

SECTION 'G' – REMEMBERING THE WAR YEARS

Wartime in our society is often something that occurs without recording its potential future relevance in history. Many of us had relatives who experienced the trauma of war but maintained their silence on the subject. Families thought better than to ask their father or grandfather, *“What did you do in the war, where did you serve, what was it like?”* Only later in life or in the pursuit of family history does the desire emerge to find answers to difficult questions or to unravel facts of local or personal interest.

Throughout the First and Second World Wars the Catholic community of Bury St Edmunds continued to function despite the number of men from the parish who were drawn into service abroad. Surprisingly, little was documented. For example, the St Edmund’s Church register of burials is devoid of any entries for the years 1914 to 1920 and for the years 1922 to 1924. However, to best discover relevant information, research of the interments at the Borough Cemetery that occurred in these years where a Catholic priest officiated, revealed 41 names that would otherwise have been forgotten in the annals of Church history. The details are not included in this chronicle but are available from the authors.



The work of David Bowden in connection with The War Graves Photographic Project has also proved vital in the construction of this Section, especially his research of the names of those who appear on the marble war memorial in the Church. This was erected in 1927 following donations that included £14.5.0 from members of the Blessed Sacrament Guild.

The plaque implores: *‘Remember in prayer the Catholic officers and men of this congregation who gave their lives for us in the Great War 1914-18’* and identifies those who died. The plaque

was unveiled by Sir Pierce Lacy following mass on 23 October 1928. It was subsequently updated to record those from the parish who died during the hostilities of 1939-45, the work being carried out by Hanchetts, now of Cratfield Road, Bury St Edmunds. Later research indicated misspellings occurred at the time of creating the plaque identifying the incorrect spelling of the names of McMurdo and McMullen.

The First World War saw many soldiers billeted locally and in need of a chaplain. Fr O’Gorman made many unsuccessful requests to General Inglefield commander of Based Anglia Division and to his staff.

He finally abandoned them and asked the War Office to assign a Roman Catholic chaplain for Catholic soldiers of all arms within 10 miles of Bury St Edmunds. The request was granted at once and General Broadwood of Mounted Division was told to appoint Fr O’Gorman’s nominee at a cost of £100. Fr Provincial undertook to find a priest for this appointment. Meanwhile Fr O’Gorman did make some notes of what was happening:

‘1916: A mighty Zeppelin raid took place here on Friday 31st. A large anti-aircraft gun kept blazing at the Zepp which dropped over 35 large explosive bombs in and around the town for 20 minutes. Ten people were killed practically outright and three died a few days later of heart shock. The nearest bomb fell some 400 yards away (below Cullum Road) in a field. The noise, said a soldier from the Gallipoli peninsular, resembled a small battle. Thousands of windows were smashed. I stayed in bed till near its close and then hastily dressed and rushed into the street – just too late to see the Zepp.

This incident relates to the Zeppelin raid so well documented in the book of Gareth Jenkins entitled *Zeppelins Over Bury: The Raids on Bury St Edmunds 1915 & 1916* in which he indicates the probable route of the Zeppelin as entering the town from the area of Barton Hill in a circuit that overflowed Eastgate Street, the Abbey ruins, Westgate Street, Hardwick Lane, skirting what is now Parkway and returning via Tayfen, the Grove Park area, Chalk Lane, King’s Road and from there re-tracing a route similar to that of its entry.

The dropping of 11 incendiary bombs is recorded as occurring in the vicinity of Tayfen/Grove Park and Eastgate Station. A further six Explosive bomb/aerial torpedo attacks took place in Spring Lane, Chalk Lane, Mill Lane and Prussia Lane leading to loss of life, serious injury and the devastation of homes.

Fr O’Gorman’s account is interesting in that he specifically makes mention of Cullum Road which does not appear to have been traversed in the route described by Gareth Jenkins. It might either mean that Fr O’Gorman’s version is inaccurate or that somewhere in a field in Cullum Road lies an unexploded bomb. His account continued:

Many houses had to be rebuilt (so shaken were they or even smashed in). For months after this raid the Special Constables created panic by their warnings to expect raids which never came off. We noticed a considerable improvement in piety (till the summer came) as a result of the Raid-Panic. This wore off when Zepps began to be destroyed by our new methods and security seemed to increase. But one result was the decision of good old Mr Harvey to go under instruction and later to Church after nearly 20 years putting it off. He had lost 2 men in the raid, who used to work for him’.



The importance of religion to those in the armed services is demonstrated at various public services, ceremonial occasions and through the sterling work of the chaplaincy. For the individual, belief and prayer are strengths that insulate against fear. Although few examples of artefacts remain, the Suffolk Regiment Museum in Bury St Edmunds has amongst its exhibits a home-made rosary used by an officer during World War I. The rosary was made from an old necklace with cardboard dividers cut from a Woodbines cigarette packet.



While the words *'Of your charity pray for the soul of Lieut Harry Thomas Harvey who fell in action at Ypres July 31, 1917. RIP'* are self-explanatory, the history of the Lady Altar tells a greater story.

Harry Thomas Harvey was born in the town in 1892 and became a young lieutenant in 1/5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment attached to 23 Company Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). He took part in the 3rd Battle of Ypres as part of 8 Division and was killed in 1917 at either Pilkem Ridge (31 July/1 August) or Westhoek (31 July).

No known grave exists but he is remembered on panel 21 of the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

Harry Harvey was the son of Henry Francis and Caroline Elizabeth Harvey (nee Pierce) of 5 Brentgovel Street (subsequently Boot's Opticians), Bury St Edmunds. Church records show that he was baptised in St Edmunds on 14 December 1892 and had two younger sisters May Caroline and Daisy Agnes.

SUFFOLK REGIMENT	
CAPTAIN	SERJEANT
ATTREE F. W. W. T.	LAMBERT E. J.
CHALMERS R.	LEEKES A.
HARRIS P. C.	MABBUTT E. J.
JOURDAIN E. N.	MASON J. M.M.
POLLOCK-HODSOLL	MEAD H.
G. B.	MILLS W.
RUSHBROOKE B. D.	NEAL F.
TEMPLE A. H. W.	O'NEILL W. E.
WOOD-MARTIN F. W.	POLLARD J. H.
	QUINTON J. S.
LIEUTENANT	SOUTHON E. J.
BRADLEY S.	WALLAGE J.
CHIBNALL R. S.	WOODS J.
FORBES D. K.	
HARVEY H. T.	LANCE SERJEANT
PRICHARD R. G.	JAY J.
SMITH C. E. B.	STAMP C.

In 1919 Henry Harvey approached Fr O'Gorman to raise subscriptions for an altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart in memory of his son but this was rejected because funding was required for a new hall in the Crypt. Mr Harvey, a local fishmonger and game dealer therefore took it upon himself to provide the altar, made by James and Willis of London of marble and costing £600 (equivalent in 2023 to £7,500), in memory of his son. The first two masses were celebrated on 7 March 1921 at the altar which was beautifully adorned with flowers.

The Misses Harvey that year also donated six fine candlesticks and the later stage hangings for the altar. It is apparent from the other locations within the Church of the mention of Lt Harvey that his loss to his family was deeply felt.

On 28 July 2017, 100 years after Harry Thomas Harvey's death, Mass was celebrated by Fr Mark Hackeson at the altar in memory of all who had died in World War 1, the service being concelebrated with Fr Bill Mason and Fr (Peter) Sok Na who had only that week arrived from Cambodia for 3 months. It was a reminder that atrocities across the world continue and the importance of our prayers for peace and to comfort those affected by conflict.



It was an occasion when vestments donated by Sir Pierce Lacy that had not been seen for many years were worn. During the poignant service the names of those on the narthex plaque were read out. Work in moving Church furniture to allow for the service was appreciated by over 30 parishioners who attended.

Fr Mark and David Bowden continued their weekend by both going to Passchendaele for ceremonies to honour those killed in battle there.

On 22 October 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the future of St Edmund's Social Club held in the Crypt, was discussed. The Chairman Mr Miller reported that he had approached the police authorities with a view to restarting the usual activities but their consent was not granted for the time being. In view of this and coupled with the fact that certain members of the committee had extra calls made upon them as a result of the war which prevented them from giving the necessary time to the running of the Club, it was agreed that the only option was to hand Canon Garnett all the cash (£12.10s 0d) standing to the credit of the Club and to temporarily close down.

However, on 6 November 1939 it was announced that through the kind action of Lieutenant Head it had been possible to obtain permission from the police to reopen the Crypt subject to black-out conditions being observed. The Club was to be restarted immediately, primarily in the interest of the Catholic members of H M Forces stationed in and near Bury. In consequence, although he was not at the meeting, Lieutenant Head was elected Chairman of the Club with Corporal King deputising in his absence. Due to military commitments, these appointments did not materialise and Mr Pierre remained Club Chairman. It was the beginning of an era when the social events took into account the needs of servicemen with nightly events and dances taking place and subsidised admission costs being granted to the troops. Life at the Club continued with the register of members (Catholic and Non-Catholic) from 12 November 1939 listing around 152 names.

It was proposed that comforts made by members of the club be given to those serving in H M Forces. The term 'comforts' perhaps needs explanation – on 10 November 1940 Miss Neary reported that 63 pairs of gloves and socks had been given to the troops up to date. It was also decided to give a Christmas party to members of H M Forces and evacuee children, on similar lines to the one given the previous year.

The activity in 1940/41 to provide comforts for the troops saw members and their friends busily knitting from wool supplied by the Club. Whilst it might seem that this labour of love was somewhat unnecessarily added to by a register showing every pair of socks or gloves knitted, it is once again, a useful insight into history and the names of those who participated in this charitable act and, perhaps more interestingly, the name of each recipient. The registers can be viewed at the Suffolk Archives Office.

The East Anglian Guild Magazine was a valuable source of historic information but as reported in No 1, Vol 13, issued spring 1943 its existence was threatened because of sanctions that limited production to only 6% of pre-war paper supplies.

The magazine's edition No 5, Vol 13, issued spring 1944 considered the implications of post-war planning and conveyed a somewhat evangelical message ... *'In the first place we see that East Anglia is a sparsely populated district, the inhabitants for the most part living in the innumerable villages and small towns with populations up to 4,000; in the three counties there are only 15 towns with a population over 5,000 and the total permanent population of the area is approximately 1,100,000; assuming the percentage of Catholics at 1%, we number 11,000. The problem then is how we can best give our own people the facilities to practice their religion, and the best method of approach to the 99% without the "one, true fold."* Let us be under no illusion as to our responsibilities in regard to those in the latter category, the first object of the Guild is the *"re-conversion of East Anglia to the ancient Faith ..."*

Financial aid was important and on 16 March 1944 St Edmund's Catholic Social Club arranged a dance at the Bury Corn Exchange in aid of the British Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. This attracted around 500 people and the amount sent to the fund was £137 2s11d. Several items were raffled, and the tickets were drawn and prizes given away by a junior girl of St Louis Convent.

According to the East Anglian Guild Magazine No 9, Vol 13, issued spring 1945, on 4 December 1944 the Sisters of St Louis Convent arranged a fancy dress party for the children which was held in the Corn Exchange, Bury, in aid of the Bishop's new War Orphanage; when it was over, an American Band (The Flying Yanks) played music for a public dance which realised £85, and a cheque for the amount was sent to the Bishop.

On 16 March 1945 the Catholic Social Club held a very successful dance in aid of the British Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. A grand total of £140 8s 10d was raised, and a cheque for the amount handed to the Fund's Secretary.

The influx of American forces to the County of Suffolk during the Second World War was immense – at one stage one in every seven people in the County was American. Between 1943 and 1945 their forces were based at Rougham Airfield. Their Chaplain was Major Joseph N Collins who was known to all as Fr Joe.

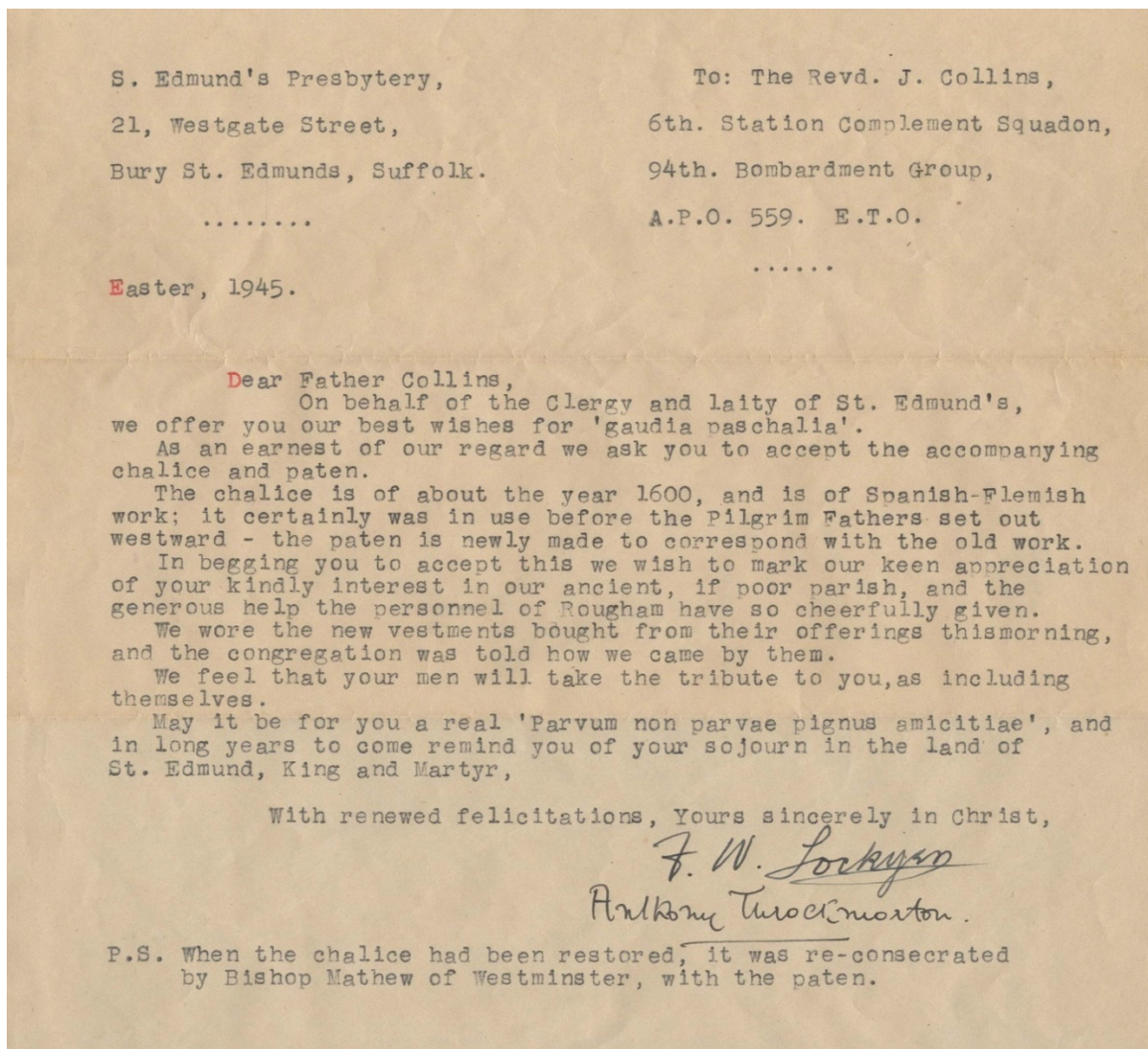
Fr Joe's role was one that should not be underrated. At that time the separation of airmen from their families, the young ages of those serving, the loss of life in conflict, the psychological effects of not knowing what tomorrow would bring were amongst the challenges facing the Eighth Air Force personnel. Post-traumatic stress disorder was not then a recognised condition and the Chaplain multi-tasked as counsellor, spiritual adviser and a shoulder to lean on.



Fr Joe's role brought him into close contact with local Catholic parishioners and it is apparent that he formed a close working relationship with the two priests at the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr in Bury St Edmunds (Fr Frederick Lockyer and his curate Fr Anthony Throckmorton).

The bond between the Bury priests and Fr Joe (pictured) was incredibly strong. When the time came for Joseph to depart for France and Germany (post-occupation) in 1945, Frs Lockyer and Throckmorton

presented him with the chalice and paten as a gift for his service to the community at St Edmund's Church.



In 1984 Fr Joe died and his nephew Bill Christie came into possession of the chalice and paten and generously decided that it should be gifted back to St Edmund's Church.

On 17 September 2018 Bill and his wife Maryann made a visit to Bury St Edmunds where they were able to see our Chapel which was founded by the Jesuit priests in 1762 and the Church which was built in 1837. They were struck by the beauty and history of what they saw. They were also able to visit Rougham and step back into the former Forces' Chapel, now a store-shed, where Fr Joe would have said Mass.



Bill and Maryann Christie handing to Fr Alvan the chalice and paten referred to in Section 'G', etching an important occasion in our parish history.

The East Anglian Guild Magazine No 1, Vol 14, issued spring 1946 indicated that the Ex-Servicemen's Catholic Association was intending to give its final 'welcome home' dinner to Catholic servicemen and women. During the war it had collected £806 and dispatched 2,647 comforts to Catholic personnel in the Forces.

Whilst the above commentary is of a general nature in showing life during the Wars, David Bowden's research registers the local connection and the harsh reality of the effects on our parish.

Henry Frederick Hugh Clifford DSO was Brigadier General having been born 13 August 1867 in London. He served on the General Staff of the British Expeditionary Force, commanding 149 Brigade, late of the Suffolk Regiment.

His death occurred on 11 September 1916 at the age of 49 years. He was shot by a sniper from Delville Wood whilst inspecting recently dug advanced assembly trenches as part of the battle of the Somme.

He is buried at Albert Communal Cemetery Extension, plot 1, section L, grave 1.

He was the second son of Major General the Honourable Sir Henry Hugh Clifford VC, KCMG, CB and Josephine Elizabeth Anstie. He was the seventh child of eight, having 5 sisters and 2 brothers. He served with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in the Boer War in 1899 and 1902 as Lieutenant Colonel and Brevet Colonel. He also commanded the Battalion from the outbreak of war before joining the General Staff in 1915.

During World War I he was wounded in the right arm on 5 May 1915 at Vierstraat but remained in command. He was also mentioned in despatches and awarded the DSO and the Order of St Stanislaus of Russia (3rd Class). On 25 May he left the Battalion for home leave, returning on the 9 June and then finally left the Battalion to take command of 149th Brigade on 28 June 1915. He was gazetted temporary Brigadier in August the same year.



James Vivian Reynell De Castro was born in Torquay on 19 May 1891 and held the rank of Captain of the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion Suffolk Regiment, having been appointed on 2 September 1914 and attached to 2nd Battalion on 28 January 1915, arriving at La Clytte (Belgium) on 4 February as a 2nd Lieutenant.

He died 1 October 1915, aged 24 years and is buried at Bedford House Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium, near Ypres, enclosure 4XV row B, grave 3. 'Requiscat in Pace' is inscribed at the foot of the headstone.

He was the son of Major James A and Mrs de Castro of Collingwood, 20 Whiting Street, Bury St Edmunds.

The 3rd Battalion was based in Felixstowe for the whole of the war. The first draft was sent to France on 6 August 1914. At the outbreak of war James was in Turin working for an American car company, but immediately returned home. On 9 June 1915, with three fellow officers he went to GHQ near Poperinghe to be 'experimentally gassed'. He was involved in the aftermath of a mine detonation on 19th July and defended the crater at Hooge. The Battalion War Diary states 'Good work done by Lieutenant de Castro'. On 30 September, now a Captain, he was defending the western edge of the crater and under heavy machine gun fire cut the barbed wire which was hindering the advance. He was recommended for the Military Cross in July 1915 and the Victoria Cross in September, neither of which was confirmed.

Charles D'arcy Edmund Wentworth Reeve



Born 5 September 1894 at Ousden, Charles D'arcy Edmund Wentworth Reeve was 2nd Lieutenant, Temporary Captain and Flight Commander from 1 May 1916. Serving in the Suffolk Regiment, he was attached to the Royal Flying Corps, being commissioned 17 March 1915.

He died 18 July 1916 at the age of 21 years and is buried in the family grave at St Peter's churchyard, Great Livermere.

He was the son of Mr C S and Mrs Beatrice Wentworth Reeve of Thorpe Satchville, Melton Mowbray and Livermere Park, Bury St Edmunds. He obtained his aviator's certificate on 24 April 1915 at Farnborough and was posted to Loos in August before moving to Ypres. He had the reputation of being an excellent night-pilot. He was invalided home from France in September 1915 and killed whilst flying at Hounslow. The Royal Flying Corps brought his body to Bury St Edmunds for a Requiem Mass before burial at Livermere with full Military Honours. The Last Post was provided by a bugler of the Suffolk Regiment.

Hugo Charles Meynell (Meynall) was born in 1889 at Paddington, London. He was 2nd Lieutenant in the 12th (Reserve) Battalion Essex Regiment. He died of wounds on 27 September 1915 aged 26 years. He is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France in section 11, row J, grave 7.

At the foot of his headstone are the words 'Jesus mercy, Mary help. R I P'

He was the son of Hugo Thomas and Mary Julia Meynall of 43 Old Elvet, Durham and his name appears in the 1911 census as residing in Newmarket.

He was transferred to the 11th Battalion in April 1915 and was possibly wounded at the battle of Loos where the Battalion were in the reserves for the battle. They took the German second line defences at Chalk Pit as part of 71st Brigade. In the battle the Battalion casualties amounted to 371 including 18 officers, one being Hugo.

The 12th Battalion was based at Harwich from 10 April 1915 to 1 September 1916 after which it became part of 6th Reserve Brigade.



William Ernest Seal. Born in 1889 at Aldershot, Hampshire, he was a resident of Bury St Edmunds. He was Sergeant (Service number 6829) in the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment, serving with the Battalion in 1911 and stationed at Aldershot.

His death came on 30 September 1915 at the age of 26 years.

He is buried in Perth Cemetery (China Wall) Ypres in section XII, row A, grave 6.

Inscribed at the base of his headstone is the reminder, 'He made the great sacrifice'.

He was the son of Ernest and Julia Seal of 141 Lansdowne Road, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex.

The Battalion was part of 8th Brigade in 3rd Division between 25 October 1914 and 22 October 1915, which took part in the battle for Loos (Bellewaade).



From the Battalion War Diary it appears that he was serving under Captain de Castro at Hooge defending the western edge of the crater when he was killed.

Edward Longdon McMurdo was born in 1874 in Edgbaston but lived locally. Serving as Staff Sergeant (Service number 41) he was a member of the 54(1/1 East Anglian) Casualty Clearing Station, Royal Army Medical Corps.

Records show that he was lost at sea on 13 August 1915 aged 41 years.

Although there is no known grave, he is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey. panel 199 and 200 or 236 to 239 and 328 - the spelling of his name is shown as McMurdo.

54 Clearing Station was part of 54 (East Anglian) Division which departed for Gallipoli between 14 and 19 July 1915 and landed at Suvla Bay between 10 and 15 August.

Edward worked for the Royal Liverpool Insurance Society and lived in Fornham All Saints at the time of his enlistment.

Nearly all Medical Unit records were destroyed soon after the end of hostilities so little is known about his wartime activities.

Robert Charles McMullen was born in 1884. He was a Sergeant (Service number 8635) in the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.



On 27 September 1918 at the age of 34 years, two days before the War ended he died of malaria. He is buried at Karasouli Military Cemetery, Greece. Grave D 914 shows the spelling of his name as McMullen.

He was the only son of Mrs S A Broughton (formerly McMullen) of 1 Short Brackland, Bury St Edmunds and the late Corporal P Mc Mullen. He was serving in South Africa before the war

started in 1914. The Regiment embarked for Salonika in 1915 and served on the Dorian Front as part of 82nd Brigade of 27th Division of XVI Corps commanded by Lt Gen Charles James Bridge. He took part in various actions against the Bulgarian Army until his death.



Francis Joseph Floyd was born 8 November 1888 and baptised at St Edmund's Church ten days later. He was a Sergeant (Service number 97107) in the Royal Army Medical Corps, 49 General Hospital.

He died on 5 January 1919 aged 30 years and is buried at Mika British Cemetery, Kalamaria, Greece in grave 1184.

Francis was the son of Mr and Mrs Joseph Arthur Floyd of 68 Whiting Street and husband of Edith Jesse Floyd (married 19 August 1916) of 14 Hatter Street, Bury St Edmunds. His father was Church organist. Francis was a chemist and signed up in December 1915. In May 1916 he was called up and posted to the Suffolk Regiment with a Service Number of 29264. He later transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Nearly all Medical Unit records were destroyed soon after the end of hostilities so little is known about the wartime activities of Francis.

Nelson Godfrey Dutton. He was born in 1897 in Bury and enlisted in the Suffolk Yeomanry at Culford (Service number 2251 which became 320284 when the regiment was re-designated 15th (Suffolk Yeomanry) Battalion, Suffolk Regiment in 1917. He was a Private who was killed in action during 3rd battle of Gaza on 6 November 1917 at the age of 20 years. He is buried in grave M48 at Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel.

Nelson was the son of James and Louisa Elizabeth Dutton of Castle Hotel, 39 Cornhill, Bury St Edmunds and worked in the hotel as a gentlemen's servant.

The Regiment was formed in Egypt in January 1917 from dismounted Yeomanry Regiments as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and came under the command of 230th Brigade in 74th (Yeomanry) Division.



Amos Jack Hargrave was born in Bury St Edmunds on 20 November 1893 and baptised at St Edmund's Church on 5 February 1894.

He joined the 1/5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment and served as a Private (Service number 2291).

His death occurred on 21 August 1915 at the age of 22 years.

Although there is no known grave, he is remembered on Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey, panel 46/47. Sadly, the ravages of time have made the panel shown in the photograph virtually illegible unless large-scale viewing is used. However, the Commission is embarking on a long-term project to replace all the First World War headstones.

Amos was the son of Henry and Catherine Hargrave. He lived at 30 College Street, Bury St Edmunds in 1911.

The Regiment was part of 163rd (Norfolk and Suffolk) Brigade formed in Bury St Edmunds in August 1914, and 54th (East Anglian) Division. On 30 July 1915 they embarked at Liverpool on HMT 'Aquitania', with a complement of 290 Officers and 978 other ranks for Sulva Bay via Mudros and arrived on 10 August landing on 'A' beach near Kiretch Tepe Sirt. On 18 August they moved into reserve trenches but were under constant shelling and sniper fire. They were carrying out improvements to existing trenches and dugouts. Conditions were very difficult due to the heat, steep ground and lack of water. The daily allowance was 1 pint per day for all purposes. It was possible to cool off in the sea but that required a climb of 400 feet each way. He was declared missing in action on 21 August 1915, by which time the Battalion complement was 12 Officers and 499 other ranks.

Cecil Jack Walton Boone. Having been born on 13 June 1920, he was another to have been baptised in St Edmund's Church, this occurring on 7 November 1920.

He attained the rank of Warrant Officer (Pilot) (Service number 1162710) in 166 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, Part of No 1 Bomber Group.

He died 2 September 1943 aged 23 years. He is buried in the War Grave Section at Bury St Edmunds Cemetery, compartment 56, grave 141.

The inscription at the foot of his headstone reads 'One of our pilots is safe'.

He was the son of Jack and Olive Emily Boone (nee Proctor) of 112 Kings Road, Bury St Edmunds. He had married his wife Olive Boone (nee Booth) of Moreton Hall at St Edmund's church on 13 May 1943, tragically only five months before his death.

He was based at Kirkmington Airfield in Lincolnshire (now known as Humberside International Airport) about 6 miles north-east of Brigg and 11 miles north-west of Grimsby. He piloted the Wellington MkIII bomber AS-J ED875. His death was registered at Caistor, Lincolnshire.



Herbert John Cahill was born 27 November 1907 and baptised at St Edmund's Church on 11 February 1908.

He served as Gunner (Service number 1733787) in 181(M) HAA Regiment, Royal Artillery. He died on 31 December 1943 aged 36 years.

He is buried in the War Grave Section Bury St Edmunds Cemetery, compartment 56, grave 140. The inscription at the foot of his headstone reads 'Deep in our hearts a memory is kept of a son we loved and can never forget', words that portrayed the depth of love of his parents Charles and Anne Cahill of 46 Chalk Road, Bury St Edmunds.

The Regiment was formed in October 1942 and disbanded in March 1945. No Regimental records survive.



Reginald Edmund Defew was born in Singapore on 27 February 1914 and baptised at St Edmund's Church on 1 December 1917.

A Lance Sergeant (Service number 5832558), he served with the 1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment as a member of B Company having enlisted on 20 June 1940.

He died on 15 February 1942 aged 27 years. No known grave exists although he is remembered on Singapore Memorial at Kranji, column 57.

THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE REGIMENT	
WARRANT OFFICER	PRIVATE
CANT A	ALLISON A
COY QMR SGT	AINUTT FCM
WATLING H	ANDREWS C
SERGEANT	ANSILL S
AUSTIN RGC	ARNOLD R
BURRELL LG	AVERY F W
CLARY CE	AYLOTT E L
EVERARD J W	BAKER W
HOLLAND P I	BALDWIN A W
HOLYHEAD W	BARRETT A A
KNEUSS P C	BARTON H I
LONG H W	BATEMAN H F
PORTER C A	BAXTER A E
RANSOME E D	BAXTER C H
SMITH R J	BEARD E A
WRIGHT H G	BELL J
LCE. SERJEANT	BELL R I
DEFEW R E	BENNETT A D
KELETT M J	BIRD D A
PRESTON W C H	BLAIR W
SMITH F	BLOOMFIELD
SPINKS R W	BLUNDEN G P
WENN G W	BOLDEN J A
CORPORAL	BREWSTER J W
ABRAHAM G F	BROOKES J W
ASHMAN S G	BROWN A W
BUNNING S T	BROWN S H A
	BROWN W
	BUCK G A
	BUNKALL J A

On 24 September 1938 he married Muriel Ettie Defew (nee Cross) at St Edmund's Church. Before enlisting, he lived at 60 Cannon Street and was a grocery manager. His parents were William and Jane Defew.

In late 1941, along with the 2nd Battalion, as part of 18th (East Anglian) Division he embarked for the Middle East. However, whilst at sea Japan entered the War and he and his colleagues were diverted to the Far East. The 1st Battalion landed in India, but after a very brief stay they travelled to Singapore. They arrived on 29 January 1942 in time to take part in the final battle of Singapore. The Battalion moved in to the line on 4 February and dug in around Sime Road Camp, close to the MacRitchie Reservoir. It held its position against constant attacks by large numbers of infantry and tanks, being surrounded for 2 days but was unbroken. When the order to surrender was given the Battalion was possibly the last to lay down their arms. Reginald was killed in the Bukit Timah area of Singapore.

Francis Thomas Gladwell. Born on 19 February 1920 in Myanmar it was not until 22 March 1922 that he was baptised at St Edmund's Church.



He was a Private (Service number 5828483) in the 5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment D Company.

Dying on 25 August 1943 aged 23 years, he was buried at Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Yangoon, Myanmar, section B3, grave G5.

Before joining up he was a metal machinist. He was the son of Alfred and Maria Gladwell of 2 Chalk Lane, Bury St Edmunds. According to Battalion records his father lived at 13 Springfield Avenue.

Francis served with the Battalion as part of 54 Infantry Brigade, 18th Division which embarked at Liverpool on 27 October 1941 for service in the Middle East. The route was across the Atlantic to Nova Scotia, down the west coast of America and

across the Caribbean to Trinidad. From there they crossed the Atlantic again, to Cape Town arriving on 9 December. By then Pearl Harbour had been bombed and as a result they were sent to Singapore, via India, arriving on 29 January 1942. When Singapore surrendered, he became a prisoner of war on 15 February 1942 and died of diarrhoea at Nicki working on the Burma Railway. The Battalion strength on arriving in Singapore was 979 Officers and men. During the defence of Singapore 35 were recorded as killed in action or missing with a further two dying of wounds. 289 died as prisoners of war, 14 went missing at sea, three died after release, one went missing after release, one died on USS Wakefield, and for one other no information is available.

Jack Denis Thompson. It is believed that he was born around 1920. Variations occur in the spelling of his forename of Denis/Dennis.

He joined the 75 (NZ) Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, part of No 3 Bomber Group where he served as Sergeant (Wireless operator/air gunner) (Service number 1152206).

His death on 7 November 1941 occurred when he was aged 21 years. He is buried at Bergan-op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands in a collective grave 8H 3-7.

His headstone bears the words of a grieving family: 'Treasured memories of a dear only son and brother. At rest. God knows best'. His parents were Ernest Alfred and Edith Ellen Beatrice Thompson of Ipswich.



He was also remembered on a memorial at Cranfield's Mill, Ipswich which has since been demolished.

He died in bad weather on a bombing raid on Berlin from RAF Feltwell. He was in one of two Wellingtons in the squadron lost that night.



Karel (Charles) Valach highlights the contribution made by those from outside the United Kingdom. He was born on 26 January 1918 at Kroměříž, Czech Republic and joined 311 (Czech) Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, serving as Flight Sergeant (Air Gunner) (Service number 787551).

He was the husband of Doreen Francesca Valach (nee Todd) of Langton House, Bury St Edmunds whom he married in St Edmund's Church on 10 December 1940.

At the age of 23 years, his death came on 23 June 1941 only six months after marriage.

No known grave exists but his name is remembered on the RAF Runnymede Memorial, panel 37.

He was one of the gunners on Wellington bomber Serial number KX-T T2990 flying from East Wretham airfield, Norfolk. They took off at 2316 hours on 22 June 1941 on a bombing mission to Bremen and it is believed they were shot down by Ob Lt Prinz zur Lippe Weissenfeld of 4/NSGI. The plane crashed about 0213 hours on 23 June at Nieuwe Niedorp north-east of Alkmaar in the Netherlands. The pilot, Flight Sergeant Vilen Bufka bailed out and was taken prisoner. The rest of the crew, including Karel, were reported missing. They were Pilot Officer Leonhart Smrek, Flight Sergeant Alois Rozum and Sergeant Jan Hejna. The plane hit the ground with so much force that it was buried to a depth that made it impossible to recover the bodies. The spot was marked by a small enclosure with a marble cross and plaque.



The Dutch Government remained proactive in its salvage programme and in May 2021 the excavation of the Nieuwe Niedorp crash site was commenced by a recovery team from the Royal Netherlands Air Force. Not only was this driven by the need to clear the site but by the importance of honouring those who had given their lives in combat.

The site excavation was completed on 17 June 2021 and human remains found in that aircraft were taken to the Royal Netherlands Army Salvage and Identification Service. There, detailed examination using medical records and forensic tests established that the remains were of five airmen.

As some of the remains were as small as 8mm, it was not viable to assemble five sets of remains for individual burial and so the decision between the various authorities in Holland, Czech Republic and the UK was that all the remains would be placed in one casket and interred at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Bergen op Zoom cemetery.

On 23 June 2022, the 81st anniversary of the crash, the five airmen were interred as intended, each of them being commemorated by an individual headstone. Descendants of Karel Valach were able to be present at this moving event.

Earlier mention was made on the spelling of names. The names used above are those listed in The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's official listings. The War Memorial spellings are shown in brackets where different.

On Wednesday 11 November 2015 a poignant hour of reflection, readings and music held in St Edmund's Church commemorated Remembrance Day. The performance of 'The Christmas Truce' by pupils from St Louis School was deeply moving. Organised by Francis Watts, who was unfortunately unable to attend the evening due to illness which sadly led to his death, it brought together those of all ages to remember the fallen and included the reading out of the names of those on the Church memorial.

In 2023 research was undertaken by David Bowden into the memorials within the Coldham Cottage Church to explore a degree of local misunderstanding. There are two memorials in the Church, one by the door to the Sacristy which lists the members of the parish who fought in the First World War and returned. The plaque has a list of 16 names with inscriptions reading 'Roll of Honour' and 'They did their duty'. The second plaque on a plinth at the rear of the Church avows 'Our Dead' and 'RIP' and bears the names:

- **Ernest Robert Betts**
- **Edmund Crosby**
- **Patrick Crosby**
- **Walter John Crosby**
- **William J Farrow**