



**L/Sergeant Frederick George Crunden**

**639611**

**9th Btn Royal Sussex Regiment**

**Killed in action in Burma**

**5th August 1944**

He was retrieving injured men from the battle -  
mentioned in dispatches.

Fred was a member of the Guild of the Blessed  
Sacrament - he was a convert to the Catholic Faith -  
he attended Mass at St Agnes.



**75 Firle Road, Eastbourne - where Fred Crunden had lived.**





**Taukkyan War Cemetery, Burma - where Fred Crunden is buried.**

# A Photographic record of Frederick George Crunden.

Fred in TA uniform with his wife, Winifred and daughter, also  
Winifred c.1930.



With his wife, daughter and son, Frederick Patrick George,



c.1938.

Fred worked as a milkman for the Co-op - c.1938.







**Back Row : Fred, Ron (died at sea), Mr Crunden Snr, Sid (died at Monte Cassino).**

**Front Row : Mrs Crunden, Ken (youngest son, died in 2012), Ruth (only daughter).**



To his Mum.

Lance Sergeant Fred Crunden, Royal Sussex Regiment.

Notice of his death in local paper.



Killed in Burma.

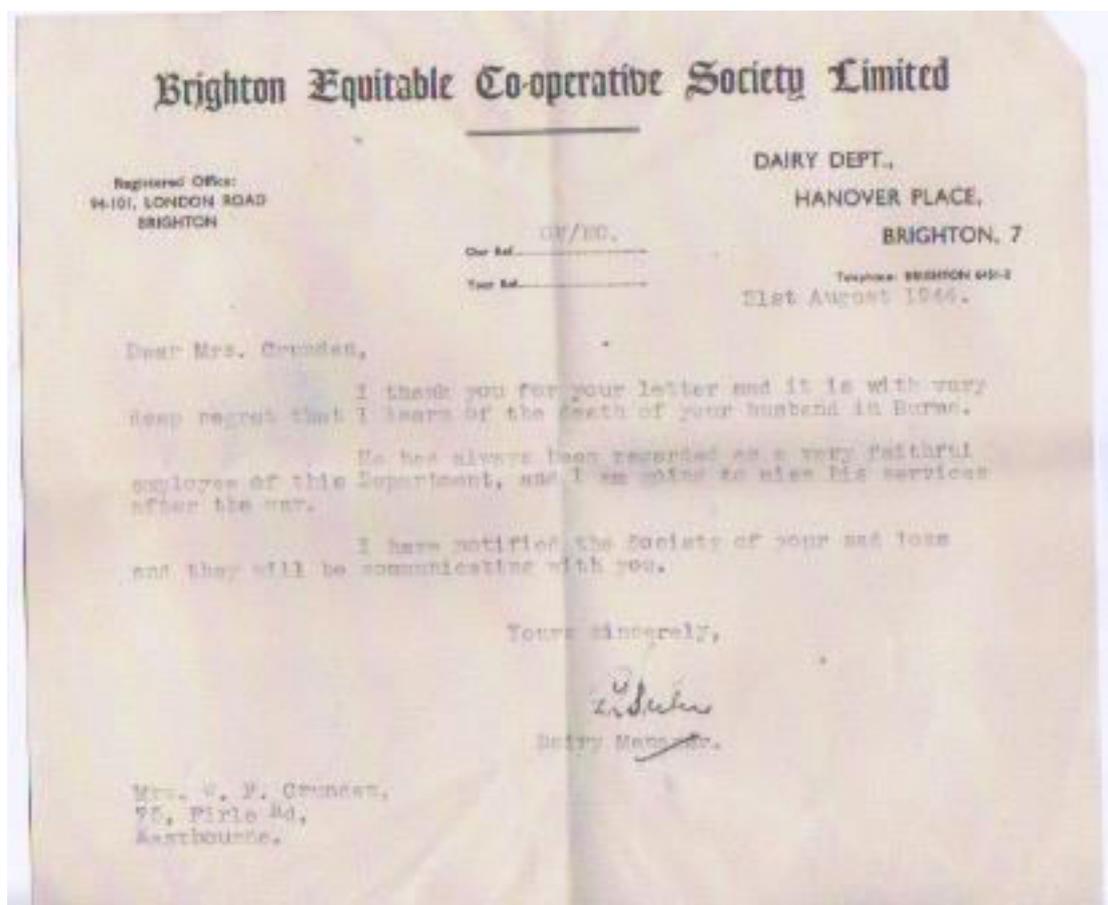
The sad news has been received by Mrs Crunden of 75 Firle Road, that her husband, L/Sgt Frederick George Crunden has been killed in action while fighting the Japanese, with the 14th Army in Burma.

He was 35 years of age and leaves a widow and three children. They reside at 75 Firle Road. Before her marriage Mrs Crunden was Miss Dillon-White of 6 Clarence Road where her mother still lives. The news of her husband's death was a great shock to her as she has only just come out of hospital.

Sympathy has also been expressed with his mother, Mrs O. Crunden of 7 Dudley Road who has now lost three of her four sons. Her second son, Private Sidney Thomas Crunden was killed in Italy in February last, and the third son, Able Seaman Ronald Crunden, lost his life at sea in December, 1940.

The youngest son, Rifleman Kenneth Crunden, is serving in the King's Royal Rifles.

L/Sgt Crunden was educated at All Soul's School, and for some years, was employed as a milkman by the Brighton Co-operative Society. He formerly served in the Territorials and volunteered for the Army in 1940. His father, Mr George Crunden, who died in January 1940, was employed at Bradford's Dairies for 40 years.



## **Letter of condolence from Brighton Co-operative Society.**

“Dear Mrs Crunden,

I thank you for your letter and it is with very deep regret that I learn of the death of your husband in Burma.

He has always been regarded as a very faithful employee of this Department, and I am going to miss his services after the war.

I have notified the Society of your sad loss and they will be in communication with you.

Yours sincerely

Dairy Manager”



**Louis Marie Divenes**

**A Soldier of France**

**Died of wounds June 1940 in Eastbourne**

**Aged 27.**

**Buried at Langney Cemetery.**

**Mentioned in Parish Notice Book 23rd June 1940.**



# **Captain Charles Dunman**

**No. 138363**

**Royal Artillery**

**Killed in action : probably 5th June 1943  
somewhere in the Middle East.**

Capt. Dunman was born in China but had lived in Eastbourne. Prayers were said for him at St Gregory's church when his death was reported on 27th June, 1943.



# Sergeant Leon Hampel

1918 - 1941

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, Polish Airforce.

No. 304 Squadron, flying Wellington Bomber IC R1443

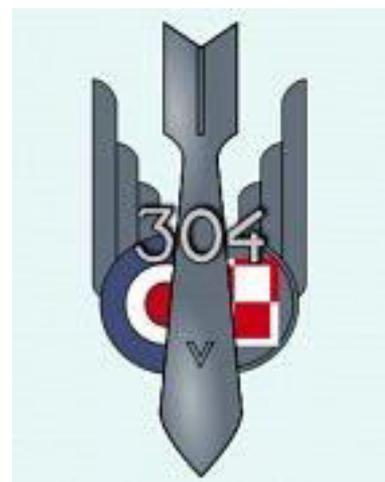
Operation : to attack German installations at Le Havre, France on 6th May, 1941.

Taking off at 22.01 hours from RAF Syerston, Nottinghamshire together with 16 other Wellingtons. Understood to have been hit by Anti-Aircraft fire from German ships off Texel, Holland, with the aircraft coming down in the North Sea. The bodies of three crew members, including Leon Hampel, were eventually washed up some time later in both England and Holland. The other three crew members were all missing, presumed killed.

Leon Hampel was born 1.2.1918 at Wieroszów, Poland He is buried at



Sgt. Leon Hampel



Langney Cemetery, Eastbourne.

304 Squadron Crest



## Langney Cemetery







# Carol Winifred Lawry

**ACW1/WAAF  
1903 - 40**

Killed by enemy action, 8th October 1940, Eastbourne.  
Buried in Ocklynge Cemetery.





## **Sgt Kenwyn Charles Lawry**

**1913 - 1941**

LAWRY, Sgt Kenwyn Charles, 959601, RAF (VR) 413 (RCAF) Sqn 22  
October 1941. Age 28. Commemorated in Ocklynge Cemetery.



## Carol & Ken Lawry

"LAWRY, Sgt Kenwyn Charles, 959601, RAF (VR) 413 (RCAF) Sqn 22 October 1941. Age 28. Son of Charles A Lawry, and of Agnes Lawry, of Richmond, Yorkshire; husband of Winifred Lawry (nee Carroll), killed by enemy action at Eastbourne, 1940."



Carol Winifred Lawry had enlisted in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force as early as 23 September 1939, just over two weeks after the declaration of war. Beginning as a Clerk and being promoted to ACW1 on 1 June 1940 she had found herself posted to RAF Kenley, Surrey, and on 18 August she was at the end of a ferocious Luftwaffe attack against that airfield. Ken, meanwhile, had joined up on 3 April 1940 to begin his training as an air observer and with postings to Initial Training Wings throughout the spring and summer of 1940 he was relatively safe whilst Carol was very much in the front line. The pair had married in Torquay on 18 July 1940 and at 37 Carol was ten years Ken's senior although, by all accounts, she was an exceptionally fit and youthful looking young woman. Family members recall how very much in love the pair clearly were, and it must have come as a relief to Ken to know that his wife was getting away for a few days leave from 8 October in their marital home town of Eastbourne where she was to spend some time with her mother-in-law. Here, he reasoned, she would

be away from the danger of being on an operational fighter station with the ever present threat of attack. With his recent posting to No 9 Bombing and Gunnery School, Penrhos, for the core part of his training with effect from 1 September 1940, Carol's leave period in Eastbourne was a weight off Ken's mind. Late in the afternoon of 8 October she stepped off the train at Eastbourne where her mother-in-law met her and they set off for home via the shops. As the two women walked through the town centre, Ken was preparing for what was only his fifth training flight since joining 9 BGS at far-away Penrhos. It was a local flight with Flt Lt Thomas in a civilian Fokker (G-AFXC) which had been impressed into military service.

Almost without warning, a German air attack scattered bombs randomly across the town centre at around 16.15 hours and with one heavy calibre bomb detonating in Lismore Road just outside Messers Bobby's Department Store as Carol and her mother indulged in a spot of window-shopping. As the bomb whistled down, Carol grabbed her mother-in-law and flung her to the ground throwing herself on top of her just as the bomb detonated. Sadly, Carol was struck by shrapnel and was seriously injured being taken at once to St Mary's Hospital where she died of her injuries the following morning. Mrs Lawry (sen) was shaken but unharmed, her life having been saved by the selfless actions of her daughter-in-law. By the time Ken landed back at Penrhos at around 18.30 hours that same day the telegram saying that his wife had been seriously injured was already on its way, although by the time he could get away from Penrhos airfield in North Wales for the long journey home Carol had died. He was now returning for his wife's funeral, and not coming back to be a comforting presence at her bedside as he had imagined. With the funeral in Eastbourne over, Ken was obliged to return to his unit and ongoing training and by 16 October he was back flying and trying to cope with his devastating loss as well as the crushing knowledge, gleaned post-mortem, that his Carol was also carrying their child.



## Carol & Ken Lawry



Although not of the same squadron, this is a scene typical of a Catalina crew returning from an operational flight as they come ashore for breakfast. Sadly, there was to be no return for the traditional bacon and egg breakfast for Ken Lawry and his crew-mates.

By 8 March 1941, now a sergeant, Ken had been posted for several weeks of training with an Operational Training Unit and then, fully fledged, he was assigned his first operation squadron on 21 May. This was 236 Squadron at Carew Cheriton, a Blenheim squadron,

with whom he flew a number of operational flights up until the end of June. Then, in mid-August, he was posted to 413 Sqn, RCAF, a Catalina flying boat squadron, operating first at Stranraer and then out of Sullom Voe. Here, he flew only local flying trips and on air-to-sea firing sorties. His first operational flight with 413 Squadron was on 22 October 1941. It was also his last.

According to squadron records a signal had been received by 413 Squadron to the effect that photographs of five specific points of interest in Norway were urgently required: Simavik Power Station, Skarfjord Power Station, Vagfjord Power Station, Skattora seaplane base and Tromso Harbour. The crew, it is understood, were all volunteers and in view of the special nature of the operation the squadron CO, Wg Cdr R G Briese, flew the sortie on Catalina AH566, QL-G, along with:

Fg/Off C C Proby (Pilot)	Plt/Off W J Hoover RCAF
Sgt L J Harris	Sgt W H Martin
AC2 W Benson	Sgt K C Lawry
AC1 T H Atkin	Sgt R E Austin
AC1 A H Agus	

Such long-range recce trips in Catalinas were, recalled Lawson Randall a former 413 Squadron pilot, not for the faint-hearted. The type, he believed, was entirely unsuited for this type of operation and, in his opinion, Wg Cdr Briese went along that night because he had grave reservations about the Catalina's suitability for the job. If his men were being expected to fly on such dangerous operations, then so should he.

After the aircraft had departed at 02.35 hours on 22 October nothing further was heard of it. Initially, however, this was not a matter of any concern since strict radio silence had been ordered and it was not until some hours had elapsed past its due return time that AH566 and her crew were declared overdue. At dusk the following evening, and throughout that night until dawn, a flare path was laid out on the water anticipating the return of Briese and his men. However, they were not coming home. Ken Lawry had flown his last operation, still deeply mourning Carol and his unborn child, caring little for his own survival but bent on carrying the war to the Germans if at all he could. The last entry of any significance in the diary he had left behind was poignant. On 9 October 1941 he had written "Carol's death anniversary".

By a quirk of fate the body of Wg Cdr Briese was the only member of the crew who was ever found, the Norwegian Red Cross



reporting that he had been recovered from the sea and buried at Trondheim (Stavne) Cemetery. The men he had been anxious to protect and shepherd, so far as he was able, had all been taken by the cruel sea although it is tempting to speculate that two of the eleven unknown airmen buried at Stavne close to Briese might be men from Catalina AH566. Sadly, there is no evidence that they are or even might be, and it would not be right to speculate given the lack of any information about them. However, it is impossible not to wonder.

from : "Finding the Fallen" by Andy Saunders.

### **Bobby's Store in Eastbourne - bombed on 8th October, 1940.**







## **Private Noel Simmons**

**No. 14552974**

**2nd Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's  
Light Infantry**

**Killed in action : 28th June 1944, in Italy,  
aged 19.**

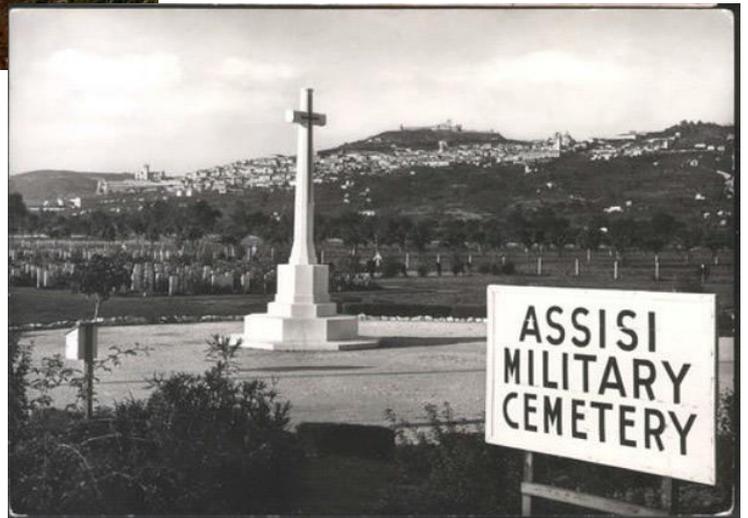
The Allies took Rome on 4th June, 1944 and continued northwards towards Florence, which they took in August. There were many casualties. It was during this campaign that Private Noel Simmons was killed.

Born in Eastbourne, resident in Worcester.  
Buried in the War Cemetery, Assisi in Umbria.

Buried from the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, Assisi.



Plot III.C.10



**Assisi**





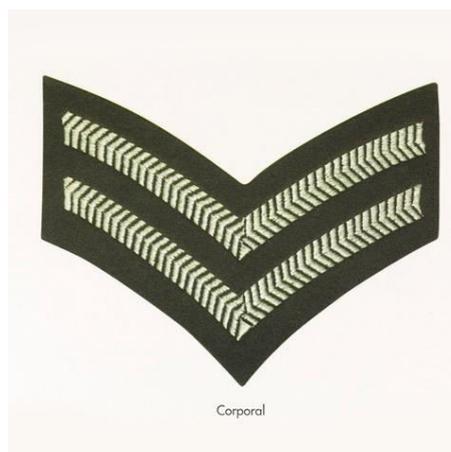
# Frederick Slater

**Staff Corporal 832672  
Royal Artillery**

Born : Eastbourne.

Died of wounds in Eastbourne - 4th October 1944

Fought in Western European Campaign (presumably  
in France/Low Countries).





The standard British army artillery piece was the twenty-five-pounder (weight of the projectile), with a specified range of 13,400 yards. Longer ranged than its American counterparts, the 3.45-inch weapon was generally regarded as the Allies' most effective antitank gun. The twenty-five-pounder was rated to penetrate 130 mm (5.2 inches) of armor at a thousand yards. Nominally a 1944 British infantry division had seventy-two twenty-five pounders deployed in three Royal artillery regiments.

Mentioned in Parish Notice Book 22/10/1944.



**Marcel Thomines**

**1912 - 1940**

**Died of wounds**

**A Soldier of France**

**Buried Langney Cemetery**

**Mentioned in Parish Notice Book 22nd December 1940.**



**Sgt Mackenzie John Urquhart**

**Canadian Black Watch (RHC)**

**1921 - 1944**



### **Mackenzie John Urquhart:**

Born in Montreal, Canada, on 23rd December 1921. Son of Robert E. and Camelia Urquhart. He volunteered for the Black Watch when able to in the 2nd World War. In 1942 he was stationed in Eastbourne, East Sussex, England where he met and soon married a local girl, Sybil Pamela Towner. They were married at Our Lady of Ransom RC Church, Eastbourne on 26th November 1942. He was killed on 10th September, 1944 in Belgium. Sybil gave birth to a son on 13th February, 1945.

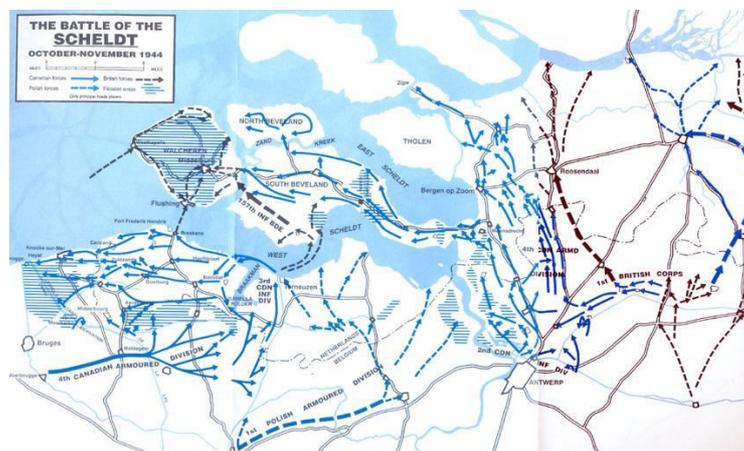
# The Liberation of Belgium and the Battle of the Scheldt

During the Second World War, Belgium was the scene of major fighting by the First Canadian Army from September to November 1944. The Canadians were given the important tasks of clearing coastal areas in the north of France and capturing the launching sites of German rockets to put an end to their attacks on southern England. The First Canadian Army also played a leading role in opening the Scheldt estuary (tidal river), gateway to the Belgian port of Antwerp. Access to this port was essential to maintain supply lines to the Allied armies as they continued their push toward Germany to defeat Adolf Hitler's forces.

## Remembering their Sacrifice

Those Canadians who fought in the Battle of the Scheldt achieved and sacrificed much in their efforts to help bring peace and freedom to the people of Europe. These combatants were among the more than one million men and women who served in Canada's Armed Forces during the Second World War.

More than 42,000 Canadians gave their lives in the war. Canada and the world recognize the sacrifices and achievements of all Canadians, like those who fought in the Battle of the Scheldt, who accomplished so much and left a lasting legacy of peace. Most of the Canadians who died in the Battle of the Scheldt are buried at two Commonwealth War Cemeteries in





the region. Adegem Canadian War Cemetery is in the northwest corner of Belgium, not far from the Dutch frontier. It contains the graves of 848 Canadians, most of whom lost their lives during the bitter struggle to clear the Breskens pocket on the south bank of the Scheldt.

Canadian troops at the River Scheldt, 1944.

Bergen-op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery is located in southwest Holland. It contains the graves of 968 Canadians, most of whom fell fighting to open the sea approaches to Antwerp and make that port available to Allied shipping.

In the last week of September 1944, the Allies held the city of Antwerp, but the Germans held both shores of the Scheldt estuary, so that the port of Antwerp could not be used. The task of clearing the southern shore of the estuary was allotted to the 3rd Canadian Division, aided by the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and the 52nd Division. Their operations lasted from October until the beginning of November 1944. By 3rd November the Germans had been cleared from the north-west corner of Belgium and the south shore of the Scheldt was free. There had been fierce fighting for two weeks for the crossing of the Leopold Canal. The majority of the men buried at Adegem died during the operations for the clearance of the south bank of the Scheldt; but many Canadians who lost their lives elsewhere in Belgium were also brought here for burial. There are 848 Canadians buried here.

## **Adegem Canadian War Cemetery**





## Adegem Canadian War Cemetery

### **Directions**

Adegem Canadian War Cemetery is located midway between Brugge (17 km) and Gent (26 km) on the N9 which connects the two towns. From Brugge, Adegem is approached via Sijsele and Maldegem. On reaching Adegem, the cemetery is located on the Prins Boudewijn Laan, on the right hand side of the N9.

Tpr Unger, Percy Frank Fort Garrys  
 Pte Ungerer, John Christian Nth NS Highrs  
 Pte Unrow, Edward Nelson PPCLI  
 P/O Unruh, Victor Allison RCAF  
 F/O Unser, Anton Nicholas RCAF  
 F/L Unterscher, Emil RCAF  
 F/L Unwin, Leonard Arthur RCAF  
 P/O Upper, Bedford Philip RCAF  
 WO2 Urshall, Lloyd Joyce RCAF  
 Rfn Urban, Ludvick Regina Rif  
 P/O Urban, Russell RCAF  
 Col Urbanski, Paul R Regt C  
 Pte Urbanski, William John Tr RC  
 F/S Urquhart, David RCAF  
 Sto PO Urquhart, Harold Frederick RCNVR  
 P/O Urquhart, James Arthur RCAF  
 F/O Urquhart, Kenneth Robertson RCAF  
 Pte Urquhart, Leonard PPCLI  
 L/Sgt Urquhart, McKenzie John RHC  
 Pte Uschiy, Walter Paul LEdmn R  
 Pte Uzelman, Leo Peter Westm R  
 Col Usick, Micheal SSask R  
 Pte Usick, Peter Calg Highrs  
 Lt Utman, George Drummond SD & G Highrs  
 Sgt Utter, Gordon Frank 1 H  
 F/O Uyen, William RCAF  
 P/O Uzelman, Peter RCAF

**V**achresse, Beverley Richard CB Highrs  
 Pte Vachon, Leo Gen List  
 Pte Vadboncoeur, Edmond Rde Mais  
 Pte Vadboncoeur, Henri R22 R  
 Pte Vader, James Daniel Edwin Calg Highrs  
 Gnr Vadheim, Joseph Henry RCA  
 F/O Vagg, Robert Arthur James RCAF  
 Pte Vail, Wendal Birfield Carls York R  
 Pte Vaillancourt, Joseph Albert  
 Alexandre Georges Fus MR  
 Col Vaillant, Bernard Rde Chaud  
 Ldg Sdwd Vair, James Alexander RCNR

Pte Vair, Walter Lawrence Carls York R  
 Col Vaisvila, Mamartas BCR  
 Pte Valade, Paul-Emile Fus MR  
 Pte Valcourt, Aime Rde Chaud  
 P/O Valde, Victor Lewis RCAF  
 Maj Valeriotte, Silvio Louis RCAMC  
 P/O Valiquette, Raymond James RCNVR  
 F/L Valk, John Chester RCAF  
 Spr Vallas, Frederick Earl RCE  
 Col Vallee, Robert R22 R  
 L/Cpl Vallette, Herman RWop Rif  
 Maj Vallieres, Gerard Rde Mais  
 Pte Vallieres, Gerard Fus MR  
 Sgt Vallint, John 14 H  
 LE Valois, Roger Rde Mais  
 Sgmn Van Acker, Edmond RCSigs  
 L/Cpl Van Acker, Fidelis NShore R  
 F/O Van Alstyne, Philip Nairn Thompson RCAF  
 P/O Van Blarcom, Eugene Clifford RCAF  
 Pte Van Buskirk, Douglas Lamert RHLI  
 F/L Vance, Alan Russell, DFC RCAF  
 F/O Vance, Gordon Elgin RCAF  
 P/O Vance, Warren William RCAF  
 Pte Vancott, Howard James RCIC  
 Sgt Vancoughnett, William Earl RCF  
 F/O Vandekinder, Marcel Edward RCAF  
 L/Sgt Van Den Broeke, Martin Cornelis CB Highrs  
 Pte Vandenbrooks, John Albert RHLI  
 F/O Vander Dasson, William Lorne DFM RCAF  
 F/S Vanderhart, Albert Major RCAF  
 P/O Vanderveen, Hugh Ledgerwood RCAF  
 Pte Vanderven, William Albert C Pro C  
 P/O Vandette, Roy Emmitt RCAF  
 Rfn Vande Veen, Jacob Regina Rif  
 Pte Vande Velde, Peter HLI of C  
 P/O Van Droogenbroeck, Francois RCAF  
 Pte Vandusen, George Frederick HLI of C

**From the official Book of Remembrance.**



## **PYERS ARTHUR WORRALL**

### **1920 - 42**

42291 PO Pilot British 85 and 249 Squadrons

Joined the RAF on a short service commission in April 1939. Worrall was posted to 85 Squadron at Martlesham Heath on July 21 1940.

He shared in the destruction of a Do 17 on August 26 and claimed a Bf 110 destroyed on the 31st. In this combat over Tunbridge Wells he was himself shot down, baled out, slightly wounded in the thigh, and was admitted to Croydon Hospital. His Hurricane, V 6581, crashed on Court Lane Farm, Newenden.



On September 13 Worrall was posted to 249 Squadron at North Weald. He claimed a Bf 109 destroyed on October 25 and another probably destroyed on November 8.

Worrall arrived in Malta in a Sunderland from the Middle East on January 20 1941 and joined 261 Squadron at Hal Far. He returned to the Middle East in May and in 1942 was in Burma with 136 Squadron, as a Flight Commander. Worrall was killed in a flying accident on June 8 1942, aged 21. He is buried in Bhowanipore Cemetery, Calcutta.

## **Pyers Arthur WORRALL**

Flt Lieutenant (Pilot) 42291, RAF. Pyers was the son of Colonel Percival Worrall CBE, DSO, MC and Agnes Worrall, Avon Dassett. Pyers fought in the Battle of Britain with 85 and 136 Squadrons, RAF.

P/O Pyers Arthur Worrall(1920-42). He Joined the RAF in April 1939,and completed his training at Cranwell.After converting to Hurricanes he was posted to 85 squadron at Martlesham in July 1940.He shared in the destruction of a Do17 on the 26th August and an Me110 on the 31st.He claimed a Me109 in October. He was posted to Malta in January 1941 flying Sunderland. During 1941, Pyers was a member of 136 Squadron, RAF ('The Woodpeckers') equipped with Hurricane 11Bs).

He was posted to Burma in 1942 as a flight commander with 136 squadron.

From March 1942, the squadron was in India where it was responsible for providing air defence for the Calcutta area. Pyers died 8/6/1942, age 21 Pyers is buried at Plot O, Row J, grave 21, Calcutta (Bhowanpore) Cemetery, Kolkata, India. His name is also



commemorated inside St. Joseph's R.C. Church, Avon Dassett.



Mentioned in Parish Notice Book at St Gregory's : 28/6/1942.

**1940**

**Alfred Kinsella, killed in action : mentioned in Parish Notice Book 21st July 1940.**

**1941**

**Frank Murphy, killed in action : mentioned in Parish Notice Book 15th June 1941.**

**1942**

**Frank Raynor, killed in action : mentioned in Parish Notice Book 8th November 1942. Worshipped at St Gregory's.**

**1943**

**Paul Kelly, died of wounds : mentioned in Parish Notice Book 5th September 1943. Worshipped at St Gregory's.**

**1944**

**John Arthur Thompson, killed in action : mentioned in Parish Notice Book 11th June 1944.**

**1945**

**Mark Aspinall, killed in action : mentioned in Parish Notice Book 13th May 1945.**

# Eastbourne at War.

*The story of civilian deaths - from the RC parishes of Our Lady of Ransom, St Gregory's and St Agnes - caused by bombing in the 2nd World War:1939 - 45.*

At first, in September 1939, Eastbourne was considered a safe place, so much so that children from London were evacuated here. With the Fall of France in May-June, 1940 all changed and Eastbourne - together with the South Coast of England - became the Front Line in the war against Nazi Germany.

## 1940.

Between October 1940 and June 1941 there were nearly fifty air raids on Eastbourne. The first came on 2nd October 1940. After an early morning attack there was a follow-up raid in the afternoon ranging from the Meads down to College Road. One of two men killed that afternoon was Thomas Gurr, a gardener in the Nativity Convent.

On Tuesday, 8th October 1940 there was extensive damage to a portion of Bobby's Department Store in Lismore Road. This was where Mrs Carol Lawry was fatally injured saving her mother-in-law by throwing herself onto Mrs Lawry Senior. Carol Lawry died of injuries the next day in hospital. She is included in the list of those who were "killed in action" because she was a member of the WAAF, was home on leave and it seems appropriate to mention her alongside her husband, Ken - also RAF - who died exactly a year later when his aircraft went missing over the Norwegian coast.



*Bobby's Department Store (later Debenham's) showing damage in Lismore Road : 8th October, 1940.*

## **1941.**

On Friday, 3rd March, 1941 a low-flying aircraft bombed the neighbourhood of Churchdale Road and Willoughby Crescent. Several houses were destroyed and there were three fatal casualties - including a very young parishioner, named Brian Fly, a pupil at St Joseph's. According to an eye witness Brian was travelling in a bus and was killed when struck by a piece of shrapnel which went through a window. Over twenty others were injured. John Smith also died at this time - possibly injured in the same raid - although his death is not recorded until three days later. Mr Smith is mentioned in the burial book for Our Lady of Ransom and was buried at Langney.

## **1942.**

For much of the rest of 1941 there was a lull in the bombing. The raids started again in May 1942. For the next two years the bombing was quite intense - with Eastbourne having the unenviable reputation of the most bombed town on the South Coast with more than 1,000 people killed or injured. Among those killed at this time were about a dozen parishioners.

The first parishioner to be killed at this time was Mrs Margaret Mary Richardson of Ocklynge Avenue who died in a big raid on the town on 4th May 1942 and was buried at Ocklynge Cemetery. The attack was made by nine enemy planes which swept in from the sea near Holywell, causing extensive damage from St John's, Meads all the way down to Commercial Road and the railway station. Mrs Richardson died along with three others - about thirty people were injured.

Just before Christmas, 1942 some eighteen Christmas shoppers were killed on Friday, 18th December, among them Miss Anna Bonner, recorded as one-time sacristan at Our Lady of Ransom. This heavy raid destroyed - among other buildings - Marks and Spencer's and other business premises in Terminus Road.

## 1943.

Hit and run raids continued during the first six months of 1943 and there were many casualties, over fifty of them fatal. On Sunday, 7th February, the Fire Station was one of many buildings hit in a massive raid. Four parishioners of Our Lady of Ransom were among the dead - including Frederick Duke, a member of the National Fire Service. He was aged thirty and was buried at Langney. In the same raid Lushington Road was hit. At number 20 the three Pringle sisters - Anne Elizabeth, Christina Jane and Emily Getrude were all killed. Their house had received a direct hit.

Four weeks later there was another Sunday attack - fifteen were killed, among them parishioners William and Elizabeth Payton and Cornelius de la Roche. The Paytons lived at 26a Meads Street. Their house was destroyed. Likewise, Mr de la Roche's home suffered the same fate in Jevington Gardens. All three were buried on the same day - 12th March - the Paytons at Ocklynge and Mr de la Roche at Langney.



*Meads also received the attention of enemy raiders.  
Houses in this picture were reduced to rubble on March 7, 1943.*

*Meads Village, 7th March, 1943.  
Tragedy struck again on 3rd  
April 1943 when Christopher  
Bonfiglioli and his mother*

Dorothy were both killed. Mr Brian Phipps, a witness from the time, takes up the story : "Christopher, aged 9, was a pupil at St Joseph's. Brian and Christopher were good friends and they had walked home together from school on the Friday afternoon of 2nd April. The next morning, Saturday, people were shopping when the sirens sounded. A number of people in South Street rushed for cover in a surface shelter in Spencer Road, just by St Saviour's church. Among them were Christopher and his mother, Dorothy. Brian Phipps' sister, Stella, was also nearby and also made for the shelter but decided on arrival that it was too crowded and left. Shortly after the shelter took a direct hit by a bomb and the shelter was destroyed - killing everyone inside. Over 30 people were killed in this one raid. Mr Phipps remembers that all the remains were buried in a communal grave at Langney - just behind the Jewish section.



*Near St Saviour's Church : 3rd April, 1943.*

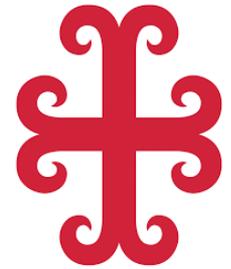
Ernest Mason, who lived in Susan's Road, was also among those killed in the shelter.

Another young parishioner, Brian McSwiney, died whilst away at boarding school at Downside in Somerset, when a training plane crashed into a cricket match, killing nine boys. The story of this tragedy is told elsewhere.

**1944.**

By 1944 the bombing seems to have stopped locally - although the threat of doodlebugs was still a problem. The parish Notice Book reports three more parishioners who were killed, but they are not mentioned in the civilian casualty lists. They were : Maurice Condon and Kathleen and Veronica Cane 'Pa. Perhaps they died elsewhere.

# Brian McSwiney



## 1929 - 43

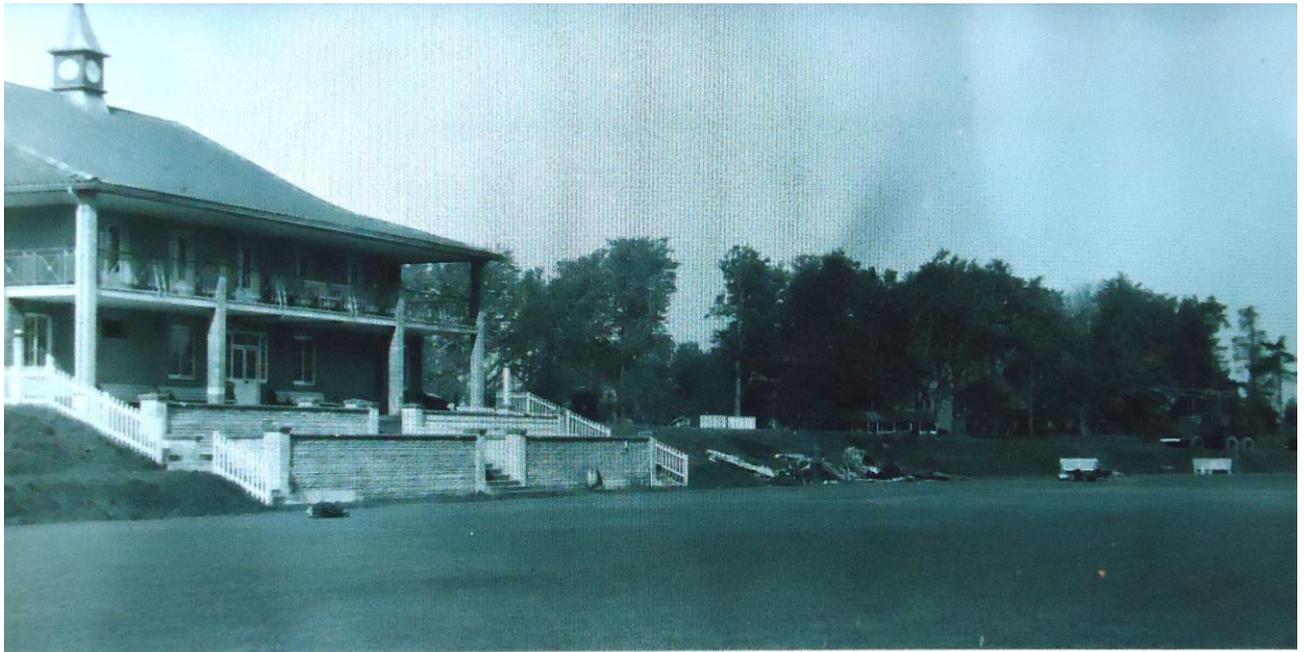
Died in an accident involving an RAF training aircraft, 15th May, 1943, at Downside School, Somerset.

Brian's family lived in Eastbourne. A processional cross was donated by the family in his memory.



The funeral procession at Downside for the pilot and nine boys killed in the accident.

In 1943, a World War Two Hawker Sea Hurricane on a training exercise came down on the cricket pitch, killing nine schoolboys. The pilot also died in the May crash, which saw his plane plough into a crowd of 150 boys watching a school cricket match. Eight children were killed instantly and a ninth died in hospital that night. The boys were David Lowndes, Laurence McNabb, Keith Stokes and Michael Quinlan, all 15; Philip Rose, Hugh Dearlove and Brian McSwiney, all 14; Grahame Letts, 13; and David Jennings, 10.



Site of the tragedy.

An account by Stephen Corsi - whose father was present at the tragedy :

My father was a witness to this crash and a friend of some of the boys who died and were injured, I have collated the records and stories below in an effort to encourage him to tell me what he remembers. He recalls :

“There was a crash involving a fighter aeroplane on a bank where most of Downside School was gathered to watch a cricket match on Saturday 15 May 1943. The pilot and 9 boys were killed and 14 boys were injured. I

was playing cricket on the upper field and at the time was fielding in a position facing the pavilion. My concentration was not entirely on the game and I was watching the antics of these two aeroplanes with some interest and even trepidation as they were flying lower than any I had seen before. As was always the case, the instructor was in front and the pupil was flying behind and some ten to twenty feet below his leader. The final pass was very low and over some very tall fir trees at the edge of the field. The first plane cleared these but the second one just touched the tallest tree, probably with its tail, so that its nose tipped downwards. At that height there was no chance for Sub-Lt McCracken, the pilot, to do anything and he ploughed straight into the crowd on the bank. There is a tree with a dead section at the top at approximately the point where the aircraft touched and it would not surprise me if this was the actual tree that was struck and that the dead section had resulted from a partial fracture of the trunk. Everything that happened after that moment is a blur and the only things that I can remember were that we were all given sandwiches the next morning and told to go out and not come back before teatime. I also remember seeing the shrouds laid out in the squash court and only half-believing that underneath these were the bodies of my friends, particularly David Lowndes whom I had already known for seven or eight years. My most vivid memory is of his brother Michael coming back from hospital with his terribly scarred face. On the Monday everything returned to normal and life continued exactly as before being only interrupted for the joint funeral of the dead pilot and boys. I ought to have been in one of the Junior House dormitories with all the other first year boys but had been moved up into the Smythe dormitory at the beginning of that term so I have no recollection of the empty beds on the Saturday night. This might also explain why I was playing cricket when most of my friends were sitting in the crash area. I hope that this helps to clarify the actual sequence of events and I would be very pleased to know whether there is any evidence to support (or disprove) my memory of that terrible event.”-

A group of Dutch pilots formed part of the funeral procession.



At the time pupils of the Downside Catholic Public School were playing a junior match, and at least eight died and a further nine were injured in the accident. -----

- The pilot is buried in the Downside Abbey Monastic Cemetery at Stratton-on-the-Fosse. -

Pilot: Sub-Lt (A) Alan Cairnhill McCRACKEN, RNZNVR - Age 22. -

Shepton Mallet Rural District Council entry in the Imperial War Graves Commission's Register of Civilian Deaths: -

Hugh Michael Dearlove -- Aged 14 -

David Michael Jennings -- Aged 10

David Hugh Lowndes -- Aged 17

David Lawrence McNabb - --- Aged 14 - Son of W/C L.V. McNabb

Brian Richard Patrick McSwiney -- Aged 14

Michael Bagot Quinlan -- Aged 15

Philip Humphrey Peter Rose ---- Aged 14

Keith Edward Charles Stokes -- Aged 15.

11 May 1944 – ---Queen Mary visited Downside to present the Cornwell Medal to Richard Kingsbury who at the time of the Air Crash a year earlier had insisted others should be attended before him

### **The verdict of the Coroner's Court:**

The jury at the resumed inquest yesterday on the bodies of the nine boys who were killed when an aeroplane crashed on the cricket ground of Downside School found that the death of Brian McSwiney (one of the boys) was caused by injuries received through the accidental crashing of the aeroplane.

The foreman said:—" In our opinion there no evidence to show -what caused the crash."

The Coroner said he would formally call them on another date to hear medical evidence regarding the other boys and to return a similar verdict.



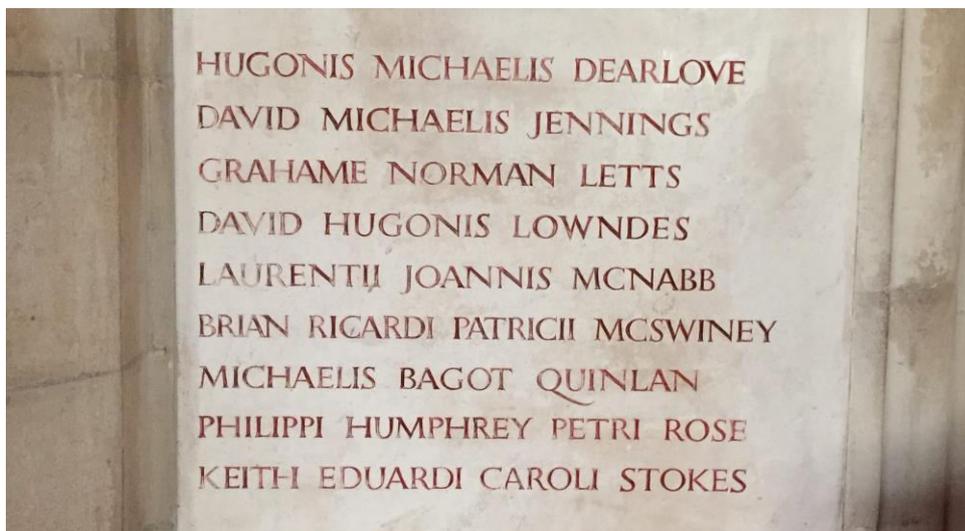
Queen Mary visiting on the first anniversary of the accident.

Queen Mary's visit on 11th May, 1944 - with staff and Richard Kingsbury

(in boy scout uniform), the pupil, who recieved a medal for bravery.



A drawing by a pupil present at the accident.



A memorial to the nine boys at Downside who died.



(By kind permission of Downside Abbey Trustees).

