

WAR MEMORIAL, ROADE,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.



This "Roll of Honour" is dedicated to those men of Roade,
Northamptonshire who whilst in the service of their King
and Country, died from whatsoever cause during the years
1914 – 1918 and 1939 – 1946.

In remembering them we give thanks for the sacrifice which they
made in order that we may have the freedom and liberty which
we enjoy today.

ROLL OF HONOUR.
THE GREAT WAR – 1914 TO 1918

Click the name for details

BADBY. S.	Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry#
CHAPLIN. H.	Royal Marines.#
CHAPLIN. T.	Northamptonshire Regiment.
CLEMENTS. F.C	Royal Warwickshire Regiment.#
COMBER. S.J.	Royal West Surrey Regiment.#
ELLIOTT. C.E.	Rifle Brigade.
HARBAGE. C.F.	Suffolk Regiment.
HUTTON. S.F.	Royal Fusiliers. #
LANE. R.	Royal Fusiliers.
MILLS. W.T.	Suffolk Regiment.#
RYAN. J.H.A. M.C.	King's Liverpool Regiment.
SHEPPARD. J.G.A.	Seaforth Highlanders.
SKEARS. J.	Northamptonshire Yeomanry.#
SMITH. P.T.A.	Royal Fusiliers.
STEWART T.W. M.M.	King's Liverpool Regiment.#
TATLER. T.W.	Cheshire Regiment.#
WESTLEY. G.	Royal Field Artillery. #
WHITLOCK. H.	Northamptonshire Regiment.

N.B. # denotes those names not listed on the Roade Memorial as at autumn 2008.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

WWII - 1939 - 1946

Click the name for details

<u>CURTIS. F.J.W.</u>	Royal Army Service Corps.
<u>DUNKLEY. F.W.</u>	Special Air Service.
<u>EVERY. J. M.M.</u>	Royal Armoured Corps.
<u>EVERY. T.V.</u>	King's Royal Rifle Corps.
<u>EVERY. W.</u>	Royal Armoured Corps.
<u>HARRIS. S.G.</u>	Merchant Navy. #
<u>KEDWARDS. W.H.</u>	Royal Army Service Corps.
<u>WALKER. C.J.</u>	Northamptonshire Regiment.
<u>WATTS. J.</u>	Royal Artillery.

N.B. # denotes that his name is not on the Roade Memorial as at autumn 2008.

PREFACE

This year, 2008, is the 90th Anniversary of the ending of the Great War of 1914 – 1918 and the 70th Anniversary of 1938 when Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party were continuing to flex their political and military muscle against the Allied Powers and those weaker continental countries against whom they were to launch their 'Blitzkrieg' (Lightning War) in the autumn of 1939 thus enveloping the greater part of the developed world in another world war.

It is an honour and a privilege to compile this "Roll of Honour", listing as it does, the men from the village of Roade, in Northamptonshire and its surrounds who died in the service of their country – thus ensuring for all time that who they were and what they did are not and will not be forgotten.

Not all personal military records are available. Over 60% of World War One personnel records were totally destroyed during the Blitz on London in World War Two. If one adds up the total number of those killed in the Great War and who have known graves, together with the number of headstones of those 'Unknown Soldiers' and then add to that the total number on memorials abroad of those listed as 'missing', then ideally the total reached should be approximate to the sum of all those who went to that war and never returned – not so – there are still some 50,000 unaccounted for. At an early stage of this compilation, it was discovered that there were men, born and bred in Roade but whose families seemingly, had later moved away and whose names were not among those listed on the village war memorial as having fallen in the Great War. Details of these men are included in this document and it is hoped that at some future date their names may be added to the list of their colleagues on the memorial.

It may be that there are others of whom we have no knowledge at this time – If that be so then apologies are offered for the inadvertent omissions.

It is fitting too, that we also remember those who went to war, did their duty and came home again. Not all of these were uninjured or unaffected by their lives on active service. Nor must we forget the families of those who went away – they had to suffer the waiting and the anxiety and the 'not knowing' of what was happening to their loved ones. The 'Chaplins' of Roade for example – in the Great War five lads of that name went off to fight; two were lost and are named in this 'Roll of Honour'; two fought in all the major battles and came home and the fifth served on special duties within the United Kingdom.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

This work would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of many people – not only those from in and around the village of Roade. To those who provided invaluable information go our grateful thanks and it is felt that the efforts of the following really must be especially acknowledged:-

Linda Groom of Wollaston (nee Johnson of Roade) who, having assisted in similar projects elsewhere first mooted this one and who did so much work via the Census' Records of bygone years. Bill Hudson together with others from the Roade Local History Society – particularly Elizabeth Dyke, Vivian Blyth and Alex Wood – all of whom spent hours in research work and in local interviews, meetings and conferences.

Those who divulged matters close to their families' histories and others who loaned treasured and irreplaceable photographs. Obviously due to the passage of years personal photographs of many of the fallen are sadly, not available. Attempts have been made to enhance photographs of some of the soldiers from First World War records courtesy of the Northamptonshire Library Services and their help is very much appreciated.

Mr Peter Clarke of Wollaston warrants an extra-special mention for all his work in providing many hours of technical and practical assistance with the computer systems and ancillary matters.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission – for their superb record keeping and most helpful and friendly staff and for their work in keeping the overseas memorials and cemeteries in such superb condition.

We salute the various regimental museums for their help and assistance.

Finally – a word to those who may read this work in the years to come. Having learned what these soldiers and other troops did and having perhaps travelled to see where they fought and fell and having visited their graves and memorials or visited the fields where those missing still lie – you may say as we do:-

“WE DO REMEMBER THEM”.

Gordon Hall. (Author).

Wollaston. 2008.



HE whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom.

Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.

Sergeant 6011 Samuel **BADBY**.



Sadly, due to the on-going international situation, photographs of the Memorial at Basra are not available - the picture above shows a two-volume 'Roll of Honour' listing all casualties buried and commemorated in Iraq, on display at the Headquarters of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at Maidenhead, England. Once the political climate has improved, the Commission will commence a major rehabilitation project for its cemeteries and commemorations in Iraq.

Until 1997 the Basra Memorial was located on the main quay of the naval dockyard at Maqil on the west bank of the Shatt-al-Arab, about 8 kilometres north of Basra. Because of the sensitivity of the site the Memorial was moved by presidential decree and re-erected 32 kilometres along the road to Nasiriyah, in the middle of what was a major battleground during the first Gulf War. It commemorates 40,656 members of the Commonwealth forces who died in the operations in Mesopotamia from the Autumn of 1914 to the end of August, 1921 and whose graves are not known.

Sergeant 6011 Samuel **BADBY**.

1st Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

Killed in Action 22nd November, 1915 aged 38 years.

Commemorated on the Basra Memorial To The Missing, Iraq
(Panels 26 and 63).

The son of Alfred and Eliza A. Badby he was born in Roade and enlisted at
Banbury.

At the start of The Great War – 4th August, 1914, his battalion as part of the 17th Brigade, 6th (Poona) Division were at Ahmednagar but by the 27th of November they had arrived in what was then known as Mesopotamia.

September, 1915 saw them advancing along the river Tigris and attacking and taking the town of Kut but with heavy losses with Indian troops seemingly not keen on attacking the Turkish front lines. Hardships abounded for our troops and thirst so intense that men were incapacitated. The war dragged on and on November, 21st, our General Townshend, as part of a planned campaign against the Turks, attacked the Turkish defences of Ctesiphon as a prelude to what was intended to be a rapid march on Baghdad, a mere twenty-two miles away. He found that the earlier good fortune of Basra, Kurna, Amara and Kut was over. Of the 8,500 British and Indian troops who went into battle at Ctesiphon more than half were killed and wounded. Despite almost twice that number of casualties, the Turkish defenders, far from panicking and fleeing as they had in earlier battles, not only stood their ground but counter-attacked. The British – four hundred miles from the sea, could expect no reinforcements of any sort; the Turks could, and did call on their resources at Baghdad, only a few hours' march away. Having come so far, the British were forced to retreat the humiliating journey back to Kut (beginning on the 25th November). The survivors of the battle were exhausted and demoralised, the lack of facilities for the wounded made every mile of retreat a torment. The treatment by the Turks of our troops taken prisoner was appalling.

The tragedy of our besieged troops at Kut is in itself another story.

Sadly, Sam Badby was killed during the fighting at Ctesiphon.

May he and his colleagues rest in peace. They are not forgotten.

Private CH/12437 Herbert **CHAPLIN**.



Cayeux Military Cemetery, France..

Private CH/12437 Herbert **CHAPLIN**.

1st Royal Marine Battalion, 63rd (Royal Naval) Division.

Killed in Action 13th November, 1916 aged 32 years.

Buried in Cayeux Military Cemetery, Somme, France.
(Plot III. Row C. Grave Number 1).

Son of Thomas and Emma Chaplin of Cherry Row, Roade and the husband of
Ada Chaplin of Myrtle Cottage, Wootton, Northampton.

He enlisted in London in June, 1901, was discharged on 7th of December, 1906
and rejoined the next day, so obviously he was a professional soldier.

His division, despite its title only used ships for transport and throughout the war
its members always fought as infantry whilst still retaining naval ranks,
terminology and customs.

Starting off their fighting in 1914 saw them in the Defence of Antwerp (3rd-9th
October) and later at Gallipoli before moving to major conflicts on the
battlefields of France and Belgium.

The 13th November, 1916 found them on the banks of the River Ancre, near
Albert in the Somme region – their task that day was to attack and hold the
village of Beaucourt as part of a big attack across the extended battlefield and
was the last ‘big-push’ of the year before the terrible winter weather set in.

As soon as they left their starting positions they ran into major problems and all
four company commanders were killed as they moved out. Records show that
only a few small parties fought their way through to the enemy third line of
defences.

The War Diary notes that “they advanced 490 strong – returned 138 –
casualties 352”.

Herbert was one of those killed. May he and those with him, rest in peace.

Private 9899 John Thomas **CHAPLIN**.



Coxyde Military Cemetery (near Dunkirk).

Private 9899 John Thomas **CHAPLIN**.

2ND Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.
(attached to the 256th Company, Royal Engineers).

Killed in Action 12th August, 1917 aged 18 years.

Buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery (near Dunkirk).
(Plot II. Row F. Grave number 29).

Son of Thomas and Emma Chaplin of Cherry Row, Roade, he was employed as a bricklayer's labourer prior to enlisting at Northampton.

It will be seen that John Chaplin had been seconded from his 2nd Northamptonshire battalion and attached to the 256th Company, Royal Engineers – this was a tunnelling company and part of the 4th Army, 15 Corps.

Between the 15th July, 1917 and the 16th November that same year they were stationed between Nieuport and Bains (near Oostdunkirk) on the Belgian coast near the French Border.

With their Headquarters at Oostdunkirk the 256th were employed in the area known as 'The Dunes', sinking wells; dug-outs; observation posts for the Heavy Artillery Groups and positions for the artillery and trench-mortar companies as well as dug-outs for the Divisional Headquarters. All this was well within range of the enemy who were quite aware of what the British troops were doing.

There had been severe fighting there on The Dunes on 10th July, 1917 when the 1st Battalion of the Northamptonshires were badly mauled on the Iser Canal at a point just before it meets the sea.

The official records held at the National Record Office at Kew show a brief entry for the 12th August, 1917 – the day when John was killed. It simply reads – "Private 9899 Chaplin killed in action by shell-fire".

He is buried not far from where he fell. May he rest in peace.

NB. Army records show that he was born "about 1896" and as census records agree, then the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records should show his age as about 21 years and not as shown above.

Corporal 307487 Frederick Charles **CLEMENTS**.



Berlin (Brandenburg) South-Western Cemetery, Germany.

Corporal 307487 Frederick Charles **CLEMENTS**.

2/7TH Battalion. Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Died 10th January, 1918. aged 20 years.

Buried in Berlin (Brandenburg) South-Western Cemetery.
(Plot X. Row C. Grave Number 3).

Son of Charles E and Mrs M. Clements of Pear Tree Cottage, Roade. he was born in Roade and enlisted at Rugby.

At this time the circumstances of his death are unknown but it is obvious that he died whilst in captivity as a Prisoner of War. Neither is it known when he was taken prisoner.

His battalion as part of the 182nd Brigade, 61st (2nd/South Midland) Division went to France in May 1916 and by the 25th of that month were fully esconced there.

They fought in the following major battles in the Great War (up to the time of his death):

1916;

19th July – Attack on Fromelles.

1917;

11th-15th January. Attack on the River Ancre (Somme).

14th March – 5th April. German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line.

18th August. Battle of Langemarck (Ypres in Belgium).

As a prisoner of war he could have died as a result of wounds previously received in battle or of malnutrition or of illness or disease – it will be recalled that in late 1917 they was an epidemic of “Spanish ‘Flu” which swept through the European countries and caused the deaths of over 40 million people by the time its course was run.

For details of the cemetery where he is buried please see Appendix “A” of this document.

NB. There is some doubt about the exact date of his death (above) as other official records show it as 24th October, 1918.

Private T/205419 Sidney John **COMBER.**



Towcester Road Cemetery, Northampton



Private T/205419 Sidney John **COMBER**.

3/4th Battalion Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

Died of Wounds 23rd February, 1918 aged 19 years.

Buried in Towcester Road Cemetery, Northampton. Ref.No. 447.3.17372.

Son of Mr A.T. and Mrs. S.A. Comber of 9 Victoria Promenade, Northampton, he had attended school at Roade. He was born at Courteenhall, enlisted at Northampton and was living there at that time.

Records in the Roade Parish Council Minute Book and Trade Directories note that the family were living at Manor Farm, Roade in 1914 (having moved there some years earlier) and that Sidney had died of wounds. Official records show him as having died in the United Kingdom on the date shown above.

It is not known when or where he received the wounds which necessitated his return to the United Kingdom but it seems reasonable to suppose that it was during one of the following two campaigns.

His battalion landed in France, disembarking at Le Havre on 1st June, 1917, joining the South African Brigade, 9th Division on 6th June, 1917 before transferring to the 12th Division on 23rd July, 1917 and finally to the 62nd Brigade, 21st Brigade on 9th August, 1917 – almost certainly at that time in the Ypres area of Belgium - and becoming involved in the '3rd Battle of Ypres' now more commonly known as 'The Battles of Passchendaele'. At 6.a.m. on 4th October, 1917 his battalion attacked, advancing across the Polygonbeek (stream) and its adjacent marsh. The German trench named 'Juniper' was carried along with a blockhouse before continuing to 'Judge Trench' and consolidating their position.

Their next battle was between the 2nd and 3rd December, 1917 when they were involved in attempting to stop the fierce German counter-attack near Cambrai which followed-on from our successful advance there in the days following the 20th November.

During the 1st December, 1917 the 2nd Lancers, a squadron of the 6th (inniskilling) Dragoons and a section of the 11th Machine-Gun Squadron left the village of Epehy from the east and galloped down Catelet Valley. Later, after heavy fighting, the 21st Division relieved them and occupied most of the positions won earlier in the day. The cost to the cavalry mentioned was grim. The line then quietened down for the time being.

It could have been here where Sidney was badly wounded.

Rifleman S/333936 Charles Edward **ELLIOTT**.



Nine Elms Military Cemetery (near Poperinghe, Belgium).

Rifleman S/333936 Charles Edward **ELLIOTT**.

2ND Battalion, Rifle Brigade.

Died of Wounds 7th March, 1918 aged 26 years.

Buried in Nine Elms Military Cemetery (near Poperinghe in Belgium)
(Plot X. Row B. Grave number 1).

An ex-railway worker and the son of Mrs and Mrs. W. T. Elliott of The Leys, Roade. He was born at Weedon, enlisted at St. Pancras and at that time was residing at Hampstead, Middlesex.

By the end of 1917 the Germans knew that they could not win the war but were determined to make one last do-or-die attempt to force us into either an armistice or a surrender before the Americans (who had declared war on them in April, 1917) were able to come across in sufficient numbers to be of any great use.

To that end they launched a series of massive attacks from the 21st of March, 1918 onwards – “Der Kaiserschlacht” – “The Imperial Battle”. It so nearly succeeded.

It was launched on that date on the old Somme Battlefields of France of 1916 and Field Marshall Douglas Haig always feared that a similar attack would be made in and around the town of Ypres in Belgium. It was – in April, 1918 when the enemy struck in an attempt to take that town which they had been after since September, 1914 – together with the surrounding area. We were busy preparing for that expected attack and Charles Elliott and his colleagues in the 2nd Battalion Rifle Corps as part of the 25th Infantry Brigade in the 8th Division were holding the line on the Passchendaele Front.

Between the 9th of February when the division returned to the front lines after a short period of rest and recuperation, and the date of his death due to wounds (7th March, 1918) there is no mention of anything other than what is described as ‘ordinary trench routine’. This routine would of course include being shelled by the enemy by artillery and machine-gun and rifle fire etc and also the normal patrols out into No-Man’s-Land etc. Snipers too would have played their part in Allied casualties.

Charles was obviously taken, wounded, back out of the fighting zone to one of the many military hospitals where, sadly, he succumbed to his injuries.

May he and his comrades, rest in peace.

Private 25196 George Frederick **HARBAGE**.



Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, Somme, France.

Private 25196 George Frederick **HARBAGE**.

2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment.

Killed in Action 13th November, 1916 aged 23 years.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, near Albert, France. (Piers and Faces 1C and 2A).

Son of Mrs Alice Harbage of The Leys, Roade, he was born in Roade and enlisted at Northampton.

It will be noted that there is a discrepancy between his name as shown above and the one on the Roade Memorial where it is given as C.F. Harbidge.

The Thiepval Memorial To The Missing is the largest memorial of its type in the world, engraved with almost 74,000 names of those who fought and fell and who have no known graves. The Battles of The Somme commenced on 1st July, 1916 and petered out on 24th November of that year. The total casualties to the Allies were some 600,000 killed, wounded and missing and to the Germans some 620,000.

On Monday, 13th November, 1916 the Allies launched their last big attack of the year before the winter weather settled in. His battalion as part of the 76th Brigade, 3rd Division attacked the well-defended village of Serre. The Germans were well dug-in and in strength. Large parts of the ground which the Suffolks and their brother battalions had to cover were waist-deep in mud and as they advanced through mist which thickened as the smoke of the artillery barrage increased, the direction of the attack was extremely difficult to maintain. Rifles became caked with mud, the German barbed-wire defences were awesome and as a result the British attack turned into a shambles. Various plans were made – also to attempt to collect the wounded and exhausted men throughout the area but none came to fruition.

At 4.30.p.m. the attack was called off and all operations cancelled.

His battalion incurred 272 casualties of which, sadly, he was one.

He was one of those who were never recovered and he still lies there in those now tranquil fields.

May he and his comrades rest in peace and know they are still remembered in Roade.

Private PS/10224 Sydney Frederick **HUTTON**.



Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, Somme, France.

Private PS/10224 Sydney Frederick **HUTTON**.

8th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.

Killed in Action, 7th October, 1916 aged 31 years.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, near Albert, France (Piers and Faces 8C, 9A and 16A).

The son of Rev. F. (Vicar at Roade from 1884-1887) and Mrs M. Hutton he was born in Roade, enlisted at Manchester and at that time was residing at Swinton, Manchester.

The Thiepval Memorial To The Missing is the largest memorial of its kind in the world, engraved with almost 74,000 of those who fought and fell during the Battles of The Somme in 1916 and who have no known graves.

Those battles commenced on Saturday, 1st July, 1916 and petered-out on the 24th November that year. The total losses to the Allies were some 600,000 killed, wounded and missing and to the Germans, some 620,000. Sydney Hutton and his colleagues as part of the 36th Brigade, 12th (Eastern) Division were an integral part of those momentous times.

They had arrived on the Somme in time to take part in the first day's attack and from then on until the 23rd October they were involved in many days' fighting – interspersed with periods out of the line for rest, recuperation, training and to be reinforced with equipment and men – these to replace the truly awful losses already incurred.

They returned after one of these periods of rest etc – when they took over trenches west of the village of Gueudecourt and near the village of Flers on the 2nd October, 1916.

On the 7th – the date of his death – the battalion incurred heavy losses during an attack on the enemy in Bayonet Trench and although they were pulled out of the line on the 9th, that was too late for Sydney.

The records show that zero hour was at 1.45.p.m. Saturday, 7th October, a fine day but a bit windy, but just before that time the Germans put down a machine-gun barrage on the British front-line trench held by his division, thus hampering the attack. Although his battalion together with the 9th Royal Fusiliers and the 6th Buffs entered their objectives – Rainbow and Bayonet Trenches, they were forced out.

Sydney was one of those never found and must still lie out there in those now tranquil and peaceful fields. May he rest in peace.

Private 667247 Riley **LANE**.



Tynes Cot Memorial To The Missing, near Ypres, Belgium.



Private 67247 Riley **LANE**.

Royal Fusiliers – posted to the 2nd/2nd Battalion, London Regiment
(formerly 18323 of the 29th T.R. Battalion)(Training Reserve).

Killed in Action 26th October, 1917 aged 19 years.

Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial To The Missing near Ypres in
Belgium. (Panels 28-30; 162 and 163A).

Son of Mr. R.W. Lane and Ellen Lane of Hyde Cottages, Roade, he was born
in Roade and enlisted at Northampton.

Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery and Memorial To
The Missing is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the world.
It contains almost 12,000 headstones of soldiers with graves and the rear wall
is engraved with the names of some 35,000 of those who have no known grave.

The 3rd Battle of Ypres – now known as ‘The Battles of Passchendaele’
commenced on Tuesday 31st July, 1917 and came to an end on the 10th
November that year. Our total casualties, killed, wounded and missing were in
excess of 300,000.

Riley Lane and his colleagues were among those casualties.

On Friday, 26th October, 1917 – an overcast day with a temperature of 48
degrees F. and with a rainfall of 7.8mm, his battalion as part of the 173rd Brigade,
58th Division were due to launch an attack on the enemy west of the village of
Poelcapelle.

They attacked at 5.40.a.m. – zero hour. His battalion got off to a good start and
captured three German blockhouses at a place named Cameron House. The
2/3rd battalion advanced to Spider Crossroads where totally exhausted and
under heavy machine-gun fire they came to a halt.

Between 7.a.m. and 10.a.m. the Germans counter-attacked on the left flank
and on Cameron House, forcing home their attack, cutting off the advance
posts and rolling-up the northern gains.

The 58th Division were driven back to their original line.

During these hours Riley was killed.

He was never found and so must still lie there in those now tranquil fields with
so many of his comrades. May they rest in peace.

Private 4040 William Thomas **MILLS**.



Ashton-St-Michael Churchyard, Northamptonshire.

Private 4040 William Thomas **MILLS**.

3/5th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment.

Died in the United Kingdom 28th June, 1916 aged 30 years.

Buried in Ashton-St-Michael Churchyard, Northamptonshire.
(To the east of the church).

Son of William and Sarah Mills of Roade, he was born there and enlisted at Northampton. A coal-merchant by profession.

His death certificate shows that he died of Scarlet Fever and Toxaemia (now called blood-poisoning) in the Isolation Hospital at Tring and later brought back to Ashton to be buried near his home.

The 3/4th and 3/5th Battalions were formed at Ipswich and Bury-St-Edmunds in April, 1915 before moving in August to Windsor Great Park. In October 1915 they were at Tring where they became the 4th and 5th Reserve Battalions in the United Kingdom, remaining there until the autumn of 1917 when they moved to Crowborough. They provided training facilities and troops for the front line battalions in the fighting areas overseas and as such never went abroad.

It is obvious that it was whilst he was stationed at Tring that he contracted the medical problems which caused his death.

As he died whilst in the service of his King and Country he would have been entitled to a Commonwealth War Grave Commission military headstone. As his grave is not so marked then it is presumed that his family must have declined that entitlement and preferred him to have a civilian non-military headstone.

Lieutenant/Temporary Captain James Henry Aloysius **RYAN**. **M.C.**



Cambrin Military Cemetery, France.



Lieutenant/Temporary Captain James Henry Aloysius **RYAN. M.C.**

1st Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment.

Killed in Action 25th September, 1915 aged 22 years.

Buried in Cambrin Military Cemetery, France. Row D. Grave No. 16.

Son of the Roade doctor – W. H. Ryan and Alice Mary Ryan. Tilecote, Roade. He played cricket for Northampton.

The Battle of Loos in France commenced during the early hours of the 25th of September, 1915 and lasted – in the main part – for just over three weeks. During that time our casualties amounted to some 60,000 of which about half were killed.

James Ryan's battalion as part of the 6th Brigade, 2nd Division took part in the first day's events – the British Army's intention being to capture the German positions from the village of Loos down to the La Basse canal. The two main objectives overall being to take the town of Lens and to deny the Germans their access to the coal mines on this part of the Douai coalfield.

His division which was on the extreme left of the attack, immediately south of the above mentioned canal, had the most dispiriting task of all for it had losses without compensating successes.

This day was the first time when the British Army used gas – some 150 tons of it, discharged from 5,500 gas cylinders. On the right sector it drifted slowly over the enemy lines where it proved moderately effective but on the left (2nd Division) it drifted back into our own lines. Many of the men in that division were themselves gassed and those who were not were caught in the open by German machine-gunners who were waiting for them.

The main assault had begun at 6.30.a.m. but was unable to make very much progress. Reinforcements were too far behind and by the time they finally did arrive at about 11.a.m. the next day it was far too late.

The attack was launched over ground made rugged by mining and counter-mining in the previous months and the enemy had a number of well-sited machine-guns and behind these, belts of uncut barbed-wire and by the end of the day all ground captured had to be given up as it was too exposed to hold.

James Ryan was killed that day and lies buried with many of his comrades in Cambrin Military Cemetery – a short distance from where he fell. May he and they rest in peace.

Lance Corporal S/13308 John George Allan **SHEPPARD**.



Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, Somme, France.



Lance Corporal S/13308 John George Allan **SHEPPARD**.

7TH Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.

Killed in Action, 12th October, 1916 aged 38 years.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, near Albert, France. (Pier and Face 15C).

The husband of Minnie Sheppard, he was born in Elgin, Morayshire, Scotland and enlisted at Bletchley, Buckinghamshire. He worked at Wolverton Carriage-Works prior to enlistment.

It should be noted that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission incorrectly recorded his name as Shepherd.

The Thiepval Memorial To The Missing is the largest memorial of its type in the world, engraved with almost 74,000 names of those who fought and fell and who have no known graves.

The Battles of The Somme in 1916 commenced on 1st July and petered-out on 24th November that year. The total casualties to the Allies were some 600,000 and to the Germans some 620,000.

As part of the 26th Brigade, 9th (Scottish) Division, his battalion was an integral part of those battles, moving in and out of the battle areas as determined by events.

They moved back into the fighting zone on the 10th October, going into the forward trenches north-east of the hamlet of Eaucourt l'Abbaye. During an attack on the enemy in Snag Trench on the 12th, they suffered heavily from machine-gun fire upon entering No-Man's-Land. The British artillery barrage falling short also caused casualties to our own troops. They were relieved at 3.a.m. on the 13th and pulled back.

Their casualties between the 10th and leaving on the 13th were 467.

Sadly, John Sheppard was one of these.

He was never found and must still lie out there in those now quiet and peaceful fields along with so many of his colleagues.

May he and they rest in peace.

Private 1454984 Joseph **SKEARS**.



Arras Memorial To The Missing, Arras, France.



Private 1454984 Joseph **SKEARS**.

1/1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry.

Killed in Action 11th April, 1917 aged 21 years. Commemorated on the Arras Memorial To The Missing, France. (Bay 1).

Son of Mrs Jane Skears and the late Mr. Frank Skears of High Street, Towcester, he was born in Roade and enlisted at Northampton.

The above memorial, in addition to having 2,600 graves, also has a number of panels – these showing the engraved names of 35,942 of those who fell and have no known grave.

The 'Battle of Arras' started in a snowstorm on 9th April, 1917 and by the time it petered-out around the 19th May, our casualties, killed, wounded and missing, amounted to over 159,000.

Joseph Skears is one of those missing.

Monchy-le-Preux – a village with a commanding view of the area, was held in strength by the Germans and was the object of an attack by our troops on the morning of the 11th April, 1917 – another day of awful weather, snow, rain and wind – and everywhere – mud.

The cavalry of the VIth Division was there to assist the infantry divisions set to attack the village.

As between 1,500 and 1,600 of them were forming up in a field near the village and awaiting orders they were spotted by two German aircraft who machine-gunned them and called in their artillery to shell them as the cavalry formed up and started off to attack the village. Records state that for the men and horses 'there was not so much as a tree for cover'. During this time a total of 91 officers and men and 196 horses were killed.

The attack on the village was ultimately successful but the cavalry were withdrawn before it was finally taken by the infantry.

Of the Northamptonshire Yeomanry 2 officers and 7 other ranks were killed (of which Joseph Skears was one); 1 officer and 6 other ranks died of wounds and 57 others were wounded.

He was never found – may he rest in peace. "There is some corner of a foreign field which is forever England".

Private 228240 Percy T.A. **SMITH**.



Mendinghem Military Cemetery, near Ypres, Belgium.



Private 228240 Percy T. A. **SMITH**.

1st City of London Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.
(formerly 5251 Royal Sussex Regiment) – posted to
32nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.

Died of Wounds 8th June, 1917 aged 20 years.

Buried in Mendinghem Military Cemetery, near Ypres, Belgium.
(Plot II. Row D. Grave number 21).

Son of William and Anne Smith of The Leys, Roade, he enlisted at
Northampton and resided at Roade.

‘The 3rd Battle of Ypres’ better known as ‘The Battles of Passchendaele’ in Belgium was due to commence on 31st July, 1917 – the idea being that our Forces would launch an attack on the German lines surrounding the town of Ypres, break out and then attack and take the ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge from where the enemy submarines were causing havoc to Allied shipping. Before we could start that process, a ridge of high-ish ground behind Ypres had to be taken – this to prevent the ability of the Germans to fire into the rear of our troops during that attack. This, the ‘Messines – Wytschaete Ridge’ lay just south-west of Ypres town and was heavily defended by the enemy.

On the 7th June we exploded nineteen underground mines laid under the German front line trenches and strong points – zero hour being 3.10.a.m. The 26th and 32nd Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers lay near the hamlet of St. Eloi – to the north-west of our front line of attack and were to attack towards a small hamlet – Oostaverne. Once our heavy artillery bombardment had eased – they advanced – the 32nd following the 26th in bright moonlight.

Their work was wholly successful – all objectives were achieved and as they closed the final enemy trenches many Germans fled the scene, many were killed and thirty were eager to give themselves up and be taken prisoner. His battalion went into action 17 officers and 551 other ranks strong and came out with 11 officers and 384 other ranks. For an attack with such important objectives which were secured in record time and on schedule, these losses were not excessive. By 8.10.a.m. their work was over.

Percy was wounded during this attack and died of his wounds the next day. The cemetery where he lies is near the sites of a number of military hospitals a few miles behind the lines to the north-west of Ypres.

May he rest in peace and know he is not forgotten in Roade

Private 19534 Thomas Watson **STEWARD. M.M.**



Vis-en-Artois Memorial To The Missing, France.

Private 19534 Thomas Watson **STEWARD**. Military Medal.

13th Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment.

Killed in Action 31st August, 1918 aged 38 years

Commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial To The Missing,
(between Arras and Cambrai, France). Panels 3 and 4.

The son of Thomas and Elizabeth Steward he was born in Roade and enlisted at Manchester and at that time was residing at Seedley, Manchester.
A railway worker by profession.

One of the spectacularly beautiful memorials, it and the Commonwealth War Grave Commission Cemetery, are there for those who fell in the 1918 "Advance to Victory" in Picardy and Artois. 9,832 names are remembered on the panelled wall and in the cemetery are the headstones of over 1,700 British and 582 Canadians who died in the capture of this sector in August, 1918.

The battle in front of the town of Amiens and the subsequent successful operations had made possible the great advance of the Allied armies which began on 8th August 1918 (the blackest day in the history of the German Army as stated by their General Ludendorf) and ended in victory.

Thomas Steward and his colleagues with their battalion were part of the 9th Brigade, 3rd Division and bore their full share in those times of severe enemy resistance and heavy fighting which drove the Germans back towards Mauberge and eventually, Mons.

Having fought the enemy back across the old Somme battlefields of 1916 their division attacked the village of Ecoist (south of Arras) on the 30th August. Having been pushed out they attacked again on the 31st and retook the village on the following day and continued on towards Noreuil where on the 3rd September they were relieved by the Guards Division.

Thomas was one of those who were never found – may he and they rest in peace in those now quiet and tranquil fields.

Private 15179 Thomas William **TATLER**.



Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, Somme, France.

Private 15179 Thomas William **TATLER**.
11th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment.

Killed in Action 3rd July, 1916 aged 20 years.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial To The Missing, near Albert, France. (Piers and Faces 3C and 4A).

Son of William and Rebecca Tatler he was born in Roade and enlisted at Chester. He was one of a family of railway workers.

The Thiepval Memorial To The Missing is the largest memorial of its kind in the world, engraved with almost 74,000 names of those who fought and fell during the Battles of The Somme and who have no known grave.

Those battles commenced on Saturday, 1st July, 1916 and petered-out on the 24th November that year – having cost the Allies some 600,000 killed, wounded and missing and the Germans some 620,000.

Thomas Tatler's battalion, as part of the 75th Brigade, 25th Division, took part in those momentous times.

Moving in to the fighting areas, the battalion had arrived on the 2nd July at Martinsart Wood. They then moved forward over the River Ancre at Black Horse Bridge and assembled for the attack south of Thiepval during the night.

They attacked on the right of the line on the 3rd July – leading waves noted in the War Diary as passing over No-Man's-Land in perfect order. Heavy enemy machine-gun fire later brought the assault to a standstill about 50 yards from the German first line. "Line after line of troops were mown down". Records show that some 60 men drifted to the right and joined the Highland Light Infantry in the Leipzig Salient. The Commanding Officer was killed whilst going forward with a reserve company.

The remains of the battalion were forced to withdraw to their starting positions. 20 officers and 655 other ranks started out to attack on the 3rd but only 6 officers and 350 other ranks came out during the night.

Thomas was one of those lost and never found and must still lie out there with so many others – may he and they, rest in peace.

Shoeing-Smith 84119 George David **WESTLEY**.



Etaples Military Cemetery, France.



Shoeing-Smith 84119 George David **WESTLEY**.

“C” Battery, 72nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

Died 12th March, 1917 aged 41 years.

Buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, France.
(Plot XXII Row A. Grave Number 5A).

Son of Henry and Jane (née Bonham) Westley he was a Railway Worker and husband of Elizabeth J. Westley of Wortley, Leeds. He was born at Roade and enlisted at Stockport.

This cemetery, near the coast and well behind the firing lines, is the largest in France (11,557 graves) and during the Great War there were many hospitals nearby. Records show that the cause of his death was ‘nephritis’ (kidney problems). Whether this was as a result of wounds or illness or disease is not known. Initially his artillery brigade had fought as part of the 15th (Scottish) Division – at Loos and The Somme in 1915 and 1916. On 20th January, 1917 they left that division to become an Army Artillery Brigade under Army control.

The Battle of Arras was due to commence on the 9th April, 1917 when the Allies were to launch a massive attack on the heavily defended German lines known as ‘The Hindenburg Line’ and as part of that attack, Vimy Ridge near Arras was the objective of the Canadian troops. George’s brigade was to assist those men. Obviously there was much preparation to be done – enormous numbers of guns of all sizes, plus the necessary stockpiles of ammunition and other supplies to be brought up and placed across the already war-torn landscape. (His gun would have been a field-gun firing an 18-pound shell – either shrapnel or high-explosive).

As the enemy held the high ground of Vimy Ridge they could see what we were doing and naturally they would not have just ignored our actions but would have shelled us with their own artillery and carried out attacks on our lines.

It seems reasonable to assume that George was involved in some of these preparations prior to his being admitted – for whatsoever reason – to hospital near Etaples.

May he rest in peace and know he is not forgotten.

Private 24235 Herbert **WHITLOCK**.



The Menin Gate Memorial To The Missing, Ypres, Belgium.

Private 25235 Herbert **WHITLOCK**.

7th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Killed in Action 31st July, 1917 aged 36 years.

Commemorated on The Menin Gate Memorial To The Missing, Ypres, Belgium. (Panels 43 and 45).

Son of Mr John and Mrs Amelia Whitlock of Roade he was born and enlisted at Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. He was employed at St.Andrew's Hospital, Northampton prior to enlistment.

The above-named memorial is probably the most famous memorial in the world. Straddling the road from the town centre of Ypres towards the equally famous Menin Road it has engraved upon its walls the names of some 55,000 of those who died and who do not have the privilege of a known and honoured grave.

The 7th Battalion of the Northamptonshires was known as 'The Mobb's Battalion' – named after Edgar Mobbs, one of their officers who played rugby for Northampton and England.

The '3rd Battle of Ypres' – nowadays more commonly known as 'The Battles of Passchendaele' commenced on the date of Herbert's death (and that of Edgar Mobbs) – the 31st July, 1917 and by the time the battles petered-out on 10th November that year, our losses amounted to over 300,000 killed, wounded and missing.

On that fateful day, their battalion as part of the 73rd Brigade, 24th Division attacked at zero hour – 3.50.a.m. – through a large wood known to us as Shrewsbury Forest. They were held up by fighting in the forest but later reached Jehovah Trench and continued, taking Groenenburg (Green Hill) Farm and Jordan Trench but were stopped by enemy pillboxes at Lower Star Post. The Germans held out there all day, thus preventing any further advance.

Later the 73rd Brigade fell back and dug a line just in advance of the captured Jehovah Trench.

They were relieved the following day with losses – in the ranks – of 37 killed, 162 wounded and 47 missing.

Herbert was killed whilst acting as a stretcher-bearer. Sadly he was never found and must still lie out there, either in the forest or the fields nearby – may he and all the others – rest in peace.

Driver 174632 Frederick Joseph William **CURTIS**.



Ismailia War Cemetery, Egypt



Driver 174632 Frederick Joseph William **CURTIS**.

Royal Army Service Corps – attached to the Royal Artillery.

Died 30th April, 1941 aged 26 years.

Buried in Ismailia War Cemetery. Plot 1. Row A. Grave Number 12.

Son of Mr Arthur C. Curtis and Mrs Rose Kate Beatrice Curtis of Roade.

The Curtis family had moved to Roade from Willesden in London during the war with Mr. Curtis later obtaining employment at the Maintenance Unit in the nearby Salcey Forest.

Fred had been employed as a chauffeur in London prior to his enlistment in the Army – this probably accounting for his posting as a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Details of his active army service are not known but his brother Cyril, still living in Roade, gives the information that Fred died of acute peritonitis.

As far as the military situation at that time was concerned, it will be recalled that the Spring of 1941 was not a good time for the Allied Forces during the desert campaigns. General Rommel and his German Panzer Corps were recapturing Cyrenaica and bypassing some of our troops trapped and besieged in Tobruk and heading for Egypt, Alamein and Alexandria. (Later of course, they in their turn were pushed back).

Ismailia is a small town in Egypt on the side of the Suez Canal.

Sergeant 7889452 Frank Wilfred **DUNKLEY**.



Bayeux Memorial To The Missing, Normandy, France.



Sergeant 7889452 Frank Wilfred **DUNKLEY**.

“D” Squadron, Special Air Service Regiment A.A.C.

Died 8th August, 1944 aged 22 years.

Commemorated on the Bayeux Memorial To The Missing, France.
(Panel 18 Column 2).

Son of Mr Benjamin Frank and Lilian Cathrine Dunkley of Roade.

After “D-Day” – 6th June, 1944 – it was ordered that special ‘Commando’ troops be dropped far behind enemy lines to disrupt German forces and where possible cooperate with the Maquis and French Resistance workers in harassing enemy troops; lines of communications and supplies; destroying depots, fortifications, airfields etc and in addition radioing vital information back to the United Kingdom. They were supplied with jeeps, equipment and manpower by air-drops from the Royal Air Force which also brought in and evacuated agents from our Special Operations Executive. Frank’s squadron parachuted into France on the night of 16th/17th June, 1944 with an officer and six men, landing south of Pithiviers (an advance party having landed two nights previously). They immediately set to work on demolitions and other operations, hiding when not so engaged, in camps in the large Forest of Orleans (towards the north-east corner). The activities of the Commandos so enraged Hitler that he ordered that ...”captured S.A.S. troops must be handed over at once to the nearest Gestapo unit....these men are very dangerous and the presence of S.A.S. troops in any area must be immediately reported...they must be ruthlessly exterminated”.

On the 8th August, Frank, who was manning a machine-gun on the rear of the jeep and his colleagues were en route to render assistance to one of their fellow groups which had been ambushed and badly shot-up by a large number of enemy troops, when they in their turn were ambushed as they approached a ‘T’ junction at the village of Chambon at the northern end of the forest. Some of Frank’s men were killed and another wounded – the latter saw him handcuffed and bleeding, being taken away by German soldiers. He was never seen alive again and it must be assumed that Hitler’s order was carried out.

Two S.A.S. men from another group (Privates Ion and Packman) had been taken after capture, to a chateau at the nearby village of Chillers-aux-Bois where they were tortured, shot in the head and then had their hands cut off – presumably to hinder identification. When their graves were opened some weeks later a third decomposed and unidentifiable body was found with them. From a process of elimination there is every reason to believe that this third man is Frank Dunkley.

(Continued overleaf)

Sergeant 7889452 Frank Wilfred **DUNKLEY**.

Tombes de Guerre
du Commonwealth
Commonwealth
War Graves



Sergeant 7889452 Frank Wilfred **DUNKLEY**.

(continued)

These three men are the only British troops who lie in the village cemetery.

They were extraordinary men doing extraordinary duties for which we can never thank them enough. May they rest in peace.

The photographs here show the cemetery and their graves. It will be noted just how well the local villagers care for these men and look after the graves of 'their soldiers'.

Of the three headstones – reading from left to right – the first (believed to be Frank Dunkley) is to an unknown soldier – engraved with the word “Known Unto God”. The middle one is Private Packman and on the right lies Private Ion.



Trooper 6459844 Jack **EVERY**. **M.M.**



Sfax War Cemetery, Tunisia.



Trooper 6459844 Jack **EVERY**. Military Medal.

Royal Armoured Corps (Queen's Bays – 2nd Dragoon Guards).

Died 29th March, 1943 aged 22 years.

Buried in Sfax War Cemetery, Tunisia. Plot V1. Row B. Grave Number 4.

Son of Mr Thomas A and Mrs W. Every of Roade.

After the Allied troops famous 'break-out' at El Alamein on the 2nd – 4th November, 1942, General Montgomery's 'Desert Rats' started to push Field Marshall Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps back through the desert.

It was a hard fight and losses on both sides were severe.

As the weeks went on we continued to push them back through the deserts of Tripolitania – past Tripoli towards the next main objective in view – Tunis.

Some of our older British-made tanks were being replaced by the newer, American 'Sherman' tanks – faster and much more modern but their guns were much smaller and lighter than those on the German Panzers.

Between the 20th and 27th March, 1943 we launched an attack on the 'Mareth Line' which the Germans had strung across a narrow neck of land between the sea and a range of inland hills – the Matmata Hills and the nearby Tebaga Gap. Here our 8th Army met fierce opposition indeed. On the 26th March, whilst our tanks advanced under an Allied artillery barrage assisted by Allied aircraft, the enemy anti-tank gunners were dazzled by the light of the setting sun. Some of our tanks were able to crush these guns and their crews by running over them.

Jack, who drove a three-ton ammunition lorry, had earlier been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field when taking ammunition up to the troops whilst under heavy fire, was apparently repeating this brave conduct during the current attacks when he was sadly killed.

Our losses were fairly heavy, with many 'Shermans' going up in flames and our Infantry too suffered badly. The fighting continued and by the 30th of March the 8th Army had reached the Gabes Gap. They were through the Mareth Line but there was much fighting yet to be done and many miles to go before Tunis would fall, on the 7th May.

Jack lies with many of his colleagues at Sfax – about one third of the way between the Mareth Line and Tunis. May they all rest in peace.

Rifleman 6896275 Thomas Victor **EVERY**.



Krakow Rakowicki Cemetery, Poland.



Rifleman 6896275 Thomas Victor **EVERY**.

King's Royal Rifle Corps (1st Queen Victoria's Rifles).

Died 22nd August, 1944 aged 25 years.

Buried in Krakow Rakowicki Cemetery.
(Plot 1V. Row C. Grave number 10).

Son of Mr Thomas A and Mrs W. Every of Roade.

For the British troops involved, the battle for Calais between the 22nd and 27th May, 1940 was described as 'a forlorn hope' – it was just that, in that one British brigade, including one tank battalion, without artillery, engineer or air support was pitted against a complete German panzer division backed by the resources of a whole panzer corps and the support of the German Air Force. Our troops were outnumbered, outgunned and trapped against the sea with no resources planned to evacuate them.

As the German army was forcing the Allied troops back towards the sea and their ultimate evacuation from Dunkirk, the hurriedly formed and poorly equipped 30 Brigade was sent from England to help the few troops fighting to defend Calais against the onslaught of the 10th Panzer Division. Those who managed to survive this 'fight to the finish' were captured and marched off into captivity for the rest of the war. Tom was one of those. He first went to a P.O.W. camp at Thorn in northern Poland later becoming Prisoner 13514 in B.A.B. 20/1 - this near the town of Cosel then in Upper Silesia but now in western Poland. The camp was located within the perimeter of an enormous synthetic oil refinery known to us as Heydebreck or Reigersfeld and to the United States American Army Air Force as Blechhammer South. Possibly as many as 40,000 men were used here as forced labour – his work was on earth-moving and road making.

In 1944 the USAAF planes were able to reach this area for the first time and for six months it became a priority Allied target. Sadly there were many casualties within the camps from these raids – Tom was one of them – his then Commanding Officer later told Tom's brother Frank, that Tom had been killed in the camp by one of the 'stray' bombs from an American aircraft – a B 17 (Flying Fortress bomber).

He was originally buried in the town cemetery at Cosel but was later uplifted and with others like him now lies buried at Krakow some 150 kilometres from the camp-site May they all rest in peace.

(Continued overleaf)

Rifleman 6896275 Thomas Victor **EVERY**.



Rifleman 6896275 Thomas Victor **EVERY**.

(Continued).

What has not been recorded in the previous page was the high esteem in which Tom was held by his fellow prisoners-of-war. Often exhausted and half-starved from his forced-labour work he would return to the camp where he and a few other men of talent and energy produced the theatrical shows which were of such enormous importance to the men held there.

Tom not only acted but also played the guitar in the camp orchestra.

Every veteran who was there at the time has spoken with pride and affection for these men who raised their morale during those very difficult years and of their sadness when he and other members of the theatrical group were killed during the Allied bombing.

After their deaths no more plays were produced.

It is thought that all his old comrades would wish to be recorded and remembered, the way in which Tom (and the others) so raised the morale of over 1,000 men – they will never forget him.

Nor should we.

Lance Corporal 5949748 William **EVERY**.



Cassino War Cemetery, Italy.



Lance Corporal 5949748 William **EVERY**.

Royal Armoured Corps. (3rd King's Own Hussars).

Died 26th May, 1944 aged 23 years.

Buried in Cassino War Cemetery, Italy.
(Plot X1. Row F. Grave Number 20).

Son of Mr Thomas A and Mrs W. Every of Roade.

Detailed records of his unit on the date of his death are, sadly, not available from Army sources.

After the Battle of Alamein in October, 1942 the 3rd Hussars had been equipped with Crusader, Sherman and Grant tanks. In June, 1943 they moved to Aleppo in Syria; in August to Haifa and then to the Lebanon but it was not until April, 1944 that they were put back into action when they were engaged in pushing the Germans out of Italy.

They landed in Italy at Taranto on the 4th May, 1944 leaving there on the 24th for the front and joined the 78th Division, part of the X11 Corps of the 8th Army.

Cassino had finally fallen to the Allied troops on the 18th May after a long siege and many casualties on both sides – our capture of that town and the famous monastery overlooking it allowing us to 'break out' and start heading for Anzio and Rome.

William was the commander of his tank when his 3rd Hussars with their armoured vehicles led the advance of the 78th Division up the Liri Valley from the River Rapido and although the records of those Hussars state "the circumstances of his death are not indicated" it is obvious that he was killed in that now famous 'break out' and its subsequent advance just a few miles to the north of Cassino.

The cemetery where he lies is particularly beautiful and high above it and overlooking it is the now rebuilt Cassino Monastery.

May he and all the others rest in peace.

First Radio Officer Sidney George **HARRIS**.



Tower Hill Memorial



First Radio Officer Sidney George **HARRIS**.

S.S. Elmcrest (London). Merchant Navy.

Killed by enemy action 5th July, 1940 aged 30 years.

Commemorated on the Merchant Navy Memorial to The Missing, Tower Hill, London.

The son of Mr Joseph Edward Harris (garage and taxi proprietor) and Mrs. Jessie Louise Harris of High Street, Roade and the husband of Alfreda Mabel Harris of Northampton. When a boy he attended school in Roade.

Notwithstanding that he was in the Merchant Navy, having been killed as the result of direct enemy action, he is recorded in the archives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and as indicated above, is commemorated among the missing on the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill, London.

His ship was a steamer of just over 5,000 tons and was en route from Hull, England to Wabana (near St. John's) in Newfoundland when she was sunk by a torpedo from a German E-Boat (a fast motor-torpedo-boat) some 13 miles off Portland Bill, near Weymouth in Dorset.

She sank with the loss of sixteen of her crew – sadly, Sidney was one of those. It is not unreasonable to suppose that, if he had survived the initial explosion, being the radio officer, he would have done his utmost to ensure that a 'May-Day' distress call was broadcast before sinking.

May he and his crewmates rest in peace.

Driver T/14900619 W.H. **KEDWARDS.**



Road Cemetery, Northamptonshire.

Driver T/14900619 W. H. **KEDWARDS.**

Royal Army Service Corps.

Died 6th June, 1946 aged 34 years.

Buried in Roade Cemetery, Northamptonshire.
(Grave Number 288).

Husband of Kathleen Elsie Kedwards of Roade.

Full military details of his service career are not available but the following information has been obtained from a former member of his family still living in the village.

It is believed that he came from Birmingham to Roade where he married Kathleen – née Chambers.

He was 'called-up' for military service late in the war and in military age terms – this being borne out by the date of his death and his age at that time.

Brought back ill from India on a hospital ship – believed to be a 'Red Cross' ship, he went to Northampton Hospital for treatment. Sadly he subsequently died after a long and painful illness – probably related to liver problems. This is substantiated by the inscription on his headstone in Roade Cemetery where reference is made to "long suffering".

May he rest in peace.

Private 5882955 Cyril John **WALKER**.



Maroeuil Communal Cemetery, near Arras, France.

Private 5882955 Cyril John **WALKER**.

2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Died 23rd May, 1940 aged 26 years.

Buried in Maroeuil Communal Cemetery, near Arras, France.
(Grave Number 26).

Son of Mr. George Thomas and Lydia Gertrude Walker of Courteenhall,
Northamptonshire.

On the 22nd May, 1940 a Division of German troops assisted by Panzers under the control of General Hoth were continuing to push the British Expeditionary Force back through France and were driving clockwise around the town of Arras.

Facing them - in addition to some French troops and tanks – were some of our own, including the 2nd Northamptonshires, who were in and around the Maroeuil Woods with the village of Mont St. Eloi to their right. The Germans submitted them to heavy shelling and one German infantry attack was driven off during the night.

On the 23rd German tanks with 200 infantry advanced towards St. Eloi from the direction of Acq and at the same time their shelling and dive-bombing increased. The French withdrew from St. Eloi during the morning despite their assurances to the contrary that they would 'hold on' and at 10.30.a.m. gave notice that they would withdraw their guns after 1.p.m.

Enemy pressure became intense and severe all day along the battalion front.

Eventually the order was given to withdraw and this was accomplished with great difficulty - e.g. "C" Company of the Northamptonshires either failed to get the order to withdraw or else they could not do so and were surrounded and either killed or captured.

This, their first action of the war cost them 352 casualties – sadly Cyril was one of them.

Our troops afterwards continued a fighting withdrawal to the coast and the famous evacuation of Dunkirk followed later in the month and into June.

May Cyril and his colleagues rest in peace – they are not forgotten.

Gunner 1085715 James **WATTS**.



Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand.

Gunner 1085715 James **WATTS**.

118 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Died 15th June, 1943 aged 31 years.

Buried in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand.
(Plot 6. Row B. Grave Number 12).

Son of James and Eliza Winifred Watts of Towcester. Northamptonshire and
husband of Winifred Beatrice Watts (née Dyde) of Rugby, Warwickshire.

James died of cholera whilst a prisoner of war of the Japanese.

In 1946 after the end of the war, he and so many like him who had died of illness, disease, malnutrition or by the appalling treatment meted out by their guards whilst in captivity were uplifted from their original graves and re-interred in the main Prisoner of War Cemetery at Kanchanaburi – some 80 plus miles inland from Bangkok.

Records at his regimental museum do not show where his place of death was, their representative there was only able to say that “it was at an unknown place somewhere up the jungle”.

He would have been originally buried by his friends and co-prisoners with as much solemnity and dignity as would have been possible at that time.

The conditions they had to endure have been well documented and reported upon in many books over the years and it is felt inappropriate to repeat them in this ‘Roll of Honour’.

May they all rest in peace – they earned it. They are not forgotten.

APPENDIX "A"

BERLIN (BRANDENBERG) SOUTH-WESTERN CEMETERY.

This cemetery is situated close to the village of Stahnsdorf, about 26 km south-west of Berlin and 15 km east of Potsdam. The cemetery is on the eastern edge of the Potsdam Forest. Visitors travelling along the main road between Potsdam and Stahnsdorf should follow the signs for Tetlow, Stahnsdorf and the airport, Schonefeld. Immediately after passing the village boundary of Stahnsdorf turn left at the traffic lights into Bahnhofstrasse. The cemetery lies 500 metres after this turn, on the left side of the road. The CWGC plot is approximately twenty minutes walk from the entrance and is found by following the signs for the church and continuing on the main path running through the cemetery.

In 1922-3 it was decided that the graves of Commonwealth servicemen who had died all over Germany should be brought together into four permanent cemeteries. This one was one of those chosen and in 1924-25, graves were brought here from more than 140 burial grounds in eastern Germany. There are now 1,176 First World War servicemen buried or commemorated here. This total includes special memorials to a number of casualties buried in other cemeteries in Germany whose graves could not be found. The following cemeteries are among those from which graves were brought here:-

Altdam P.O.W. Cemetery, Pomerania. 51 burials of 1915-18. Buderose P.O.W. Cemetery, Brandenburg. 68 burials of 1918. Doberitz P.O.W. Cemetery, Brandenburg. 38 burials of 1914-18. Hasenheide Garrison Cemetery, Brandenburg. 64 burials. Heilsberg P.O.W. Cemetery, Brandenburg, East Prussia. 12 burials of 1917-18 (39 burials remain at Heilsberg). Klein Wittenberg Old Cemetery, Saxony. 25 service and 8 civilian burials of 1915. New or Prisoner of War Cemetery. 74 service and 3 civilian burials of 1915, 17 and 18. Wittenberg Old Small Cemetery. 2 burials of 1914 and 1915. Lamsdorf P.O.W. Cemetery, Silesia. 83 burials of 1917-19. Magdeburg Military Cemetery, Saxony. 25 burials of 1915-18. Mersberg Town Cemetery, Saxony. 12 burials of 1915-17 and the P.O.W. Cemetery. 33 burials of 1917-18. Oppeln Town Cemetery, Upper Silesia. 11 burials of 1921. 30 post-war burials remain at Oppeln. Schneidermuhl P.O.W. Cemetery, West Prussia. 67 burials of 1915-18. 18 burials remain at Schneidermuhl. Stargard P.O.W. Cemetery, Pomerania. 41 burials of 1917-18. Stendal P.O.W. Cemetery, Saxony. 1413 burials of 1917-18. Zerbst (Heidetor) Cemetery, Anhalt. 2 burials of 1914-15 and the P.O.W. Cemetery. 45 burials of 1917-18.



This "Roll of Honour" was compiled for and on behalf of
The Roade Local History Society, Northamptonshire

Gordon Hall
Wollaston
2008

[Back to Index](#)