

WAR GRAVES

of Seaford Cemetery

By Kevin Gordon



Department for
Communities and
Local Government



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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SEAFORD CEMETERY
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WAR MEMORIAL
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Cemetery dates from 1897

THE PROXIMITY of churchyards to busy town centres and their water-wells was not hygienic and in 1796 Seaford MP Paul Jodrill raised the subject in the House of Commons.

It took many years until the Burials Act of 1881 gave authority to local councils to establish their own burial grounds. They tended to be 'extra-mural' cemeteries - in other words they were outside the boundaries of the town.

In July 1889 Seaford was again mentioned in Parliament when there were questions asked after Seaford's Vicar, the Reverend Meade-Buck, refused to bury non-conformists in his churchyard.

Seaford Cemetery was established in 1897 and the churchyards at St Leonard's in Seaford and St Peter's at East Blatchington were closed for burials the following year.

The only people that can still be buried in the churchyards are the clergy and (at St Leonard's) members of the Simmons family. The Simmons family were long-standing churchwardens and this is why there is a solitary Commonwealth War Grave at St Leonard's Church. (Frank Gordon Simmons, a 36-year-old member of the Labour Corps, who was found dead on a train at Three Bridges railway station in June 1917).

The cemetery wall (which by law had to be eight feet high) was completed as early as 1894 but the first burial was not until March 6, 1897 for an unidentified person who was washed ashore.

The cemetery was extended northwards in 1935. The cemetery walls have been damaged twice: first by bombs which fell in Kammond Avenue to the east during the Second World War and again in 1987 when considerable damage was caused by the Great Storm.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

AT THE OUTSET of the Great War there was no formal mechanism for marking and recording

the war-dead. This was noticed by Fabian Ware who commanded a mobile ambulance unit for the Red Cross. Ware was a journalist and a previous editor of the *Morning Post*. He had been rejected for service as he was too old, but was determined to 'do his bit'. It was due to his efforts that the Graves Registration Commission was established in 1915 as a part of the British Army.

By the end of the war the Commission had identified 587,000 graves and registered a further 559,000 people as 'missing'. The British Government realised the importance of this work to assist them in dealing with hundreds of thousands of queries from the public about their loved ones.

The Great War was the first conflict where an effort was made to provide an individually marked grave for each of the dead, irrespective of rank. The original graves were marked by a simple wooden cross with metallic 'tic-a-tape' giving brief details of the occupant. Examples of these can be seen inside Rottingdean Church.

The graves were in a variety of places; some were buried in local (French or Belgian) churchyards or cemeteries. Others were buried where they fell, often by the enemy. Some men died in hospitals and others while *en-route* 'back to Blighty'. Many men and women died after they returned home.

To qualify for a war grave the deceased needed to have been a member of the armed services during wartime. Not all saw action. It should also be noted that, though the Armistice was on November 11, 1918 the war did not formally end until June 28, 1919 so many graves in Seaford cemetery are dated after hostilities ended. The cut-off date for Great War casualties receiving an official Commonwealth war grave was August 31, 1921.

After the war many people travelled to the war-zones of northern France and Belgium to visit their loved ones. Some families wanted to replace the simple wooden crosses with their own headstones but the authorities would not allow this.

A decision was made to replace all war-graves with a standard design. This was a Portland marble gravestone 2 feet 8 inches tall and 15 inches wide showing details of the deceased and also incised with a regimental badge and a religious symbol (usually a cross). The top of each stone would be curved to discourage rainwater falling across the face of the stone. The family were allowed to add a few words to the base of the stone. Families were originally asked to pay 3½ pence a letter, though this was later waived. There was to be no distinction of rank, race, religion or social status.

Not everyone was happy with the scheme. In May 1919 the Sussex Territorial Force Association complained about the 'uniformity' of the headstones and the removal of memorials that were already in place.

Questions were asked in Parliament but Sussex author Rudyard Kipling responded by saying *"Our boy (Jack) was missing at Loos and the ground is battered 'Lest We Forget' beyond all hope of any trace of him being discovered. I wish that some people who are making this trouble would realise how fortunate they are to have a name on a headstone."*

The work of the Imperial War Graves Commission (since 1960 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission - CWGC) cannot be understated. By 1921 they had been responsible for maintaining, and sometimes creating, 950 cemeteries on the Western Front alone. They had planted 15 miles of boundary hedges and 75 miles of flower borders. Among the architects involved in the project were Sir Edwin Lutyens (responsible for many beautiful Sussex houses) and Sir Reginald Blomfield. Gertrude Jekyll helped to design the gardens. Rudyard Kipling assisted with the wording. "Lest We Forget" and "Their Name Liveth Forever More".

Similar work was being done in England. Commonwealth War Graves are located at more than 23,000 sites and of these over half are in the UK. These are often for local people who were engaged on war work at the time of their death. However, Seaford Cemetery is unusual as it contains the graves of many soldiers from around the Empire who died while undergoing training at the two huge army camps in the town.



They date from October 1914 to June 1919.

Of the 273 War Graves there, 253 are from the Great War so this is one of the largest war-graves in the south. There are graves of English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Canadian, West Indian and even American men with ages ranging from teenage to a man of 63.

Though initially the graves were marked with wooden crosses, they were later replaced by permanent stones. In June 1922 it was reported that 'in Sussex' the War Grave Commissioners had completed the erection of a tombstone on each war grave and the 'little mounds' of the graves had been levelled.

Cemeteries with more than 40 war graves were enhanced with a Portland stone 'Cross of Sacrifice' on an octagonal base. The centre of the cross was adorned with a bronze sword, point down.

The original design of this sword by Sir Reginald Blomfield can be seen at the Ypres Tower Museum in Rye.

Blomfield, an architect who lived in Playden, near Rye, was also responsible for designing the Menin Gate in Ypres and County Hall in Lewes. Seaford cemetery has such a cross (pictured left).

A Walk around the Cemetery

WE START the walk at the entrance (Cemetery Gates). The cemetery is divided into seven sections, each subdivided. Please refer to the map, printed on the back cover, where each section is colour coded.

The walk is flat and short but we will be walking across grass and between gravestones so please be careful where you step, particularly after rain when the ground can be slippery.

The cemetery is owned and maintained by Lewes District Council, though the war graves and surrounding garden-beds are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Please remember this is a burial place and you are asked to give due respect to the location and the people who come to the cemetery to visit their loved ones.

(1) Cuthbert Bromley and John Lee Bromley (Section D)

Not all soldiers commemorated in the cemetery are actually buried here. Many are remembered on family graves. An example is Cuthbert **BROMLEY** VC.

From the cemetery gates, walk up the path to your left alongside the Cemetery Lodge (built in 1896) and the WC.

The seventh grave to your left is for Sir John Bromley's family. The family lived at Sutton Corner, a house near where the War Memorial in the town now stands. Their son Cuthbert Bromley was a Major in the 1st Battalion (20th Regiment) of the Lancashire Fusiliers.

On April 25, 1915 Major Bromley led an attack to the west of Cape Helles on the Gallipoli Peninsular, Turkey. They met deadly fire but managed to gain the beach-head. He was wounded in the back.

For his leadership and bravery he was awarded the Victoria Cross. He was one of six men to receive the VC for his actions that day. These are known as the "Six before Breakfast" Victoria Crosses.

On the night of August 13 -14, 1915 he was on board the transport ship "Royal Edward" when it was torpedoed. His body was never recovered. Bromley Road in Seaford is named after him and in 2015 an incised paving stone was unveiled adjacent to the War Memorial in Sutton Park Road.



Cuthbert Bromley, VC

You will see that not only is he mentioned on the family grave but also his nephew, John Lee Bromley, who was killed during the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944.

He was a glider pilot and was killed when his aircraft struck trees when it landed. The glider was carrying Forward Observation Officers from the Parachute Brigade.

(2) The First War Graves (Section A4)

If you turn and face the cemetery chapel you will see two partial rows of Commonwealth War Graves just in front of you.

These date from 1914 and 1915 and were the first soldiers to be buried here. You will note that some of the soldiers have non-CWGC gravestones, which were probably provided from donations by fellow soldiers and maybe local people.

The tallest of these is for Joseph **TOPLEY**, a 22-year-old Private from the Royal Irish Fusiliers who drowned in August 1915 while swimming in the Cuckmere River.

The Irish

The first group of soldiers to populate the Seaford Camp were from Northern Ireland. In July 1915 the newly raised 36th (Ulster) Division arrived in Seaford having travelled by train from Belfast to Dublin, the ferry to Holyhead and then by train again via Crewe to Seaford.

The Irish political situation was fragile and most of the men had been recruited from the Ulster Volunteer Force. On July 12, 1915 the Ulster-men celebrated Orange Day with a march through the town. The following week Lord Kitchener came to Seaford to review the men in the grounds of St Peter's School which was on the other side of the Alfriston Road to the cemetery. He was pleased with what he saw and described the 36th Ulsters as the finest Division in his new army.

To the right of the grave of Topley is the Commonwealth War Grave for Thomas **POLLOCK**, a 36-year-old Driver from County Down. He drowned in Seaford Bay while trying to rescue a colleague, 19-year-old Robert **WILSON** who got into difficulties. As Pollock tried to pull the teenager ashore, the undertow pulled them away from the beach and they were both drowned. Pollock was a married man with several children and was identified by his brother who was also training at Seaford.

Both men were buried close to each other with full military honours. The funeral was described in the local press and makes interesting reading when you consider that the process would have occurred more than 250 times in the cemetery:

"The funeral party met at the North Camp (Blatchington Entrance) where over 300 men for the Army Service Corps stood in silence. The funeral procession was led by fifteen men of the Royal Irish Rifles marching slowly with their guns reversed. Next were the bands of the Royal Irish Rifles and the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, over sixty men in all. Each of the drums of the band were muted with black cloth. Next came two horse-drawn carriages carrying the union flag draped coffins of the men. Their caps, belts and

guns had been placed on top and the carriages were awash with colourful wreaths. On either side of the carriages, the pallbearers marched and behind them were members of the families of the men. Following this were the two horses usually ridden by the soldiers, the men's jackboots had been reversed on the stirrups. The funeral preceded along Claremont Road, Clinton Place, and Sutton Park Road to the cemetery, where, as the coffins were lowered into the graves, the firing party fired three volleys over the graves and the last post was sounded."

The West Indians

In the next row, closer to the chapel, you will see three graves of men who travelled thousands of miles away from their homes in the Caribbean.

Early in the war, potential recruits travelled from all over the Empire to enlist but black men from the West Indies were initially not so enthusiastically welcomed. However, the determination of the men led the 'West Indies Contingent' to be established and it was decided to send the men to Seaford to await a decision to be made regarding their deployment.



The West Indies Regimental Badge

Hundreds of men from Barbados and British Guiana arrived in Seaford on September 5, 1915; 750 more arrived in October; and on November 25 a further 750 marched from the railway station to the North Camp.

The British West Indies Regiment was formed in Seaford on October 25, 1915. The West Indians settled well in the town and there are records of the men worshipping at St Leonard's Church, visiting local school children and attending meetings of the local Ancient Order of Foresters. Seafordians nicknamed the men 'The Westies'.

The cold, sharp blustery winter must have been a huge shock to these men compared to the weather at home. Sadly, many of the men succumbed to illness. There are 19 West Indian CWGC graves at Seaford. One of the first to die, however, was killed in an accident: Corporal James Lawrence **BROWN**, who is buried in this section.

On November 21, 1915, Corporal Brown and two other West Indian soldiers, looking to explore the local countryside, hired bicycles from William Allen, a 'cycle agent' in Broad Street, Seaford. He warned them to take care on the hills. The other soldiers were William Stuart and Cyril Gabriel and all three were from St Vincent.

They returned from Eastbourne after dark, ensuring that their cycle lamps were lit, but on travelling down the hill towards Exceat Farm (now the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre) James Brown lost control and crashed into a tree. He died at the scene before a doctor (Lieutenant Walker of the Royal Army Medical Corps) could attend.

He was taken to the Ravenscroft Hospital which was a converted school run by the Red Cross where his brother, who was also a member of the West Indian Regiment, formally identified him.

The subsequent inquest returned a verdict of accidental death. Sadly, one of the other cyclists, Cyril Gabriel was to die on active service and is buried at Jerusalem Cemetery in the Holy Land.

In 2015 a plaque to commemorate the soldiers of the West Indies was unveiled at the cemetery. This can be seen later in the tour in the porch of the chapel.

(3) The Bombing of Seaford (Section E4)

Now walk up towards the garage-like building near the corner of the cemetery. Close to the path by the hedge surrounding the building you will see four identical lichen covered graves.

These are not Commonwealth War Graves but are nevertheless for victims of war. These council graves are for civilians killed in Seaford during the air-raids of the Second World War.

These graves contain the majority of the dead of Seaford's two worst raids of the war, including Kathleen **BORRISOW** and her father George who were two of 14 people killed when the town was attacked on Sunday October 25, 1942.

Among the people killed in this raid were William Tomley, an Air Raid Warden, who was machine-gunned to death as he ran towards the Council Control Point in Crouch House. His grave is elsewhere in the cemetery.

The grave to the right is for Harriet **MARTIN** who was one of five people killed in an air-raid on Thursday November 5, 1942. The bombs fell on a row of fine Victorian terraced houses in Pelham Road (opposite the entrance to what is now a supermarket).

In total, 20 civilians were killed by enemy action in the Second World War and most are buried in the cemetery here. Unusually, the Seaford War Memorial in Sutton Park Road lists their names alongside the military dead.

(4) Second World War Graves (Section E5)

If you turn around, and take a few paces ahead, you will see a single war grave a short way ahead of you.

This is the grave of John James **WHITTERS**, a 45-year-old Irishman from County Fermanagh. He married a local girl and they lived in Chyngton Lane. He died in 1945 while a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. He is buried in the family grave but with a CWGC stone.

Four rows away is the grave of Walter John **HEWETT**, a 37-year-old member of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps. He died in Barnet, Middlesex, but was returned to his home in Seaford for burial.

Beyond this in Section E5 are 11 further graves from the Second World War including some for unidentified sailors who were washed ashore in Seaford Bay. Seaford's proximity to the Channel meant that this was a frequent occurrence and many of the men were from the Merchant Navy.

Note the graves of George **TERNENT** (25-year-old Deckhand from Gateshead), Isaac **SMITH** (20-year-old Boatswain), Edmund Ellis **PARKER** (40-year-old Fireman from South Shields), and George William **OLIVER** (23-yr-old Deckhand from Sunderland) who were all from the same ship, the SS Stanwold.



Kenneth ('Wilfred') Fison

The Sailing Ship Stanwold was a collier and was bringing much-needed coals from Northumbria to the South Coast. The ship left the Tyne on February 23 but foundered and sank off Littlehampton on February 27 1941. She sank with the loss of 18 Merchant Navy crew and four Royal Navy men. Their bodies were recovered around the coast between Newhaven and Sheerness in Kent.

Here are also the graves of members of the Royal Air Force, including Sergeant Kenneth Wilfred Young **FISON**. He was known as Wilfred and attended Clare College Cambridge where he was awarded a Hockey 'Blue'. He joined the RAF in December 1941. Fison was the Wireless Operator to a famous Spitfire Pilot Richard Hillary, whose book *The Last Enemy* inspired the film *The Battle of Britain*. In 1940 Hillary was shot down and was badly injured

and burnt. He slowly recovered and was determined to fly again. He had only been flying with Sergeant Fison for two weeks when their Bristol Blenheim V crashed during a night-flying exercise. Both men were killed. Sergeant Fison lived at Broadleaze, a house on the Eastbourne Road, and his body was returned home for his funeral here. On November 6, 2001 a memorial to Hillary and Fison was unveiled at the site of the crash near RAF Charterhall on the Scottish Borders.

A family grave nearby commemorates Ronald Victor **GALT** and his brother Robert Brownlie **GALT**. The Galt family were from London but moved down to Seaford to live in Highlands Road. Ronald Victor was an RAF flying instructor who died at Sleaford, Lincolnshire, of wounds received on active service just a week after he was granted a commission as a Pilot Officer.

Robert Brownlie Galt was a Pilot Officer in 139 Squadron and was killed when his Blenheim IV bomber was shot down off Le Havre, France, while on anti-shipping patrol on July 14, 1941. (Note that the second entry on the grave has both the name and year of death wrong).

The next grave is that of Trenchard Duroure **PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE**. He was born in India in 1894 but was educated in Canada and later at Sandhurst. During the First World War he served as a Second Lieutenant with the Suffolk Regiment. On the night of July 19, 1916 he led a group of men which held the rim of Hooge Crater near Ypres and for his leadership and bravery was awarded the Military Cross. He was a keen sportsman and during the 1930s played cricket for the 'Sussex Martlets'. He was also a noted breeder of Afghan Hounds. In the Second World War he was a Captain in the Royal Sussex Regiment. He was married with two children and lived in Blue Haze, a house (now called Underdown House) near the cemetery on the Alfriston Road. He was killed at Cuckmere Haven on September 22, 1940.

Walk back onto the footpath and turn right towards the chapel.

(5) Cilda Fort (Section E3)

On your right you will see a low grave slab for talented professional dancer 26-year-old Cilda **FORT**.

She was killed in the air-raid on November 5, 1942 while assisting three elderly ladies into the basement of a house in Pelham Place. The letters on her grave show that she was a Member of the Royal Academy of Dance and a Licentiate of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing.

(6) A New Zealand Soldier (Section F1)

Turn around and you will see what appears to be a Commonwealth War Grave.

Closer inspection shows that this is a grave for a Great War Veteran, Rifleman 14802 Henry **FRANCOU**, who served in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. He was born in Australia but enrolled in the NZEF in March 1916 and, following a short period of training, arrived at Devonport, England on the SS Tahiti in August. The following year he was in France. He was seriously wounded in action in March 1917 and his left leg was amputated. While convalescing in Surrey he met a local girl, Rachel, and they married and moved to Seaford. They lived in Crypt Villas and later Vale Road. He died aged 86 in 1953.

(7) Murdered (Section B4)

Return to the chapel and look towards the Cemetery Gates at the rows of war graves. There are many graves of Canadians here.

Walk along the first row and you will see the grave of Private Joseph Plant **WILD** who was murdered. Wild was born in Rugby in 1877 but had left England to become a prospector in Canada. He was not a nice man and was said to be a bully and sexual predator.

Early in 1917 Wild allegedly attacked a young Canadian soldier, Stanko Jovan Layovich who was originally from Serbia.

Layovich was a proud soldier and had three 'wound stripes' sewn to his uniform. He had seen action on several occasions and claimed he had been recommended for both the Victoria Cross and Distinguished Conduct Medal. At 4.30pm on May 10, 1917 Layovich walked into an Army wash-house at Seaford and shot Wild twice in the back. Layovich then walked to the Quartermaster's Hut and handed in his revolver and was taken into custody.

Wild was taken to hospital in Eastbourne where he died a few weeks later in August. It was later discovered that Wild had given a false name when he joined the Army; his real name was Joseph Baguley (as indicated on the top of the stone). There was a suspicion that he had criminal convictions.

Layovich was initially sentenced to just three years for the crime but his mental condition deteriorated and he was taken to Broadmoor Hospital. He died in a Psychiatric Hospital in Canada in 1939.

Close to the grave (in the next row back) is the grave of the oldest soldier to be buried at Seaford. He was Richard **SPITTLE**. (At the time of writing his grave wrongly gives his age as 23 years).

Spittle was born in 1857 in Harlington, Middlesex. He joined the King's Royal Rifle Regiment as a teenager and went to Ireland where he married. The 1881 census shows him in a Musketry Course at Hythe in Kent while his wife and son were living in an Army Camp in Farnborough. In 1891 he had taken his family to St Peter's Garrison in Jersey.

He retired and returned to London where he worked in a sawmill but on the outbreak of War re-joined his regiment at the age of 57. He was posted to Seaford but his role here is unclear. He died in Ravenscroft Military Hospital in Seaford in August 1916, aged 63. He is one of the oldest soldiers to have died in the Great War.

Now retrace your steps and walk around behind the chapel to the rear of the cemetery (Sections C5 and C6 which have dozens of war graves, mainly Canadian).

(8) The Influenza Pandemic (Section C5)

Walk straight ahead and take the second path on the right at the grave of Canadian soldier J. J. Gordon.

Twenty-three-year-old John James **GORDON** was a railway worker from Williamstown, Ontario. He was admitted to hospital in Eastbourne with influenza on October 27, 1918 and died later that day. The 'Spanish Flu' struck quickly and Private Gordon's death is typical of many of the men buried in this section of the cemetery. There were reports of men attending parade in the morning and dying before the end of the day.

(9) A Freemason

Further down in the same row you will see a gravestone in the form of a cross.

It is the grave of Lieutenant Joseph Gore **SHEPLEY**. Shepley was a Structural Engineer from northern Ontario. He joined the Canadian Army as a commissioned Lieutenant on March 27, 1917, the day after he became a master freemason. He was married on June 19, 1918 and two weeks later was posted to the Canadian Engineers Training Centre at Seaford's North Camp.

On October 22, 1918 he caught a cold which developed into pneumonia and he died in Eastbourne Hospital four days later. It is likely that local freemasons paid for his grave which is why it is not a standard war grave.

Two rows immediately behind the grave of Shepley are the graves of Walter Rauffenbart and Orville Hyslop.

(10) The Americans

Walter **RAUFFENBART** was one of about 20 men from the USA who were buried at the cemetery under the Canadian Maple Leaf.

Walter was a plumber from Atlantic City and had already seen service in the United States Cavalry. He crossed the

border to join the Canadian Army in February 1916, more than a year before the USA declared war on Germany in April 1917.

Orville Newton **HYSLOP** was a student when he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915. His first posting was in Bermuda, far from the mud and slaughter of the Western Front but his unit, the 38th Battalion, arrived in France in August 1916. During an action in April 1917 he was wounded but was awarded the Military Medal for 'bravery in the field'. He ended up recuperating in Seaford but died aged 22 in March 1918.

(11) A Talented Musician

Five plots along the path from the cross of Lieutenant Shepley is the grave of Cephias **ABBOT**.

Cephias was born in Lakefield Ontario. His father Edward was a fruit-grower and inventor and in the early years of the 20th Century moved his family to Mission City, British Columbia, where two houses of the "Ontario Style" were built as family homes. Cephias was a gifted musician and

played several instruments. He studied at the University of Toronto and had an interest in liturgical music.

In the early years of the war Cephias worked as a plumber and tinsmith, which were then seen as reserved occupations for the war effort. However, on March 27, 1918 he enlisted into the Canadian Engineers and soon afterwards made the long journey to England, eventually arriving at Seaford Camp.

On arrival, Cephias joined the camp band and it is sad to note that one of his first duties would have been to attend



Cephias Abbot

military funerals here at Seaford Cemetery on the Alfriston Road. He remained in Seaford after the war had formally ended, no doubt as he was a member of the regimental band, but sadly he succumbed to the flu himself and died on March 18, 1919. He was just 29.

Relatives of Cephas Abbott still live in the family house in Mission City, built over 100 years ago. They still cherish his clarinet and old hunting rifle and are proud of Cephas. They have provided Seaford Museum with his photograph and he looks a smart, serious and intelligent young man.

(12) Young victim of a modern conflict. (Section C1)

Walk along the path to the 'cross roads' and turn left. To your right you will see the grave of Gareth **WHEDDON**.

Gareth was known as Gary to his family and Gaz to his friends. He was born on February 3, 1959 and lived in Seaford.

On November 9, 1978 he was a Marine, serving with 2 Troop, K Company, 42 Commando in Northern Ireland when he was badly injured by a radio-controlled booby-trap IRA bomb near Crossmaglen, County Armagh, while he was on foot patrol. He was taken to Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast where he died three days later. Sadly, he died during what was planned to be his last week on duty in Ulster. He was 19 years old.

The grave is not a Commonwealth War Grave, as there had been no declaration of war in Ireland. But the grave is similar and has the crest of the Royal Marines.

Next to Gareth's grave is that of Verdun **DICKENS**. Verdun was born in 1916 and named after the Battle of Verdun.

(13) Undecorated War Graves (Section C5)

Retrace your steps and among the Canadian graves on the right you will see several that are not decorated with a cross.

Twenty-two-year-old Sapper Charles Emerson **McALLUM** died only 10 weeks after he arrived in Seaford for training. He

was a Presbyterian. Nearby is the grave of 21-year-old Private Melville **TAMLIN**. He was a Methodist. Two rows back towards the chapel of rest lies Private Ross **HUBLEY** who died in 1919 and was a Baptist.

To his right is the grave of Duncan James **McLEOD**. Despite an early death in Seaford at the age of 23, he had already seen action and had been awarded the Military Medal. He was also a Presbyterian.

The families of these non-conformist religions declined to have a cross carved onto the headstone.

On the corner of this group of graves is that of Captain John (known as Jack) Douglas **VERNER** of Winnipeg. Though only 24 years old when he died, he had received the Military Cross twice for his bravery. In 1917, during an attack on enemy positions, he led his men through a heavy mist and enemy machine-gun fire to capture five German guns, six officers and more than 70 men. He was wounded in 1918.

(14) A Family Tragedy (Section C3)

Diagonally opposite the grave of Jack Verner (down the slope) is the grave of the **TOMLEY** family in the form of a Celtic marble cross.

The grave remembers three members of the family who were killed in the Second World War. William Pryce Tomley was the local monumental mason and you may have noticed his name on several of the civilian graves in the cemetery.

His two sons, Sydney and Maurice, joined the RAF shortly after the outbreak of war and both became Flight Sergeants. Sydney was killed on July 31, 1940 during operations off the Norwegian coast. He was 21 and has no known grave but is commemorated on the imposing Runnymede RAF memorial in Surrey.

Exactly a year later on July 31, 1941 Sydney's brother was killed. Maurice John Tomley had joined the RAF two years earlier and became a Flight Sergeant a year later. He was also

21 years old and had recently married a local girl. He was a popular member of Seaford cricket and rugby clubs.

Tragically, a third family death occurred a year later in 1942. Ada Tomley was not only to lose her two sons but her husband as well. William (known as Bill) Tomley was born in Sydney, Australia. During the Great War he had served as a Sergeant in the Royal Sussex Regiment and later as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal West Surrey Regiment.

Bill was a well-respected member of the community, a member of the Crouch Bowling Club and also, during the Second World War, the chief Air-Raid Warden for Seaford. During Seaford's worst air-raid (October 25, 1942) he was making his way to the Control Point in Crouch House when he was machine-gunned while in Sutton Park Road (close to the site where the War Memorial now stands.) A bullet hit him in the chest and he was killed.

Now walk towards the chapel.

(15) The Chapel

The Cemetery Chapel was built in 1898 and would have been used for the funerals of many of the people (including the soldiers) buried in the cemetery.

In 2015 a plaque was erected in the entrance to the chapel to commemorate the Centenary of the West Indian soldiers who served in Seaford.



(16) The Cross of Sacrifice

You are now close to the large Cross of Sacrifice. Every year a ceremony is held here at 11am on the Tuesday after Remembrance Sunday.

It is a simple but moving service to commemorate the fallen of the Great War, particularly the Irish and Commonwealth soldiers that lay here. The West Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association, Canadian military and other organisations are represented.

This is a fitting place to stay a while and reflect on the hundreds of victims of the two world wars, both civilian and military, who are buried here.



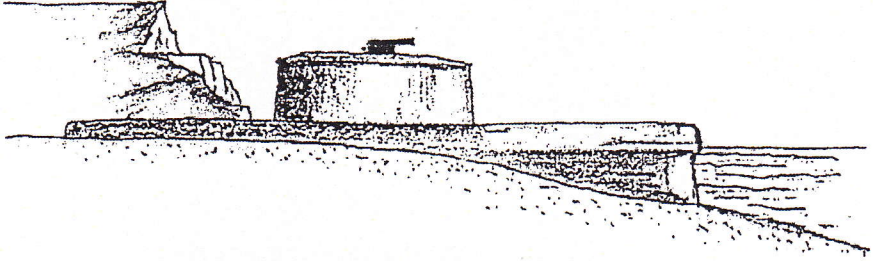
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Seaford Museum Publications

Bygone Seaford by John Odham
Seaford Timeline (1066-2002)

Local History Booklet Series

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Sectional Plan of the Cemetery Area containing War Graves



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