

"I don't suppose we shall hear any more about it."

Shelia Banyard tells how the courage of eight brave Leicester soldiers was recognised by their Belgrave friends

On 22nd November 1919 the Leicester Chronicle featured eight men, all but one in army uniform, photographed at the city's ancient Guildhall. These members of the Belgrave and District Working Men's Club and Institute had "served with distinction during the war and... were each presented with a framed group photograph of themselves at an Armistice Day celebration at the club last week".¹

On that first anniversary of the Armistice over 300 people gathered in the Checketts Road clubhouse to welcome back members who had served and to commemorate those who had not returned. Alongside supper and speeches, the Club's magnificent Roll of Honour was unveiled. On its six vellum panels were inscribed the names of all 485 members who had served including, in a central panel, the names of 35 men killed and 4 who later died. Below were the names of 8 'Medallists', all of whom survived, and were honoured that evening with the presentation photograph.

The desire of communities and institutions to commemorate the men they remembered with such pride led to the design of memorials being left in local hands, both to meet local needs and to make best use of available funds. Deciding on a Roll of Honour, the Belgrave club chose to list in alphabetical groups (rather than strict alphabetical order) the name of every man who had served, without mention of rank or unit. The section for the fallen was set out in the same way. However, an unusual feature was a separate list of those awarded medals. These men, two of them decorated twice, were shown with their rank and in the order of precedence of their awards, the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) and the Military Medal (MM):

Company Sergeant Major George

Henry Antliff DCM

Corporal Lewis Thomas Butler DCM

Regimental Sergeant Major George

Ernest Evelyn Hewes DCM

Private Arthur William Healey DCM

Sergeant William Smith MM and Bar

Sergeant William Freeman MM

Sergeant Robert Robinson MM

Private Mark Monaghan MM and Bar

Their occupations before enlistment reflected the economy of early 20th century Leicester – the shoe, cotton and leather trades, labouring work, blacksmithing and telephone engineering. In 1914 four were, or had been, regular soldiers: Hewes joined the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI) in 1905 and at 32 was the oldest of the eight when war was declared. Freeman was a driver in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA), joining up in 1908. Antliff and Butler were immediately recalled from the Reserve in August 1914 to the Cheshire Regiment and Sherwood Foresters respectively, their service ending only the previous year. These seasoned soldiers were quickly in the thick of preparation and action, but the four volunteers were not far behind: Monaghan and Robinson enlisted in August 1914, Healey in October 1914 and Smith in October 1915. Aged just 21, Healey was the youngest of the whole group.

Details of their service and how their awards were won have not always survived, but those that do illustrate the breadth of their experience of the war and the scale of their bravery.

George Antliff went to Egypt with 8th Battalion Cheshire Regiment in June 1915. In February 1916 he thanked the Leicester Daily Post for its Christmas parcels to the troops *"I am now having a well-earned rest at Port Said, after spending from July to January on the Gallipoli Peninsular, and going through hardships that had better be left unrecorded. I went through the big flood on the Peninsular, and the withdrawal from Helles without mishap, although I have had some very narrow escapes. I have had to leave a good number of my dear old pals behind."*²

On 12th February the Division had begun moving to Mesopotamia where it remained for the rest of the war and, amongst other actions, was instrumental in securing Baghdad and consolidating hard-won territory. In June George was promoted to Company Sergeant Major. The citation for his DCM, announced in August 1918, said:

*"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He has invariably performed his duties with conspicuous zeal and ability, displaying the highest courage and gallantry under fire, and setting a splendid example of devotion to duty to all ranks with him."*³

Lewis Butler landed in France with 2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters on 10th October 1914 and earned his DCM on the Western Front, where his regiment served with distinction. The award was announced in January 1916, with the citation: *"for consistently good work in the trenches"* following in March.⁴ The Leicester Mail, recording that Lewis was a GPO telephone linesman, reported:

*"Pte Butler, while working as a signaller, went to within ten yards of the German trenches, cut their communications, and laid his own wires. This was immediately before the big battle of Hooge, and his coolness under the difficult circumstances deservedly won the attention of his superior officers."*⁵

His medal was presented on 1st July by the Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant of the County, at a parade of the 1st Cadet Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment held in Victoria Park on a day of torrential rain.

Now promoted to Corporal, he was taken prisoner, unwounded, in March 1918 at Lagnicourt during the German Spring Offensive. In August he was in Parchim camp in Mecklenburg and in November in Friedrichsfeld, north of Cologne. From there he was repatriated, arriving in Dover on 30th November.

Honouring Belgrave's War Medallists



Above: HONOURED - Soldiers awarded the DCM and MM for bravery in the Great War, Sgt Maj George Antliff, Cpl Lewis Butler, Reg Sgt Maj George Hewes, Sgt Robert Robinson, Pte Mark Monaghan, Sgt William Smith, Sgt William Freeman and Pte Arthur Healey. Photograph taken from The Leicester Mercury, 7th November 2009,

George Hewes landed in France on 21st May 1915 with 6th Battalion KOYLI which served on the Western Front until 1918. During his deployment he was recommended for the DCM and the award was announced on 3rd June 1916, with the citation *"For conspicuous good work when organising carrying parties and the distribution of supplies, frequently under shell fire."*⁶

A 1938 newspaper report of his death noted that he had been wounded in 1917 at Passchendaele, causing the loss of an eye and damaging his health in later life. In June 1919 he was a patient in the military hospital at Catterick and his injuries led to him leaving the army in September.

Arthur Healey landed in France with 4th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment in March 1915. A newspaper article of August that year described his service:

"Pte. A. W. Healey, of the 138th Mining Section, has received a card from the Commanding Officer of the North Midland Division, to which Brigade he is attached, recognising his bravery in the field."

In a letter dated 1st August to his mother, who lives at 70 Leire Street, Belgrave, Pte. Healey gives a brief account of the deed which earned him the above-mentioned recognition. He says: 'We have been having some hard fighting. Yesterday when we were working in our mine we ran into a German mine under one of our trenches, all ready for blowing up. Five of us got every ounce of explosives out; we got 1,400lbs out, and we had to work like slaves for three hours. If we hadn't found it

some poor devils would have been blown up. We have been recommended to the General, but I don't suppose we shall hear any more about it. The chap that got it all out of the mine itself deserves the V.C.'

Pte. Healey was originally in the 4th Leicesters, enlisting last October, and going out to the front in March. He has been transferred to his present branch of the service since he has been out there. When working in Leicester he was a blacksmith on the Great Central Railway."

Following this action Arthur was awarded the DCM, announced in the local press in January 1916. The citation read *"For conspicuous gallantry when he assisted to uncharge an enemy mine which had been discovered, tamped ready for explosion."*⁸

However, in October 1915 Arthur had been badly wounded in the arm and leg by machine gun fire during action on the Hohenzollern Redoubt. As a result his mother was summoned to visit him in the military hospital in Bradford. The severity of his injuries led to Arthur being invalided out of the army in February 1917.

William Smith enlisted in the Leicestershire Regiment but went on to serve in the new Machine Gun Corps (MGC), formed in October 1915. This especially dangerous work resulting in heavy casualties led to its nickname of 'the suicide club'.

In July 1916 he was a member of 100th Company MGC. During the Somme Offensive his unit was engaged in fierce, ultimately unsuccessful, fighting to take High Wood, near Martinpuich. The 100th Company War Diary for

19th July records that for courageous actions on 15th and 16th July William was one of five soldiers recommended for awards and he was presented with his Military Medal ribbon on 30th July by the Major General of the Division at a parade whilst the troops were in camp at Albert.

As fighting continued during August, William's Company was positioned in Savoy Trench to support the infantry in a further attack on High Wood. Throughout 24th and 25th they were engaged in delivering constant covering fire over a 12 hour period and were under great pressure to maintain the effectiveness of their guns in these extreme conditions. The War Diary for 25th August records:

*"Meanwhile at 6.45pm Cpl Smith proceeded to his objective, No 3 position. Cpl Smith chose this physiological (sic) moment to advance almost on the heels of the first infantry. He had previously brought in a [machine] gun left out by a wounded man under very heavy fire. It was originally arranged that this gun should go with KRRC [King's Royal Rifle Corps] Group but owing to congestion in trenches, on his own initiative Cpl Smith chose to go out from CUPID'S POST. He ran on, carrying the gun himself advancing owing to his enormous strength in front of Worcesters and reached final objective, TEA TRENCH, with leading infantry, personally shooting one German and taking another prisoner. He then went back to our old front line to bring up working party and ammunition. He accomplished all without casualties. This was a very difficult task. No 3 position held and consolidated."*⁹

Honouring Belgrave's War Medallists

As a result of this courageous initiative William, now Acting Corporal, was recommended for the DCM but was in fact awarded a Bar to his earlier Military Medal. Fighting in the Somme Offensive continued until 18th November during which he was again recognised for brave conduct by being Mentioned in Dispatches.

By the Spring of 1917 William had been promoted to Sergeant and his Company was involved in action around La Clytte, an area which saw intense fighting in the Third Battles of Ypres between July and November. The War Diary records that casualties were heavy in the engagement of 25th-28th September and it is likely that it was in this period that he was wounded, for he was posted as such at the end of October.

William (Bill) Freeman disembarked in France with the RFA on 7th November 1914. In December 1915 he wrote thanking the Leicester Daily Post for a Christmas parcel, signing himself Bombardier Freeman 85th Battery RFA, 2nd Canadian Division Artillery, with which his Brigade was fighting that winter and beyond.

In 1917 Bill was awarded the Military Medal, announced in July, an honour always inscribed as awarded for "bravery in the field". Promoted to Sergeant, he was now serving with 84th Battery. Bill would in later years be reported as having been involved in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, where the artillery played a key role by bombarding enemy positions for a prolonged period before the battle commenced in April, and that he had led men 'over the top' with their 18-pounder guns. He himself said that in addition to receiving the Military Medal he had been Mentioned in Dispatches.

Bill was wounded twice in 1917: in September he was discharged from hospital in Étaples to convalesce after being wounded in the arm and a few weeks later the Brigade War Diary lists Bill as one of 13 men wounded and/or gassed on 29th September. It records the conditions on that date: "*A very bad night. The enemy fired large quantities of gas shell (sic) for 5 hours from 1-5am possible 3-4000.*"¹⁰ Bill was one of those gassed and he experienced the after-effects on his eyes all his life. Of the men wounded on that occasion 7 were from Bill's Battery, all of them suffering as a result of the prolonged gas attack. He left the army in 1919, with his injuries contributing to his discharge.

Robert Robinson arrived in France on 29th July 1915 with 8th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. Sometime before 20th October

1916 he was promoted to Acting Corporal, for on this date his award of the Military Medal was announced.

Although precise details are not clear, the action took place between 14th and 17th July when the Leicesters were engaged in fierce fighting around Bazentin Le Petit wood and village during the Somme Offensive. The War Diary records that at the close of the action they had suffered a total of 432 casualties and that 13 officers, NCOs and men were "*recommended for immediate awards for acts of gallantry during the operation*", amongst them "*11473 LCpl R. Robinson*".¹¹ The Leicester Daily Post announced Robert's award on 23rd October and the following month the Leicester Chronicle marked it by publishing his photograph.

Mark Monaghan enlisted with 6th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. By May 1915 he had transferred to the Signals Depot, Royal Engineers, and was specialising as a Line Telegraphist. Having been previously employed by the General Post Office had skills the army could use in the field. After receiving his Certificate of Trade Proficiency he served in France from 24th May 1915.

During August 1915 he was in hospital with pneumonia, rejoining his unit the following month. In October 1916 he was promoted to a higher trade level and in June 1917 became a Lance Corporal.

On 16th August that year his award of the Military Medal was announced.

In April 1918 at his own request he reverted to the rank of Sapper and the award of a Bar to his Military Medal was announced in December. The presentation was made by the Mayor of Leicester on 18th July 1919, with other demobilised soldiers also receiving awards. Mark had been demobbed in March and in the Leicester Chronicle's November photograph of the Belgrave Medallists Mark was the only one not in uniform as it had "*literally fallen to pieces through extended wear*".¹²

Returning home

Approximately 25,000 Distinguished Conduct Medals, 115,500 Military Medals and 5,700 MM Bars were awarded in the war. For men below the rank of commissioned officer these were the second and third highest awards for gallantry in action after the Victoria Cross. But after their extraordinary experiences in combat an ordinary civilian life awaited these men. All eight Medallists returned to live in Leicester with wives and families. Some continued to be afflicted by war injuries, a few resumed old jobs, others followed new paths.

But the Belgrave club's Roll of Honour helped to ensure that their stories would continue to be heard and their bravery not forgotten.

George Antliff went back to work for T Roberts and Sons, Shoe Manufacturers, eventually becoming their Chief Engineer. When he retired on 31st August 1957 he had had worked for the firm for 44 years. He died just a few days later.

Lewis Butler returned to work in the Post Office engineering department and continued there until retirement. He died in 1957.

George Hewes became the licensee of the Fleur de Lis public house in Belgrave Gate. In the last year of his life he ran an off-licence and general stores in Dorset Street, the same street he had lived as a child. He died in 1938 and was honoured with a semi-military military funeral.

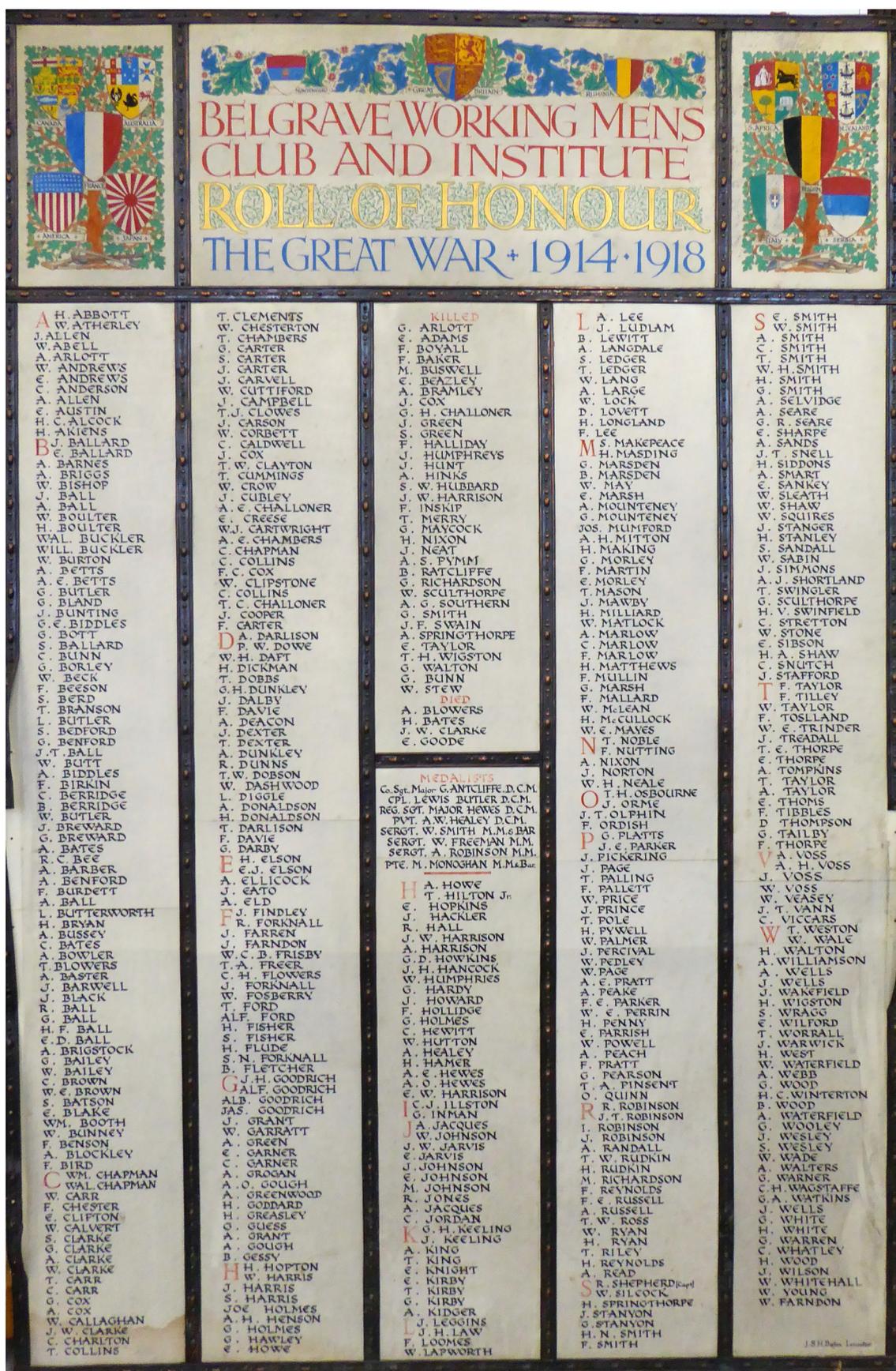
Arthur Healey became active in the Discharged Sailors' and Soldiers' Association soon after leaving the army. He suffered ill health and needed treatment long after the war, but despite significant spells in hospital in Leeds, he was a key figure in the newly formed British Legion in Leicester. He died in London in 1953.

William Smith resumed his occupation as grave digger at Gilroes Cemetery and later moved with his family to Glenfield. He died suddenly at work in 1946 and the newspapers noted that he had been employed by Leicester Corporation for 40 years, for most of that time as sexton at Gilroes.

Bill Freeman worked at the British United Shoe Machining Company, later becoming landlord of the Griffin Inn in Belgrave Gate and then Steward of the British Legion Club in Bond Street. He was a staunch member of the Old Contemptibles' Association and felt strongly about the support injured former soldiers should receive. He died in 1977.

Robert Robinson was demobilised in February 1919 and worked for Leicester Corporation as a Tramway Conductor. He died in 1962.

Mark Monaghan continued working in the GPO engineering department until his retirement on health grounds in 1940. In 1942 he was presented with the Imperial Service Medal in recognition of his work with the department since 1913. He died in 1969.



Above: Roll of Honour from the Belgrave Working Mens Club and Institute, honouring those who served in the Great War.

References:

- 1. Leicester Chronicle, 22nd November 1919, p8.
- 2. Leicester Daily Post, 23rd February 1916, p5.
- 3. Supplement to The London Gazette, 21st October 1918, p12393.
- 4. Supplement to The London Gazette, 11 Mar 1916, p2655.
- 5. Leicester Mail, 3 Feb 1916, p3.
- 6. Supplement to The London Gazette, 21st June 1916, p6145.
- 7. Leicester Daily Post, 17th August 1915, p5.
- 8. Supplement to The London Gazette, 10th March 1916, p2681.
- 9. The National Archives WO 95/2431/3.
- 10. The National Archives WO 95/293/1.
- 11. The National Archives WO 95/2165/1.
- 12. Leicester Mercury, 7 Nov 2009, p7.

The Twenty Allied Faces of Vorden

Honouring Allied War Dead in The Netherlands, including a Gateway Grammar Old Boy

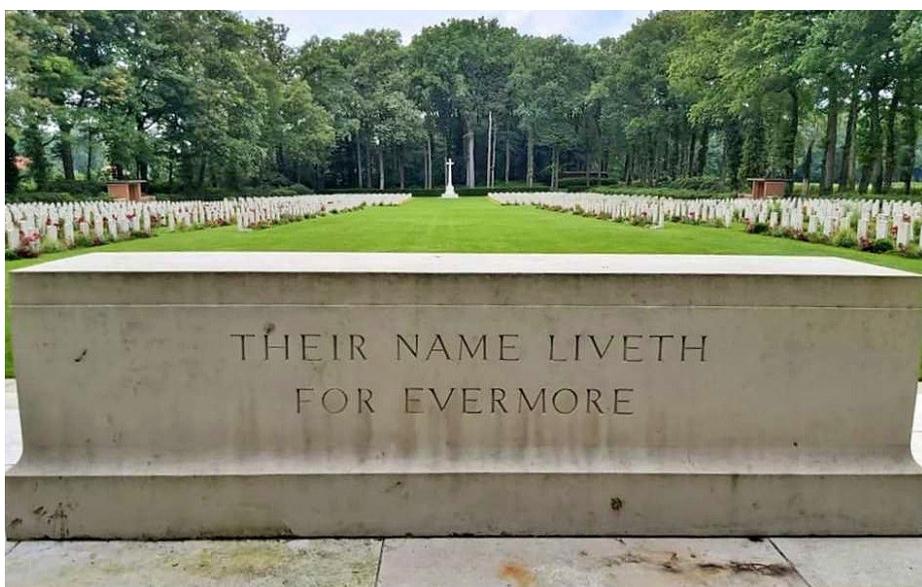
Jan de Jager, a volunteer concerned with people and places with *TracesOfWar* delivers this article on the war memorials in village of Vorden, Gelderland, The Netherlands.

The Netherlands, which had remained neutral until then, became involved in the Second World War on 10 May 1940 when Germany invaded the country. On that very day, the first British activity took place in the skies above the Netherlands and the first British airmen were killed on Dutch territory.

When the RAF intensified its bombing of Germany, the route to and from the target often passed over the Netherlands. These bombings resulted in enormous losses in terms of human lives and material, and the crew members who were killed were buried in the towns and villages where they had crashed. Unlike the Americans and Germans who died in the Netherlands and were reburied in central cemeteries after the war, this did not happen to the victims from the Commonwealth countries. This explains the large number of cemeteries in the Netherlands where these graves can be found.

With Operation Market Garden, the ground war also moved to the Netherlands. The soldiers who died during Market Garden and afterwards in the autumn of 1944 in the Netherlands are buried in their own British or Canadian cemeteries. These are mainly found in the south and east of the Netherlands.

Vorden, in the Dutch province of Gelderland, is one of the villages where aircrews who were killed in action are buried. Twenty British and Canadian soldiers who were killed in action rest in a circular courtyard of honour at the village's General Cemetery. Eighteen of them belong to the crews of the three British bombers that crashed near Vorden in 1942 and 1943. Two graves are those of British officers who, in October 1944, after escaping from captivity following Market Garden, were recaptured and executed by the German SD



(Secret Police).

One of the victims buried in Vorden is a young man named Peter Gordon Arthur Malin from South Wigston, Leicestershire. He was

the son of Arthur William Malin (1892-1970) and Martha Lilian Peabody (1890-1987). They lived at 80 Bull Head Street, where Peter was born on 22 October 1918.



Above: Statue of Queen Victoria, Park Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. Above: Statue of Queen Victoria, Park Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

Honouring Allied War Dead in The Netherlands

After attending Wigston Infant School and then Wigston Secondary School and Gateway Grammar School, he went to work in Leicester for a leather goods company called Pemberton & Co.

In 1939, Peter volunteered for the RAF Voluntary Reserve. He was assigned to the 156th Squadron at RAF Cardington and left for Canada in January 1941 for further training. After returning to England, he made his first operational flight as a pilot on 14 January 1942 from RAF Alconbury.

A few days later, on 17 January, Peter married his fiancée Betty Norman at All Saints Church in Wigston. Unfortunately, their marriage was not to last long. On 31 May 1942, Peter was killed at the age of 23 when his plane was shot down over Linde (Vorden) in the Netherlands. His wife Betty was already pregnant with their first child and on 31 October 1942, their son Michael Peter Malin was born.

On the night of 30/31 May 1942, his Vickers Wellington bomber, registration DV715, was part of a massive raid on Cologne. After dropping their bomb load, their aircraft was most likely attacked by a German night fighter on the way back, with fatal consequences. Parts of the aircraft fell in various places near Vorden, and the burning and uncontrollable aircraft crashed a few dozen metres from a house, where the remaining ammunition exploded. Due to the sea of fire, the local

residents could do nothing for the crew, and the next morning, nothing remained of what had once been an aircraft in the smouldering wreckage.

In the afternoon, German soldiers arrived and quickly found the first body. A day later, three more bodies were found. They were buried on Friday, 5 June 1942, at the General Cemetery in Vorden.

The fifth body, that of gunner Raymond Catley, was not found until 8 June. Several photographs of the funeral have been preserved, showing a large attendance by the local population.

After the war, the bodies were exhumed by the British Graves Commission with the intention of identifying them. Only Catley and Cooke, fellow crew members, could be identified with certainty. The other three, including Peter Malin, could not be identified. Their remains were buried in two communal graves.

In the early years after the war, simple wooden crosses adorned the graves until they were replaced by the familiar stones of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Residents of Vorden adopted and cared for the graves, and over the years, contacts and friendships developed with the families of the soldiers. Peter

Malin's grave was maintained by the pupils of the public primary school in Vorden. In 1985, Peter was still remembered. When their



Above: **Photographic Portrait of P.G.A. Peter Malin**

school celebrated its 150th anniversary, the pupils sent the commemorative booklet, which included the story of their son and brother, to his mother and sister.

Every year on 4 May, the day before Liberation Day, the Netherlands commemorates its dead from the Second World War. Over the years, the group of victims to be commemorated has been expanded to include those from later conflicts and peace operations in which the Netherlands has been involved. There are also



Above: **Wellington Mk.IA (N2887) of the Central Gunnery School, 24th June, 1943.**

Honouring Allied War Dead in The Netherlands

tentative initiatives to involve Germany in this. In many places, this is a sensitive issue and the question of who and how remains a subject of debate.

On 4th May, at 8^{pm}, the entire country observes two minutes of silence. In addition to the national commemoration in Amsterdam, each place has its own form of remembrance. In many places, gatherings are held at graves and monuments and flowers are laid. In Vorden, this commemoration takes place at the war graves, where the 20 soldiers who gave their lives for the liberation of the Netherlands are also remembered. Every year at the beginning of May, their photographs are placed at the graves and remain there throughout the month. Relatives from England regularly attend this commemoration in Vorden.

At the large Canadian Cemetery in Holten, lights are lit at all the graves every year on Christmas Eve, and in 2015 the idea arose spontaneously to adopt this custom throughout the Netherlands. Not only at the large CWGC cemeteries, but also in towns and villages where there are sometimes only a few war graves. This initiative was widely followed, and on Christmas Eve 2015, there were already candles burning at war graves in 140 places in the Netherlands. This tradition has since grown further, and by Christmas 2024, candles were burning at more than 26,000 graves and memorials in 500 locations throughout the Netherlands, where they remained until after Christmas. And so it is in Vorden!

In 2022, it became clear once again that Vorden has not forgotten the crew of the Wellington. Exactly 80 years after his grandfather's death, Peter Malin's grandson Simon unveiled a simple monument at the site where the plane crashed in 1942.

In addition, after years of research by local researchers and a crowdfunding campaign, a book entitled "De 20 geallieerde gezichten van Vorden" (The twenty Allied Faces of Vorden) was published in 2022. They searched archives and spoke to relatives and the last surviving witnesses. A worthy tribute to "The 20 Allied Faces of Vorden".

LEST WE FORGET

Jan de Jager for [TracesOfWar.com](https://www.tracesofwar.com)



Above: **Dutch children laying flowers on the graves of the hundreds of men who parachuted into Arnhem on September 17th, 1944. Arnhem has honored the memory of the fallen men on each year since the liberation.**



Above: **The annual Christmas eve lighting of candles at the war graves at the Arnhem Oosterbeek war cemetery**

Sources:

The 20 Allied Faces of Vorden, Omkijpunt, Freerd Boekelo and Robert Ellenkamp www.omkijpunt.nl, www.tracesofwar.com
Addendum to Article Vorden/Malin
Nowadays, the Dutch War Graves Foundation (Dutch War Graves Foundation) is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the graves. As part of mutual grave maintenance, those in non-CWGC cemeteries are maintained by the Dutch foundation and, conversely, the CWGC maintains the Dutch graves in its cemeteries.

Some figures:

There are 18,521 military personnel from Commonwealth countries buried in the Netherlands. The identities of 221 of these victims are unknown, and more than 1,000 military personnel who died on Dutch territory are still missing. The CWGC has 42 cemeteries of its own in the Netherlands, and Allied military personnel are also buried in another 464 Dutch cemeteries. Source: CWGC.

POLAND

The third in the series by **Denis Kenyon** explores war, occupation and memorialisation in Poland.



Having written about France (Issue 14) and Germany (Issue 16), in this issue we focus on Poland.

Because of its position, over the centuries Poland has seen waves of invasion both from the west and from the east. In the 20th century, both Germany and Russia have overrun Poland. The Poles a proud nation, have fought back valiantly, usually against overwhelming odds. Suffering occupation, some people through either belief or coercion assisted the enemy, which once the conflict was over, caused much lingering suspicion of neighbours and bitterness. Something, which we in Britain have not had to endure since 1066, so we should not judge.

This has meant that as a nation, they are somewhat conflicted about memorialisation. But before we look at war memorials within Poland, let us examine Polish memorials in Great Britain. Approximately 230,000



Above: **Logo of the Polish Institute of National Remembrance**

Poles fought alongside the allies in WW2, consequently their losses are commemorated in several locations.

One major Polish memorial, is the that located at RAF Northolt, in memory to over 2,165 Poles who died serving with the Royal Air Force. They paid a particularly prominent

part in the Battle of Britain accounting for some 12% of downed German planes.

At the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire is the memorial to the Polish Land Forces, featuring bronze figures representing the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Underground State.

These two memorials have a very distinctive style with the Polish eagle on top and on the Land Forces memorial, a woman signifying active defiance of the civil population.

In the CWGC cemetery in Newark, are 397 individual graves to Polish service men, the headstone similar to ours, but with a differently shaped top.

The Institute of National Remembrance was set up following the collapse of the Soviet Union, to investigate and if necessary, prosecute Nazi and Communist crimes carried out between 1917 and 1990. The war memorials erected since the Soviet

Below: **Plac Kasińskich Warsaw Uprising Monument, dedicated to the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Wincenty Kucma and Jacek Budyn 1988-89**



Memorialisation in other lands

withdrawal, pull no punches.

With this history of numerous partitions, the Institute's role is to create "a collective memory" round which the nation could rally.

The memorial, previous page, unveiled on 1st August 1989, commemorates the Warsaw uprising against the Germans, which lasting 63 days, took place from 1st August until 2nd October 1944. The Poles had hoped that their "allies" the Soviet Army, positioned just across the Vistula from Warsaw, would come to their assistance. But Joseph Stalin and the Red Army was playing a treacherous game, waiting for the Germans to crush the uprising and then take over the city themselves. More than 150,000 people died.

This image on the right shows citizens of Warsaw, coming out of the ruins to attack the Germans. The figures below left has the survivors retreating down into the sewers intending to fight another day.

In Great Britain fortunately, we have never had the need for such graphic reminders of brutal times past.

Rubbing salt into the wound, in late 1945, the Soviets erected this statue (far right) in Warsaw titled "Brotherhood in Arms". In total there were in excess of 200 Soviet war memorials and numerous statues of Lenin, Dzierzynski the head of the KGB and other Russian luminaries.

With a deep loathing of times under the Soviet yoke, as can be imagined these constant visual reminders stuck in the craw. This particular memorial was removed to a museum in 2013.

Shortly after 1989, the Polish Government came to the conclusion that the Soviet era war memorials were peddling a false narrative of "brotherhood" when the reality was of "masters and serfs". In 2016 a law was passed - *Prohibition of Propagation of Communism or Any Other Totalitarian System Act* requiring all local authorities to dismantle any vestiges of Soviet domination. War cemeteries were specifically excluded.

The invasion by Russia of Ukraine in February 2022 significantly speeded up the whole process.

43 Soviet era war memorials have been demolished in Poland. As blunt as this solution has been, by following this path Poland has affirmed its sovereignty, ensuring that its public spaces celebrate the nation's hard-earned freedom, as opposed to its Kremlin-coerced past.

The Polish Government pulled no punches in creating this monument bottom right. It is titled "Monument to the Murdered and Fallen



Above: **The Polish War Memorial, South Ruislip.** Below: **Polish Armed Forces War Memorial, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire, England.**



Right: **The memorial in Skaryszewski Park being removed in 2018.** Credit: **Jakub Kamiński.**

in *The East*". Unveiled on 17th September 1995, on the flat-car which is set on tracks, are Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim symbols. Each railway sleeper displays the names of places from which Polish citizens were deported for use as slave labour in the USSR, and the names of the camps, collective farms, exile villages and various outposts of the gulag that were their destinations, including the mass murder sites used by the Soviet NKVD.

Being on the "front-line" of potential hostilities over the centuries, the Polish Government is determined to show to the world, via the symbolism of war memorials, that they have neither forgotten not forgiven and are a strong and determined nation who will not bow to a foreign yoke.



Above: **Polish war graves at Mount Vernon cemetery, Edinburgh.** Credit: **Derek Crowe - derekcrowe.com.**



Above: **Monument to Brotherhood in Arms standing in Vilnius Square but now housed in Museum of Polish History, Warsaw..**



Above: **Monument to the Fallen in the East in Warsaw.**

Hohenzollern

The Great Charge of the
Leicestershire Terriers' at the taking of the
"Famous Hohenzollern Redoubt."
at the Battle of Loos. 13th October 1915.

T'was the 13th of October,
When the stirring charge was made
On the Hohenzollern Redoubt,
By the 'Terriers' Brigade.
They had held the line in Belgium
For eight long weary months
They'd had no chance to go forward
But they'd never drawn back once.

And now the chance was given them
Each heart was filled with joy.
From the G. O. commanding
To the youngest drummer boy.
We relieved the 'Guards' at midnight
They explained to us the ground
And how the trenches to the front
With machine guns did abound.
A Captain passed along the trench
"Keep calm my lads," said he
"And by the help of God above
We'll claim a Victory."

The boys they understood him,
And all ready for the fray,
They cracked their jokes with ne'er a thought
Of might be 'fore end of day.
At midday came an awful noise
Like a hundred peals of thunder
Our Artillery had opened its deadly fire -
'Twas like earth being rent asunder.

At One PM we gassed them -
A harder death unknown;
But they who make the horrors of war
Shall reap what they have sown.
During those two hours of waiting,
An awful feeling's given
You think of those you've left behind
And a prayer goes up to heaven.
At five to two the order came -
"Stand to, Boys, and get ready."
'Tis hard, thus waiting for your doom,
to be both calm and steady.
Again the order came along, -
Two minutes to go - now, one -
Then: Over the top and at 'em, Boys,
For God's sake, do get on!"

Over the top - to find you're one
Of a silent khaki wall,
With to do or die for England!"
Wrote on the face of all.
In a second or two you find yourselves
Masters of their front line -
Then it's: "Over and at 'em again my lads,
Go on - you're doing fine!"
On no man's land many a hero fell,
As on, still on, they came;
And their folks at home will feel proud to know
T'was for right and an honoured name.
At last we have gained the ground we want,
But, Oh, what a lot we lost!
Still we did our duty, for the order was -
"Take and hold it whatever the cost!"
They were game to the last, and held their ground
For two long days, we're told,
And the Guards, relieving, were moved to tears
At so many so stiff and cold
The boys who are left shed silent tears
As they fight it over again;
For many a pal, ay, and brothers, too,
Are numbered with the slain
Trust in God - the Chaplain has said,
"and think of the badge you wear,"
They did, and they thought of their parents, too,
Whose name they proudly bear.
If only the 'slackers' in England now
Would think of those who are gone,
And resolve to shed their own life's blood
For the sake of a dear old home.
If they all in one voice would cry, "I will"
Then this terrible murder would cease,
And the world at last, would be clothed in a robe
Of everlasting Peace.
Think of the time in years to come,
And they ask, "Did you fight in the great war, Dad,
So that I might have a home?"
You proudly answer, "yes, my lad,
Long before you came,
So that you might have an English home,
And bear an honoured name!"

Composed by one of the lads
Of the 1/4th 'Bengal Tigers'
"The Fighting Fourth"
"Heroes of Loos"

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