

Commemoration of those who died in World War 2



Researched by Luddesdowne PCC and parishioners in 2014 in memory of all those mentioned in this booklet who made the ultimate sacrifice for King and Country.

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**St Peter & St Paul
Luddesdowne**

1939 -1945

David Alastair Sparrow

Rank: Flying Officer

Number: (Pilot) 126770

Regiment: 151 Sqdn. Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Died: 20th April 1943 aged 21 yrs

Cause: Killed in Action Netherlands

Additional information: Son of Joseph Albert and Janet Marian Sparrow, of Gravesend, Kent.

Grave/Memorial Reference: Plot A. Row E2. Grave 9.

Cemetery: Onstwedde General Cemetery, Netherlands. There are only two British War Graves in this cemetery.

Location Information

Onstwedde is 56 kilometres east of Groningen and 15 kilometres south of Winschoten.

The cemetery lies north of the village in Dorpstraat, on the road to Wedde. The Commonwealth war graves can be found in the front right hand corner of the cemetery.

Commemorated on the Memorial Plaque in St Peter and St Paul's Church Luddesdowne and there is also a stall given in memoriam in St George's Church, Gravesend

houses a reception room for visitors and other offices.

In addition to the Commonwealth plots, the cemetery also contains French, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Belgian and Italian sections, and a number of war graves of other nationalities all cared for by the Commission. The American Military Cemetery is the responsibility of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Brookwood Military Cemetery now contains 1,601 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 3,476 from the Second World War. Of the Second World War burials 5 are unidentified, 3 being members of the R.A.F. and 2 being members of the R.C.A.F.

The war graves of other nationalities in the Commission's care number 786 including 28 unidentified French.

As an agency service on behalf of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, the Commission also maintains a plot of the graves of Chelsea Pensioners, which is situated adjacent to the Military Cemetery, and a small plot containing the graves of 12 members of the nursing services in the adjoining Brookwood Cemetery is also in the Commission's care.

The Brookwood Memorial stands at the southern end of the Canadian section of the cemetery and commemorates 3,500 men and women of the land forces of the Commonwealth who died during the Second World War and have no known grave, the circumstances of their death being such that they could not appropriately be commemorated on any of the campaign memorials in the various theatres of war. They died in the campaign in Norway in 1940, or in the various raids on enemy occupied territory in Europe such as Dieppe and St Nazaire. Others were special agents who died as prisoners or while working with Allied underground movements. Some died at sea, in hospital ships and troop transports, in waters not associated with the major campaigns, and a few were killed in flying accidents or in aerial combat.

The Brookwood (United Kingdom 1914-18) Memorial was created in 2004. It commemorates casualties who died in the United Kingdom during the First World War but for whom no graves could be found.

Used by permission of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Sources:

'Action Stations Volume 4. Military Airfields of Yorkshire'.

Author: Bruce Barrymore Halpenny.

Published by Patrick Stephens Limited.

'RAF Airfields of World War 2'.

Author: Jonathan Falconer.

Published by Ian Allan Publishing.

'Bomber Squadrons of the RAF and their Aircraft'.

Author: Philip Moyes.

Published by Macdonald & Jane's Publishers Limited.

'The Blitz - Then & Now' Volume 1.

Author: Winston Ramsey.

Published by After The Battle Series

Brookwood Military Cemetery

Brookwood Military Cemetery is owned by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and is the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the United Kingdom, covering approximately 37 acres.

In 1917, an area of land in Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis) was set aside for the burial of men and women of the forces of the Commonwealth and Americans, who had died, many of battle wounds, in the London district.

This site was further extended to accommodate the Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. There is a large Royal Air Forces section in the south-east corner of the cemetery (which also contains the graves of Czechoslovakian and American airmen who served with the Royal Air Force) and the Air Forces shelter building nearby houses the register of the names of those buried in the section. A plot in the west corner of the cemetery contains approximately 2,400 Canadian graves of the Second World War including those of 43 men who died of wounds following the Dieppe Raid in August 1942. The Canadian Records building, which was a gift of the Canadian government,

Canadian Air Force Personnel Crew of Halifax bomber LV 996 429 (Bison) squadron

Mardyth Wesley Sanderson

Rank: Flight Lieutenant (Pilot)

Service number: J/14905

Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force

Birth: 18th July 1916

Death: 6th March 1945

Age: 29

Force: Air Force

Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force

Division: 429 Squadron.

Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB

Grave Reference: 50. F. 7.

Commemorated on page 561 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca



Joseph Paul Nault

Rank - Officier Pilote (Navigator) (Pilot Officer)

Service number: J/93930

Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force

Birth : Unknown

Death: Le 6 Mars 1945 (March 6th 1945)

Age: 29

Force: Air Force

Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force

Division: 429 Squadron.

Additional Information:

Son of Elie and Albina Nault; husband of Jeannette P. Nault, of Hull, Quebec. They were French Canadians which is why Joseph's headstone is in French and what is listed above.

Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB

Grave Reference: 50. G.1.

Commemorated on page 549 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca



the rest of its stay in the U.K. Equipped originally with Wellington III's and X's, they began operating with Halifax II's in September 1943, changed to Halifax V's in November, then in March 1944 to Halifax III's. By the end of March 1945, it was flying Lancaster I's & III's, with which types it made its last few attacks of the heavy bombing campaign. Logging 3,221 operational sorties in all, the Squadron dropped or laid more than 8,100 tons of bombs and mines in its 16 months of operations in 1944 and 1945 alone.

429 lost 71 aircraft and 451 aircrew, of whom 82 were killed, 322 missing, 23 prisoners of war and 24 proved safe. Gallantry awards were 45 DFC's, two Bars to DFC's, one AFC, one CGM and seven DFM's.

At the end of August 1945, 429 was again transferred, this time to No. 1 Group, and engaged in Operation Dodge repatriating service personnel from Italy to the U.K. It continued this work until its disbandment on 31st May 1946.

R.A.F. Leeming, Yorkshire.

Situated in the Vale of York, Leeming dates from 1938 when parts of Clapham Lodge and Wilson's Farm were made into an airfield for use by Yorkshire Air Services. However, in the latter half of 1938 this area, and some adjacent land, was acquired by the Crown, drained, levelled and made into an airfield for the Royal Air Force. It was constructed as a standard bomber airfield with permanent brick buildings and officially opened in June 1940. From then, and until the end of World War II, Squadrons which operated from Leeming included No's. 7, 10, 102, 35, 77, 419, 408, 405, 424, 427 and 429 plus 1659 HCU. Some stayed only a few weeks or months, but the two longest resident units were 427 (RCAF) from May 1943 to May 1946 and 429 (RCAF) from August 1943 to May 1946. Leeming is currently, (December 1997), still in use by the RAF.

All seven members of the crew are interred in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Woking, Surrey. It has been established that they were:

Pilot: Fit/Lt Mardyth Wesley SANDERSON. Age 23.
Service No. J/114905. Mitchell, Nebraska USA.
Row 50 Grave P7.

Navigator: P/O Joseph Paul NAULT. Age 29.
Service No. J/393930. Hull, Province of Quebec,
Canada. Row 50 Grave G 1.

Air Bomber: P/O Henry Nixon PRINCE. Age 22.
Service No. J/94371. Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
Row 50. Grave F9.

Wireless Operator/
Air Gunner: P/O Adrian Steve LEROUX. Age 23.
Service No. J/94407. St. Claude, Manitoba, Canada.
Row 50. Grave F6.

Air Gunner: F/Sgt Andrew Glen CALDWELL. Age 20.
Service No. R/281867. Reston, Manitoba,
Canada. Row 50. Grave F8.

Air Gunner: F/Sgt Philip Felix GONROSKI. Age 19.
Service No. R1281969. Brandon, Manitoba,
Canada. Row 50. Grave F5.

Flight Engineer: P/O William Russell STRAND. Age 28.
Service No. J/91014. Vancouver,
British Columbia, Canada. Row 50. Grave F 10.

In 1995, Chris Price from Meopham arranged to have their names entered in the 'Book of Remembrance' in Luddesdowne Parish Church. During the evening Remembrance Sunday service, their names, with those from Luddesdown who fell in the two World Wars, are read out to the congregation.

429 (BISON) Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force.

429 (Bison) Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force was formed at East Moor, Yorkshire on 7th November 1942, as a bomber unit of No. 4 Group. Five months later it was transferred to No. 6 (R.C.A.F.) Group. On 11th and 12th August 1943, came a move to R.A.F. Leeming, Yorkshire which was to be the Squadron's home for

Henry Nixon Prince

Rank - Air Bomber
Service number: J/94371
Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force
Birth : Unknown
Death: March 6th 1945
Age: 22
Force: Air Force
Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force
Division: 429 Squadron.

Additional Information:

Son of Henry and Margaret Jane Prince, of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB

Grave Reference: 50. F. 9.

Commemorated on page 556 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca

'Sincere and true in his heart and mind
Beautiful memories he left behind'



Adrian Steve Leroux

Rank - Pilot Officer, wireless operator / air gunner

Service number: J/94407

Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force

Birth : Unknown

Death: March 6th 1945

Age: 22

Force: Air Force

Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force

Division: 429 Squadron.

Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB

Grave Reference: 50. F. 6.

Commemorated on page 534 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca



ascertained that the aircraft was a Halifax B Mk. III, LV996 of 429 (Bison) Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force based at RAF Leeming, Yorkshire and during the night of 5th/6th March 1945, had taken part in a raid on Chemnitz, Germany. During the early hours of the 6th the aircraft came to grief whilst, it is believed, attempting to land at Luddesdown. Some reports state that three or four members of the crew survived the crash. However, they were seriously injured and died on their way to Hospital.

Precisely why they attempted to land on the decoy airfield is not known. Were they damaged by enemy action, short of fuel, lost, injured on board, who knows? One report states that the aircraft was on three engines, the undercarriage unserviceable and that they were attempting to land at what they believed to be West Mailing approximately ten miles to the south. Were the lights on at Luddesdown? If so why? According to sources, all 'Q' sites had closed down at the end of 1943, attacks by the Luftwaffe on mainland Britain at this time being few and far between. Gravesend had closed to operational flying in June/July 1944 due to V1 attacks on London and the South East. The area, surrounded by Barrage Balloons, made operations from Gravesend more than somewhat hazardous.

One informant states that a friend of his was out hunting one night in the 1950's with his partner and got lost, stumbling on the site by accident. There were rounds of .303 ammunition on the ground and he kept some for a number of years until they became corroded and he disposed of them. In front of him he saw what appeared to be a pool of water but which, on inspection, turned out to be melted aluminum. Another says concrete blocks on which the generators stood are still in-situ. It appears the Halifax came to a standstill in a wood and because it was a very cold night any survivors died of exposure.

**A newspaper clipping from
'The Red Deer Advocate' on 4th April 1945**

Details of the crash of Halifax #LV 996 (which) was airborne 1652 (hours) 5 Mar 45 from (RAF) Leeming on a raid to Chemnitz, Germany.

Homebound, it crashed at Halling some 4 miles SW of Gillingham, Kent, after running out of fuel. All were buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery. The crew members were: F/L (P) M.W.Sanderson, age 23, from Mitchell, Nebraska, U.S.A.; P/O (FE) W.R.Strand, age 28; P/O (N) J.P.Nault, age 29, from Ottawa; P/O (BA) H.N.Prince, age 22, from Hamilton, ON; P/O (WAG) A.S.Leroux, age 23, from St. Claude, MB; F/S (AG) A.G.Caldwell, age 20, from Reston, MB, and F/S (AG) P.F.Gonroski, age 19, from Brandon, MB

The following was researched by © Christopher Price of Meopham, Kent in December 1997

**Halifax LV996 429 (BISON) Squadron
Royal Canadian Air Force.**

In a booklet describing the history of The Cock Inn, Luddesdown, Kent is the following paragraph:-

'Luddesdown was appointed as a secret "QX" site for RAF Gravesend and acted as a decoy airfield by illuminating flares or lights at night to lure enemy aircraft to release their bombs. The tragic crash of a Canadian crewed four engined bomber returning from a raid on Germany is but one of the sad local stories that have been passed down from that period.'
There were two 'Q' (or 'QL') sites which were decoy airfields designed to lure enemy aircraft to drop their bombs in open country in the vicinity of RAF Gravesend, one on Cliffe marshes, the other, generally referred to as Luddesdown, was actually situated at Upper Bush Farm, Cuxton.'

Subsequent enquiries regarding this incident have

Andrew Glen Caldwell

Rank - Flight Sergeant / air gunner

Service number: R/281867

Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force

Birth : Unknown

Death: March 6th 1945

Age: 20

Force: Air Force

Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force

Division: 429 Squadron.

Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB

Grave Reference: 50. F. 8.

Commemorated on page 501 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca

Additional Information:

Son of Alexander Clyde and Sarah Alma Caldwell, of Reston, Manitoba, Canada.

'A loved one from our home is gone
A voice we loved is stilled'



Philip Felix Gonroski

Rank - Flight Sergeant
Service number:R/281969
Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force
Birth : Unknown. Born in the UK
Death: March 6th 1945
Age: 19
Force: Air Force
Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force
Division: 429 Squadron.
Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB
Grave Reference: 50. F. 5.
Commemorated on page 519 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca

Additional Information:

Son of Tony (died 15 May 1954) and Frances (died 2 June 1960) Gonroski, of Brandon, Manitoba, Canada.

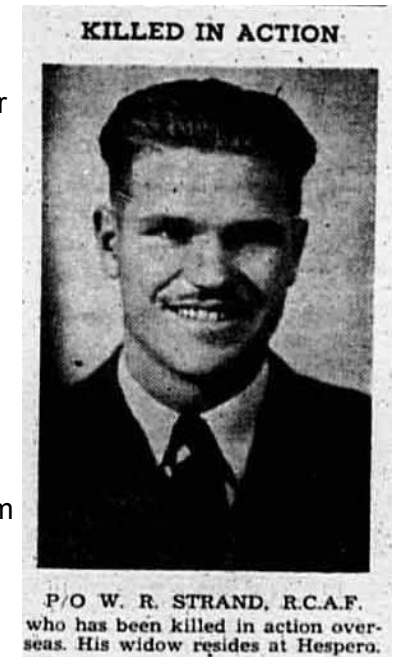
'A bud that will unfold in heaven'



William Russell Strand

Rank - Pilot officer/ Flight Engineer
Service number: J/91014
Inscription: Royal Canadian Air Force
Birth : Unknown Born in the UK
Death: March 6th 1945
Age: 28
Force: Air Force
Unit: Royal Canadian Air Force
Division: 429 Squadron.

Cemetery: Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom GU24 0JB
Grave Reference: 50. F. 10.
Commemorated on page 567 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance. See www.veterans.gc.ca



Additional Information:

Son of Charles Strand and of Mary Strand (nee Donaldson); husband of Joan Strand, (nee Darlington), of Vancouver, British Columbia.

'At the going down of the sun
And in the morning.
We will remember him'