

St Peter's Church, Formby

Review of the Ten Commonwealth War Graves in the Graveyard



Prepared to mark the VE Day Celebrations 08-10 May 2020

Introduction

This review has been prepared to commemorate the ten graves in the graveyard that meet the published criteria of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) which honours the 1.7 million men and women who died in the armed forces of the British Empire during the First and Second World Wars, and ensures they will never be forgotten. The CWGC work began with building, and now maintaining, cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories and managing the official casualty database archives for their member nations. The CWGC core principles, articulated in their Royal Charter in 1917, are as relevant now as they were over a hundred years ago:

- Each of the Commonwealth dead should be commemorated by name on a headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be equality of treatment for the war dead irrespective of rank or religion.

CWGC are responsible for the commemoration of:

- Personnel who died between 04 August 1914 and 31 August 1921; and between 03 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 whilst serving in a Commonwealth military force or specified auxiliary organisation.
- Personnel who died between 04 August 1914 and 31 August 1921; and between 03 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 after they were discharged from a Commonwealth military force, if their death was caused by their wartime service.
- Commonwealth civilians who died between 03 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 as a consequence of enemy action, Allied weapons of war or whilst in an enemy prison camp.

Military casualties buried in a grave are commemorated with a CWGC headstone or pedestal marker. If they have been identified, their military details are engraved in a standard layout. Some may also have a religious emblem and personal inscription chosen by their family. [we have eight]

Those with no known grave are commemorated on one of the Memorials to the Missing, according to where and when they died.

Individuals who died away from the battlefield, or after they were discharged may have been buried by their family in a churchyard or civil cemetery and their grave marked by a private memorial [we have two].

Commonwealth civilian casualties from the Second World War are commemorated in specially bound volumes of the Roll of Honour held at Westminster Abbey in London.

We have a further five graves of people who died after 31 December 1947 that are nevertheless commemorated with a CWGC headstone. These, along with all but one of those included on other plaques inside church and on private memorials in the graveyard, are not included in this review.

Background

Whilst I enjoy undertaking family research, it is not helped when around 60% of service records from WWI were destroyed in a bombing raid during WWII which struck the War Office repository in Arnside Street, London. Where a record of enlistment is available, I have given the information although such data is not strictly necessary for this review.

I have added footnotes when appropriate where additional information can be given either about an individual or point to a broader, common interest in the Appendices.

I asked myself during early research "Why are these graves here at all?" After all, I have visited WWI graves in France and the Menin Gate in Belgium; I've seen civic memorials in Formby and those more formal like the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffs and the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London. Many didn't serve overseas in France, Belgium or Germany. So why are there CWGC graves in St Peter's Churchyard? Well the answer came with the realisation that there was a Home Theatre of War in addition to the, perhaps, more familiar Theatres. All ten along with thousands of others signed on the dotted line not knowing what lay ahead. They were not only willing but actually gave their lives so that others might live and for that, we will remember them.

At the time of drafting this review, we are going through another testing time with the Coronavirus pandemic. This time it is 2020. Appendix 4 explains an earlier pandemic in 1918 and the numbers involved. I hope and pray that this one is less severe than that one.

On a lighter note a remarkable co-incidence during my research, like meeting a work colleague or neighbour whilst on holiday. Two of the descendants in the families I met had played together as children in Graburn Road, Formby.

Finally, I am grateful to the invaluable help given to me by individuals and by websites in preparing this review. I have listed them formally in Appendix 5, Acknowledgements. I would like to record my special thanks to Richard Walker for proof reading and keeping me going and to Dr David Unwin for his professional interest in the causes of death and interpretation of them. I am deeply thankful to them all. A map of the ten graves is at Appendix 6.

Mike Fletcher
St Peter's Church
Formby

April 2020

In Memory of
Flight Sergeant Pilot

Walter Alexander Dixon

R/109932, 195 (R.A.F.) Sqdn., Royal Canadian Air Force who died on 09 April 1943 Age 24

Son of Thomas Russell and Ellen Jane Dixon, of Markdale, Ontario, Canada.

Remembered with Honour

Walter was the first son born to Thomas (a farmer) and Ellen (nee McKay). He had two elder and two younger sisters; and a younger brother William McKay (Mac) Dixon. On leaving school, he went to America and got a job as a stock clerk in Detroit for two years before returning to Canada as citizenship in America was not possible. He had a couple of clerical jobs before applying to be a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and joined on 04 August 1941.

The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan had been launched in December 1939 and was a major program for training Allied air crews during World War II operating in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The programme comprised four stages: Manning Depots where the required basics were taught, education up to the required RCAF academic standard, an aptitude test followed by streaming into aircrew or groundcrew; Initial Training Schools with theoretical studies, tests and a "test flight"; Elementary Training Flying Schools operated by civilian flying clubs with mostly civilian instructors; and finally military Service Flying Training Schools. Walter gained his Pilot's Flying Badge and was promoted to Flight Sergeant on the same day, 19 June 1942. Following further training with RCAF he arrived in England in November 1942 and was posted to 55 Operational Training Unit, RAF Annan for low level flying experience. He was then posted to 195 Squadron, RAF Hutton Cranswick, Yorkshire on 11 January 1943, a month before the squadron moved to RAF Woodvale, Formby on 25 February 1943 to train for low level sweeps over France prior to D-Day.

Walter flew from Woodvale in his Hawker Typhoon on 09 April 1943 to carry out very low-level strafing runs over Burscough railway line but hit a railway signal arm and crashed fatally at New Lane near Martin Mere. Walter died at Burscough aged 24. The cause of death was certified as "Multiple injuries sustained in aeroplane crash. War operations". The informant was F H Horton, Clerk to Ormskirk UDC. Walter was buried on 11 April 1943.

Walter's younger brother "Mac" was in an amphibious converted Sherman tank that sank. The tank crew waited for the tank to fill with water then opened the hatch and escaped. Mac was picked up by a passing landing craft which itself was then shelled so he swam the last 100 yards to the beach. The Canadian troops went on to achieve their mission to destroy a telegraph pole inland. Mac survived the war intact.



In Memory of
Private

Reginald Edgar

TR/3/15026, 51st Bn., Training Reserve who died on 30 October 1919 Age 20

Son of George and Catherine Edgar of Formby

Remembered with Honour

Reginald, born in Maghull in 1898, was the fourth child of George and Catherine (nee Thompson). He was baptised in Halsall Parish Church. Earlier, and by 1891, his father George had moved south from Cumberland to Maghull, was single, working as a postman, living as a boarder with the Thompson family and married their daughter Catherine a month later. The 1901 Census shows them with five children, now living next door to the in-laws. Ten years pass with the addition of two more boys but the 1911 Census also shows father George living as a boarder in Formby, still working as a postman but wife Catherine remaining with the children in Maghull. I suspect this was a temporary arrangement as the whole family later moved to Formby.

In January 1916 the Military Service Act was passed. This imposed conscription¹ on all single men aged between 18 and 41 unless they were eligible for exemption. Reginald was 18 on 22 November 1916 and “enlisted” on his 18th birthday. After eight months serving with the 51st Battalion of the Training Reserve he was discharged due to ill health². He was issued with a Silver War Badge³ which he could wear to show he was a discharged service man.

Reginald died at home, 17 Willow Grove, Formby. His occupation is shown as Army Pensioner. The cause of death was certified as “Pulmonary Tuberculosis leading to Syncope” – collapse due to loss of consciousness. The informant was his younger brother William present at the death. The burial took place on 03 November 1919.

The Edgar name lives on through one of Reginald’s nephews whom I managed to locate and speak with; and through several grandchildren.



¹ See Appendix 1 - Conscription

² See Appendix 2 - King’s Regulations

³ See Appendix 3 - Silver War Badge

In Memory of
Sergeant Wireless Op./Air Gunner
John Alfred Entwistle

977325, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on 20 March 1941 Age 23

Son of John and Edith Entwistle of Freshfield, husband of Lily Entwistle of Whitehaven.

Remembered with Honour

John (Snr) and Edith Partington's marriage was registered in Liverpool in 1915. On 01 September 1917 their first child, John Alfred, was born. He was baptised on 07 October 1917 at St Peter's Church, Formby whilst living at 5 Cummins Road. His father's occupation was listed as a soldier but I was unable to confirm that fact. Almost 3 years later in 1920, a second child George Ravenscroft was baptised at St Peter's and at this time the father's occupation is shown as a railway clerk.

Sadly, George died in 1936 aged 16. Three years later, the 1939 Census almost certainly finds John living at home with his parents at 25 Whitehouse Lane, Formby. The entry is currently redacted and an alternative explanation for the redaction takes place the following year when John married Lilian Allan. Lilian could have been visiting Formby. The couple married at the Registry Office in Whitehaven, Cumberland on 06 April 1940. The certificate records John as an Aircraftman in the RAF residing at RAF Penrhos, Caernarfon (formerly a railway clerk) thus following in his father's footsteps; and Lilian residing at her home in Whitehaven. Later in 1940, John and Lilian had a son. He was named George Stanley, no doubt after John's younger brother.

Only months later, on 20 March 1941, John took off with two colleagues from the Torpedo Training Unit, RAF Abbotsinch, now Glasgow Airport, in Bristol Beaufort L9814. The flight was to carry out a training exercise but crashed off Lady Isle, Firth of Clyde according to one report. Deaths are registered by the office covering the place of death, in this case Troon. The certificate records John's occupation as a railway clerk and Sergeant Wireless Operator / Air Gunner RAF. The body was found on 13 May 1941 at 6.50pm on a marsh near Black (Road?), Troon. Last seen alive on 20 March 3.30pm. The cause of death was "Accidental drowning. Flying accident" and the informant the Officer Commanding RAF Troon. Also killed was the navigator Sergeant D.F. Cade but the pilot, Sergeant E.W. Poole survived his injuries, plus two further events and the war.

John was buried on 22 May 1941. The burial record shows extra comments by Revd. H.P. Barsley including "Rear Gunner, RAF and former Chorister and Server". The pipe organ memorial plaque also includes his name. Probate in Liverpool on 26 July 1941 supports the death certificate above.



In Memory of
Major

Robert Hodgins

Indian Army who died on 01 February 1918 Age 39

Son of Robert and Mary Hodgins of Summerhill, Tipperary; husband of Mary Hodgins

Remembered with Honour

Robert Hodgins was born at Nenagh, County Tipperary, Ireland on the 29 October 1878, the eldest son of Robert Hodgins (Snr) and Mary (nee) Mounsey. He had two elder sisters and one younger brother and sister.

The 1901 Census of Ireland finds him living with his cousin in Rathfarnham, Dublin as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He obtained his commission in the Indian Army on the 16th Mar 1901. He also held the rank of Assistant Commissioner with the Burma Military Police.

Robert married Margaret Daisy Wilson at Shwebo, Bengal, India on 13 September 1905. He and his wife had three children; Robert (Jnr) Crossman (1907), Pamela Margaret (1910) and Michael Minden (1912). Robert Jnr became a solicitor and Deputy Town Clerk. Michael joined the Anglican church and was latterly Secretary of the London Diocesan Fund and the Archdeacon of Hackney for 30 years until 1981.

On 06 October 1917 Robert arrived at Liverpool aboard the Henzada from Rangoon, Burma. The address he gave in the passenger list was 1 Wordsworth Crescent, Harrogate.

Robert died on 01 February 1918 at Shaftesbury House⁴, Formby aged 39. The cause of death was certified by Dr E.S. Hayes Gill as "General Paralysis of the Insane". GPI is a severe neuropsychiatric disorder that leads to cerebral atrophy in late-stage syphilis. The informant was William Lomax present at the death. He was buried on the 03 February 1918. His death certificate and subsequent probate records gave his home address as Minbu, Lower Burma, India.



⁴ Shaftesbury House on the south side of Ravenmeols Lane, was the home of Dr. Stanley Gill who also ran it as a private Mental Hospital. It was described as having well wooded grounds, nearly 10 acres in extent, affording ample privacy for exercise and recreation. It had an attractive hall used for concerts at which Percy French entertained. It is now the site of Harebell Close

In Memory of
Private

Herbert Holme

42237, 3rd Bn., The King's (Liverpool Regiment) who died on 20 March 1917 Age 34

Son of Edward and Catherine Holme of Macclesfield; husband of Esther Holme of Formby.

Remembered with Honour

Herbert Holme was born at Roby in 1882, the son of Edward Holme and Catherine (nee Watkin) who were married at St. Michael's Church, Huyton in 1870. Herbert's mother Catherine was from Huyton and his father Edward from Macclesfield, Cheshire. His known siblings were Thomas Edward (1871), Charles Gorst (1873), Rowland (1878), Emily (1884) and Albert (1887).

Edward Holme was the station master at Garston railway station in 1871 and at Roby railway station in 1881. In the 1880s Edward started to work for the tramways as a cashier and inspector and the family relocated to Seaforth where the youngest child, Albert, was born. Edward died in 1910.

Herbert Holme was already a gardener in 1901 and, in pursuit of his career, he moved to the Formby district where he was boarding at 5 Rimmers Avenue by the 1911 census. His younger siblings Emily and Albert were living alone in Seaforth at the time, their mother having died earlier in 1911. Herbert married Esther Gardner, the daughter of a timber merchant, at St. Peter's Church, Formby on 24 April 1911.

Herbert enlisted in the King's (LR) at Southport on 15 November 1915. A single page of his pension records has survived. It shows that on 06 March 1917 he was assessed by a Medical Board as suffering from a heart condition that was not the result of and not aggravated by military service. Just two weeks after the Board he was dead. He was formally discharged as physically unfit on 27 March 1917 a week after his death.

Herbert died at Liverpool Royal Infirmary. The cause of death was certified as "Pneumonia (Lobar) leading to cardiac failure". The informant was his widow Esther of 21 Old Mill Lane, Formby. He was buried on the 23 March 1917.

Herbert and Esther had only one child, Herbert (Jnr) Thomas, who born on 22 October 1917, some seven months after his father's death. Esther received a War Gratuity of £3.0s.0d on 21 October 1919. Esther Holme married William Bibby at St. Peter's Church, Formby in 1920. After the war she and her second husband moved to Rawtenstall and Rossendale, Lancashire and had three children.



Moving on to WWII, Herbert's brother Charles Gorst Holme and his two daughters Florence Mabel Holme and Kathleen Mary Holme, were killed on 04 May 1941 at their home, 24 Croxteth Avenue, Litherland on the worst night of bombing in Liverpool during the 'May Blitz' of Liverpool. As if this were not enough for the Holme family, Herbert and Esther's only son Herbert Jnr was killed on the 24 July 1941 aged 23 whilst serving as a Sergeant with the 50th Squadron RAF during WWII.

In Memory of
Private

Richard Walter Jackson

85174, 1st Bn., The King's (Liverpool Regiment) who died on 14 November 1920 Age 32

Son of Thomas and Mary Jackson of Bootle; and husband of Mary Jackson of Liverpool

Remembered with Honour

Richard Walter Jackson was born at Bootle in 1888. His parents were Thomas Snr and Mary nee Greenwood. He had three elder siblings, Thomas Jnr (1881), Caroline Maud (1883) and Margaret Robina (1886). Whilst his wife Mary had been born in Liverpool, Thomas Snr and all the children were born in Bootle.

Richard married Ellen Wharton at St. Mary's Church, Walton in 1914. Richard and his wife had three children; Robert Walter (1914), Richard (Jnr) T (1915) and Margaret Mary (1917).

Richard died at home, 20 New Road, Formby. His usual occupation is recorded as Dock Labourer. The cause of death was certified as "Carcinoma of the stomach". The informant was his widow Ellen who was present at the death. He was buried on the 18 November 1920.

After the war, Ellen and the children lived at 14 Whitehouse Avenue, Formby. A pension was awarded in October 1921 of £2.4s.2d per week from 15 November 1920 but another entry on the pension record states it was refused on the grounds that the disease was contracted after Richard was discharged from service. What is not clear is which party refused it!

Their son Robert lived until 1981 without issue; Richard Jnr survived but months; and Margaret Mary died without issue.



In Memory of
Private

Harry Lovelady

SE/21969, Royal Army Veterinary Corps who died on 29 December 1918 Age 36

Son of Nathan and Mary Lovelady of Formby; husband of Mary Lovelady of Formby.

Remembered with Honour

Harry Lovelady was born at Formby in 1882 and baptised at St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Altcar. His siblings were Margaret (1870), Ellen Harriet (1871), Mary Elizabeth (1873), Richard (1876), Catherine (1877) Alice (1879) and Gilbert Nathan (1885).

Their parents, Nathan Lovelady and Mary (nee Rimmer), were both born at Formby but were married at Our Lady and St. Nicholas' Church, Liverpool in 1869. The family lived in the Altcar and Raven Meols districts of Formby all their lives. Nathan and Mary started out their married life living with relatives. In 1871, they were making their home with Mary's grandmother, Elizabeth Rimmer, at Arnolds Farm in Altcar. The farm was 52 acres and Nathan Lovelady an agricultural labourer. From 1881 until Nathan's death in 1903 the Lovelady family lived at Ravenmeols Lane in Formby. Nathan worked at different times as a farm servant, gardener and nurseryman. After Nathan's death and by 1911, his widow Mary had moved to 10 Phillips Lane, Formby where she was living with the two youngest sons Harry and Gilbert (known as Bert) and the youngest daughter Alice Mawdsley with her new family, husband Henry (m1906) and child Herbert.

In 1901, aged eighteen, Harry had been working as an errand boy at a private asylum, now confirmed as Shaftesbury House. In 1911 he was a coachman and his experience with horses no doubt made him an ideal candidate for the Veterinary Corps. He married Mary Moon (or thought he did)⁵ at Holy Trinity Church, Formby in 1913. They had two sons, Harry Jnr (1913) and Gilbert (1915). His medal card suggests that he first saw overseas service after January 1916.



Harry died at Liverpool Stanley Hospital, Kirkdale. The cause of death was certified as "Influenza leading to pneumonia"⁶. The informant was his brother in law William Blanchard present at the death. He was buried on 01 January 1919. That's not quite the end, the death certificate was one of the last to be located. Whilst he was known throughout his life as Harry, as indeed I have, the certificate correctly records him as Henry Lovelady. His widow Mary and the children continued to live at 21 Willow Grove, Formby. Mary married widower Harold Gardner in 1926 and had a son Harold Edward.

Harry and Mary's younger son, Gilbert, sadly died in 1920 aged 5. Their elder son Harry Jnr⁷ married Beatrice nee Richards and they had two children. The Lovelady name lives on through one of Harry's grandchildren whom I managed to locate and speak with; and through several great-grandchildren.

⁵ The marriage certificate was subsequently amended, by Mary and another witness, from surname Moon to Johnson; from age 25 to 29; and father's name from John Moon to Daniel Johnson. Her second marriage shows her father's name as Samuel Johnson. Mary is the only person I have been unable to trace. A mystery lady, so far

⁶ See Appendix 4 - "Spanish Flu"

⁷ Harry Jnr later joined the Merchant Navy and served during WWII, which he survived despite being torpedoed twice.

In Memory of
Private

Herbert Leopold Rheam

769572, 28th Bn., London Regiment (Artists' Rifles) who died on 02 November 1918 Age 18

Son of William and Harriet S Rheam of Warlingham

Remembered with Honour

Herbert was born on 07 September 1900, the younger twin brother of George Turner Tatham Rheam, to parents William and Harriet Stewart (nee Tatham). There was also a younger sister Dorothy Jean Stewart (born 1902). In 1901, life may have seemed good with father a schoolteacher living in Garston with his family; his wife, the two boys, his mother-in-law and brother-in-law with Dorothy as yet a "twinkle in her father's eye". Herbert was barely four years old when his father sadly died in 1904, buried at St Peter's aged 44. His mother Harriet was the daughter of George Turner Tatham, the Vicar of Leck (near Kirkby Lonsdale) and Jane Boyle (nee Stewart) and had five siblings including two elder brothers, one a solicitor and the other a medical student.

Mother Harriet despite her upbringing must have been under pressure to raise the twin boys aged 4 and the daughter aged 2. 1911 finds both boys boarders at a famous old public school known for its uniform, Christ's Hospital in Horsham, Surrey. Founded in 1552 and received its first Royal Charter in 1553, Christ's Hospital follows much of the public schools' tradition. Since its establishment, Christ's Hospital has been a charity school, with a core aim to offer children from humble backgrounds the chance of a better education. 1912 finds Harriet on the electoral roll of Warlingham, Surrey, not too far away from the school.

This family clearly demonstrates the common practice, even today, of re-cycling "full names" in future births, both given name(s) and surnames: Herbert (paternal uncle) Leopold (maternal uncle), George Turner Tatham (maternal mother), Dorothy Jean Stewart (maternal mother & grandmother). Between 1913 and 1916 Herbert's Uncle Gilbert married Winifred Collier in St Peter's Church and children Gilbert William and Winifred Rosemary Lucy were baptised here.

Herbert died at the Military Hospital, Little Warley, Brentwood, Essex aged 18. The cause of death was certified as "Influenza 10 days leading to pneumonia 7 days"⁸. The informant was A J Gaw, Chief Resident Officer, Military Hospital, Little Warley. He had enlisted on 16 Oct 1918 and, within three weeks, was buried on 05 November 1918. Herbert was the youngest (18) and the only one of the ten CWGC graves to also have an additional family memorial from father William (deceased) and mother Harriet containing a paraphrase of Psalm 21:4 "He asked life of Thee and Thou gavest him a long life: even for ever and ever".

In 1911, Herbert's Grandmother Lucy, Aunt Katherine and Uncle Gilbert were all resident at Ryecroft, 30 Ryeground Lane, Formby now rebuilt. Although Uncle Gilbert moved upon marriage to Yewhurst, 18 Ryeground Lane and died there in 1919 aged 52, I would like to believe that they all wanted the CWGC headstone placed adjacent to the memorial of Granddad William (Snr). It is noticeably out of line with other headstones in the row. In WWII, twin brother George OBE was serving in the Special Operations Executive as an acting Lt. Colonel on intelligence work. George died in 1996 and I believe the Rheam name lived on through him but have been unable to make contact and provide evidence.

⁸ See Appendix 4 – "Spanish Flu"

In Memory of
Major

Roger Cecil Seys DSO, OBE

Royal Garrison Artillery who died on 10 April 1921 Age 37

Son of Godfrey and Evelyn Seys of Tiddenham, Glos; husband of Gladys Flora Seys

Remembered with Honour

Roger was born in 1883, the eldest son of Godfrey (Snr) and Evelyn (nee Vaughan-Hughes) with a brother Godfrey William (1885) and sister Eda Alison (1888). Godfrey Snr had an elder brother Roger (Snr) who died aged 9 so he clearly took the familiar naming route with his male children.

Paternal grandfather William had made his mark on Gloucestershire by 1861 as both a JP and a landowner. He sent Godfrey Snr to Lucton boarding school and to Oxford. By 1891 Godfrey Snr was also a JP and living on his own means. By 1901 his son Roger had left the family home and joined the Suffolk Artillery as a 2nd Lieutenant. His first appointment was in Dec 1902 to the Royal Garrison Artillery with which he served for most of his career being promoted to Lieutenant in 1905; to Captain in 1914; and to Major in Jun 1917. He saw service in India, was early into France in 1914 and was also at Gallipoli with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. His DSO was awarded in 1917 following recommendation for *“constant good work during the whole time he has been Staff Officer R.A. of the Corps, both in France and Gallipoli. He is untiring in his zeal and devotion to duty and has at all times carried out his work entirely to my satisfaction”*.

My interest as an amateur genealogist was even more captivated on the maternal side. Roger's grandmother was Mary Anne Mainwaring, daughter of Rear Admiral Rowland Mainwaring RN, who served with distinction as a midshipman in the Majestic at the Battle of the Nile (1798) and in the Defence at the blockade of Copenhagen (1801). One of his last commands was the Caledonia, flagship of Sir Edward Pellew. The Admiral's third wife was Laura Maria Julia Walberga Chevillard, only child of Florian Chevillard. Florian was one of Napoleon's Colonels and died in 1815 from wounds received at the Battle of Leipzig (1813). As if that weren't enough of a heritage, the Mainwaring family of Whitmore family history is held by the National Archives back to the 13th century.

Roger died at home, Gollenberg, 16 Barkfield Avenue (now redeveloped), Formby. The cause of death was certified as “Addison's disease leading to asthenia and cardiac failure”. The informant was his brother Godfrey who was present at the death. He was buried on 12 April 1921.

Roger had married Gladys Flora nee Taylor in 1914 and their only child Diana Josephine was born in 1915. Diana married the Rev. John Henry Elkington in 1947 and they had two sons.

Brother Godfrey married Constance Maud Burgoyne in 1910. They had four children: Richard Godfrey (1912); John Anthony (1914); Roderick William (1917); and Charmian Anne Marie (1929). Richard, the eldest married in 1939, served in the RAF in WWII and was awarded the DFC and AFC, and had two sons; John married Rosemary Leonora Ruth de Rothschild, daughter of Lionel Nathan Baron de Rothschild and had two children; Roderick was killed in WWII whilst serving with No 1 Commando, Middlesex Regiment (CWGC grave, Holy Trinity Church, Lyne, Surrey); and Charmian married in 1951 and had two children. Whilst I suspect there are living descendants, I have been unable to trace them.

In Memory of
Corporal

Stuart Anthony Weeks

1101122, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, who died on 04 December 1946 Age 31

Son of Stuart Antonio and Florence May Weeks of Formby; husband of Kathleen Patricia Weeks of Ainsdale, Southport

Remembered with Honour

Stuart Anthony (Jnr) was the third child of Stuart Antonio (Snr) Weeks and his mother Florence May (known as May) Richers of German descent. Following their marriage in 1906, Stuart Snr and May had three children: Margaret Dora (1906); John Stanley (1907) and Stuart Jnr (1915). Stuart Snr's middle name Antonio must come from his paternal side as his father James Weeks had married Elizabeth Amelia Pastorelli (of Italian descent) in 1864. Stuart Snr worked his way up Board of Trade certification from Second Mate to First Mate and eventually to Master Mariner certification in 1910. On the maternal side, whilst mother May was born in Liverpool, her father Carl Christian Heinrich Richers was born in Hamburg and was also a Master Mariner.

The 1911 census finds Stuart Snr absent, presumably at sea, and mother May living with her widowed mother-in-law and the first two children at Lyncroft, Piercefield Road, Formby. In 1913, May and son (John) Stanley aged 6 are shown on the crew list of the S/S Belle of Ireland with father as Captain and Master arriving in New Orleans from Rio de Janeiro. Only a couple of years after Stuart Jnr's birth in 1915, father Stuart Snr died in 1917 aged 36 at Basra, Iraq. Basra is the main port of Iraq and his death occurred in the WWI Mesopotamia Theatre and the Fall of Baghdad. Whilst I did not find conclusive evidence during my research, I can only offer the thought that Stuart Snr, as an experienced Master Mariner, may also have died serving his country in the Mercantile Marine⁹ during WWI.

The 1939 census finds Stuart Jnr now aged 24 living with his widowed mother May, Margaret, and John plus John's wife Sarah at Hay-Tor, Moor Lane, Crosby. His occupation is shown as an insurance clerk and the situation changed in 1942 when his mother May died. He married Kathleen Shacklady in 1944 and a year later a son Anthony Barry was born. Sadly, just over a year later Stuart himself was dead. He died at home, 89 Sandbrook Road, Ainsdale. The cause of death was certified as "Phthisis" – an archaic name for pulmonary tuberculosis. The informant was his sister Margaret present at the death.



Stuart Jnr was buried on 07 December 1946. The Weeks name lives on through his son whom I managed to locate and speak with; and through three grandchildren.

⁹ The title 'Merchant Navy' was granted by King George V after the First World War to recognise the contribution made by merchant sailors.

Appendix 1 - Conscription - the First World War

Your Country Needs You

Within a year of Great Britain declaring war on Germany in August 1914, it had become obvious that it was not possible to continue fighting by relying on voluntary recruits. Lord Kitchener's campaign promoted by his famous "Your Country Needs You" poster had encouraged over one million men to enlist by January 1915. But this was not enough to keep pace with mounting casualties.

Conscription introduced

The government saw no alternative but to increase numbers by conscription - compulsory active service. Parliament was deeply divided but recognised that because of the imminent collapse of the morale of the French army, immediate action was essential. In January 1916 the Military Service Act was passed. This imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, but exempted the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and certain classes of industrial worker. Conscientious objectors - men who objected to fighting on moral grounds - were also exempted and were, in most cases, given civilian jobs or non-fighting roles at the front. A second Act passed in May 1916 extended conscription to married men. Conscription was not applied to Ireland because of the 1916 Easter Rising, although in fact many Irishmen volunteered to fight.

Effects of conscription

Conscription was not popular and in April 1916 over 200,000 demonstrated against it in Trafalgar Square. Although many men failed to respond to the call-up, in the first year 1.1 million enlisted. In 1918 during the last months of the war, the Military Service (No. 2) Act raised the age limit to 51. Conscription was extended until 1920 to enable the army to deal with continuing trouble spots in the Empire and parts of Europe. During the whole of the war conscription had raised some 2.5 million men.

Appendix 2 - King's Regulations

King's Regulations for the Army set out the various reasons (causes) for which a soldier could be discharged. In WW1, paragraph 392 of the 1912 edition of King's Regulations contained all the official causes of discharge, and these were set out in sub-paragraphs, numbered from (i) to (xxvii), omitting (xvii). In 1919 a new cause of discharge was introduced, numbered (xxviii).

Sub-para Cause of Discharge

- (i) References on enlistment being unsatisfactory
 - (ii) Having been irregularly enlisted
 - (iii) Not being likely to become an efficient soldier
 - (iv) Having been claimed as an apprentice
 - (v) Having claimed it on payment of £10 within three months of his attestation
 - (vi) Having made a miss-statement as to age on enlistment
 - (vii) Having been claimed for wife desertion
 - (viii) Having made a false answer on attestation
 - (ix) Unfitted for the duties of the corps
 - (x) Having been convicted by the civil power of _____, or of an offence committed before enlistment
 - (xi) For misconduct
 - (xii) Having been sentenced to penal servitude
 - (xiii) Having been sentenced to be discharged with ignominy
 - (xiv) At his own request, on payment of _____ under Article 1130 (i), Pay Warrant
 - (xv) Free, after _____ years' service under Article 1130 (ii), Pay Warrant
 - (xvi) No longer physically fit for war service
- "Sick" was often added to this cause to indicate that he was discharged due to sickness, rather than wounds
- (xvii) Surplus to military requirements (having suffered impairment since entry into the service)
 - (xviii) At his own request after 18 years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)

- (xix) For the benefit of the the public service after 18 years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xx) Inefficiency after 18 years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xxi) The termination of his ____ period of engagement
- (xxii) With less than 21 years' service towards engagement, but with 21 or more years' service towards pension
- (xxiii) Having claimed discharge after three months' notice
- (xxiv) Having reached the age for discharge
- (xxv) His services being no longer required
- (xxva) Surplus to military requirements (Not having suffered impairment since entry into the service)
- (xxvi) At his own request after 21 (or more) years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xxvii) After 21 (or more) years' qualifying service for pension, and with 5 (or more) years' service as warrant officer (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xxviii) On demobilization

Appendix 3 - Silver War Badge

During the Great War of 1914–18 more than 8.6 million men and over 57,000 women served in the British Army. Many families were losing loved ones at the Front, so when men ended up being sent home due to sickness or injury they had suffered, although distressing, it was often somewhat of a relief to their relatives. Those young men, once at home, would come under closer scrutiny of the public, since many were perceived to be shying away from their duties to the country and were treated with contempt and sometimes violence. It had even been the practice of some women in England to send white feathers, a traditional symbol of cowardice within the British Empire in an attempt to humiliate men not in uniform. It was therefore important that those who had served their country and returned home due to sickness or injury could be identified in some way, and this was recognised by King George V. So, in 1916 the following order was given, though there were subsequent amendments, including the granting of the badge to eligible civilians, as well as members of the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) and nurses:

Army Order 316 of 1916 – His Majesty the King has approved the issue of the Silver War Badge to officers and men of the British, Indian and Overseas Forces, who have served at home or abroad since the 4th August, 1914, and who on account of age, or physical infirmity arising from wounds or sickness caused by military service have, in the case of officers, retired or relinquished their commissions, or, in the case of men, been discharged from the Army.

First issued in 1916 and continuing to 1920-22, the Silver War Badge, also known as the Services Rendered Badge, Discharge Badge or Wound Badge, was therefore issued to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds, disability or sickness (caused otherwise than by misconduct).

Appendix 4 - “Spanish Flu”

The Influenza pandemic of 1918 was one of the greatest medical disasters of the 20th century. This was a global pandemic, an airborne virus which affected every continent.

It was nicknamed “Spanish flu” as the first reported cases were in Spain. The pandemic occurred during World War I when certain newspapers were censored including Germany, the United States, Britain and France. All had media blackouts on news that might lower morale so, although there were flu cases elsewhere, it was the Spanish cases that hit the headlines. One of the first casualties was the King of Spain.

Although not caused by World War I, it is thought that in the UK, the virus was spread by soldiers returning home from the trenches in northern France. Soldiers were becoming ill with what was known as ‘la grippe’, the symptoms of which were sore throats, headaches and a loss of appetite.

Although highly infectious in the cramped, primitive conditions of the trenches, recovery was usually swift and doctors at first called it “three-day fever”.

The outbreak hit the UK in a series of waves, with its peak at the end of WW1. Returning from Northern France at the end of the war, the troops travelled home by train. As they arrived at the railway stations, so the flu spread from the railway stations to the centre of the cities, then to the suburbs and out into the countryside. Not restricted to class, anyone could catch it.

Young adults between 20 and 30 years old were particularly affected and the disease struck and progressed quickly in these cases. Onset was devastatingly quick. Those fine and healthy at breakfast could be dead by tea-time. Within hours of feeling the first symptoms of fatigue, fever and headache, some victims would rapidly develop pneumonia and start turning blue, signalling a shortage of oxygen. They would then struggle for air until they suffocated to death.

Hospitals were overwhelmed and even medical students were drafted in to help. Doctors and nurses worked to breaking point, although there was little they could do as there were no treatments for flu and no antibiotics to treat the pneumonia.

During the pandemic of 1918/19, over 50 million people died world-wide and a quarter of the British population were affected. The death toll was 228,000 in Britain alone. Global mortality rate is not known but is estimated to have been between 10% to 20% of those who were infected. More people died of influenza in that single year than in the four years of the Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. The pandemic in that single year killed more people than WWI at somewhere between 20 and 40 million people.

Appendix 5 – Acknowledgements with grateful thanks

Dr David Unwin
Mr Richard Walker

Websites

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<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>
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**Appendix 6
Map of Commonwealth War Graves**

