

# RENDCOMB COLLEGE CIRENCESTER

*QUO LUX DUCIT*

## THE ROLL of HONOUR WORLD WAR II

### **Digital Edition 2022**

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August 2022 NSP

Not long before he was killed in action, **John Russell Harmer** wrote a prescient poem which, ultimately, was published in the Observer newspaper, viz.,

Had I but time and heart, then I am sure  
I could at last win to that distant hill  
Where those who climbed its crag, no more endure  
But dying, live in faith death cannot kill.  
These, by their wit, escaped the touch of death;  
Their laurels fade not, nor their glories change:  
Mine be the task, while yet I draw my breath,  
To find the frosty foothills of the range.  
And if I never reach that topmost height,  
If all my strength and spirit sink too low,  
Or all too soon falls everlasting night,  
Then brush away my footsteps in the snow;  
For they are nearly great who die unknown  
Rather than reap a harvest badly sown.

It is printed here as a memorial to all the young men of his generation who answered the call to serve King and Country but never returned home.

*Let all those who come after them  
see to it that their names be not forgotten*

## **Sergeant Arthur Ashton CALEY, R.A.F.V.R.**

(OR 1926 to 1931) no. 1377873

Arthur Caley was born in 1916 and entered Rendcomb College in 1926. As a first-year student he appeared on stage, as a boy, in the school production of "Spreading the News" by Lady Gregory. He was a practical individual who was adjudged to have produced "outstanding woodwork" in 1929 and he was a keen athlete, winning the Junior Lodges race in 1929, in 15 min. 39 secs., and playing First XI football when 13 years old. He left school to join the Training Ship "H.M.S. Conway" for two years and was reported as being a cadet in the Lamport and Holt Shipping line in 1934.

His subsequent career is not known but he was a Wireless Operator who had already completed a tour of operations with 90 Squadron R.A.F., when he arrived in May 1943 at R.A.F., Oakington, Cambs., from a Heavy Conversion Unit, to commence a new tour of operations with 7 Squadron R.A.F., which was a Pathfinder squadron. He was a member of the 8 man crew of a Stirling Mark I, flown by Squadron Leader J.R. Savage, R.A.A.F., a very experienced pilot, who was also on a second tour of operations.

Arthur Caley participated in a further six operations against highly defended targets such as Dortmund, Wuppertal, Krefeld and Mulheim. On the night of 24th/25th of June 1943, a raid was mounted against a heavily defended target, Elberfeld, which entailed the loss of three of Squadron 7's aircraft, including Savage and all of his crew, who were presumed to have crashed in the North Sea off the Dutch coast. There were no survivors and only one body was recovered from the sea.

## **Lance-Bombardier Albert Raymond CURTIS, R.H.A.**

(OR 1926 to 1933) no. 1086534

Albert Curtis was the son of Albert and Alice Curtis, of Cirencester, Gloucestershire. Following his admission to Rendcomb College as a Foundation Scholar in September 1926, he proved to be a competent scholar and sportsman. He obtained a School Certificate in 1930 and Higher School Certificate in 1933. In 1930, he was elected secretary of the school's legislative body, the General meeting, and subsequently he became a House prefect. His sporting achievements included first team tennis and cricket from 1931, membership of the Football and Hockey 1st XI's in 1932 and Captain of Cricket for two years. In 1933, he was awarded the accolade of "best batsman" and he won an Open Tennis Singles championship. On leaving College, he entered the College of St. Mark and St. John, Chelsea, to complete a teacher training course of 3 years duration, leading to a degree. Thereafter he is believed to have taught in London.

Shortly after the outbreak of war, 'Bert Curtis joined the army. Little is known about his subsequent career but early in 1941 he was known to be serving in North Africa with the Royal Horse Artillery. He was killed in action on December 1st 1941 during a rear-guard action south of Sidi Rezegh in circumstances corroborated by General Mervyn Janes, lately of 4 R.H.A., and present in the desert in 1941, as follows

"The Western desert was renowned as ideal tank country and, in 1941, the Axis powers were acknowledged to possess the most superior armour. The 2nd R.H.A., manned highly mobile units of 2 pounder anti-tank guns, in terrain which provided little cover except that which the armies created for themselves. There were frequent strategic and tactical advances and withdrawals on both sides and gun crews frequently fought at close range, and over open sights. On November 18th 1941, the Imperial Allied forces opened an offensive on the Solium to Jarabub line and captured Sidi Rezegh when the Tobruk garrison sallied forth in support. Field Marshal Rommel, the German C. in C., countered by sending a raiding tank column across the Egyptian frontier which then turned westwards to attack Allied forces in the rear. During an intense battle which went on for a fortnight, Sidi Rezegh was taken from the enemy three times and lost twice. An official report states, "On November 29th the intense conflict again developed when the XVth and XXIst Panzer, and the Italian Ariete division, made another attempt to break out through a ring of steel. Yesterday, (Nov., 30th), the enemy threw into battle all his available armour on a comparatively narrow front . . . (and) . . . there was very heavy fighting throughout the day in the area Sidi Rezegh to Bir el Hamed".

The precise circumstances of his death are not known but an officer of 2 R.H.A was awarded a posthumous V. C., for engaging 60 enemy tanks with a battery of 12 anti-tank guns in the Sidi Rezegh area. Albert was killed on 1st December 1941 during a rear-guard action fought between Belhamed and Bir Reghem, near Sidi Rezegh, when in support of the 4th N.Z., Brigade, and together with many of his comrades he is buried in the [Knightsbridge cemetery at Acroma](#) in Libya.

**Sergeant John Robert GURDON, R.A.F.V.R.**

(OR 1935 to 1938), no 919478.

John Gurdon was born on March 7th, 1922 at Sheepscombe, Stroud, but no record exists of his next-of-kin. During his time at Rendcomb College he developed a keen interest in athletics, particularly as a runner and was successful in the Lodges races. It is said that he craved adventure and after he had left school in the summer of 1938, he was reported to have signed on as a ship's apprentice on the S. S. Jersey City, and was bound for New Orleans and Yokohama.

In 1941, he joined the Royal Air Force and by 1943 he was a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner in the R.A.F., Volunteer Reserve, attached to 166 Squadron, R.A.F., based at Kirmington, Lincolnshire.

His Wellington Mark III aircraft was shot up over Beautor, France on April 11th 1943, and crashed at Couvron following a raid on Frankfurt. The squadron lost 25% of its aircraft on the night of 10th/11th of April 1943.

John Gurdon is buried with 4 crew members at [Couvron-et-Aumencourt](#) communal cemetery, in Northern France.

## **Pilot Officer John Russell HARMER, R.A.F.V.R.**

(OR 1935 to 1942) no. 183571

John Harmer was the son of Ronald and Alison Harmer of Earl's Court. He was born in 1923 and entered Rendcomb in 1935. He had literary talent and as a pupil he wrote several plays to be enacted on the stage in "Big School", and sundry articles for the College magazine, one of which, written in 1939 and entitled "Raid", foretold events in which he would soon participate. John Harmer served on the school's Entertainments Committee which fulfilled an important function in an age when pupils were expected to contribute to their own leisure activities, and he qualified for the Football 1st XI in 1938. On leaving school he spent a year or so working as a cub reporter and as a journalist with the Aeronautical magazine, which also published some of his humorous drawings. He was encouraged in journalism by his grandfather, Mr W. Scotford Harmer, who had been editor of the Wilts., and Gloucestershire Standard.

After serving for six months in the Royal Naval Air Service as an air gunner, he transferred to the Royal Air Force (Air Crews division) in March 1943 and after further training he was appointed as a Sergeant Air Gunner and served with a Halifax squadron in Yorkshire, participating in operations over Berlin and Stuttgart.

In February 1944, he was transferred to 78 Squadron based at R. A. F., Brighton, Yorks. His new crew's first operation was a raid on Trappes, France, on March 6th 1944.

John Harmer died in tragic circumstances during his 31st operation with the squadron on July 19th 1944. These circumstances are described by a survivor, Sergeant Bailey, in a letter written to the current squadron archivist, John Erricker, D.F.C.

Sergeant Bailey states that the aircraft was returning from a raid on a flying bomb site at Acquet, in the Pas de Calais area. It was attacked by a night fighter. A fire broke out and the pilot gave the order to bale out but Bailey was unable to do so because his parachute was in the fire, and the mid-upper gunner was trapped in his turret. Sgt., Bailey remained on board and succeeded in quenching the fire and rescuing the trapped man. Although suffering from severe burns, the pilot managed to regain control of the aircraft and flew it with commendable skill back to these shores, landing at West Malling, which was a forward fighter station. After touching down, the aircraft travelled the whole length of the runway, went down an embankment, and crashed, without bursting into flames. The pilot, F/Sgt., M. Buchanan, was subsequently awarded the D.F.C., and Sergeant Dew, a flight rescue engineer, was awarded the C.G.M.

The great tragedy of this action was that the three men who obeyed the order to bale out, who included **John Harmer**, fell into the Seine estuary, and were drowned. John's body was recovered and he is buried in the military [cemetery at Étaples](#).

The frontispiece of this work includes a prescient poem written by John Harmer, and published in the "Observer" newspaper.

**Lance Corporal Anthony Francis HARRISON**  
(OR 1943 to 1946), no. 14449330

Tony Harrison was the son of George and Dorothy Harrison of Michigan, U.S.A., but he was a British citizen who chose to serve his term of National Service with the 15th/19th King's Royal Hussars. In 1947 this regiment was engaged ostensibly in keeping the peace between Jews and Arabs in the British Mandated territory then known as Palestine. The situation deteriorated and became a terrorist war between militant Jewish groups and the British Army. Corporal Harrison was one of three casualties sustained by the King's Royal Hussars in 1947 when keeping the peace. It is claimed that he was killed by the accidental discharge of a rifle during sentry duty in Jerusalem on January 8th 1947. However, the minutes of the Army's Court of Enquiry are not available to the public.

## **Major Reginald Middleton INGLETON, Royal Marines** (OR May 1930 to July 1936)

Reginald Ingleton, son of William and Alice Ingleton, entered Rendcomb College in 1930 from Aldersbrook School. He matriculated in 1935, and left to become an articled pupil in his grandfather's firm of architects in 1936, after a school career in which he was noted for his prowess at games, particularly hockey, and prophetically, for his skill as a canoeist on "the lake in the park".

He joined the Royal Marines in 1940 and served initially in the R. M., Armoured Support Regiment. Later he specialised as a swimmer-canoeist with an Assault Force known as Detachment 385 before being sent to serve as SEAC's observer in the rank of Major, with Col., Ivan Lyon's SOE Force 136, which organised clandestine resistance against the Japanese.

Major "Otto" Ingleton, a big man weighing 108kg, took part in Operation "Rimau", or "Tiger", which followed a highly successful Operation "Jaywick", in which a commando force made a difficult and protracted journey, by sea, in a native fishing boat, and blew up shipping in Singapore harbour. Operation Rimau did not succeed in its objectives. A task force set out from Freemantle on September 11th 1944 on board the submarine "Porpoise" and established a secret base on the island of Pulo Merapas, off Singapore. Members of the force succeeded in capturing a trading prahu to convey 15 submersible canoes into Singapore harbour, but it was intercepted by a patrol boat and it had to be abandoned and sunk. The raiders split up and fled, but were hunted down, until all of them were killed or captured. Ten men, including Major Ingleton, were incarcerated in Outram Road gaol in Singapore for 9 months, interrogated by the Kempei Tai, and put on trial. Subsequently, all of them were executed by decapitation at Bukit Timah, off Reformatory road, on July 7th 1945 and their graves may be found in the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore. Unusually for enemies of the state who were executed by the Japanese, their graves were recorded and marked, and this distinction may be attributed to the Japanese Court's verdict, given, allegedly, according to the doctrine of "Yu-shi", namely, .."send them to the glory of death to glorify the last of the heroes...Let us not disgrace their spirit by supposing that they may want to be alive. Sending them to death is the only way to send them to an eternal glory. Let us do this".

There are discrepancies between the official account, which suggests that the mission was partially successful, and a detailed post war investigation conducted by Major Tom Hall, which is highly critical of the organisation. Major Hall's appraisal was published in "The Heroes of Rimau; unravelling the mysteries of one of World War II's most daring raids", by Lynette Silver, (Leo Cooper 1991), ISBN 0 08552 334 6. Another book, "The Heroes", by Ronald McKie, (Angus Robertson 1960), takes a more conciliatory view.

Whatever the truth may be, it does not alter the fact that brave men were executed, yet, for thinly disguised political reasons, the instigators of this war crime, particularly the C. in C., General Itagaki <sup>1</sup>, were not brought to account. One of those brave men, who, by his captors' admission, showed great courage throughout, even to the moment of execution on 7th July 1945, was Reginald Ingleton. The Japanese interpreter at the trial, Furuta, has stated that Ingleton asked to shake the hands of his fellow captives before he died and that he thanked Furuta for his courtesy and kindness throughout their captivity. Furuta described Ingleton as "a huge genial man", and as "a mountain of a man, calm, quiet and imperturbable, seated on the floor (of his cell), with his back against a wall and with a book propped on his knees". In captivity, he had shown a penchant for the works of P. G. Wodehouse and William Shakespeare.

Reginald Ingleton was survived by his mother, wife and baby daughter. He is buried in the [Kranji War cemetery](#).

<sup>1</sup> General Seishiro Itagaki was tried for war crimes and executed December 1948, [link](#).



## **Flying Officer George Kenneth NOBLE, D.F.C., R.A.F.**

(OR 1928 to 1932) no. 42424

George Kenneth Noble was born at Whitley Bay, Northumberland in 1915, the son of George and Mary Noble. He was admitted to Rendcomb College in January 1928 and gained a School Certificate in 1932. Latterly he was a School Prefect. He left in 1932 to work in a Public Works Contractor's department.

George Noble may have joined the Royal Air Force before the outbreak of war. He is described in the Commonwealth War Graves' Commission's records as a Lance Corporal but he was given a Short Service Commission as a Pilot Officer in the General Duties branch of the Royal Air Force for 6 years, in August 1939. In 1940, he was stationed at R.A.F. Luka, in Malta, as a member of 148 Squadron, R.A.F., which operated Wellington aircraft.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on December 24th 1940, also previously Mentioned in Despatches.

<https://deriv.nls.uk/dcn30/9610/96103400.30.jpg> GK Noble DFC 24 March 1940 (centre column).

He was reported missing, believed killed, following an operation over Italy, on January 12th, 1941, aged 25 years. His body was recovered and buried in [Catania military cemetery](#) in Sicily. The Supplement to the London Gazette (belatedly) lists G.K. Noble DFC as missing. London Gazette dated 24 September 1941 (5573) link [here](#).

Royal Air Force 148 Squadron, Wellington T2874 Aircraft shot down and crashed over Catania, Sicily, 13 January 1941.

Crew lost: George Kenneth Noble DFC (42424 Pilot Officer), Jack Stidolph (81022 Pilot Officer), Sgt. Samuel Victor Hearfield (633545 Wireless Operator/Air Gunner), Sgt. John Irving Wilson (935111 Wireless Operator), Sgt. Robert Claude Verran DFM (751685 Observer).

<http://www.rafcommands.com/forum/showthread.php?19094-F-Lt-Donald-Sidney-Pinks-Service-No-122235-255-Squadron&styleid=3>

### *NIGHT FIGHTER*

*Pilot Officer Maurice Noble, whose home is at Newcastle...wins the D.F.C. [later Gazette announcement 8 Sept 1944] With his pilot he took part in the destruction of three enemy aircraft at night. He was born at Dunston.*

'Those Other Eagles' by Christopher Shores has an entry for Pinks, and they had three victories with 255 Sqn, all in Beaufighters, in 1944, on 17/18 April, 14/15 May and 8/9 June. The second and third were Ju-88s.

Ref Maurice Noble appeared in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle of April 1st 1942:

*Leading Aircraftman Maurice Noble and Mrs. Noble, of Creagmore, Holeyn Hall Road, Wylam, who attended a recent investiture for the award of the D.F.C. to his missing brother, Pilot Officer George Kenneth Noble, have now received news of his death. He is believed to be buried in Catania, Sicily. He is the son of Mr. G. W. R. Noble, of Fairfield, West Road, Newcastle. He was decorated for gallantry in operations over enemy territory.*

Maurice's brother, P/O George Kenneth Noble, D.F.C., 42424, was killed in Wellington 1c T2874/W of 148 Sqn: <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/ca...ORGE%20KENNETH> (Maurice Noble did not attend Rendcomb College).

## **Corporal Donald Albert James Keough RICHARDS, 4th R.T.R. R.A.C.**

(OR 1929 to 1934) no 7892157

Donald Richards, son of Charles and Gertrude Richards of Westbury Park, Bristol, entered Rendcomb College in 1929 from Woodchester Endowed School. He left in 1934 after gaining his School Certificate to become a Management trainee in a Bristol based business firm. He enlisted in the Army in 1941 and trained as tank crew at Bovington, Dorset before being drafted to the 4th Royal Tank Regiment of the Royal Armoured Corps. Whereas the movements of 4th R.T.R., can be established, there is no evidence to confirm the extent to which Donald Richards was involved, but early in 1941 Corporal Richards was sent with his unit to North Africa.

The war in Egypt and Libya was different from any other theatre of war in that it was a fluid affair, in which strategic advances or retreats were made over huge distances, in comparatively short periods of time. In 1941, the Allies had succeeded in occupying a major portion of Libya, but from early in 1942 the Axis made preparations to drive the Allies out of Libya into Egypt, utilising the advantages of shortened communications, improved supplies, and improved arms and armour. The Allied defence, which had to take account of lengthy supply lines and vast distances, comprised strategically sited but isolated "boxes", each a mile or two square with mined and fortified perimeters and artillery. "Knightsbridge", south-west of Tobruk, was one of them. Roaming between them were three British tank brigades.

A major Axis offensive opened on May 26th 1942 from Bir Hacheim which was to end, eventually, at El Alamein. The offensive developed into fierce battles in the Knightsbridge region on May 24th involving the 1st and 7th British Armoured Divisions, which included the 4th R.T.R. By May 30th, the battle developed into a series of actions over a wide area in the course of which the Allies lost 200 tanks in 10 days to superior armour and artillery, despite some fierce rear-guard actions, and much gallantry. The 4th R.T.R., were conspicuous in the defence of Acroma.

Brigadier James Bouverie-Brine was an officer serving with 1 RTR at the time and has confirmed that 4 RTR was involved with other Regiments, and depleted squadrons, in a fighting retreat to El Alamein. Corporal Richards unit was equipped with slow, but heavily armoured and defensively equipped, "Valentine" tanks for use in supporting infantry in set piece battles. Numerous actions took place around the defensive boxes, such as "Knightsbridge" where 4 RTR was heavily involved, all of which were successively overwhelmed.

Corporal Don Richards was killed in one such action on May 31st, 1942, aged 23 years. He has no known grave and he is commemorated on the [Alamein memorial](#).

## **Flying Officer John Frederick SPENCER, R.A.F.V.R.**

(OR 1933 to 1940) no. 124650

John F. Spencer, son of Henry Edward and Beatrice Louisa Spencer (née House) of Gloucester, was born at Monmouth in 1922. He had one older sister born in 1915. He entered Rendcomb College in September 1933. During his school days, he passed the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations. He served on the General Meeting Finance Committee in 1937, and later he was appointed as an Auditor. In 1938, he was a member of the House Committee, and during the Lent Term of 1939 he was elected as Chairman of the General Meeting, and member of the Council. In sport, he was regarded as an enthusiastic hockey player and regularly kept goal for the 1st team.

After leaving school in July 1940 he enlisted as an Airman in the R.A.F., and was accepted as potential aircrew from February 1941. He completed his flying training, as an Air Bomber, in South Africa and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in June 1942. Subsequently, he was promoted to Flying Officer in December 1942. During the year he was posted to 428 Squadron R.C.A.F., at R.A.F., Dalton, Yorks., which operated Wellington aircraft.

On March 29th, 1943, John Spencer's aircraft was shot down over Gelsenkirchen following a raid on Bochum, Germany. He was 22 years old. The certificate and location of his grave at the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery is given in this [link](#). JF Spencer is listed on the War Memorial in Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, UK.

Navigator Flight Sergeant [Gustavsen](#)'s crew was one of two who failed to return on this night. Wellington III BK564 NA-R took off from Dalton at 19:34 hrs, but nothing was heard from the crew after take off. The Wellington crashed near Gelsenkirchen; Preben B. Gustavsen, Plt Off. Joseph LRF Cartier, and Fg Off. J.F. Spencer died in the crash. Sgt Harold F. Rhodes bailed out, but died from his injuries on 12 April 1943, and Sgt Dale King was captured and became a prisoner of war.

The four other airmen are all buried in the Reichswald Forest [War cemetery at Cleves](#).

Sgt [Dale King](#) who was taken P.O.W. (Stalag Luft L3 Sagan and Belaria), survived the war.

**Trooper Denis Wilfred STONE, Fife and Forfar Yeomanry R.A.C.**  
(OR 1933 to 1938), no.7952967

Denis Stone was the son of Arthur and Florence Stone of Warmley, Gloucestershire. He entered, Rendcomb College in September 1933 and became an enthusiastic writer. A short story written by him appeared in the College magazine in February 1937 when he was a IVth former. He held sundry Meeting offices including those of Games Wardens and membership of sub-committees. Although well built for his age he was regarded as being a young man of gentle disposition.

Denis was killed in action, aged 21 years, on July 18th 1944, when serving as a tank driver with the 2nd Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, Royal Armoured Corps, as part of the 11th Armoured Division during Operation Epsom.

An O.R., contemporary, present nearby that day, has written, "the 11th Armoured Division., units were out on their own for too long and, in any event, their Shermans were no match for the German tanks and the 88mm., artillery". The official records state that following a spectacular aerial bombardment, the 4th RTR's and the 2nd Fife and Forfars spearheaded an advance south east of Caen. They came under heavy fire at close range, and in close formation, so that, according to a 4th RTR survivor, "the lines of Shermans were raked and shattered by hidden Panthers and so easy was the mark that had the German gunners been able to load their guns quickly enough, barely one of the Fifes would have escaped". The greatest destruction was in the vicinity of Cagny where Denis lost his life. The Regimental historian has drawn attention to the extremely high number of casualties sustained in the assault upon this fortified position, most of whom were immolated in "brewed up" tanks. The 2nd Fife and Forfars lost 4 officers killed and 68 other ranks wounded in this action. By nightfall, 43 tanks out of a total of 126 were destroyed at a cost of 336 men killed and wounded mainly between 10.00 hours and 14.00 hours on July 18<sup>th</sup> 1944.

Denis Stone is buried in the [Banneville la Campagne cemetery](#) in France.

## **Flight Lieutenant Roger Claude Vaughan WATERS, R.A.F.V.R.**

(OR 1926 to 1933), no. 142344

Roger Waters was born at Chipping Sodbury, Glos., in 1915, and he entered Rendcomb College in 1926. From his earliest days, he played an active role in the life of the College as an athlete and as an amateur actor. In 1928, he won the Junior Lodges race in 16 min. 43 secs., He represented the College at the High Jump against Burford G. S., in 1930, and was regarded as a proficient football forward in 1930. His earlier promise as a runner continued when he was third in the North Cerney race in '31, third in the Senior Lodges in '32, second in the North Cerney race in '32, returning a time of 23 min. 21 secs., and finally first in the Senior Lodges '32, in 13 min. 10 secs.

Roger Waters passed the School Certificate examination in 1930 and the Higher School Certificate in 1933. Subsequently he trained as a solicitor in Bristol from 1934. He enlisted in the Royal Air Force in the ranks in March 1941, and was granted a commission as a Pilot Officer in the General Duties branch, R.A.F.V.R., in February 1943 after flight training in Canada. An article describing his stay of several months appeared in the College magazine of October 1943. Subsequently, he was promoted to Flying Officer in August 1943, and to Flight Lieutenant in February 1945.

After training as a Navigator, he joined 47 Squadron at R.A.F., Gambut in December 1943 and flew in Beaufighters on anti-shipping operations in the Aegean Sea, where he completed 7 patrols including a successful strike against the M.V. Livenza. Thereafter the squadron moved in stages to India and Burma where it was employed from January 1945 in bombing and strafing patrols against Japanese forces. It was highly mobile, operating under primitive conditions from temporary air strips, and living under canvas. When it arrived at Kumbhirgram, in Burma, in January '45, it had accomplished 7 moves in 18 months. In March '45 the squadron was redeployed to Thazi, and thence to an airstrip so new and temporary that it was, and is not, marked on any published map. During this time Flight Lieutenant Waters participated in a further 20 strikes against forward positions, stores, and river shipping, which required exceptionally accurate navigation.

On May 15th 1945, Roger Waters was the navigator of a *Mosquito* aircraft piloted by the flight leader, Wing Commander Filson-Young (no 39725), when a concentration of Japanese troops was bombed at Rice Mill, Lagubyo, on the River Beloin. Filson-Young's aircraft went into a dive, bombed, and attempted to pull out at 3,500 feet, but the aircraft fell into the river, exploding on impact. Both men have no known graves and their names are recorded on the [Singapore memorial](#).

A contemporary account states that the Squadron suffered a great loss when these two officers were killed. Flight Lieutenant Waters was considered to be one of the squadron's leading navigators and had nearly finished his operational tour.

**Warrant Officer William John Boulton WHALL, R.A.F.**

(OR 1932 to 1936), no. 570575

Bill Whall was born in 1920 at Polegate, Sussex. He was the son of William and Alice Whall, who resided in Bath at the time of their son's death. He joined Rendcomb College from New Oakfield School, Rugby.

Nothing is known of Bill Whall's career but it is believed that he joined the Royal Air Force as an Apprentice Technician before the war. He was serving on detached duty with 179 Squadron R.A.F., when he was killed on April 21st 1947, allegedly as a result of an armed insurrection by natives. The bulk of the squadron had returned to the U. K., by April '47 and it is thought that Bill Whall was part of a contingent left behind to guard R.A.F., Fayid at a time of unrest, when bases were vulnerable to organised raiding parties of thieves which described themselves as national liberationists. Unfortunately, military records of this incident and other contemporary ones of this nature, are incomplete. He is buried at [Fayid war cemetery](#), Egypt.

**Lieutenant Trevor Desmond WRIGHT, M. M. and Bar, ROYAL MARINES**  
(OR 1933 to 1935) 178439V

Trevor Wright's home was in South Africa. He was the son of Frances F. Wright and St. Clair C. Wright of the Transvaal, and he was born in 1918.

He was admitted to Rendcomb College in the autumn of 1933, passed a School Certificate examination in 1934, and quickly gained a reputation as a good amateur actor. In 1935, he gained an Open Scholarship in Art at Reading University, where, according to the College magazine, the Professor came to hold a high opinion of his work. As an undergraduate he represented the U.A.U., at hockey versus London University in 1940.

After passing a Board of Education Examination in Painting he returned home to enlist in the Army, and after a short spell as an acting Second Lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps, he transferred to the ranks of the South African Armoured Brigade and fought through most of the African desert campaign, where he was twice wounded. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery during a defensive action at Agheila and he was twice wounded, gaining a bar to his M.M., for exemplary service.

Subsequently, he was commissioned into the Royal Marine Commandos and served in number 45 R. M., Commando after it was formed in August 1943. He was injured again during training and had only returned to active service for a few weeks when he was killed.

Following the crossing of the River Rhine, the unit participated in the assault on Osnabruck, which had been by-passed by the armoured brigades. In view of heavy sniping on the outskirts, it was planned to attack before daylight on April 4th 1945. Number 3 Commando, which was leading the assault, encountered little opposition, but by the time 45 Commando reached its allotted sector it was quite light. Lieutenant Wright, who was 2 i/c "A" troop, was killed while covering his section during the advance. The section went on to annihilate the enemy in the position which had held them up.

He is buried in the Reichswald Forest [War Cemetery at Cleves](#).

## **Pilot Officer John Graham YOUNG, R.A.F.**

(Staff 1939 to 1940) no. 116691

John Young, better known as "Jock" to many contemporary pupils, was born at East Dulwich in 1913, but he spent much of his childhood in Ceylon where his family were planters. He came to Rendcomb College as a temporary teacher of Classics in September 1939. Being an enthusiastic musician, he assumed responsibility for the Choir, and he conducted the Carol concert in St. Peter's Church, Rendcomb in December 1940.

J. G. Young enlisted in the Royal Air Force in January 1941. After aircrew training he was attached to 604 Squadron R.A.F., as a Sergeant, and on April 5th 1942 he was transferred as an Observer/ Radio and Radar Operator to 125 Squadron R.A.F., Colerne, which was converting from Boulton Paul Defiants to Beaufighter aircraft. When this squadron became operational again it transferred to R.A.F., Fairwood Common, near Bristol, and it was employed on Ground Controlled Interception duties directed, mainly, at enemy aircraft utilising the Irish Sea for a supposedly easier passage north. On July 29th 1942, Sqdn., Leader Barwell and Sgt., Young were credited with the almost certain destruction of a Heinkel 111. In August 1942, Sergeant Young was commissioned.

On September 22nd 1942, two Beaufighters were ordered to carry out a G.C.I., controlled by R.A.F., Wrafton, over St George's Channel. One of them was being flown by P.O. W. King, with P.O. Young acting as Observer. At 22.06 hours radio contact was suddenly lost with this aircraft and the coastguard at Strumble Head reported an aircraft going down in flames. Post war enquiries suggest that it was due to enemy action by a squadron of bombers en route to Merseyside.

Despite an Air Sea rescue search there were no survivors. No bodies were recovered, and the names of both officers are recorded on the [Runnymede memorial](#).



## Re : P.O. John G. Young

The following account, extracted from "The Sky Suspended", by Jim Bailey (Bloomsbury 1964) may refer to P.O. Young if it can be shown that the aircraft in which he was flying on September 22nd 1942 was "Q for Queenie".

"125 Squadron : ...We had our misfortunes too. One night a message came through from Operations saying : "We're unable to contact Q for Queenie and the Observer Corps say they think an aircraft has gone into the sea off the Smalls. It may be someone else, of course, but we ought to try a search. The crashboats will be going out any minute now. What can you do about it ?

We replied, "Two or three of us will load up with flares and as soon as the ships are in position, light the sea for them ".

"OK", replied the controller.

So we set to work collecting additional flares and in a quarter of an hour were airborne. We had met these accidents before, and knew that if Queenie did not call up on the wireless shortly, or come into land with a bent wireless set, he was a dead man.

The moon had just set, high cloud hid the stars. A cold front was approaching from the west, so we flew into it, the amount of cloud increased and the base of it descended.

I checked. Temperatures OK, pressures OK.

Poor old Queenie! Poor bloody navigator! It is sufficient to cut one's own throat as a pilot, but to have it done as a passenger - poor sap!

Control came through on the wireless, "Fuzzbuzz calling. You are right over the place now, can you see the ships? I peered through the darkness which was too wholeheartedly black to allow of distinguishing land from water. There were 2 or 3 little lights below.

"I think so. Thanks very much. Hello Ran, are you in position yet?"

"How the hell should I know! Yes, I can see you to starboard. In position, now".

Ken let go two flares. One failed. The second glowed like an aspiring sun.

I saw three ships below as if it were day. The light was reflected from the ceiling of the cloud which was lowering upon us. Even from up here you could see that the wind had risen and the waters were in turmoil. The flare spanked a wave and went out. It was again pitch dark, St Dunstan.

"Did you see anything, Ran?"

"Not a sausage".

"Here goes the next".

Ken, on whom conjurors have nothing, released a third flare through the hatch. For two minutes there was light. We search, then all is solid darkness once more. Thus, we sent down eleven flares

Thanks to the Observer Corps, we knew for this once the exact place where the aircraft was seen to hit the sea. The ships are in the correct position. The sea is rough and bitterly cold. Speed is therefore essential if someone is to escape. But who could escape, I wondered. Whoever does on these occasions?

"Hallo, Fuzzbuzz, send out our relief with more flares".

"Fuzzbuzz answering. No, I think you had better come in and land, we have some more information for you".

We turned our backs on Queenie, who might, I imagined, have been sitting, distraught and chilled, in a small yellow dinghy riding that fearful sea, certain in such weather to die by daylight.

We flew back, feeling our way through the dark night, wondering the while if more could have been done. Ran and I landed, parked our two aircraft and together entered the dispersal hut. The electric light was bright in our eyes. Gordon rose as we came in. *It was he who had been practising with Queenie.*

"I had you chaps recalled," he told us, "because I saw most of the accident. Old Queenie caught sight of me, —there was still a bit of moon — and thought he would take evasive action. He did so in no mean way. I should think he put the stick hard over for he turned on his side and went straight down. I actually saw a flash a second later, but thought no more of it at the time."

"It was as black as a xxxxxx's xxxxxxxx below cloud", Ran put in.

"Yes, what probably happened was that his gyro toppled and he was too slow going on to his turn and bank instrument, once he had dived."

*"I suppose his navigator may have baled out".*

*"I very much doubt it".*

## **William Allan WYON**

(OR 1933 to 1940)

Allan Wyon did not serve in His Majesty's Armed Forces but he was a casualty of war. He was one of three brothers, the eldest of whom, Dr. Peter H. Wyon, Major in the RAMC (OR 1926-30) and later a senior member of the Old Rendcombian Society. Allan entered College in September 1933 and matriculated in December 1935, following which he obtained a Higher School Certificate in 1939 with distinctions in Mathematics and Physics. Subsequently, he was awarded an Open Scholarship (1939) in Natural Sciences to Wadham College, Oxford. Allan served in sundry offices within the General Meeting and School Council between 1937 and 1940 and was regarded by his teachers and peers as a promising, perceptive scholar.

Sadly, owing to the exigencies of war, Allan did not live to fulfil that promise. At the age of 19 years, he enlisted in the Friends' Ambulance Unit. Although, in his brother's opinion, he was "a sensitive young man and very young to be thrown into tough conditions", he was sent to serve with a Friends' Ambulance Unit attached to the Spears' mission in Syria. His brother John met him in Damascus early in 1945 when in transit, but they had very little time together. Allan was killed on May 25th 1945 when an ambulance in which he was travelling crashed over a cliff. He is buried in Beirut. (*See websites link below*).

# **ROLL of HONOUR**

Rendcomb College  
Cirencester

Originally Compiled by D. J. Payne, (OR. 1940-48)

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The many anonymous Clerks who compiled Regimental War diaries and Squadron Operational records when on active service, and sundry Old Rendcombians, contemporaries of the deceased.

2022 T. Bates (OR 1964-67). Suzanne Happe Veterans Affairs Officer, Canada House, London. E: [suzanne.happe@international.gc.ca](mailto:suzanne.happe@international.gc.ca)  
R.C.A.F. – Royal Canadian Air Force. No 428 Squadron R.C.A.F. was later based (from June 1943) at Middleton St. George, County Durham. (Memorial Garden at Durham Tees Valley Airport).

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