

Long Lane Memorial

The stories of men from the Long Lane area who fought and died in
World War 2 (1939 – 1945)



November 2015

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Introduction

This booklet has been put together to make real the WW2 (1939 – 1945) names on the Long Lane Memorial. They were young men, from Heald Green and surrounding areas, who left their homes to defend our freedom and never returned. We must remember them.

This document covers the stories of the four men on the memorial who died and the Cemeteries and Memorials where they are buried and remembered.

- Gunner W.J.R. Dudley, R.A.
- Flying Officer E. Francis R.A.F
- Corporal W. Pollock R.A.S.C.
- Lance Corporal E. Roscoe R.A.S.C.

The following two names have also been included in this document:

- Sergeant Kenneth Eastwood Walmsley RAFVR has been included as for some reason his name has been overlooked and does not appear on the War Memorial.
- Lance Corporal David Wilson Stitt has also been included as he was killed in 1982 in one of the worst terrorist bomb attack in Northern Ireland whilst serving in the Army with the 1st Battalion, Cheshire Regiment.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following:

- The Forces War Records information was taken from their web site.
- The Cemetery and Memorial information and photographs are taken from the CWGC (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) web site.
- Find a Grave web site.
- The late Joan Heinekey's "Heald Green in Wartime" booklet.
- South Manchester Crematorium Office
- Sheila Dean (daughter of Eric Roscoe)

This document complements the one produced last year which commemorate the centenary of WW1 and covered those names on the memorial that died in WW1.

Should you have any further information about those listed in this booklet and would like it to be included then please use the contact details below.

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William John Robert Dudley - Gunner, Royal Artillery

Gunner "John" Dudley lived in West Avenue. When he was called up in 1942 his elder brother George was already a rigger in the R.A.F. stationed in India and his sister was training to become a nurse. He went into the Royal Artillery but was transferred into the Herts and Essex Yeomanry as a wireless operator. He survived the D-Day landings, and was in the headlong dash to save occupied Paris, when the boat in which he was travelling across the River Seine was sunk by enemy fire. He was weighted down with his equipment and drowned. His sister, Mrs. Kerr, said that the army sent home his dried out uniform which she found heartrending. He is buried in St Desir War Cemetery, France, which is the most easterly of the cemeteries from the Normandy campaign and it contains burials of men killed in the final stages of this campaign.

Parents: George and Alice Dudley, of Cheadle, Cheshire.

Forces War Record

DOB: Circa 1924
Age: 20
Date of Death: 01/09/1944
Rank: Gunner
Service Number 14367163
Service: British Army
Regiment: Royal Artillery
Battalion: 191 (The Hertfordshire and Essex Yeo.) Field Regiment
Archive Reference: WO 304/4
Place of Death: Western Europe Campaign, 1944/45

Place of Commemoration



ST. DESIR WAR CEMETERY

Country: France
Locality: Calvados
Grave Reference: VI. F.1

St Desir is a village on the N13 to Caen, 4 kilometres west of Lisieux.

Eric Frances - Flying Officer, Royal Air Force

Flying Officer Eric Frances served throughout with distinction and his mother was waiting for him to come home in 1945 when she was told he had been killed when two planes collided whilst night flying. It is thought that he had been taking part in saturation bombing of Germany when the planes were taking off and landing at the airfields on the east coast around the clock, so there were several accidents as planes circled the field to land, and wings touched.

Eric's surname is recorded as 'Francis' by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, although it correctly records his parents as Arthur and Agnes Frances. He was married and lived at 4 Meadows Road, Heald Green. His wife, Jean, had been married to his best friend, surnamed Gilfoyte, before he had been killed serving with the army. Eric had been best man at their wedding. He had completed several operational flights and had recently been promoted, no doubt at the same time as was transferred to heavy transport aircraft. He died aged 25, on 3 June 1945, when his plane crashed.

Forces War Record

DOB:	Circa 1920
Age:	25
Date of Death:	03/06/1945
Rank:	Flying Officer (Navigator)
Service Number:	181591
Service/Regiment:	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve



Place of Commemoration

CHEADLE AND GATLEY CEMETERY

Grave: Section 12, Grave 60

Historical Information:

The cemetery contains war graves of both world wars. The 1914-1918 burials number 28, and are in various parts of the burial ground. There are 41 Service burials of the 1939-1945 war and they too, are distributed throughout the cemetery.

Willson (Ken) Pollock - Corporal, Royal Corps of Signals

Willson Pollock lived with his wife Glyn E. Pollock in Heald Green, Cheshire and his parents are the Revd William Brown Pollock, M.A., and Rosalie Pollock.

Forces War Record

DOB: Circa 1906
Age: 39
Birth Town: Liverpool
Nationality: British
Date of Death: 05/01/1945
Rank: Corporal
Service Number: 2588744
Service: British Army
Regiment: Royal Corps of Signals
Battalion: 165 W/T Medium Sec.
Archive Reference: WO 304/7
Place of Death: Western Europe Campaign, 1944/45

Place of Commemoration



HASSELT (KRUISVELD) COMMUNAL CEMETERY

Country: Belgium
Locality: Limburg (Belgium)
Grave Reference: Row A. Grave 10.

Eric Roscoe - Lance Corporal, Royal Army Service Corps



Here in the photograph Eric is seen wearing the Australian type bush hat that he wore whilst serving in West Africa.

Eric was born in Moston, Manchester and his parents (Albert and Ellen Roscoe) and sister came to live in Heald Green at 10 Meadows Road in 1929 when the house was newly built. Heald Green was a very rural place then, lots of fields and ponds around. Apparently he learned to drive in the field at the back of the house. There were no driving tests then, no bus service (only trains) and the nearest doctor was in Gatley. He and his friends had a small band and he played drums.

He was married at about 28 to a Scottish girl from Glasgow and they bought a house in Brown Lane, Heald Green. A year later a baby girl (Sheila) came along but unfortunately Eric's wife died three weeks later in 1936 and he and the baby moved back to 10 Meadows Road to live with his parents, the house is still in the family in 2015.

When war came along, he joined up in the army. At one stage he was stationed in West Africa among other places. In September 1944, the British Paratroopers were engaged in a bitter and, and ultimately, unsuccessful mission to capture the bridge at Arnhem, Holland. The so called "Bridge Too Far". Eric was involved in a mission to drop supplies to our troops at Arnhem. The Dakota was shot down and all were killed. The crew are buried together at Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery.

Of all the tragedies of this battle, that of the re-supply was one of the worst, for the dropping zone was in enemy hands, but no one could get a radio message through to tell them. So the unarmed Sterlings and Dakotas flew into withering fire. Major Gen. Urquart said "the gallantry of the re-supply boys was magnificent"

Forces War Record

DOB:	Circa 1908
Age:	36
Date of Death:	21/09/1944
Rank:	Lance Corporal
Service Number:	T/1736143
Regiment:	Royal Army Service Corps
Battalion:	223 Air Despatch Company.

Place of Commemoration

ARNHEM OOSTERBEEK WAR CEMETERY

Country: Netherlands
Locality: Gelderland
Grave Reference: Coll. grave 4. C. 2



Kenneth Eastwood Walmsley - Sergeant, Royal Air Force (VR)



For some reason Kenneth Walmsley's name does not appear on the War Memorial.

Kenneth lived with his father Harold Walmsley and his mother Alice Walmsley at 12 Ash Grove.

Sergeant Walmsley, a rear gunner in a Wellington bomber, was returning from what was called a 'Nickel' operation (missions away from main bombing runs) when he died after his aircraft crashed in southern England, after a flight over Belgium. A number of his fellow crew were injured but survived.

Forces War Record

Name:	Kenneth Eastwood Walmsley
DOB:	7 June 1924
Age:	19
Nationality:	British
Date of Death:	01/01/1944
Rank:	Sergeant
Service Number:	1750354
Service/Regiment:	Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Kenneth was cremated at South Manchester Crematorium and he is also commemorated on the Memorial Screen Wall (panel 22) in the adjacent Manchester Southern Cemetery

Details taken from the Crematorium Register Record No 21872:

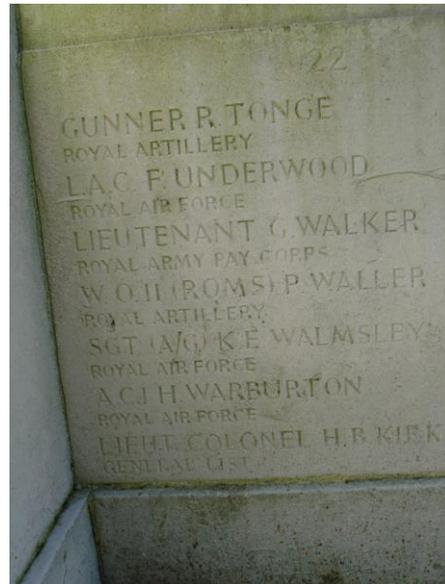
Name:	Kenneth Eastwood Walmsley
Date of death:	1.1.44
Cremation date:	7.1.44
Reg. District:	Droxford
Reg. Sub-district:	Droxford
Address:	12 Ash Grove, Heald Green
Age:	19 yrs
Father:	Harold Walmsley (Director)

Manchester Southern Cemetery:

177 casualties of the 1939-1945 War are commemorated on the Memorial Screen Wall (see photo below) which stands in the 1939-1945 War Graves Plot, in Manchester (Southern) Cemetery.



You can see Kenneth's name on Panel 22 of the Screen Wall – see photo to the right.



David Wilson Stitt - Lance Corporal, Army



Name/rank:	Lance Corporal David Wilson Stitt
Service:	Army
Service Number:	24278310
Regiment/Corps:	CHESHIRE
Place of Birth:	Bowden
Date of Birth:	31 January 1955
Age:	27
Date of Death:	06 December 1982

David Stitt, of Brandon Avenue, Heald Green, was a pupil at Etchells then Prospect Vale Primary School. Then he went to Broadway School, whereupon leaving, he went into the Cheshire Regiment. In his time with the Cheshires he served all over the world, taking in Belize, Germany, Canada and Norway. David was a veteran of five tours to Northern Ireland and was at one time the youngest serving soldier in Ulster.

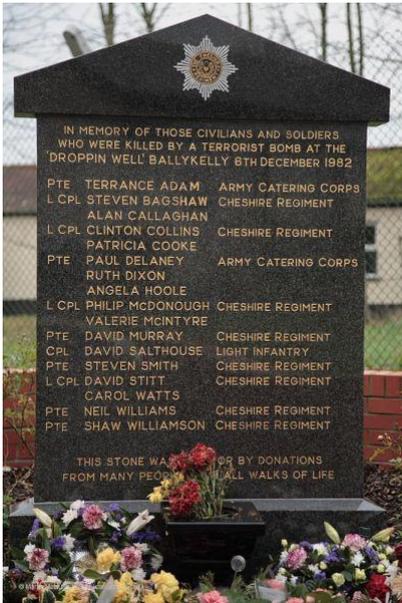
David was killed in the bombing of the Droppin' Well bar in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland, which was described at the time, by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, as "One of the most horrific crimes in Ulster's tragic history."

Eleven soldiers and six civilians were killed when a bomb exploded during a disco in the pub. David Stitt was one of the eleven soldiers killed. David's father, John, said: "He had always thought of it as a job and always said that if it was time for him to go it would happen wherever he was. He enjoyed it in the army and he had only just extended his period of service for three years."

The attack was carried out by the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), a republican paramilitary group. They were targeting soldiers stationed at the nearby Shackleton barracks in County Londonderry.

As the British Army vacated Shackleton Barracks a decision was taken to relocate the memorial - which was erected inside the army base following the bombing - to the Church of Ireland in Ballykelly.

David's funeral service was held at St Catherine's Church on 17/12/82, Heald Green, with full military honours. It was conducted by the Rev. David Garnett. The cremation took place at Stockport Crematorium.



The photograph shows the Droppin Well' Memorial (Ballykelly Memorial Garden) in the grounds of Ballykelly Church of Ireland, Main Street, Ballykelly, County Derry, Northern Ireland.

The memorial commemorates the 11 British soldiers and 6 civilians killed during an INLA bomb attack on the Droppin Well pub.