after 31 May, when they were well north of Cassino. He married Joan Pauline Watson (1925-1994) in the Battle area in 1943. She died at Eastbourne in 1994; she had not remarried.			

Buckwell, John Ade

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Captain 153502, 455 Bty, 77 Field Regt, RA.	1920 Brighton	06.07.44	Assisi War Cemetery, Umbria, Italy. Battle Memorial.
John Ade Buckwell was a Battle man, son of Charles William, born at Brighton in about 1885 and a well-known solicitor at Battle and Robertsbridge. Charles had served in the First World War; he was Mentioned in Despatches, and was invalided out with shell-shock in 1918. He was subsequently a member of the local councils. Charles, born at Steyning in 1884 but later living in Brighton, married Dora Pierce (born in 1889) at Brighton in 1911. He was to survive their son by only a few months, dying at Battle in January 1945; Dora lived on to 1979, when she was 90. They lived at Sherrington, Hastings Road. John had not married.			

Oliver, Leslie Herbert

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Guardsman 2623403, 5 Bn Grenadier Guards	1923 Battle	28.09.44	Castiglione South Africa etcn Cemetery, Emilia-Romagna, Italy. Battle Memorial.
Oliver's battalion had landed at Anzio in January 1944 and had fought its way northwards. In August it was part of the attack on the Gothic line, the last major defence line of the German forces, which was broken on the last day of the month. Castiglione South Africa etcn Cemetery is roughly halfway between Florence and Bologna, in mountainous country. We know little of certainty about Oliver's background; the Olivers were a prolific Battle family. Certainly his father Harry married Grace Edith Milstead at Battle in 1914; but there are two men of the same name (and roughly the same age) who might have done so. Grace was from Hollington, born in 1892 and dying, like one the Harrys, in 1948.			

Kinsman, Howard

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 5500321, 2/4 Bn Hampshire Regt	1919 Canada	24.06.44	Bolsena War Cemetery, Lazio, Italy. Dallington Memorial.
Of the last three Italian deaths, the first was Howard Kinsman of the Hampshire Regiment. He is buried in the Bolsena War Cemetery, roughly halfway between Rome and Siena, now largely unspoilt countryside but then the scene of prolonged and bitter fighting. Kinsman died on the day that his regiment, close to Lake Trasimeno further north, launched a major attack on the German line. After having to withdraw the attack succeeded in forcing the Germans back – but on 26 June, too late for Kinsman. His battalion had very serious losses. Kinsman is barely noticeable in the British records, but there is a soldier of that name in the Canadian service records with the right name for a father (Roy). It seems that his father was a farmer in North Dakota (USA). If this is so, then he must have transferred at some point from the Canadian forces, and we know that Battle was then host to many Canadian troops. He married Marjorie Ivy Parris (1918-2002), from the Ticehurst area in Battle in 1943. They had two sons. She did not remarry and stayed in the Battle area. They lived at Brooklands Farm. Carrick's Hill, Dallington.			

Simmons, Ronald Ernest

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lance-Serjeant 2659762, 2 Coldstream Guards	1919 Ticehurst area	04.09.44	Cassino memorial, Lazio, Italy.
It has not been possible to trace his parents, other than that knowing that his mother's maiden name was Pilbeam and that Charles Simmons, almost certainly his father, died at Elms Cottage, Bodiam, in 1918, aged about 40.			

Franklin, James Howard

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant 281950 RAC, Queens Bays (2 Dragoon Guards)	About 1924	20.09.44	Coriano Ridge Cemetery, Emilia-Romagna, Italy. Sedlescombe Memorial.
James Howard Franklin was the last death in Italy recorded here. He was killed in action and is buried in the Coriano Ridge Cemetery. Coriano is close to the Adriatic coast, south of Rimini, and the fight for the ridge was bitter and costly: some 150 men died there. So far it has proved difficult to find any record of this man – known as Jimmy, according to Beryl Lacey, the historian of Sedlescombe, who wrote that he lived at Powdermill, which is close to the reservoir – or (with one exception) of his parents in the public records of England and Wales. His father was George Gould Franklin (born in 1881) and his mother Mary (Howard, 1888-1982). There is no trace of his father George Gould Franklin in the First World War records of the UK, Australia, Canada or New Zealand. There is, however, a stone in memory of a man of that name with the dates 1881-1966, in Deansgrange Cemetery, Dublin.			

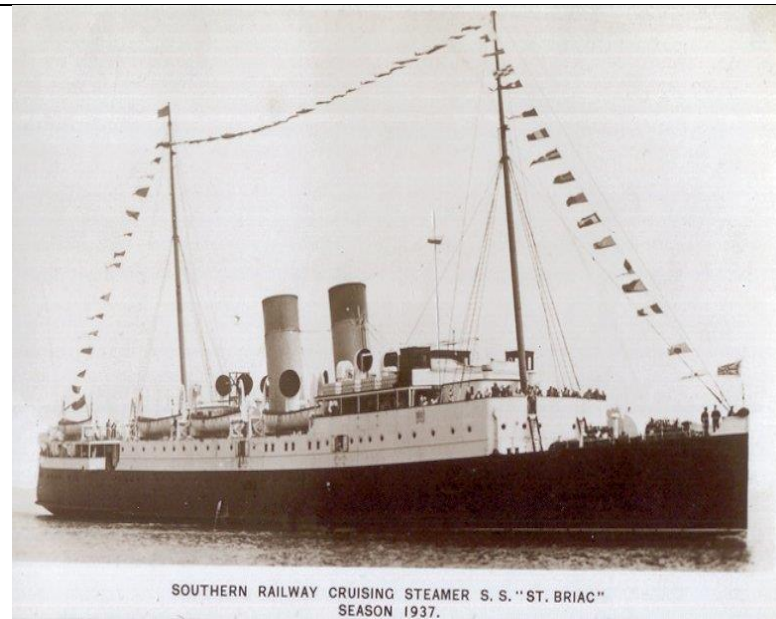
The Italian campaign went on until almost the very end of the end of the war, much assisted in its latter stages by Italian partisans, until the German surrender on 2 May 1945.

EUROPE 1941-45

Although the army had left the mainland of Europe in 1940 there were some raids by army personnel (notably that on Dieppe in August 1942) before the great invasion of 5/6 June 1944, air activity was much increased and the navy was active on every western European coast and on the convoys to Murmansk in the far north of the Soviet Union. The first deaths in this account were in 1942.

Goodsell, John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Seaman LT/JX 225406, HMS St Briac, RN Patrol Service	1906 St Helens, Hastings	12.03.42	Lowestoft Naval Memorial. Brede Memorial.



HMS *St Briac* was mined only some 30 miles out from Aberdeen. 43 lives were lost. The *St Briac* was a cross-channel ferry built for the Southern Railway (for regular services between Southampton and St Malo) and used in the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940. Hired by the Royal Navy in 1941, it was sent north and on the day in question it was being used as a target-towing vessel for the Fleet Air Arm. Unfortunately it broke down and drifted into the minefield. 47 lives were lost.

Goodsell's father John was a journeyman baker (i.e. not a master baker), born at Battle in 1879; he died at Hastings in 1949. Two of his brothers had died on the western

front in 1918. In 1906 he married Mary Elizabeth (Deeprise, 1878-1970) of St Helens, Hastings. In 1911 they were at Guestling (where their son's name is on the memorial). Goodsell was born at St Helens in 1907. He married Ada Lily Carter (1910-89) in the Rye district in 1929. The result was two daughters. Ada died at Icklesham.

Kennard, William Deryck

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Pilot Officer (Pilot) 101549, 105 Sqn RAFVR	1912 Tonbridge area	31.05.42	Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerp, Belgium. Battle Memorial.

Kennard was born at Tonbridge in 1912 and had married Anne Mary Lena Elias in 1939; they had no children. She was born in 1912 in the Haverfordwest area of Pembrokeshire, remarried in 1944 and died at Tunbridge Wells in 1997.

Kennard's probate record gives his address as also in Pembrokeshire: Ferncliffe, Main Street, Goodwick, by Fishguard. And it gives his death date as *on or since 31 May*. This may reflect uncertainty after his aircraft was missing. 105 was a bomber squadron, but beyond that we know nothing of Kennard's raid. At the date of his death his squadron was operating from Horsham St Faith, Norfolk, training in use of the new fast bomber, the Mosquito.

Nor can we reliably track his parentage, other than that his mother's surname was Allard.

Elton, Geoffrey William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Sub-Lieutenant, HM Motor Torpedo Boat 30 RNVR.	Eastbourne	07.06.42	Sedlescombe churchyard.



Motor Torpedo Boat 30 was destroyed by a mine in December 1942, but he died some months earlier in an action against a German E boat in the North Sea. He was based at HMS *Beehive*, the Coastal Forces Base at Lowestoft in Suffolk. The boat came under rifle fire and Elton was killed.

HM Motor Torpedo Boat 30

His connection with Sedlescombe is unclear. He was born and educated at Eastbourne where his parents lived and his address was given as Eastbourne at his probate. They were Sydney George Elton (born at Hokitika on

the west coast of New Zealand and married in India; he died at Eastbourne in 1939) and Dorothy Joan (Parker, 1888-1977), also dying at Eastbourne. Geoffrey's probate record says that he died at Eastbourne. He appears to have been born in India. His father had been a mechanical engineer, and left the then tidy sum of £21,000.

Isted, Ernest Charles

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Sergeant (Gunner) 657163, 149 Bomber Sqn, RAF.	1919 Battle	24.07.42	Uden War Cemetery, Netherlands. Ashburnham Memorial.
<p>Isted was based at Lakenheath in Suffolk. Uden War Cemetery in the Netherlands, not far from the German border. At the time of his death the squadron was using Anson and Wellington aircraft and was engaged in the development of radio counter-measures and new radar aids, notably the blind bombing system known as Oboe.</p> <p>Isted was a Battle man, born there in 1919. His father was Charles Isted of Battle (1896-1968) and his mother Elsie May (1900-1970), also of Battle; they married there in 1917. Ernest married Doris Irene Ansell (1919-2002) in 1939, and there was at least one child.</p>			

James, Francis John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Air Gunner 914837, 218 Sqn RAFVR.	1918 Witney, Oxfordshire	21.08.42	Kiel War Cemetery, Schleswig Holstein, Germany.
<p>James was based at RAF Downham Market in Norfolk. At this point his squadron flew Short Stirling bombers.</p> <p>James was born at Witney in Oxfordshire in 1918. He was the son of Bertha Agnes James, born at Milton-under-Wychwood in 1894; she died unmarried at Oxford in 1971. CWGC report that his wife was Ellen, of Battle; the only Ellen marrying a Francis J James in England or Wales, within the likely period, was Ellen Brown; they married in County Durham in 1941.</p>			

Best, Arthur Edwin

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Sergeant (Flight Engineer) 908515, 83 Sqn RAFVR	1910, Kingston, Surrey	24.08.42	Berlin 1939-45 War Cemetery. Battle Memorial.
<p>Later in August, on 24th, Arthur Edwin Best died in the Berlin area. He was taking part in a major bombing raid on the capital: 727 bombers, including his own Lancaster, were the biggest air attack on Berlin so far. 57 of them were lost.</p> <p>Best had been born at Kingston in Surrey in 1910, son of Arthur Frederick Best (1875-1961), who in 1911 was recorded as a bank clerk living at New Malden, Surrey. In 1907, in the Richmond, Surrey, area he had married Florence Alice Maud Josephine (Fisher, 1884-1958). The younger Arthur was unmarried at his death.</p>			

Williams, Allen Marcus

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Serjeant 6098196, Queen's Own Royal West Surrey Regt. Small-Scale Raiding Force.	1920 Maidstone	12.09.42	St Laurent-sur-Mer churchyard, Calvados, France. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>On the night of 12/13 September 1942 there was an army raid on St Laurent-sur-Mer, a small village by the sea in Calvados, France, where in 1944 the American forces were to come ashore at Omaha Beach. These raids were carried out to obtain intelligence through observation, captured documents or prisoners, and by their nature were extremely dangerous. Men were very carefully selected for this Small Scale</p>			

Raiding Force, which was established only earlier in the year, and it was after more raids of this kind that Hitler issued his order that commandos still alive were not to be treated as prisoners of war but to be summarily executed. The SSRF was the brainchild of the Special Operations Executive set up in 1940. Allen Marcus Williams of Sedlescombe died with two others that night at St Laurent. There is an annual service there held on the Sunday nearest to 13 September to commemorate them. (CWGC have his name, wrongly, as Allen *Michael*.)

His parents had moved to Sedlescombe when he was a child and he had grown up there. His father Frederick Williams (1881-1969) was from Suffolk and had married Louisa Martha (Cartledge, 1883-1965) at Kensington in 1908. In the 1911 census Frederick was described as an unemployed secretary. He was a motor lorry driver when he enlisted in the ASC in August 1914 and served throughout that war, largely in France. Their first child Henry Frederick had been wounded at Dunkirk. Allen was engaged to be married when he died.

Munn, Stanley Walter

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial and memorials</i>
Sergeant (Air Gunner) 610306, 15 Sqn RAF	Aged 35	04.07.43	Rheinberg War Cemetery, North Rhine Westphalia, Germany. Ninfield Memorial.

The Ninfield Memorial has him with different initials, but no man with those initials can be found in CWGC records likely to have connections with Sussex. But Stanley Walter Munn is clearly listed as having parents of Ninfield.

Munn was based at Mildenhall in Suffolk, flying Shirt Stirling bombers, and two planes of his squadron were lost on the night of 3/4 July. They were shot down while bombing Menden, a large town on the eastern edge of the Ruhr. They were buried there and later transferred to Rheinberg.

Munn's parents were Walter and Caroline, of whom nothing certain can be found, as with Munn's date and place of birth. In 1939 Stanley married Grace Marion Pocock, on whom the records are also silent. There appear to have been no children.

Reed, William Lewis

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Sgt Wireless Operator/ Gunner 1330193, 408 Sqn RCAF	1915 Maidstone, Kent	31.07.43	Rheinberg War Cemetery, North Rhine Westphalia, Germany. Ewhurst Memorial.

Reed had been working for Basil Petrides (see elsewhere in this account) but joined up in March 1941. He trained as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner but his skills were quickly appreciated and he was made an Instructor. His squadron was based at Leeming in the North Riding of Yorkshire. His first mission was that on which he died: in a Halifax bomber shot down while attacking targets in the town of Remscheid. His grave is about 85 km north of Cologne. His Sussex address was 3 Reeves Cottages, Northiam Road, Staplecross. Reed's parentage remains obscure, but if the birth quoted is correct his mother's maiden name was Brown. He does not appear to have married.

Hankey, Stephen Alers

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Flight Lieutenant 40822 RAF, 161 Sqn RAF	1915 Westhampnett	17.12.43	Crowhurst churchyard. Crowhurst Memorial. St Andrew's Church, West Dean.

Hankey came of a family distinguished in various ways – twentieth-century members were the first Cabinet Secretary (who later made the surprising transition to be a member of the Cabinet, with a peerage) and an ambassador. Another was an army officer killed in the Bloody Sunday troubles at Derry. Stephen was a professional officer, commissioned after Sandhurst as Second Lieutenant in the Royal Sussex, but resigning in 1937. In the next year he joined the RAF as a Pilot Officer and was promoted Flight Lieutenant in 1941. His squadron operated out of Tempsford, near Sandy in Bedfordshire. He took part in reconnaissance flights in the Middle East and in connection with the Resistance in France. Flying a Lysander on 17 December, having brought back two SOE members, he met thick fog and was diverted to Ford airfield in Sussex; but the plane crashed and he was killed.

Hankey's father Cecil George Herbert Alers Hankey (1874-1940) had been born at Kensington and at St George's, Hanover Square in 1899 married Gertrude Clare (Featherstonhaugh, 1879-1957) of Binderton House by Chichester. He was a professional soldier, retiring as Colonel. He was not poor: at his death in 1940 he left just under £100,000. Stephen Hankey married Elizabeth Anne Papillon of Crowhurst Park in 1938. They had two children. Born in 1920, she remarried twice.

Petrides, Basil Oliver

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Flight Lieutenant (Wireless Operator/ Gunner) 115353, 156 Sqn RAF	1921 Nicosia, Cyprus	21.02.44	Rheinberg War Cemetery, Krefeld, North Rhine- Westphalia, Germany. Ewhurst Memorial. St Andrew's Church, Kyrenia, Cyprus. Holy Trinity Church, Sydenham.



Petrides was widely regarded as an effective gunner, hitting targets such as searchlights with considerable accuracy. He was awarded the DFM in 1942.

He was at first with 50 Squadron but moved to 156 Squadron in December 1943, based at RAF Warboys in Huntingdonshire. His last flight was on a bombing raid over Berlin but his plane was shot down over Mannheim and, according to one account,

Basil Petrides

exploded; only the pilot survived.

Basil is recorded in one account as living at East Dean, close to the Cuckmere; in another he is at Boyces, Staplecross, where his father Basil Cecil (1884-1961) was to die. His wife Olive was born at Epsom in 1921/22. He married Anne Meriel Stallebrass (born 1922) in 1943 and they had one child. After her brief marriage to Petrides, which produced a child later in 1944, she married again.

Muir, Kenneth William Angus

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Flying Officer (Pilot) 146137, 101 Sqn RAFVR	1921 Cambridge area.	04.05.44	Voue churchyard, Aube, France. Whatlington Memorial.

Muir's squadron was based at RAF Ludford Magna in Lincolnshire, and at this stage of the war was flying Lancaster bombers. It had carried out heavy raids on Germany, notably on Berlin. The bombers did not just drop bombs: the also dropped Window to jam the German radar and radio systems. On the night in question it was carrying out a successful attack on a German army base at Mailly le Camp, about 40 km north of Troyes. There were 346 Lancasters and 14 Mosquitoes, but the Luftwaffe appeared and the result was 117 aircrew dead.

Muir's father was William Angus Muir (1893-1947). He married Clara A Traxton in 1920, and after her early death married her sister Nora.

Amies, Alan

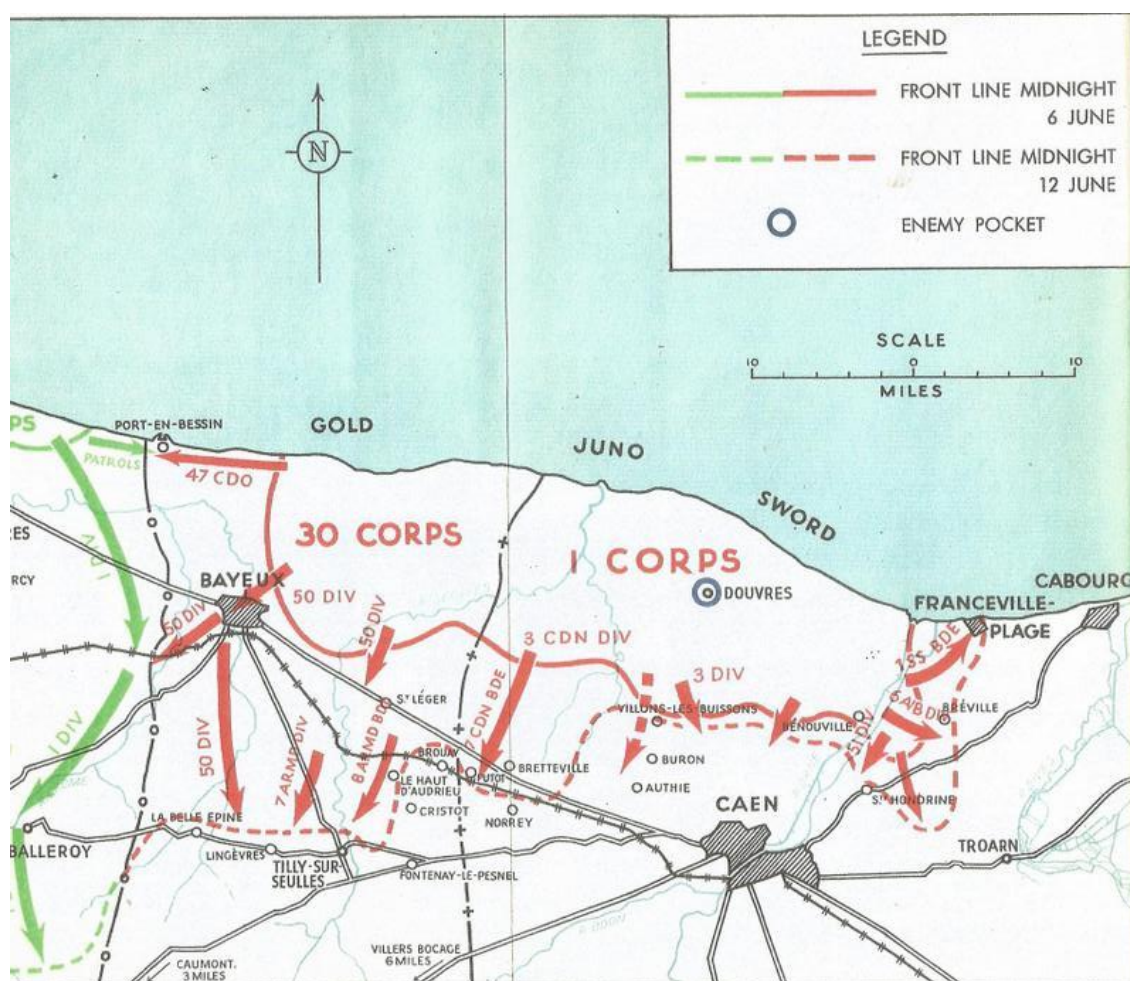
<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Flight Lieutenant (Pilot) 169719, 15 Sqn RAFVR	1923 Ticehurst area	12.05.44	Leuven Communal Cemetery, Vlaams-Brabant, Belgium. Robertsbridge Memorial.

Amies piloted a Lancaster bomber on the night of his death. It was one of 105 Lancasters based at Mildenhall in Suffolk, sent to wreck the railway yards at Leuven. His plane was shot down; there were no survivors. Apart from Amies, it was the first operational sortie for the crew (three British, a South Africa etcn, two Canadians and an Australian).

Amies's father was Henry James Amies from Folkestone (1888-1957) and his mother Anna Margaret (Winchester, 1895-1981) of Hastings. They married in the Ticehurst area in 1914. At the time of Henry's death their address was I Norman Villas, Robertsbridge.

Allen, Anthony Peter

Rank etc	Born	Died	Buried/memorial
Sergeant 1850401, 218 Sqn RAFVR	1924 Hendon, Middlesex	28.05.44	Runnymede Memorial.
<p>218 Squadron was engaged in heavy bombing, using Short Stirlings, from early 1944. It hit industrial and transport targets in France and Belgium. By VE Day it had dropped over 13,000 tons of bombs and planted 2800 mines. In March 1944 there were flights landing in France to provide support for and contact with the French resistance and in May took part in the 'spoof D Day' attacks in the Pas de Calais designed to support Hitler's belief that the imminent invasion would take place there rather than in Normandy. It is probable that Allen died in this phase of the war.</p> <p>Allen father was Douglas George Allen, born about 1885, listed as a manufacturer in the 1911 census at Hampstead, where he married Daisy Beatrice Barnes later in that year. He died at Pinner in 1937. Daisy had been born at Worthing. CWGC lists them as of Battle.</p>			



The British and Commonwealth advance (red), 6-12 June 1944. From Field Marshal Montgomery: Normandy to the Baltic (1946)

Rapley, Lionel Harry Searle

Rank etc	Born	Died	Burial/memorial
Sapper 1804759, 966 (IWT) Coy, RE	1908 Finchampstead, Berkshire	07.06.44	Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France.
<p>Rapley died on the second day of the invasion, 7 June and is buried more or less at the scene: this was the day of the liberation of Bayeux.</p>			

Rapley was son of Harry (born 1882), a carter on a Berkshire farm according to the 1911 census, and Charlotte (Searle, 1881-1947), who died at Battle. They married in 1905. In 1942 Rapley married a Hailsham woman at Battle – Mary Gwendoline (Piper, 1913-90). CWGC record her as living at Robertsbridge; she died at Trowbridge in Wiltshire.

Noble, John Padmore

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Captain, G Bty, 5 Regt RHA.	1918 Cranbrook area, Kent.	08.06.44	Sully churchyard, Calvados, France. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>Noble served in north Africa etc (where he was awarded the Military Cross) and Sicily, and on D-Day his unit, equipped with Sexton self-propelled 25-pounder guns, landed on Gold Beach. On 8 June he was supporting the attack on Sully with his tank when a German tank prompted reversal; his Sherman fell into the river.</p> <p>Sully churchyard is only some 5 km from the sea, north-west of Bayeux, at a time when the British forces were trying to move westward.</p> <p>Noble was the son of an Anglican clergyman, William Hatt Noble (1871-1950) and his wife Elizabeth Frances (Neve, 1892-1973), who married in 1912. The Rev Noble was to die at Hawkhurst.</p>			

Bowyer, Kenneth John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Serjeant 5624539, Parachute Regiment, 10 Green Howards.	1917 Greenwich	12.06.44	Ranville War Cemetery, Calvados, France.
<p>There is a confusion in the local records, which suggest that two men of this name died in the war: Kenneth John is on the Battle memorial, but a plain Kenneth is on that at Catsfield. The first of these was a parachutist in the 10th Green Howards. CWGC report his parents as living at Battle. The other is considered in the last section of this study.</p> <p>Bowyer will have died in the fight to retake Bréville, at a critical point in the attack on Villers Bocage. Bowyer's father was William, probably of Woolwich, (1889-1975) and his mother Isabel (Nawells, 1889-1970), both of whom died at Hastings. They had married in 1915.</p>			

Barnes, Charles Clarence

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Sergeant 1803398, 101 Sqn RAFVR	1924 Ninfield	12.06.44	Evreux Communal Cemetery, Eure, France. Ewhurst and Ninfield Memorials.
<p>Charles Barnes was killed in action. As for Muir above, he was based at Ludford Magna. From September 1943 he was an Air Gunner, but he was shot down while on a Lancaster MK1 on a raid on railway targets at Evreux; all the crew died.</p> <p>Charles's father was Clarence Barnes (1902-69) of the Rye area and his mother Patience or Patsy (Croft, 1906-69) of the Hailsham area, who had married in the Rye area in 1924.</p>			

Pennells, Geoffrey Phillips

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Fusilier 6107746, Royal Scots Fusiliers	1924 Eastbourne	29.06.44	St Manvieu War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Netherfield Memorial.
<p>Pennells was the son of Rosye Edith Pennells, a Brightling woman (1908-78) who appears to have been unmarried at the time. She married at Eastbourne in 1933. Her grandfather was a general labourer in 1911, living in Battle Road, Dallington.</p> <p>St Manvieu is just west of Caen, near the city's airport. When Pennells died Caen was still in German hands, despite it being an objective for the first day of the invasion, and fierce fighting was going on to make the enemy's position untenable, thereby forcing their withdrawal.</p>			

Ades, James Arthur Frederick

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Private 6412537, 8 Bn Durham Light Infantry	1923 Hastings	26.07.44	Tilly-sur-Seulles War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Netherfield Memorial.
<p>Tilly-sur-Seulles is a little west of Caen, which had fallen to the Allies on 18 July. It is likely that Ades was killed on the new front line, but it is possible that he died of wounds.</p> <p>He had been married only a little over a year, to Beryl Joan (Poppy, Tester, 1924-2002), from Brightling. After the war she remarried. Ades's father Bertram Reed Ades had been born at Ore in 1894 and would die at Hastings in 1980; in 1911 he is recorded as a farm labourer at Westfield. His mother Alice Jane (Sellings, 1894-1971) would also die at Hastings.</p>			

Pocock, Ronald James

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Sergeant 1608024, 148 Sqn RAFVR	1924 Battle area	30.07.44	Malta Memorial. Ninfield Memorial.
<p>Pocock's squadron had some of the most hazardous duties of the war. Based at Brindisi (or Foggia, as some reports say) in southern Italy, it was a Special Duties Squadron working with the Special Operations Executive. This meant flying over occupied territory, often landing at primitive airstrips or in fields. It delivered arms and other supplies to those fighting their occupiers or brought special agents in and out. Pocock's precise flight seems not to have been recorded. Clearly he went missing.</p> <p>His father appears to have been Edward Thomas Pocock, born at Catsfield in 1890, who in 1911 was a stockman on Burnt Barns farm at the western end of the parish. He died in 1961. Pocock's mother was Daisy Potter. His brother Edward died in service in 1942.</p>			

Harvey, Donald George Robert

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Lieutenant 288055, RE	1919 Lewisham	14.08.44	Banneville-la-Campagne War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Brightling Memorial.
<p>Banneville-la-Campagne War Cemetery is about 10km east of Caen, where there was fighting to move the front line further east. His father George Alfred Sydney Harvey (1879-1956) died in the Battle area; his mother Dora Annie (Speyer, 1885-1961) died at Sevenoaks. CWGC have them living at Wallcrouch near Ticehurst and clearly in that parish, so Donald's precise connection with Brightling remains obscure.</p>			

Walter, Richard Charles

Lance Corporal REME	1918 Battle area	14.08.44	Bayeux Memorial. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<p>This is another case where very little information has come to light – about the man or his family. His parents were Frank Walter and Isabella (Billings), but public records do not disclose birthdates with any confidence. They married in the Battle area in 1915. Walter married Kathleen Vera Creasey in Surrey in 1943; she was born in the Ticehurst area in 1924 and CWGC record her as living at Exmouth, Devonshire.</p>			

White, Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Signalman 6402669, Royal Corps of Signals	About 1920	11.09.44	Leopoldsburg War Cemetery, Limburg, Belgium. Catsfield Memorial.
<p>Where he died is unclear. The cemetery is well north-east of Brussels, and his burial so far from what was then the front line suggests that he died elsewhere and was later reburied. The Arnhem campaign did not start until later that month, but the troops for it were assembled at Leopoldsburg. His name does not appear among the lists of prisoners of war.</p> <p>His father was Edward White and his mother Elizabeth.</p>			

Nicholson, John Leonard

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Pilot Officer 179800, 614 Sqn RAFVR	Aged 23	22.11.44	Budapest War Cemetery, Hungary.
<p>614 Squadron was based at Amendola, near Foggia by the Adriatic coast. It was an excellent place from which to attack or assist, as appropriate, those fighting in the Balkans and further north. The Red Army had entered the Budapest area on 7 November, though it did not complete its encirclement until 26 December. The British would have been under considerable pressure to help, either from the Soviet Union or from Downing Street. Nicholson's plane was a Liberator VIII.</p> <p>His parents were Charles Norman Nicholson and Bryda Kathleen (Pocock 1896-1968). They married in the Battle area in 1919.</p>			

Hayler, William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Guardsman 2624945, 1 Bn Grenadier Guards	1926 Ninfield	03.04.45	Oldenzaal Protestant Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands. Ninfield Memorial.
<p>Hayler's battalion was part of the Guards Armoured Division advancing northward into the Netherlands. Oldenzaal itself was liberated on 2 April.</p> <p>His father was Albert Edward (1891-1969) and his mother Katie (Wightwick, 1900-70). They married in 1925.</p>			

Lemon, Robert Kershaw

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Major 145624, 4 Bn Royal Welsh Fusiliers	1908 Godstone area, Surrey.	10.04.45	Becklingen War Cemetery, Lower Saxony, Germany. Lancing College War Memorial.
<p>Lemon was originally with the Cheshire Regiment but transferred to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. At the time of his death the British were advancing rapidly north-eastwards, just north of the Ruhr. Becklingen is a small settlement about ten km south west of the city of Munster. Lemon was killed in action. He had previously been Mentioned in Despatches.</p> <p>Lemon's father was Robert Julian Lemon (1877-1915), recorded in 1911 as a retired insurance broker. His mother was Elsie Jane (Kershaw, 1874-1945). In 1938 he had married Natalie Ina Grace – or Postill – (1910-), recorded by CWGC as living at Sedlescombe.</p>			

Drewett, Arthur Jack

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Corporal 1634354, RAFVR	1905 Hastings	07.02.45	Eindhoven (Woensel) General Cemetery, North Brabant. Brede Memorial.
<p>We do not know the squadron to which Drewett belonged and so cannot check further on his last flight. Moreover, his family are remarkably elusive. It appears that this was a Surrey family, moving to Hastings at about the turn of the 19/20 century. William Drewett (born at Walton on Thames in 1872) was his father, and his mother Georgina, born at Bagshot in about 1872. She died at Hastings in 1924. In 1911 William was a taxi-driver at Hastings.</p> <p>Arthur married Dorothy Killick at Hastings in 1930 and they had three children.</p>			

The war in Europe ended at different times and in different places, but the final German surrender was on 8 May 1945. The last death in Europe from the Battle area was on 2 May.

Hayes, John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Trooper 14402455, Reconnaissance Corps RAC 6 (Airborne) Armoured Regt.	About 1923 Spain	02.05.45	Berlin 1939-45 War Cemetery, Germany. Battle Memorial.
Hayes' burial in the Berlin 1939-45 War Cemetery suggests that he was shot down over or close to the city. He was aged 21. His father was a Scot, Edwin (c1879-1931), and his mother Annie Orr Buchanan (Kitchin, 1889-1978); they had married at Tonbridge in 1920. Edwin must have had a close connection with Spain, for his son John was born there and in due course he, Edwin, died there.			

THE WAR IN THE EAST

The Japanese attacked Hong Kong and Malaya on 7/8 December 1941, leading to the capitulation of the former on Christmas Day 1941 and the latter on 15 February 1942. They then moved into Burma, pressing westwards from Malaya and Thailand. An attack on India was repelled in the spring of 1944 and British forces moved, not without difficulty, to retake Burma before the American nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war to an end.

Gregory, Robert Henley

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Sub-Lieutenant 52A, Hong Kong RNVR	1891 Edmonton, Middlesex.	19.12.41	Stanley Military Cemetery, Hong Kong. Crowhurst Memorial.
Gregory joined the Hong Kong RNVR in June 1939. He died defending the Naval Shore Station on the north shore of Hong Kong island. Having secured the colony's mainland the Japanese landed on the island late on 18 December 1941; it would surrender on Christmas Day; although strongly garrisoned, there was no air cover, and next few days after the initial invasion saw a steady retreat. By the end of 19 December the Japanese had taken the north-east of the island. It is not known whether Gregory died in the defence of the shore station, on one of the Motor Torpedo Boats sent to intercept the attack, or in the retreat. The Navy List for April 1946 shows him still on the strength, which may just be due to the confused situation after the reoccupation of the colony in the autumn of the previous year. Gregory was the son of Robert Stewart Gregory (1847-1912), Vicar of Edmonton and his wife Constance Laura (Henley, 1857-1930), who died at Crowhurst. Her sister married Wolfram Dannreuther of Battle, and their son Stephen died as a result of enemy action in the north Atlantic in 1943. In 1921, in the Philippines, Robert married Dolores Lolita (Perez-Rubio, 1890-1984); they had one child.			

Davidson-Brown, Alan

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Major A1/937, 4/19 Hyderabad Regt	1897 Liverpool, Lancashire.	07.01.42	Singapore Memorial.
Davidson-Brown was a professional soldier caught in the remorseless Japanese invasion of Malaya that the Commonwealth forces were almost wholly inadequate to repel. He was commanding his regiment when it came under attack early in the morning of 7 January, with only one tank at his disposal, and despite great resistance his unit was scattered by four o'clock and, presumably, he had been killed. This was the battle of Slim River, about 100 km north of Kuala Lumpur, the strategic importance of which cannot be doubted. British morale sank; the roads were now open. Davidson-Brown's father was Thomas (1853-97), a native of Northumberland, who in the 1891 census was described as an 'inspector engineering postal telegraphs'. His other family, including his wife Margaret Lucy, have not been traced. He is associated with Sedlescombe.			

Young, Robert Alexander Victor

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Marine PLY/X2214	Unknown	16.02.42	Plymouth Memorial.
<p>Young had the misfortune to be on board HMS <i>Prince of Wales</i> when it was sunk by Japanese planes in December 1941, along with HMS <i>Repulse</i>. By this one action the enemy effectively removed the Royal Navy from this theatre of war, just as they had removed the RAF two days earlier. Of the 1612 men on board, 327 died.</p> <p>Young was taken to Singapore, where he was to fight the Japanese invasion of the island that began on 8 February and ended with their victory one week later. The Marines fought at Bukit Timah in the mid-west of the island. What precisely happened to Young is unknown; it is likely that he died before 16 February.</p> <p>Who Young's parents were is not yet known; the Dallington researcher thinks that they lived in Whitechapel Row, near Three Cups Corner.</p>			

Jenner, Albert

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Private 1801512, 49 Bn, 48 AA Regt.	Unknown	01.03.42	Jakarta (Ancol) Netherlands Field of Honour. Brede Memorial.
<p>Albert Jenner was killed in the defence of the Dutch East Indies against the Japanese. As with so many occurrences of the war in the east it is not known how Jenner died but it was before Jakarta (then Batavia) surrendered on 5 March. Nor do we know with any certainty anything about his antecedents: family websites give his birth as at Hastings in 1917 or 1920, but no such birth record can be found, and as these sites also err in his date of death one is disinclined to give much credit to them. We do know, however, that he married Olive Wenham in 1940. She had been born in the Tonbridge area in 1920 and in 1946 she remarried; there was no death record for her up to 2007. She and Jenner had one daughter.</p>			

Cave, Peter

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant, MNBDO Royal Marines.	1914 Eastbourne	24.04.42	Portsmouth Memorial. Battle Memorial.
<p>CWGC does not report where Cave was killed but it was after the battle of Padaung in the Arakan. He was a Commando with the Special Service Detachment under Wingate's command in a group called Force Viper. On the occasion of his death he was one of eight Marines in a boat on the Irrawaddy, seven of whom drowned when a storm capsized it. In that attack, only 58 men out of 106 managed to return to India.</p> <p>He was with the Mobile Naval Base Defence Organisation No. 1, which despite its name was a unit committed to hostile attacks on the enemy. He was posthumously Mentioned in Despatches.</p> <p>Cave was born in the Eastbourne area in 1914, son of Frank Arthur Cave of St Leonards (1883-1950) and his wife Dorothy (Atkinson, 1890-1971) from Westmorland, both living at St Leonards after the war. They married at Kendal in 1913. In 1911 Frank is listed as a provisions merchant, that is (presumably) a wholesaler.</p>			

Nock, Denys Humphrey

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Aircraftman 1st Class 1238073, RAFVR	1921 Shifnal, Shropshire.	07.06.42	Colombo (Kanatte) Cemetery, Ceylon. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<p>Without a squadron number it is hard to trace how Nock may have served or died.</p> <p>Nock was the son of Howard Nock (1885-1963), a farmer of Shifnal, where he was born. He married Nesta Maud Rowlands there in 1913. She was also of Shifnal, though born at Bangor, Caernarvonshire. Their address was Brockham Cottage, Silverhill, Robertsbridge.</p>			

Stainton, Philip Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Captain 198089, 16 Field Regt RA	1920 Maidstone, Kent	10.10.44	Imphal War Cemetery, Assam, India. Battle Memorial.

Stainton died some months after the battle of Imphal, one of the two engagements that turned the tide against the Japanese in Burma.
 His father was George (1877-1923), a schoolmaster, and his mother Helen Dorothy (Ross, 1888-1972) of Winchester. They married at Winchester in 1909. George died at Maidstone and Helen at Battle. Philip's brother is well-known in cricket circles, having a long amateur career including the captaincy of Sussex and he became headmaster of Glengorse School at Battle.

Swanson, Harold

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
899377, 114 Field Regt RA	1913 Birkenhead, Cheshire	22.03.43	Colombo (Kanatte) General Cemetery, Ceylon. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>Swanson's regiment was sent from India to garrison Ceylon in July 1942 and remained there for a year. Swanson died during this time. Although Ceylon was under threat – a major bombing by the Japanese had occurred in April 1942 – there seems to have been no major attack that would have caused Swanson's death nearly a year later.</p> <p>Swanson's father was Thomas Harold Swanson (1882-1971). His mother was Constance E (Lupton, 1880-1963). They were married at Birkenhead in 1912. Constance died at Dell View, Sedlescombe and Thomas at Maidstone..</p>			

Brett, Edgar

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Lance Bombardier 954491, 118 Field Regt, RA	1917, Lewisham	03.07.43	Chungkai War Cemetery, Thailand. Mountfield Memorial.
<p>Brett's regiment was among those that were forced to surrender at Singapore; he became a prisoner of war and died in captivity. The conditions in which the Japanese kept their prisoners, and the privations to which they were subjected, defy belief but are well-attested by those fortunate enough to survive. Chungkai War Cemetery contains 1426 Commonwealth and 313 Dutch burials. It is some 5 km west of Kanchanaburi, where the 'death railway' began very shortly before he died and where there is a much larger war cemetery.</p> <p>Brett's father was probably also Edgar, born at Mountfield at the end of 1888, who died at Crowborough in 1982. There are various candidates for his mother Mabel, and she was probably Mabel Hollands, born late in 1889, who died at Crowborough in 1973.</p>			

Newbery, Peter John

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
WO pilot, 82 Sq, 1270213 RAFVR	1923, Battle	04.08.43	Kirkee War Cemetery, Maharashtra, India. Battle Memorial.
<p>Newbery was one of the well-known Battle jam-making family. Kirkee War Cemetery is near Poona. He was Warrant Officer Pilot 1270213 in 82 Squadron, RAFVR and was born at Battle in 1923. Information on his death is poor, but we know that his squadron was sent to India in May 1942 where it was based at RAF Cholvaram near Madras. (In 1944 it was to be deployed against the Japanese invaders at the battle of Imphal and Kohima – the turning point of the land war in the east.) While Newbery was there it was no doubt involved in anti-Japanese actions over the Bay of Bengal.</p> <p>Newbery was a son of John Newbery and Mabel Dyson. John was born at Battle in 1882 and died at St Leonards in 1966; Mabel was born at Windsor in 1895 and died at St Leonards in 1974. They married at Hastings in 1922 and were living at Rats Castle, Hastings Road when John died. He was a son of Joseph and Kezia Newbery; Joseph was in charge of the jam factory, which by the time of the First World War was the biggest single employer in the town. The name of Peter Newbery's uncle is on the Battle Memorial for the First World War.</p>			

Underhill, Henry

Corporal 6400850, 196 Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps	Age 23 years	05.08.43	Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Burma. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<p>Underhill is listed in the CWGC and his regiment's records as <i>Harry</i>. Thanbyuzayat is at the Burmese end of the 'death railway' from Kanchanaburi in Thailand, and although Underhill does not appear in the list of British prisoners of war it must be that he died while a prisoner working on that railway. Underhill's father was Frank Underhill (1884-1958), and his mother Lillian (French, 1881-1971). They married in the Ticehurst area in 1916. He died at Bellhurst Cottage, Robertsbridge, and she at Hastings.</p>			


Hudson, William Foster

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Pilot Officer (Pilot) 174430, 215 Sqn RAFVR	1917 Sandhurst, Kent	27.02.44	Chittagong War Cemetery, Bangladesh. Bodiam Memorial.
<p>At the time of his death Hudson's squadron was based at Jessore, about 100 km north-east of Calcutta and now in Bangladesh. It was flying Wellingtons and attacking the Japanese forces that at that point were still forcing British troops out of Burma. We do not know the precise circumstances of his death, and Chittagong War Cemetery contains graves transferred from smaller cemeteries all over the contested area. Chittagong is close to the Indian Ocean, in southern Bangladesh. Hudson's parents were Alfred Hudson (1889-1955) and Helena Dorothy (Longley, 1888-1990). She died in the Hawkhurst area at the age of 101. They married in 1915 in the Tenterden area.</p>			

Sheather, Allan Cecil

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
RM Marine PO/X113117	1922 Basingstoke, Hampshire	23.01.45	Taukkyan War Cemetery, Yangon, Myanmar. Catsfield Memorial. Battle Memorial.
<p>Taukkyan War Cemetery, immediately outside Yangon and on the way to the airport, houses remains brought in from five local cemeteries, those at Akyab, Mandalay, Meiktila, Myitkina and Sahmaw. Even with this information it is hard to tell where a man died, but in this case it seems likely that it was in the Mandalay area. Sheather may have been born in Hampshire, but he was of a Sussex family. His father Alfred Hawkins Sheather (1896-1946) was born at Catsfield and his mother Doris Lillian (Unicombe, 1896-) at Bexhill. They married at Battle in 1917. It appears that after Alfred's death his wife emigrated to New Zealand.</p>			

Mainprice, William James

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Lieutenant Commander, Fleet Air Arm, HMS <i>Illustrious</i> .	About 1918	29.01.45	Lee on Solent Memorial. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>HMS <i>Illustrious</i> served throughout the war in almost every theatre. In January 1945 it took part in attack on oil refineries at Palembang in Sumatra, in what was then the Dutch East Indies and occupied by the Japanese. Details are scarce but it appears that Mainprice's plane was shot down. He had already been Mentioned in Despatches and awarded the DFC. Mainprice was son of Rev William Horace Briscoe Mainprice (1875-1938), a Suffolk man with a Sussex</p> <p><i>HMS Illustrious</i></p> </div> </div>			

parish, and his wife Constance (Andrews, 1880-1971). They married in the Battle area in 1914. In 1941 their son married June Diana Charlotte Lake (c1919-85). At his death he was reported as living at Hurst Green

Fulford, Lionel

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Major 149439, Sherwood Foresters, attached 1 Bn Northamptonshire Regt	1912, Amersham, Buckinghamshire	26.02.45	Taukkyan War Cemetery, Yangon, Myanmar.
Existing records make it very difficult to establish where Fulford's regiment was when he died. His father John Bartholomew Fulford (1889-1955) was from Bideford in Devon and his mother Millicent May (Anderson, 1890-1983) from Linton in Cambridgeshire. They married at Uxbridge in 1910 and they both died at Wilford in Nottinghamshire. CWG records them as being of Battle.			

Masters, Leonard William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Corporal 14248613, 328 Workshop Coy, RE	1922 Battle area	08.07.45	Taukkyan War Cemetery, Yangon, Myanmar. Whatlington Memorial. Ewhurst Memorial.
As with the others, it is not known precisely where Masters died. His father George Masters (1875-1927) was from Udimore and died at Hastings; his mother Agnes (Morris, 1882-1966) was born at Sedlescombe and also died at Hastings. In 1911 George is recorded as a farm labourer at Whatlington. Masters married Nora Betty Fifield in the Battle area in 1943. She had been born in the Malling area of Kent in 1923, and after Masters's death she remarried, at Hastings. She died in the Hastings/Rother area in 1984. She and Masters had no children. Masters's brother Charles had died in north Africa etc in 1943.			

Pont, Charles James

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Aircraftman 1st Class 1242343, 84 Sqn RAFVR	1905 Ninfield	26.07.45	Jakarta War Cemetery, Indonesia. Brightling Memorial.
84 Squadron went through a difficult war: in 1942 it was completely surrounded by Japanese forces in Java and only the commanding officer and eleven men escaped. Pont joined the re-formed squadron after this episode. Based at Yanlahanka near Bangalore, it flew Mosquitos and was again engaged in bombing Japanese targets in the then Dutch East Indies, and it is probable that Pont died on one of these raids. Pont's father Frederick (1878-1937) was listed as a blacksmith in 1911, at Poplar Cottage, Salehurst; he there states that he had been born at Battle. His mother Elizabeth (Thomas, 1881-1957) was from Ticehurst. They married in the Battle area in 1904. Charles married Audrey Florence (Russell, 1907-80), of Tenterden, in 1929. They had two daughters.			

Cohen, David Anthony


<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Flying Officer 185969, 152 Sqn RAFVR	1922	01.08.45	Madras War Cemetery, India. Fallin, Stirlingshire: memorials at parish church and in village.
152 Squadron was flying in support of the 14th Army in Burma when Coen died. He was based at Thedaw airfield, about 100 km south of Mandalay. It flew Spitfires. He had previously fought in Africa etc and Italy. Cohen's parents were John Philip (-1952) and Nellie. CWGC records them as of Battle.			

Farrow, Harold William

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Burial/memorial</i>
Sergeant, Royal Corps of Signals.	Unknown	30.09.45	Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>The last known local death of the war was at Singapore after its formal surrender by the Japanese on 12 September 1945. Harold William Farrow of Sedlescombe died on 30 September and is buried in Kranji War Cemetery on the north coast of Singapore island. CWGC has his age as 38; Beryl Lucey's book has him at 30 and living at Luffs Farm, Sedlescombe. Searching among public records for the first option has given no clues as to his family; neither does searching on the younger age. The only certain record is the death in 1940 of Bertha Ellen, aged 66, of Luffs Farm, whose probate was granted to her husband Neil. Luff's Farm is at the south end of the village, in the fork where the road divides left towards Westfield and right to the A21.</p>			

THE NORTH ATLANTIC

Hinde, Harold

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial and memorials</i>
Corporal 564172, RAF HMS Courageous.	1913, Battle	17.09.39	Runnymede Memorial. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>On 17 September a convoy was proceeding in the Western Approaches south-west of Ireland, protected by destroyers and HMS <i>Courageous</i> (left). The <i>Courageous</i> was an old ship, built as a battle cruiser in 1917 but converted to aircraft carrier by 1928. The convoy came under scrutiny by German submarines, which sank a freighter before spotting the <i>Courageous</i>. U-29 launched three torpedoes, two of which found their target. <i>Courageous</i> sank with the loss of 519 of the 1260 men aboard, and two squadrons of Fairy Swordfish planes (48 in all). Hinde's father, Henry Clarke Hinde (1871-1937), was a farmer, and married Susan Mary (Hunt, 1881-1964) in 1904. In 1911 he was at Farthings Farm on Farthings Lane, where it is almost</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>HMS Courageous</i></p> </div> </div> <p>certain that Harold was born. They later moved to Swales Green Farm, Sedlescombe.</p>			

Wilkinson, Douglas Shipton

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Lieutenant RNVR	1895 Cheltenham, Gloucestershire	25.03.41	Chatham Memorial. Natural History Museum Memorial. Ewhurst Memorial.

Wilkinson was a distinguished entomologist after who the wasp genus *Wilkinsonellus* is named. He had worked as an entomologist at the Department of Agriculture in Cyprus, the British Museum and the Natural History Museum. He was 44 when the war began. He joined the RNVR and was commissioned Lieutenant, being posted to HMS *Nile*, a shore establishment near Alexandria in February 1941. He was then posted to India and joined the SS *Britannia*, a liner of 3862 tons bound for Bombay. But the *Britannia* was intercepted by the German raider *Thor*



off the coast of Sierra Leone. Its six small guns were insufficient to mount a proper defence and she lowered her boats. *Thor* sank her but left the survivors to fend for themselves some 700 miles from the shore. The result was that 122 crew and 127 passengers, including Wilkinson, lost their lives.

Wilkinson's father Walter (born at Walsall in 1858) certainly had means, and he sent Douglas to Blundells School in Devon. His mother Caroline Ethel (Rooke, born 1867) was from Cheltenham; by 1901 they were at Exmouth. Douglas's home address was Boyces, Staplecross.

Robins, Charles Valentine

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Yeoman of Signals P/JX 142381, HMS Hood RN	1918/19 Uckfield area	24.05.41	Portsmouth Memorial, Battle Memorial.

The end of HMS *Hood* was the worst single British naval disaster of the war. Popularly regarded as unsinkable, she was scheduled for further reinforcements but the war intervened. Ordered to prevent the much-feared German Bismarck from entering the Atlantic, she and other were patrolling the waters between Greenland and Iceland on 24 May. In an echo of the disastrous sinkings at the Battle of Jutland in 1916, she was set on fire and suddenly exploded. The subsequent inquiry found that a shell had probably entered one of the magazines. She sank in about three minutes. There were 1418 men aboard. Three survived.

Robins's father William Thomas Robins (1876-1951) was born at Ravensthorpe near Northampton. His burial record at Battle lists him as a retired police inspector. He married at Eton in Buckinghamshire in 1901; his wife Margaret (Valentine, 1880-1945) was from North Runcton in Norfolk. They are both buried in Battle cemetery. Charles's brother Cyril was to die in Italy later in the war.

Carrington, John Bodman

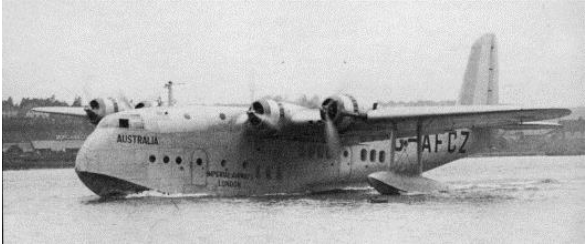
<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Midshipman RNVR, HMS Nigeria (below).	1922 Battle area	26.03.42	Chatham Naval Memorial. Crowhurst Memorial.




HMS *Nigeria* has its share of fame in that in the previous year it was one of four ships that intercepted the German weather ship *Lauenburg* near Jan Mayen Island in the far north Atlantic and secured codebooks that were crucial to an early breakthrough in deciphering German signals. *Nigeria* was a light cruiser that served in many places without serious damage, including the Russian convoys and the north Africa etc landings, and was finally to be lost when bombed during the Chinese civil war that led to the creation of the People's Republic. It seems inevitable that John Carrington must have died at sea, either through illness or accident. When he died the *Nigeria* was escorting a convoy to Murmansk in the Soviet Union.

Carrington's parents were well-off: Hugh was a lawyer, son of a retired goldsmith, born at Hampstead in 1887, and Mary (Smelt) was the daughter of a physician born at Holloway at the end of 1897. They married in the Battle area in 1917; their later address was Blacklands, Crowhurst. Hugh died in 1954 and Mary in 1982. They had five children.

Cundy, Anthony Osmond

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial and memorials</i>
First Officer, BOAC. Flying boat <i>Clare</i> .	1915 West Ham	14.09.42	Malta Memorial. Whatlington Memorial.
<p>While bombing and protecting bombers was a major task in 1942 it was not the only air duty. Civilian aircraft were also involved, flying between the UK and neutral countries such as Sweden as well as to British colonies and occupied territories. Cundy was First Officer on a BOAC flight, one of 83 BOAC staff who lost their lives while flying during the war. He died on a flight from Bathurst in the Gambia to Lisbon. He was on the flying boat <i>Clare</i>, when a fire broke out in the engine and had to land at sea, a little north west of Dakar. It</p>  <p><i>BOAC Flying Boat Clare</i></p> <p>broke up, and six crew and 13 passengers died. <i>Clare</i>, a Shorts Empire flying boat, had formerly been known as the <i>Australia</i> and had been intended for flights over the Tasman Sea but had been pressed into war service. Cundy was 27, born at West Ham in 1915. His father John George Cundy (1881-1959) was recorded as an electrical engineer in the 1911 census; in the First World War he served with the Royal Engineers. He died at Hastings. In 1905, in the Roman Catholic Chapel at Swansea, he married Jessie Isabel (Lewis, 1884-1934). After the First World War they lived at Whatlington, where Jessie died.</p>			

Lewis, Alan William George

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial and memorials</i>
Assistant Steward 179221, Naval Auxiliary Personnel (Merchant Navy) HMS <i>Dasher</i>	1922 Dover area	27.03.43	Robertsbridge Memorial. Liverpool Naval Memorial, Lancashire.
 <p>HMS <i>Dasher</i> was an American-built merchant ship converted to escort carrier with a capacity for 15 aircraft. When she blew up and sank off Ardrossan in the Firth of Clyde she was carrying 528 men; 379 of them died. It has always been a mystery why this happened. There were no reports of U boats in the area, or of enemy aircraft. The sinking was covered up to avoid loss of morale, and the subsequent inquiry revealed nothing. Modern investigation suggests that <i>Dasher</i> was simply unfit for naval duties</p> <p><i>HMS Dasher Memorial, Ardrossan, Ayrshire</i></p> <p>and that the explosion was probably caused by fuel leakage. Certainly the amount of fuel that ships like this carried was promptly and sharply reduced. Lewis's father was Albert Charles Lewis (1888-) and his mother Lilian (Plowright, 1888-). CWGC records her as of Robertsbridge.</p>			

Dannreuther, Stephen Edward

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial and memorials</i>
3rd Radio Officer, SS Harperley	1924 Crowhurst	05.05.43	Mercantile Marine Memorial, London. Battle Memorial.



Many Battle residents will know the name Dannreuther because Stephen's father Wolfram ran the fruit farm on Marley Lane where the Norman Close development now stands. This was a distinguished family, musically and in other ways, though somehow Wolfram does not appear to have met its prevailing standards. Stephen was born at Crowhurst in 1924 and on 4 May 1943 the merchant ship *SS Harperley* was part of a convoy from Milford Haven to Buenos Aires.

SS Harperley

The discipline of convoys meant that they necessarily took the shortest possible route to cross the Atlantic rather than letting individual ships take more direct routes; this meant that the *Harperley* was some 500 miles south of Newfoundland when it was attacked by the submarine U264 early on 5 May 1943. Ten men died and 39 survived.

Wolfram (1875-1950) had been born at Bayswater but died at Battle. In 1920 he married Mary Noël (Gregory, 1896-1972). They had two sons. Stephen was unmarried when he died. Mary's brother Robert died in the defence of Hong Kong in 1941.

Warrington, Clement Samuel Vincent

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>Burial and memorials</i>
Able Seaman P/JX 328995, Landing Craft (Tank) 7015.	1924 Nottingham	18/19.10. 44	Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Ashburnham Memorial.

Warrington died simply due to bad weather and bad planning rather than to enemy action. He was on Landing Craft (Tank) 7015 when it foundered off Land's End. This was one of six ships that sank in this incident, part of a convoy to the Mediterranean and then to east Asia. The convoy was of 35 merchant ships, nine LCTs being towed, three submarines and three naval ships.

There problem was that the decks of the LCTs were below the waterline, and consequently they were able to travel safely only in winds below Force 4. They met a gale with winds of up to Force 9. In total, 55 men died but well over 100 were saved. All 18 men on LCT 7015 died, among them Warrington. Clearly the convoy ought to have put into port until the storm abated, difficult though this would have been. LCTs were not again towed in this fashion during the rest of the war.

Warrington was a Nottingham man, born at Nottingham at the beginning of 1924. His father was Clement Carline Warrington, born in Cheshire (1891-1981), recorded in the 1911 census as a cotton spinner living at Kirby in Ashfield in Nottinghamshire. His mother was Edith Annie (Green, 1899-1971); she was from the neighbouring town of Sutton in Ashfield, and they married at Nottingham in 1914. It is therefore unclear what connection their son Clement might have had with Ashburnham. He was unmarried.

THE OTHERS

To divide this account into theatres of war inevitably leaves open the possibility of those who died elsewhere or where insufficient information is available to identify the place or date.

Street, Jack

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Stoker 2nd Class C/KX 103572, HMS Pembroke II	1919/20 Tadcaster, West Riding	08.08.40	Brightling Memorial.

Jack Street appears to have been the illegitimate son of Florence Street and was born at Tadcaster in the West

Riding in 1919/20. Another Florence (Joan) Street was in Battle, buried there in 2000, and this may have been his sister. His naval service also seems obscure: he was 'on' HMS Pembroke II. This sounds fairly straightforward, but this was not a vessel but a shore establishment at Chatham dealing with naval accounts. He is buried at Greenock in Renfrewshire.

Read, Henry Edgar

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Aircraftman 90235, RAFVR	Age 25 years	11.06.41	Sedlescombe churchyard. Sedlescombe Memorial.
This is a man for whom there is barely any information at all. CWGC does not name his squadron; public records have too many candidates for his parentage. CWGC do, however, report his parents as Edgar and Florence. They lived at Pump Cottage, Sedlescombe.			

Gander, William Clement

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Able Seaman P/JX 261573 President III, RN	1916 Willesden	11.09.41	Portsmouth Memorial. Battle Memorial.
<p>Gander worked at HMS President III, an on-shore accounting house like that where Jack Street (above) worked, but he did not die there. His probate account states that he died on or since 11 September, on war service.</p> <p>Gander was born at Willesden in 1916, son of David and Rosemary Annie, or at least that is what CWGC states. There is no record of a Rosemary Annie Gander, but there is one for Martha Rosina (Plummer, 1875-1927), who married David Gander in the Lewes area in 1898. David Gander was born at Arlington in 1873/74 and died at Battle early in 1971; Martha was from Chailey. David was a police officer with the East Sussex Constabulary. William Gander married Lilian Mary Oliver at Battle in 1938. She was from Battle, and did not remarry; she died at Battle in 1967 at the age of 50. No children are recorded. Gander's residence was Tanyard Cottages, which suggests that he might have worked at the tanyard on Battle Hill.</p>			

Akehurst, Violet Edith

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private W/86125, ATS att RA 490(M) Heavy AA Bty.	1925 Robertsbridge	24.11.41	Battle Cemetery. Battle Memorial.
<p>Violet is the only woman in our list. We say woman, though in this case girl might be more appropriate. She was Violet Edith Akehurst, who was only 16 years of age. An <i>in memoriam</i> notice states that she was aged 16 years and five months, which would give a probable date of birth as June 1925.</p> <p>We do not know what service she saw, but it was likely that she did see some, for there was heavy bombing during 1941. If she did, it would have been at the first mixed-gender AA battery at Richmond Park, Surrey, in August 1941.</p> <p>Her father Aleck (1896-1965) was a Hastings man who had enlisted in the Royal Sussex Regiment in August 1914, describing himself as a labourer employed by Colonel Andrews at Robertsbridge. He went to France in February 1915 and was wounded there in May of that year; he was finally discharged in March 1919. Aleck married Edith Mary MacDonald and by the 1920s the pair were in the Ticehurst area, probably at Robertsbridge, where their first child was born. Six more followed, though three died before reaching their first birthday. Violet was born in the Ticehurst area; by 1929 the family were at Battle.</p> <p>Violet too was unfortunate. She contracted pneumococcal meningitis and was taken to Bath Military hospital where she died on 24 November 1941. She may have been serving in that area at the time, but there were no raids on Bristol after July of that year, and none on Bath after April.</p> <p>Violet was brought home for burial and her grave, with a military headstone, stands by itself and very noticeably in the lower part of Battle cemetery.</p> <p>She remains the youngest woman to die in British military service in the Second World War.</p>			

Smith, James Percival

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Aircraftman 920372, 920 Balloon Sqn RAFVR.	1913 Battle area	09.05.42	Sedlescombe churchyard. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>Balloons were integral to Britain's defences. The idea was to ensure that enemy aircraft flew high enough for the AA batteries to target them; if low, they would pass too quickly. Smith's squadron was based at Derry in Ireland, which had four flights of eight balloons. It also ran a rocket battery at Balloughry. We do not know how Smith died, and it was possibly by accident.</p> <p>Smith's father was Arthur Smith (1866/67-1948). He was from Ewhurst and in the 1911 census he was a farmer at Swales Green Farm. His mother Caroline (Harmer, 1877-1949) was from the closer Battle area, where they married in 1897. Their later address was Woodman's Cottage, Sedlescombe.</p>			

Shambrook, Horace James

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Gunner 6400872, 53 Coast Regt RA.	1922 Sedlescombe	06.08.42	Sedlescombe churchyard. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>The Royal Artillery had several coast regiments so that coastal areas were not only free from uncontested invasion but also the site for attacks on incoming bombers. Shambrook did not die from enemy action: he was accidentally shot dead by his friend, another Gunner. The incident happened at Totland Bay on the Isle of Wight.</p> <p>Shambrook's parents were Henry William Shambrook (1878-1953) and Rebecca Charlotte or Charlotte Rebecca (Dawson, 1881-1964). In 1911 Henry was a road labourer. They lived at 19 East View Terrace, Sedlescombe.</p>			

King, John Keith

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Leading Aircraftman, Wireless Operator/Air Gunner 1292547, RAFVR.	1920 Battle area.	16.12.42	Queenstown Cemetery, Eastern Cape, South Africa etc. Sedlescombe Memorial.
<p>There was a Joint Air Training Scheme shared by South Africa etc and the other Allies, and one of its bases was Queenstown in the eastern Cape Province, just south of the Drakensbergs. While there was considerable activity watching the seas around South Africa etc for U boat movements, it would appear that King died in an accident.</p> <p>His father was Harold Percy King (1882-1967), born at Croydon and in 1911 a cycle dealer at Bexhill. In the Rye area in 1909 he married Ann Elizabeth (Standen, 1884-1975).</p>			

Sinden, Harry William Thorpe

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Gunner 90313, 510(M) Bty, RA.	1910 Battle	03.01.43	Battle Cemetery. Battle Memorial.
<p>Sinden's military record does not show the cause of his death or where his wound or illness was incurred. He was of the family that ran Thorpe's, boot and shoe makers and sellers at 14 High Street, Battle. His father was Alfred Harry (1884-1974) and his mother Bessie Mary (Thorpe, 1876-1946); they had married at Battle in 1906. Harry had married Kathleen Agnes Hampton (born at Battle but listed by CWGC as of Tunbridge Wells), but no children were recorded.</p>			


Willard, Roy

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Private 6401741, 5 RSR	1920 Robertsbridge	1944	Salehurst churchyard. Robertsbridge Memorial.
<p>One more local man may have owed his death to being wounded in the retreat of 1940. He was Roy Willard of Salehurst, who was discharged from the army on 10 March 1941 and died at Tonbridge of peritonitis and gangrene late in 1944. His name does not appear in CWGC records; if his death was due to war service then it should.</p> <p>His father, George Henry Willard (1886-1965), was recorded as a railway clerk in 1911, when the family was at East Street in Robertsbridge. His mother, Ethel (Every, 1891-1973), died at 5 Station Road, Robertsbridge.</p>			

Soan, Humphrey Rupert Cruse

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Sergeant Navigator, 1398223, 571 Sqn RAFVR	1922 Battle area	22.10.44	Chester (Blacon) Cemetery, Cheshire. Battle Memorial.
<p>That Soan is buried at Blacon may seem slightly odd, but men died for all kinds of reasons. In this case his squadron was part of the Light (later Fast) Night Striking Force based at Oakington near Cambridge, and they flew Mosquitoes. His last mission was for Bomber Command, attacking Hamburg. Returning towards Oakington, the plane lost an engine and was slower than the others, who went out of sight; the radio-navigational equipment then failed. In the dark, with England unlit below, there was no way in which the plane could find its way. Finally they were actually in the Pennines, a long way from their base, and they flew into the side of a hill near Saddleworth in the West Riding.</p> <p>Soan's father was Percy Soan (1888-1970), who in 1911 was a cowman at Coarse Barn Farm at the end of Uckham Lane, Battle. His mother was Constance Mabel (Cruse, 1888-1981). They married in the Battle area in 1918.</p>			

Farley, Douglas George

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Gunner 6347786, 119 Light AA Regt, RA	1917 Cranbrook area, Kent	03.03.47	Salehurst churchyard. Robertsbridge Memorial.
	<p>Farley was one of very last names to be recognised as a war death; after July 1947 they were not included in the official record. We do not know the circumstances of his death, which presumably was from wounds.</p> <p>Farley's father was Albert Harry L Farley (1877-1968), in 1911 a grocer's assistant in Heathfield, and his mother Ada Florence (Glyde, 1881-1954). He married Evelyn Nellie Jolley in the Battle area in 1940; she was almost certainly a near-relation of Norman Jolley, who was to die in France in 1940. She was born in the Ticehurst area in 1919 and died in the Battle area in 1972.</p> <p><i>Douglas George Farley</i></p>		

Bowyer, Kenneth

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Devonshire Regiment	Unknown	Unknown	Catsfield Memorial
No evidence has yet been found to support this man's inclusion on any memorial.			

Wren, Roy Victor

<i>Rank etc</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Buried/memorial</i>
Able Seaman, RN	Unknown	Unknown	Crowhurst Memorial

No evidence has been found from CWGC or naval records to provide any evidence for this man's inclusion. It has been claimed that he was lost from the wreck of HMS *Hood*. This has been officially denied, having reference to the ship's list. It is possible, though unlikely, that he joined up under another name. But the public records of England and Wales contain no reference to such a man. Those who compiled the Crowhurst memorial may have known better.

Inevitably some names have been suggested for which there is no present evidence of a local connection and they do not appear on local memorials:

David Ernest William Jempson (died 30 June 1943; buried at Tripoli War Cemetery, Libya).

George Alfred John Jempson (died 17 November 1940; buried at Winchester (Magdalen Hill) Cemetery, Hampshire).

John William Kenward (died 28 October 1942; buried at El Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt).

Harold Edwin Long (died 21 July 1944; buried at Hunsel Roman Catholic Cemetery, Netherlands).

Donald Richard Carey Smith (died 8 October 1944; buried at Pas de Calais Cemetery, France).

Sources

The sources for this study are many and various – so many, in fact, that to list them would take almost as much space as the study itself.

An investigation of this kind must begin with the memorials themselves, seen in person and amplified by the excellent Roll of Honour website. The CWGC war deaths file is invaluable, partly because it almost always lists for each man the unit with which he was serving at the time of his death. This takes us inevitably to the website ancestry.co.uk, where births, marriages and deaths can be examined, including probate records; it also contains some family histories and census data up to and including 1911. In addition, website searches for regiments, RAF squadrons and particular ships have provided much information. In some cases the internet has also given information on individuals. There are also some detailed local accounts: for Ninfield by Kevin Regan, Dallington by Roy Iremonger and Ewhurst by Hugh Willing.

The usual troubles with such searches are the rather minor errors of transcription in the public records, or very occasionally of omission altogether; and the frequently untrustworthy family researches that are contained in the relevant websites. However, there are worse difficulties. First, far fewer service records are available for the Second World War than for the first, despite major loss of records for the earlier war. For arguable reasons access to the records of those who died in the armed forces (at least of the UK and Canada) remains impossible unless a relative pays the required amount to have the information; even when the subjects died the data available are exiguous. Secondly, investigating First World War participants is much helped by the fact that three years before that war began there was a national census, but that 1911 record remains the latest open to the public. Not until 2021 will the next census returns be published. (The documentation for the 1931 census of England and Wales as accidentally destroyed in 1942, and there was no 1941 census.) Technically the 1939 register, compiled as the basis for rationing books, should contain useful data but many of the names listed above do not appear in it. This means that the records for any area are limited to the often scanty information on those who died. Last, people moved around much more during and between the wars, including to and from the rest of the Commonwealth.

What has not been attempted yet is to seek local family histories, and the note at the front of this study invites them.

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Egerton, Charles Ralph	1940	Europe 1939-40	6
Ellis, Frederick Charles	1940	Europe 1939-40	4
Ellis, George William	1942	Africa etc	15
Elton, Geoffrey William	1942	Europe 1941-45	25
Errey, Norman Wilfred	1942	Africa etc	17
Farley, Douglas George	1947	The others	44
Farrow, Harold William	1945	The war in the east	38
Ferguson, Douglas Charles	1943	Africa etc	19
Fletcher, Thomas Charles	1940	Europe 1939-40	5
Forward, Victor Frederick William	1943	Africa etc	19
Franklin, James Howard	1944	Italy	24
Fulford, Lionel	1945	The war in the east	37
Fuller, Thomas Frederick	1940	Europe 1939-40	4
Gamblen, Reginald Arthur Edward	1940	Europe 1939-40	8
Gander, William Clement	1941	The others	42
Goldsmith, Percy	1941	Africa etc	10
Goodsell, John	1942	Europe 1941-45	24
Goodsell, Thomas Albert	1942	Africa etc	17
Gregory, Robert Henley	1941	The war in the east	33
Hall, Ralph	1944	Italy	22
Hankey, Stephen Alers	1943	Europe 1941-45	27
Hartigan, John Wyndham	1940	Europe 1939-40	6
Harvey, Donald George Robert	1944	Europe 1941-45	31
Hayes, John	1945	Europe 1941-45	33
Hayler, William	1945	Europe 1941-45	32

Heasman, Leslie Ernest	1943	Africa etc	19
Hewson, Ian Dennis	1942	Africa etc	16
Hills, Ronald Stanley	1942	Africa etc	16
Hinde, Harold	1939	The north Atlantic	38
Hudson, William Foster	1944	The war in the east	36
Hughes, Evan Griffith	1941	Africa etc	12
Isted, Ernest Charles	1942	Europe 1941-45	26
James, Francis John	1942	Europe 1941-45	26
Jenner, Albert	1942	The war in the east	34
Jolley, Norman Thomas	1940	Europe 1939-40	4
Kennard, William Deryck	1942	Europe 1941-45	25
King, Frederick William Joseph	1940	Europe 1939-40	7
King, John Keith	1942	The others	43
Kinsman, Howard	1944	Italy	23
Leatherby, Frederick Ernest	1940	Europe 1939-40	7
Lemon, Robert Kershaw	1945	Europe 1941-45	32
Lewis, Alan William George	1943	The north Atlantic	40
Lyle, Peter Anthony	1942	Africa etc	15
Mainprice, William James	1945	The war in the east	36
Marden, Jim	1941	Africa etc	13
Masters, Charles Douglas	1943	Africa etc	18
Masters, Leonard William	1945	The war in the east	37
Muir, Kenneth William Angus	1944	Europe 1941-45	28
Munn, Stanley Walter	1943	Europe 1941-45	27
Newbery, Peter John	1944	The war in the east	35
Newton, Alfred Jeremy Grantham	1944	Italy	22
Newton-Clare, John Edward	1940	Europe 1939-40	9
Nicholson, John Leonard	1944	Europe 1941-45	32
Noakes, Charles David	1940	Europe 1939-40	5
Noble, John Padmore	1944	Europe 1941-45	30
Nock, Denys Humphrey	1942	The war in the east	34
Oliver, Leslie Herbert	1944	Italy	23
Pennells, Geoffrey Phillips	1944	Europe 1941-45	30
Petrides, Basil Oliver	1944	Europe 1941-45	28
Pocock, Edward Bertram	1942	Africa etc	14
Pocock, Ronald James	1944	Europe 1941-45	31
Pont, Charles James	1945	The war in the east	37
Quaife, George Thomas	1942	Africa etc	15
Rapley, Lionel Harry Searle	1944	Europe 1941-45	29
Read, Henry Edgar	1941	The others	42
Reed, William Lewis	1943	Europe 1941-45	27
Robins, Charles Valentine	1941	Africa etc	39
Robins, Cyril Jack	1944	Italy	22
Scotcher, Sidney	1943	Africa etc	18
Shambrook, Horace James	1942	The others	43
Sheather, Allan Cecil	1945	The war in the east	36
Simmons, Ronald Ernest	1944	Italy	24
Simpson, Frederick Edward	1940	Europe 1939-40	8
Sinden, Harry William Thorpe	1943	The others	43
Skinner, Walter	1941	Africa etc	12
Smith, James Percival	1942	The others	43
Soan, Humphrey Rupert Cruse	1944	The others	44
Spray, Albert Edward	1943	Italy	21
Stainton, Philip Edward	1944	The war in the east	34
Strachan, Alistair David	1943	Africa etc	19
Street, Jack	1940	The others	41
Swanson, Harold	1943	The war in the east	35
Taylor, Thomas John	1940	Europe 1939-40	5
Tew, Thomas Martin Percy	1940	Europe 1939-40	6
Turner, Ronald Arthur	1940	Europe 1939-40	5
Tutton, Michael William Leonard	1941	Africa etc	10
Underhill, Henry	1944	The war in the east	36
Walter, Richard Charles	1944	Europe 1941-45	31

Warrington, Clement Samuel Vincent	1944	The north Atlantic	41
White, Edward	1944	Europe 1941-45	31
Whiteman, Albert Percy	1940	Europe 1939-40	7
Whitmarsh, Edward Francis	1940	Europe 1939-40	7
Wilkinson, Douglas Shipton	1941	The north Atlantic	38
Willard, Roy	1944	The others	44
Williams, Allen Marcus	1942	Europe 1941-45	26
Wilson, Dorrien Guy Corbin	1944	Africa etc	20
Woodgate, Jack Victor Raymond	1943	Italy	21
Wren, Roy Victor		The others	44
Young, Robert Alexander Victor	1942	The war in the east	34

PARISH STATISTICS

By service

In some cases a name is associated with more than one parish and in allocating it a choice has had to be made. The total numbers may therefore differ from those on the relevant memorials. In these cases the individual listings above include both parish memorials.

Parish	Air forces	Army	Royal Marines	Navies	Total
Ashburnham/Penhurst	1	4		1	6
Battle (without Netherfield)	9	23	1	8	41
Bodiam	1	2			3
Brede	2	4		2	8
Brightling	1	3		1	5
Catsfield		4	1	1	6
Crowhurst	2	3		3	8
Dallington	1	2	1		4
Ewhurst	5	2		1	8
Mountfield		3			3
Netherfield		3			3
Ninfield	2	4			6
Robertsbridge/Salehurst	5	6		3	14
Sedlescombe	4	9		1	14
Westfield		1			1
Whatlington	2	1			3
Totals	35	74	3	21	133

By theatre of war

Parish	Europe 1939-40	Africa etc etc	Italy	Europe 1941-44	The east	N Atlantic	Others	Total
Ashburnham/Penhurst	1	3		1		1		6
Battle (without Netherfield)	7	10	6	7	5	2	4	41
Bodiam		1	1		1			3
Brede	2	3		2	1			8
Brightling	1		1	1	1		1	5
Catsfield		2	1	1	1			5
Crowhurst	1	4		1	1	1	1	9
Dallington	1	1	1		1			4
Ewhurst		3		3	1	1		8
Mountfield	2				1			3
Netherfield	1			2				3
Ninfield	2	1		3				6
Robertsbridge/Salehurst	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	14
Sedlescombe		1	1	4	3	1	4	14
Westfield			1					1
Whatlington		1	1			1		3
Totals	20	33	14	27	19	8	12	133

