



Congerstone War Memorial

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History of War Memorials

- Prior to the 20th Century, war memorials were created to glorify war and celebrate victory.
- The fighting soldiers were rarely recognised individually.



- After the Boer War (1889-1902), memorials displayed soldiers sculpted more realistically.
- The fighting soldiers, however, were still rarely named

The First World War

- Following the First World War, the sheer number of casualties, and the ban on repatriation of remains as a result, gave rise to the creation of large overseas cemeteries as well as local memorials back home.
- These local memorials meant that communities could focus their grief for those who had died whilst overseas and who had not returned.
- The overseas cemeteries were, and remain, overseen by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

- In 1917, the Commonwealth Graves Commission was established to ensure that every soldier of WW1 would have a final resting place. These would be of a common design regardless of rank or wealth.
- This was particularly important given the distances relatives were from the final resting places of their loved ones.
- The grave markers would have upright slabs, not crosses, to avoid sanctifying war, and every cemetery would have a standard design.
- There are now over 2,500 such cemeteries in existence and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission continues to maintain these and preserve these final resting spots.

Congerstone's War Memorial

- The Congerstone Memorial was gifted to the village by its parishioners and was inaugurated on the 9th December 1922 by the RT Hon Lord Waring of Gopsall Hall.
- In the aftermath of the Second World War, the names of further servicemen were added to existing memorials.
- The names of the three men from WW2 on the Congerstone monument were added in the 1980s.
- None of the named servicemen on the cross returned home.



The First World War

1914 - 1918

Frank Hough

Ernest Jackson

Charles Edward Seekins

John Prince

1911 Population
of Congerstone:
195

Joseph Shepherd

George Henry Wheeldon

Frederick Sewell

The First World War

1914 - 1918

At least 25 men living in the village enlisted in WW1 – over 12% of the 1911 population

World War 1 started on 28th July 1914. When war broke out, men rushed to join up – believing the war would be over swiftly.

However conscription had to be introduced in January 1916 to bolster the gaps in the front lines caused by the significant casualties.

Single men aged 18-40 were now called up for military service unless they were widowers with children, ministers of religion or had protected occupations – IE those which were crucial to the war effort such a miners. However this didn't prevent these men from volunteering, they just weren't conscripted, and many still volunteered.

The First World War

1914 - 1918

The manual labour needed by the army was provided by the Pioneer Battalions. By the end of the war they numbered some 700,000. Charles Seekins, Fred Sewell and George Wheeldon, who's names are on the Congerstone memorial, served in Pioneer Divisions.

Cavalry, previously a key component of the British Army, swiftly became overpowered by modern weapon and the men were redeployed to other units.

In WW1, men from Congerstone fought on many different fronts of the War. These included France, Belgium, Egypt and Salonika (Modern-day Thessaloniki in Greece).



Private
Joseph Shepherd
1st Queen's Own
(Royal West Kent Regiment)
Service No: G/20129
Killed in Action - 18/04/1918

Tannay British Cemetery, Thiennes

Joseph Shepherd

- Joseph was born in Congerstone in 1888
- He was the youngest of 7 children of Joseph and Ann Shepherd
- He married Edith Jane in 1908 and the family were living in Congerstone in 1911 with Joseph working as a wheelwright
- Joseph signed up for the army reserve in December 1915, under a short service attestation
- His daughter, Edith Joyce, was born in January 1917
- On 3 April 1917 he was mobilised and after training, he was deployed to France in October 1917 with the 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment
- Joseph died on 18 April 1918, aged 30, in a defensive line in the Nieppe Forest area on the Belgian border to the South of Ypres



Private
Charles Edward Seekins

12th Lincolnshire Regiment /
17th Company Labour Corps

Service no: 51360 / 10103

Killed in Action - 26/09/1917

Railway Chateau Cemetery, Belgium

Charles Edward Seekins

- Born in 1889, Charles was the youngest of 7 children to Samuel and Eliza who lived in 1 Poplar Terrace, Congerstone
- In 1911, he was working as a cowman lodging at Bank Farm, Ratcliffe Culey
- Charles enlisted in 1914 at Coalville into the Lincolnshire Regiment which transformed into the newly formed Labour Corps (as 17th Company) later the same year
- Charles was killed in action on 26 September 1917, aged 28
- Charles' brother Ernest was called up in November 1916 and joined the Royal Army Service Corps as a driver. He survived the war and returned from France in August 1918

Keeping in Touch

- People wrote to soldiers who were overseas fighting for our country to keep the morale as high as possible in these very troubled times and the soldiers wrote back
- A month before he was killed in action, Charles sent a birthday card from the trenches to a Congerstone resident for their 17th Birthday





Private Frederick Sewell

11th Leicestershire Regiment

Service No: 12320

Killed in Action - 22/03/1918



Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

Frederick Sewell

- Fred was born, the youngest of 7, on Nov 6th 1891 in Market Bosworth to Thomas and Daisy
- By 1901 the family, his father now a widower, was living in Congerstone
- Fred attended Congerstone School where his name is listed on the School's Roll of Honour.
- Fred's brother, George, had joined the army in 1894 and served in the Boer War from 1899-1900
- When war came, Fred enlisted immediately on September 1st 1914, joining the Leicestershire Regiment - he was 22 working as an Iron Foundry Labourer
- After training, he left for France on 29th July 1915 with 4 other battalions of the Leicestershire Regiment, known as the Leicester Tigers Brigade
- These regiments were inexperienced soldiers led by equally inexperienced officers, so they needed time to develop their fighting skills. But they were keen and enthusiastic and fought bravely in the actions they were involved with in the early months



Frederick Sewell

- Fred received grenade injuries in September 1915, returning in July 1916
- On 14th July, he received a gunshot wound and was evacuated to England on 17th July aboard the hospital ship Marama, for treatment and convalescence
- Despite the fact he had been badly injured, the demand for men at the front meant that he was returned there as soon as he was sufficiently recovered
- He arrived back in France on 29th February 1917 with the 11th Battalion. In October 1917 they were constructing of a light railway in the Ypres salient - working within range of enemy shelling and suffering numerous casualties
- During March 1918, the battalion was near Arras and Cambrai. On March 21st, the enemy launched its spring offensive from the Hindenburg line. An intense bombardment lasted from 5am-8am and the battalion suffered heavy losses including all its officers. By nightfall, the enemy had only managed to pierce the line at one point. Sadly Fred did not survive this intense battle.
- He was killed in action aged 26, on March 22nd 1918 at Fremicourt, 30km south of Arras.
- Fred is remembered on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais.

Private

George Wheeldon

9th Gloucestershire Regiment

Service No: 17756

Killed in Action - 20/07/1918

St Sever Cemetery extension,
Rouen



George Wheeldon

- We know little about George's background or his links to Congerstone. He is listed under Gopsall on the memorial and so he possibly had links to the hall.
- He enlisted in Atherstone into the 9th Gloucestershire Regiment in early 1915
- His records show that he first went to France on 04/10/1915. This entry to France was to be brief with the Battalion passing on through Marseilles and arriving in Salonika (modern day Thessaloniki in Greece) in November 1915.
- The Battalion remained in Salonika through 1916 and 1917, taking part in the Battles of Horseshoe Hill and Doiran before departing for France in mid-1918.
- George is listed as entering France on July 16th 1918, arriving at Serqueux on the 17th. George was killed just 3 days later on 20th July 1918 and is buried at St Sever Cemetery Extension in Rouen. The circumstances surrounding his death have unfortunately not yet been determined.
- George's brother, William, served with the North Staffordshire Regiment. He enlisted on 30th October 1914 in Burton-on-Trent, shortly after war broke out.
- He was despatched to France in the summer of 1915 before being repatriated to Edinburgh War Hospital following a shell wound to his left thigh.



Private John Prince

8th Leicestershire Regiment

Service No: 22921

Died of Wounds - 03/10/1916

St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France

John Prince

- John, at 44, is the oldest man on the Memorial
- He was born in Whatstandwell in Derbyshire and was living in Burton with his wife Elizabeth Ann Prince. He was employed as a Canal Boatman.
- John enlisted at Leicester in the 8th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment
- His war service was spent in France and on the 24th September 1916, his unit began to prepare for an attack on the villages of Flers and Gueudecourt. The attack commenced at midday on the 25th and, whilst both villages were secured, the war diary notes the heavy losses that were inflicted by enemy artillery and machine gun fire. The 8th Battalion was pulled back on the 28th September.
- John died of wounds on October 3rd 1916. It is likely that these injuries would have been received during the action in Flers and Gueudecourt between the 24th and 28th September.
- He is buried in St Sever Cemetery in Rouen which suggests he was probably nursed in one of the military hospitals in Rouen following his injuries.

The image shows the Thiepval Memorial in France, a large brick and stone archway with a central arch and two smaller side arches. Two flags are visible on top of the structure. In the foreground, there is a large stone cross on the right and a field of small white crosses. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Guardsman

Frank Hough

4th Grenadier Guards

Service No: 19321

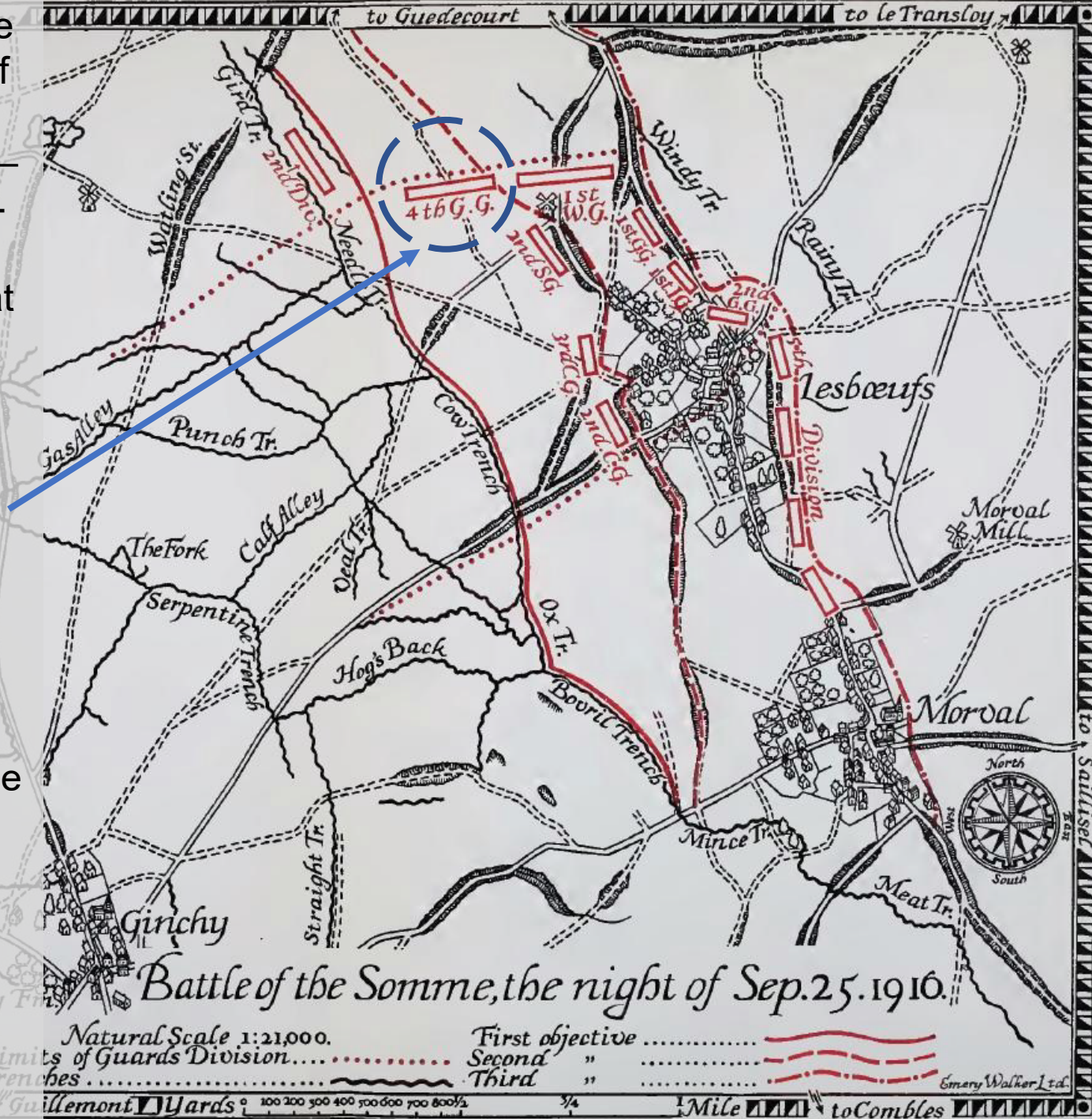
Killed In Action - 25/09/1916

Thiepval Memorial, France

Frank Hough

- Frank was born in Crewe in Cheshire and was the youngest son of Harriet and Joseph Hough - a schoolmaster. He had two older siblings; Mary Louisa and Frederick
- By 1911 he was working as a one of a team of 6 Gardeners at Gopsall Hall
- He enlisted at Stafford with the 4th Grenadier Guards and was subsequently posted to France on the 15th August 1915
- He took part in the Somme offensives of 1916 and it is during this campaign that he unfortunately lost his life
- As I'm sure some of you will be aware, the conditions on the Somme were some of the worst of the war – the first battle of the Somme lasted from 1st July 1916 through to 18th November 1916 with 57,000 British casualties on the first day alone and 419,000 by the end of the offensive. Despite these losses, the battle was considered a success with the front line being pushed back 10km and around 450 to 600,000 casualties being sustained by the German Army.

- Frank took part in the Somme offensives of 1916 and it is during one of these battles – the Battle of Morval – that he was unfortunately killed at Lesboeufs on 25th September 1916.
- This map shows the position of Frank’s unit on the night he was killed.
- This is during the same period that John Prince was wounded – the village John Prince’s unit secured was less than 3km away.



The image shows the Vis-en-arts Memorial in France, a large stone structure with two tall, narrow towers and a central portico with columns. In the foreground, there is a cemetery with many white headstones. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Private Ernest Jackson

Cameronians (Scots Rifles)

Killed In Action

11/09/1918

Age 26

Vis-en-arts Memorial, France

Ernest Jackson

- Ernest Jackson was born in 1892 in Congerstone – the second son of William and Agnes Jackson of Shadows Lane
- When war broke out, Ernest was living in Melton Mowbray and enlisted in Lichfield - initially with the Royal Field Artillery before joining the Cameronians (or Scottish Rifles) in France
- His movements in France have not yet been confirmed however his unit was withdrawn to the south-west of Avions in April 1918. Here his unit received a new draft of men before heading into action in September 1918
- British Army regiments maintained regimental diaries detailing the actions, movements and losses throughout the war
- The following slide shows the entry for 10th September 1918
- Unfortunately, from the information we have we can identify Ernest as the man who is referred to in this entry as killed in this action on the night of the 10th and 11th of September 1918
- Like so many others who fell in the first world war, his body was not recovered and so he is commemorated on the Vis-en-arts Memorial

WAR DIARY

or

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

(Erase heading not required.)

ons regarding War Diaries and Intelligence
maries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II.
the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages
be prepared in manuscript.

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
9 th		<p>East of our original line withdraw to their normal good order. The body of embankment on the 2nd A patrol which went less one man who had whilst trying to cross a Blake missing. This see platoons having to with Active patrolling by of mustard & blue cross All precautions were taken A patrol under 2nd Lt. Millar on the night of the 9th came across an enemy post. Bombs were thrown by the enemy who seemed</p> <p>"On the night of 10/11th a platoon under Lieut D Graham went out to try and capture the enemy post located on the night previous. The enemy had apparently moved his post and caught the patrol unexpectedly. Bombs were thrown and Lt. Graham and 8 O.Rs wounded, 1 killed and 1 missing.</p> <p>A daylight patrol went out on the 11th but could find no trace of the missing or killed men."</p>
10 th		<p>On the night of the 10/11th a platoon under Lieut. D. Graham went out to try & capture the enemy post located on the night previous. The enemy had apparently moved his post & caught the patrol unexpectedly. Bombs were thrown & Lt. Graham & 8 O.Rs. wounded, 1 killed & 1 missing.</p>
12 & 13 th		<p>of the missing or killed men.</p> <p>Very quiet. Gas was projected by the Special Coy. R.E. on enemy positions opposite the Battalion front on the night of 13/14th. No lights were put up by the enemy.</p>

World War 1 Memories

- **Joseph Shepherd** – “There is no death”
- **John Prince** – “Died of wounds ever remembered wife and children”
- **Charles Seekins** – “Thine for ever God of Love”

- **Charles Edward Seekins:** 1889-1917 (Aged 28)
- **Joseph Shepherd:** 1887-1918 (Aged 30)
- **Frederick Sewell:** 1892-1918 (Aged 25/26)
- **Ernest Jackson:** 1892-1918 (Aged 26)
- **John Prince:** 1872-1916 (Aged 44)
- **Frank Hough:** 1889-1916 (Aged 27)
- **George Henry Wheeldon:** Unknown - 1918. (Age unknown)



The Second World War

1939 - 1945

Ordinary Seaman

Robert Rose

D/JX 423028

HM MTB 417 Royal Navy

MIA 16/03/1944

Private

Charles Samuel Victor Hayes

11007184

2nd Leicestershire Regiment

Died 04/03/1946

Age 23

Able Seaman

Charles Joseph Wright

C/JX 299254

HMS High Flyer, Royal Navy

KIA 10/10/1943

Age 22

The image shows the Plymouth Naval Memorial, a large stone monument with a tall central column topped by a statue. The base is a circular wall with many dark panels. The scene is outdoors with a blue sky and some clouds. The memorial is surrounded by a green lawn and a stone walkway.

Ordinary Seaman Robert Rose

HM MTB 417

Service No: D/JX 423028

Missing In Action - 16/03/1944

Plymouth Naval Memorial

Robert Rose

- Robert Rose was somewhat of a mystery when we originally began our research
- There is no record of a Robert Rose on any of the census records for Congerstone
- Fortunately, we became aware of a researcher in Ibstock who was investigating a similar memorial. They had similarly hit a brick wall in terms of official records and so had appealed to the residents of Bosworth.
- Miraculously, he was contacted by a resident who had found a photograph in their parents possessions of a sailor with the name R Rose written on the back. This enabled us to narrow down the search and settle on Ordinary Seaman Robert Rose. He served aboard Motor Torpedo Boat 417 and was based out of Dover, protecting the English channel.



MTB 417 – Robert Rose

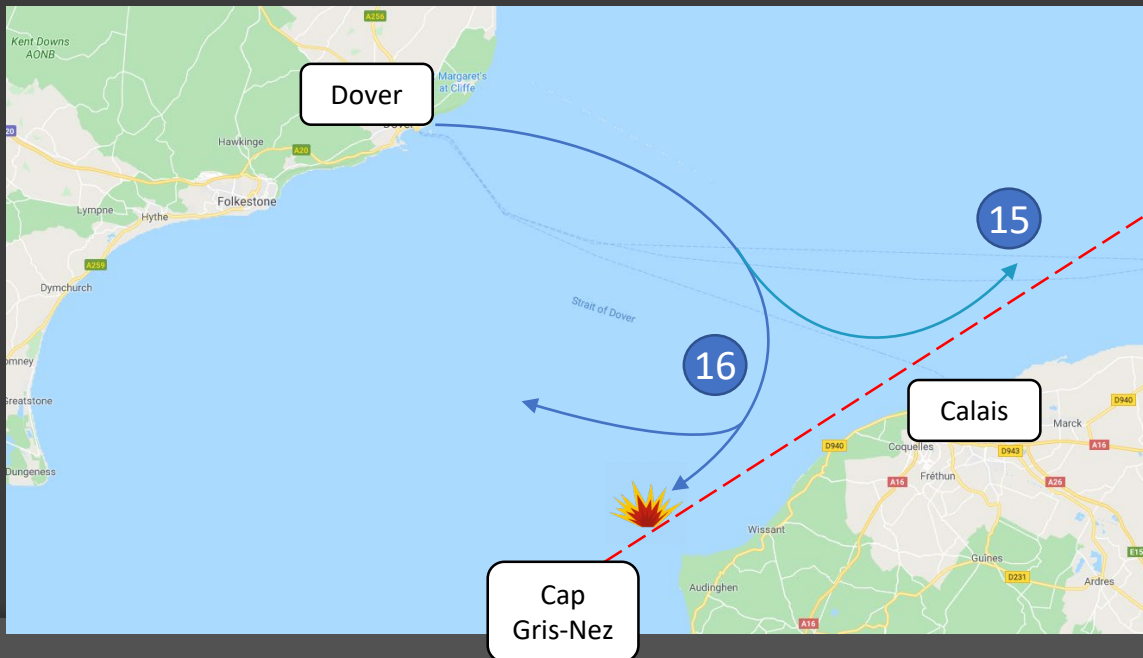
- Motor Torpedo Boats were fast attack crafts – they were designed to be fast, nimble and effectively operate hit-and-run attacks, using speed to avoid the enemy defences.
- They were usually constructed of wood and carried a small calibre weapons alongside their main weapons which, as the name suggests, were torpedoes with one torpedo located on either side of the boat.



You may notice that the boat shown here displays the number 107. This is because 417 began its life on 8th September 1942 as a Motor Gun Boat number 107, prior to being converted to a Motor Torpedo Boat a year later in September 1943.

Robert Rose

- On the evening of the 15th, three boats (including MTB 417 on which Robert Rose was serving) were sent from Dover to an area between Calais and Dunkirk. Here they successfully attacked a much larger force with one of the three boats succeeding in torpedoing the target vessel which was a minesweeper of the Kriegsmarine.
- The following night, a similar attack occurred south of Calais towards Boulogne. 4 boats were dispatched from Dover to attack 6 enemy armed trawlers just off Cap Gris-Nez.

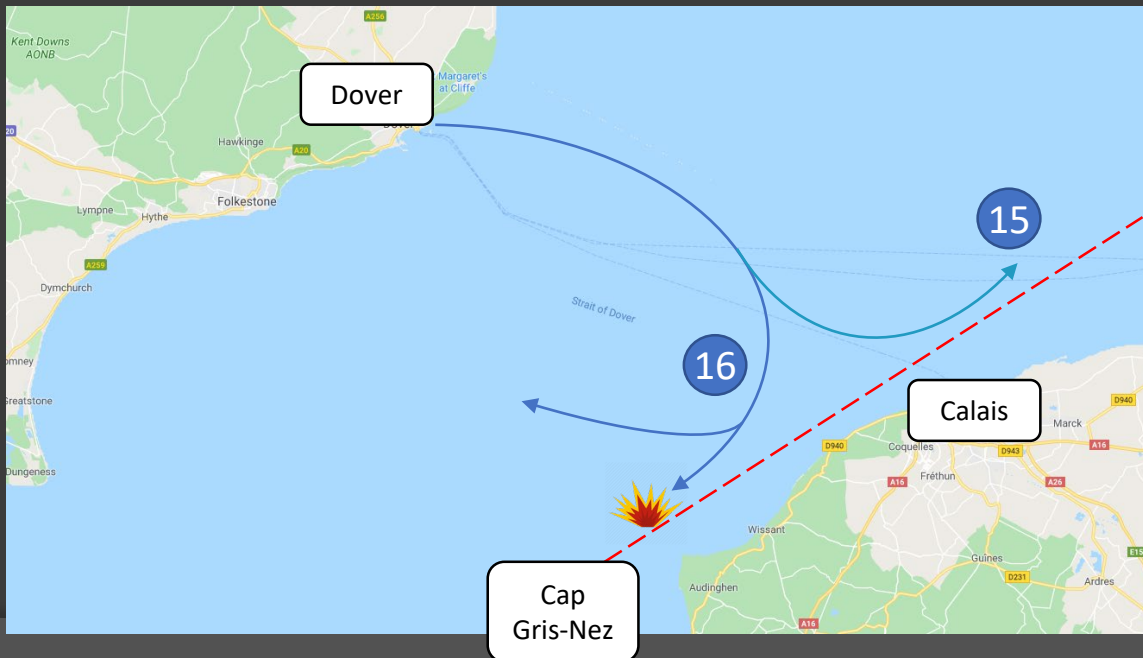


trawlers just off Cap Gris-Nez.

This chart shows the actions of the 15th and 16th March 1944 which are explained on this and the following page.

Robert Rose

- In the build up to this attack, two boats became detached which left MTB 418 and MTB 417 to complete the attack. The two boats attacked at speed and, once detected, were met with a barrage of fire from large calibre artillery.
- Unfortunately, MTB 417, on which Robert Rose was serving, was hit by multiple shells, exploded and sank almost instantly. MTB 418 completed the attack – possibly sinking one enemy vessel - and attempted to approach 417 to see if there were any survivors. However they were driven off by the continuing barrage.



- Robert's body was never recovered. He is listed alongside his comrades on the Plymouth Naval Memorial as missing in action, presumed killed

Able Seaman Charles Joseph Wright

HMS Highflyer

Service No: C/JX 299254

Missing In Action 10/10/1943

Age 22



Chatham Navy Memorial

Charles Joseph Wright

- Charles was born around 1921 and in 1939 was living at the Bungalow in Congerstone with his widowed father Charles and sister Vera
- Fast forward to 1943 and Charles was stationed at a shore base at Trincomalee in Sri Lanka known as HMS Highflyer. We don't yet know any of Charles' service in that area up until the 10th October 1943.
- From the records available, we understand that Charles was transferring to another shore base in Colombo in Sri Lanka (called HMS Lanka), when an accident occurred and he was lost overboard.
- Unfortunately his body was not recovered and he is therefore commemorated on the Chatham Navy Memorial in Kent.



Private Charles Samuel Victor Hayes

Leicestershire Regiment

Service No: 11007184

Died of Illness 04/03/1946

Age 23

THEIR NAME LIVETH
FOR EVERMORE

Kirkee War Cemetery, India



Charles Samuel Victor Hayes

- Charles Samuel Victor Hayes was born on 5th October 1922, son of Frederick and Doris Hayes of Market Bosworth and had 3 younger siblings. His sister, Audrey Pearce, still lives in Congerstone
- At the outbreak of war, Charles was living at Mill Farm in Bilstone and was employed as a County Council Road Labourer
- He enlisted in Leicester and was posted to the Royal Artillery on 5th April 1944. Second World War records are closed to all but next of kin and so information is limited
- We believe he served in Belgium before being wounded and returning to England
- The next detail we have for Charles is that he was posted to the 2nd Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, known as the Tigers, on 16th March 1945



Charles Samuel Victor Hayes

- The second battalion were based in India when Charles joined the battalion.
- They were located at Oashan Camp in Poona during late 1945 before moving to Garrison Barracks in Bombay (modern day Mumbai) in December 1945.
- It is likely that it is there, in Bombay, that Charles contracted acute tonsillitis and unfortunately passed away on 4th March 1946.
- He is buried in Kirkee War Cemetery, approximately 140km from Bombay overlooking the Mula River.
- Charles' name is in the role of honour book in Leicester Cathedral
- Mrs Pearce's grandson-in-law recently visited India on business and photographed Charles' headstone when he visited the Kirkee War Cemetery



Other wartime service

Ernest Bosworth MSM – Ernest was born in Congerstone and was resident here at the outbreak of war having attended the primary school. He served with the Royal Engineers for the full duration of the war. He was a railway clerk before enlisting on 6th November 1914. He rose through the ranks before being demobbed in April 1919 as a Quarter-master sergeant. In 1918 he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his exemplary conduct throughout his 5 years of service.

George John Watkins Brown – George, originally from Fife in Scotland, was a Cowman living in Bilstone in 1911. He enlisted as a gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery before being sent to France on 23rd September 1915.

William Hassell Brown – William was born c.1890 and was living in Congerstone in 1911 employed as a Carpenter. He had 3 brothers and 3 sisters. Further detail of his military service is still being researched.

Arnold Melville Bunting – Arnold lived in Congerstone at the outbreak of war and was sent to France on 21st September 1915 as a lance-corporal with the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He was subsequently promoted to an officer as a Second Lieutenant with the Nottingham and Derbyshire Regiment.

Harry Lawrence Bunting M.C. – Harry, brother of Arnold Melville Bunting (above), was born 25th October 1889 to parents John and Bertha who were schoolteachers at Congerstone Primary School. Harry served 4 years with the Warwickshire Militia before emigrating to Canada in 1913. He enlisted on 20th July 1916 in Winnipeg as an officer (Lieutenant) – his civilian skills as a Civil Engineer were put to use on Military projects. He was awarded the Military Cross in 1919 before returning to Canada in July 1919.

Samuel Arthur Choyce – Samuel enlisted, aged 23, on 28th October 1915 at Woolwich into the Royal Field Artillery. He initially served in the 267th Siege Battalion before transferring to an Anti-Aircraft unit. In 1911 he was living in Congerstone with his Father, also Samuel, living in Bilstone.

Charles Clarke – Charles, a bricklayer by trade, served as a Driver in the Royal Engineers before being discharged in 1919 with a Disability. He was 38 when he was discharged.

Albert Cox – Albert was born in Congerstone in 1889. He enlisted on 9th September 1915 and served with forces in France. He was posted to Home forces in October 1918.

Other wartime service

Bernard Farrell – Bernard served with both the Machine Gun Corps and the Leicestershire Regiment. He was released from Military service on 30th April 1919. Additional research is ongoing.

Archibald Goode Hampson – Archibald was born in 1889 lived as a farmer in Congerstone prior to the war with his wife Mary (born in Paris in 1882). He served with the North Staffordshire Regiment in WW1. Following the war he emigrated to Canada in May 1923 and later saw service in WW2 with the Canadian Dental Corps.

Albert Edward Hodgkinson – Albert enlisted in February 1916 at the age of 19 – at this time he was living in Congerstone having attended the school. He served with the West Yorkshire Regiment before transferring to the West Riding Regiment in September 1917. He was reported missing in action in April 1918 and a notification was sent to his family. However this was rescinded 4 days later when he re-joined his unit. He was discharge in November 1919.

Frederick Hodgkinson - Frederick was born in Congerstone and attended the primary school. He signed up as a Driver with the Royal Field Artillery, he was sent to Egypt on 1st June 1915.

George Hodgkinson – George also attended the primary school and was sent to France in November 1915 with the Leicestershire Regiment.

James Hone – James and his borther Henry, below, attended the primary school in Congerstone whilst living in Shackerstone. James enlisted 28th September 1914 and sailed for France 5 days later. He served with the Canadian Army Medical Corps and was discharged in June 1919 as a Regimental Sergeant Major.

Henry Hone – Henry was 2 years younger than his brother James. He enlisted in February 1916 and served as a Lance-Sergeant with the 130th Canadian Regiment. He died of Tuberculosis on 20th March 1917 and is buried in Ontario, Canada.

John William Jackson – John was born in Congerstone around 1889 and was a schoolmaster at Breedon prior to serving as an Air Mechanic in the RAF.

Harry Edward Jackson – A Silversmith by trade, was born in Congerstone with his Brother John William (above). He Joined the Royal Navy in November 1916 before transferring to the Royal Naval Air Service and Later the Royal Air Force as an Aircraftman. He was discharged in March 1918.

Other wartime service

Frank Wilson Jackson – Frank attended the Primary school before joining the Royal Navy as a Blacksmith. He served from October 1916 until being discharged in August 1919.

Tom King – Tom was born in 1891 and lived in Congerstone. He served with 1/4th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, entering France in December 1915. During WW2, he also served as an Air Raid Warden.

James William Lampard – Born in 1896, James was living at the Horse and Jockey in 1911 working as a Butchers Apprentice. He served as a private in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

John Poxon McCullum – John was born in 1893 and resided in Congerstone when war broke out. He served with the Leicestershire Regiment and later the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Gildroy Murby – Born in Congerstone on 14th February 1889, Gildroy enlisted into the Royal Marines on 14th September 1916 in Nottingham. He was promoted to Gunner and served on HMS Lord Nelson during the first world war. His military service continued post war and he was awarded the Royal Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1937. He was discharged from service in 1941.

Sydney (Sidney) Parnham – Employed as gardener, Sydney was living in Congerstone with his wife Daisy and young son John Robert when war broke out. Sydney served as an Able Seaman with the Royal Naval Division and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve at Perham Downs and was 38 by the time war ended in 1918.

Frederick James Petcher – Frederick was born around 1899 and lived in Congerstone. He would have been 15 at the outbreak of war and judging from his medal entitlement, likely enlisted as soon as he was able c.1917. He served as a Private in the Leicestershire Regiment.

Arthur Allen Ridgway – Arthur was employed as Gardener at Gopsall in 1911, however he enlisted into the Royal Field Artillery in Newcastle in September 1914. He was sent to the campaign in the Balkans on 28th July 1915. He remained in service until March 1920 when he was demobilised – by this time having been promoted to Corporal.

Ernest William Seekins – Ernest was the brother of Charles Seekins who is commemorated on the war memorial. Born in 1891, Ernest served as a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps having enlisted in November 1916.

Other wartime service



Charles Shepherd – Charles and his brother Frank (below), were both born in Congerstone however had moved from the village by the outbreak of war. Charles gave his home address on enlistment as Cottage Lane, Gopsall and enlisted 11th August 1914 in Southampton. He was sent to France with the Hampshire Regiment just 2 days later, serving there for over a year before returning to the UK in December 1915. From January 1916 he served in Kenya, German East Africa and South Africa before being treated for Malaria in August 1916. He suffered numerous relapses and was treated in hospital in Tanzania before being posted to the UK in 1917. He was discharged in February 1919 as a Lance Corporal in the 686th Home Service Battalion of the Labour Corps.

Frank Shepherd – Frank was the younger brother of Charles, above. By the time war broke out, he had left Congerstone and was working as Coliery Labourer residing in Nuneaton. He served with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and later the Labour Corps.

Alfred Richard Spare – Born in 1895, Alfred lived in Gopsall working as a shoeing smith. He served as a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps – entering France on 20th December 1915.

William Wheeldon – brother of George Wheeldon. William served in the North Staffordshire Regiment. He enlisted 30th October 1914, shortly after the outbreak of war – he was despatched to France in the summer of 1915 before being repatriated to Edinburgh War Hospital following a shell wound to his left thigh which left him with a lasting disability.

You can help!

This project is still incomplete and as you will have seen from this presentation, some of the information can be difficult to obtain.

If you have any information that may be helpful please do contact us.

Specifically if you have photographs of any of these individuals we would greatly appreciate if you would share these to allow their memories to live on.

Thank you for reading.

