

Axminster's World War II Service Casualties

Introduction

With two exceptions the 21 men listed below all had close personal or family links to Axminster at some point in their lives, and are commemorated on the Axminster War Memorial. The two who are not commemorated on the Memorial nevertheless had some connections to the town, and their details are included here in recognition of those links.

Jeffries Robert George BARTLETT

He died on 9 October 1944, and is buried in Axminster Cemetery (grave 4 in a clusters of WWII service graves). His name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Driver, Royal Army Service Corps. His service number was T/189800.

Links to Axminster:

Jeffries' birth was registered in Axminster district in 2Q1916. His parents were Thomas Edward Bartlett and Maria (née Sellers, married in 1915). He was their only son (they also had a daughter). In 1938 the family was living at the village shop in Smallridge. Jeffries married Florence Elenia Sweetland in Honiton district in 3Q1940.

Cyril Henry CARTER

He died on 28 March 1945 in Germany. He is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery (grave ref. 62.C.4), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Sergeant in the Rifle Brigade (1st Battalion). His service number was 6912999.

Links to Axminster:

Cyril was born in about 1916 (but the registration details have not been found). His parents were John Carter, an agricultural labourer from Southleigh, and Agnes Mary (née Baugh, married in 1895) from Plymouth. He was probably the youngest of four sons (they also had four daughters). By 1911 the family was living at Abbey Gate, Axminster, but by 1938 Agnes, by then widowed, had moved to 5, Penny's Terrace on Musbury Road, Axminster. Cyril married Hilda Evelyn Matthews in Gosport district in 1Q1944, and she remained in the Portsmouth area after his death.

Wilfred Charles COLEMAN

He died on 3 March 1943, and is buried in Axminster Cemetery (grave 3 in a clusters of WWII service graves). His name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Private in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. His service number was 5435453.

Links to Axminster:

Wilfred's birth was registered in St Austell district in 3Q1912. His parents were John Leves Coleman, a farmer from St Minver, Cornwall, and Ellen Mabel (née Johns, married in 1900) from St Kew. He was the third of their four sons (they also had four daughters). Wilfred married Alma Emily Bowdige in Honiton district in 4Q1940, and they had a daughter. Alma lived in Axminster after his death.

Brian Peter DIMENT

He died on 27 June 1944 in Italy. He is buried in Assisi War Cemetery (grave ref. IX.F.12), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Private in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (5th Battalion). His service number was 14579800.

Links to Axminster:

Brian's birth was registered in Bridport district in 2Q1924. His parents were Samuel Diment, a farmer from Morcombelake, and Elsie Mary (née Wicks, married in 1919). Brian was the second of their three sons. The family had moved to Axminster by 1938 (first to Lower Beavor Farm, and then to Beulah Farm).

Nelson Henry ELLIS

He died on 12 February 1940. He is buried in Membury churchyard (to the west of the Church), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as an Ordinary Seaman in the Royal Navy (on HMS Royal Arthur). His service number was D/SSX 32268.

Links to Axminster:

Nelson's birth was registered in Honiton district in 1Q1918. His parents were Carell Ellis, a farmer from Branscombe, and Ella (née Dew, married in 1909). He was the youngest of their four sons (they also had a daughter). In about 1920 the family moved to Wellands Farm, Axminster, where they remained for many years.

Sidney Ronald FOSTER

He died on 23 November 1940. He is buried in Axminster Cemetery (grave 2 in a clusters of WWII service graves), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Lance Corporal in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (2nd Battalion). His service number was 5437016.

Links to Axminster:

Sidney's birth was registered in Axminster district in 2Q1919. His parents were Winsor Basil Foster, a watchmaker originally from Bristol, and Ellen M (née Hill, married in 1913). In 1916, when Winsor enlisted to fight in WWI, they were living in Kilmington, but by 1938 the family had moved to Osborne, King Edward Road, Axminster. Sidney was the younger of their two sons (they also had a daughter). He married Beatrice Jeanette Boyle in Exeter district in 1Q1937, and they had a son. Beatrice lived in Axminster after his death.

John James FRY

He died on 30 November 1943 in Italy. He is buried in Sangro River War Cemetery (grave ref. XVII.E.12), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Private in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (5th Battalion). His service number was 5617880.

Links to Axminster:

John's birth was registered in Axminster district in 1Q1914. His parents were Henry Abercrombie Fry, a labourer from Axminster, and Elizabeth A (née Basten, married in 1912), and he was the second of their three sons. By 1938 John and his parents were living at 8, Lynch Cottages, North Street. John married Freda J Lockyer in Honiton district in 2Q1942.

Frederick William GODDARD

He died on 24 March 1945 in The Netherlands. His name is on the Groesbeek Memorial (Panel 2), and on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Bombardier in the Royal Artillery (3rd Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery). His service number was 1829238.

Links to Axminster:

Frederick's birth was registered in Axminster district in 1Q1909. His parents were Henry Goddard, a sawyer, and Eva (née Boalch, married in 1903) a brush maker, both of them from Axminster. He was the youngest of their three sons (they also had a daughter). In 1911 the family was living on Castle Street, and they remained in Axminster for many years. Frederick married Dorothy V Moore in Chard district in 1Q1935, and by 1938 they were living at 2, Prestor, Sector Lane, Axminster.

Roy Anthony James HELLIER

He died on 16 March 1945 in Palestine. He is buried in Ramleh War Cemetery (grave ref. 5.B.4). His name is not on the Axminster War Memorial.

He served as a Corporal in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (2924 Squadron, RAF Regiment). His service number was 932912.

Links to Axminster:

Roy's birth was registered in Hackney district in 1Q1914. His parents were Albert Hellier and Daisy (née Maidment, married in 1907). They came from, and in about 1920 returned to, Axminster, and in 1938 they were living at 1, Gas Lane, Axminster. Roy was the eldest of their two sons and three daughters.

Percy LAMBERT

He died on 22 October 1944 in The Netherlands. He is buried in Uden War Cemetery (grave ref. 4.D.8), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Trooper in the Royal Armoured Corps (11th Hussars, Prince Albert's Own). His service number was 7903739.

Links to Axminster:

Percy's birth was registered in Gloucester district in 4Q1909. His parents were George Lambert, at that time a labourer from Kingdown, near Deal in Kent, and Alice (almost certainly née Norris, though their marriage details have not been found) from Wallington, Surrey. He was the sixth of their eight sons (they also had three daughters). In 1911 George was working as a billiard marker in a Gloucester hotel. By 1938 George and Alice had done well, and were running The George Hotel in Axminster, and both of them are buried in Axminster Cemetery. Percy married Doris Celia Tidd in Sturminster district in 1Q1944. She lived in Sherborne after his death.

Gilbert John (Jack) LONG

He died on 8 December 1943 in Italy. He is buried in Sangro River War Cemetery (grave ref. XVII.E.34), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He joined the Devonshire Regiment in 1938, but transferred to the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (5th Battalion) after the outbreak of war. He served as a Private, on home soil, in North Africa and then in eastern Italy. His service number was 5620406.

Links to Axminster:

Jack was born at Axminster on 20 August 1920. His parents were Thomas Adam Long, a labourer from Membury and former soldier in the Devonshire Regiment, and Susan (née Copp, married in 1902). He was the fourth of their five sons¹ (they also had three daughters). In 1911 the family was living at Waterloo Cottages (right on the boundary between the parishes of Axminster and Membury), but by 1914 they had moved to 18, North Street. Thomas and Susan continued to live locally for many more years, and in 1938 they were at 7, Cridlake, Axminster.

James Reddie McNEIL

He died on 1 November 1942 in Egypt. He had been mentioned in despatches. He is buried in Kantara War Memorial Cemetery (grave ref. D.137A), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Captain in the Gordon Highlanders (1st Battalion). His service number was 107841.

Links to Axminster:

James was born in Scotland, probably in 1906. His parents were Charles James McNeil and his wife Mary (marriage details not found). By 1939 the family was living near Axminster, and Charles and Mary subsequently lived in Lyme Regis.

Frederick Wallace MOULDING

He died on 25 October 1942 in Egypt. He is buried in El Alamein War Cemetery (grave ref. XXVII.E.1), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

¹ Several of the details here have been supplied by Tom Long, Jack's nephew. Tom's father Robert Cecil Long was fighting up the western coast of Italy with the Royal Artillery at the same time that Jack was on the east coast.

He served as a Lance Corporal in The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) (1st/6th Battalion). His service number was 5627558.

Links to Axminster:

Frederick's birth was registered in Axminster district in 3Q1914. His parents were Walter Moulding, a sawyer, and Sarah Jane (née Sansom, married in 1893), a brush maker, both of them from Axminster. Frederick was the youngest in a family of four sons and four daughters. In 1911 the family was living on Castle Hill, and Walter was still living in Axminster in 1939. In 1938 Frederick was living on Lyme Street, and he married Hilda Mary Eastwood in Chard district in 3Q1939. She subsequently lived at Combe St Nicholas, Somerset.

William Walter NICHOLLS

He died on 8 June 1940 when his ship sank in the Norwegian Sea. His name is on the Plymouth Naval Memorial (Panel 42), and on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Chief Petty Officer Cook (S) in the Royal Navy (HMS Glorious). His service number was D/M 37968.

Links to Axminster:

William's birth was registered in Axminster district in 2Q1905. His parents were Levi Thomas Nicholls, an agricultural labourer from West Chinnock, Somerset, and Emily Ellen (née Rowe, married in 1901) from Thorncombe, Dorset. William was the older of their two sons (Levi also had an older son from his first marriage). In 1901, just before their marriage, they were both living in Misterton, but by 1911 they had moved to Combpyne. William married Ada Annie Holland in Axminster district in 3Q1928, and they had a daughter. By 1938 he was evidently already serving in the Royal Navy, but was still registered to vote via an address near Old Park, Axminster. William's picture can be found on the glarac.co.uk website.

Vincent George PASCOE

He died on 7 February 1944, in Italy. He is buried in Anzio War Cemetery (grave ref. II.J.6), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Private in the Royal Berkshire Regiment (10th Battalion). His service number was 5110671.

Links to Axminster:

Vincent's birth was registered in Devonport district in 3Q1921. His parents were William George Pascoe from Greenwich, and Alice Maude (née Potter, married in 1919). William had served as a Sergeant in the Devonshire Regiment, and had been awarded the Military Medal. Vincent was the older of their two sons. By 1938 Alice was widowed and living on Lyme Street, Axminster.

Cecil George PERCY-HARDMAN, DSO

He died on 8 March 1945 in The Netherlands. He is buried in Mook War Cemetery (grave ref. I.C.21), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Major in the Devonshire Regiment, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. His service number was 49638.

Links to Axminster:

Cecil's birth was registered in Axminster district in 3Q1911. His parents were William Henry Edward Villiers Percy-Hardman originally of Chelsea, and Rosa Mary (née Newbery) of Axminster. Further details about them and the rest of their family can be found in the text which deals with the WWI section of the Axminster War Memorial. Cecil lived at Adreienne House, Lyme Road until his marriage to Barbara Mary Mercer in Brentford district in 3Q1940. They had a daughter and Barbara lived in Ealing after his death.

Henry QUINLAN

He died on 31 August 1940. His death was registered in Honiton district, and he is buried in Axminster Cemetery (grave 1 in a clusters of WWII service graves). His name is not on the Axminster War Memorial.

He served as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. His service number was 5430980.

Links to Axminster:

Although Henry is buried at Axminster, his links to the town are not obvious, and he may be buried here simply because this is where he died. His birth was registered in Bath district in 1Q1903. His parents were John Quinlan from Bath and Emma (surname and marriage date unknown, but 1899 or 1900, based on the evidence of the 1911 census) from West Lavington, Wiltshire. Henry was the younger of their two sons. In 1911 the family was in the Bath Union Workhouse, with John and Emma identified as a painter and a housemaid respectively. Henry married Winifred Harriet Pope in Bath district in 1Q1931, and they had a son and a daughter. After Henry's death, Winifred was re-married to George W Smith in 1941, again in Bath district.

Kenneth Henry ROSEWELL

He died on 8 January 1944. He is buried in Calgary (Burnsland) Cemetery in Canada (grave ref. Lot 53, Block 9, Section G), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Sergeant in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. His service number was 1586791.

Links to Axminster:

Kenneth's birth was registered in Chard district in 1Q1924. His parents were Harry Rosewell from Crewkerne and Mildred May (née Dymond, married in 1913) from Dalwood. They later moved to Grove Lea Farm at Wyke, just outside Axminster, and in 1938 were living at Anning's Farm, Wyke.

Harold George SPURWAY

He died on 24 March 1945 in Germany. He is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery (grave ref. 34.A.1-11), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Private in the Devonshire Regiment (12th (Airborne) Battalion). His service number was 14630649.

Links to Axminster:

Harold's birth was registered in Axminster district in 2Q1925. His parents were George Harold Spurway and Edith (née Eveleigh, married in 1923), both of them of Axminster. Harold was their only son (they also had a daughter). The family continued to live in Axminster, near Millbrook, until at least 1939.

Robert James STRAWBRIDGE

He died on 8 March 1944 in India. He is buried in Calcutta (Bhowanipore) Cemetery (grave ref. L.137), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Leading Aircraftman in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. His service number was 1318503.

Links to Axminster:

Robert's birth was registered in Axminster district in 1Q1922. His parents were Eli Thomas Strawbridge, a farmer from Axminster, and Nellie (née Bowditch, married in 1920). Robert was the second of their six sons (they also had three daughters). From about the time that Robert was born the family farmed at Payne's Place, and their successors remain there still.

Charles Frederick John WILLEY

He died on 17 December 1942 in Kenya. He is buried in Mombasa (Mbaraki) Cemetery (grave ref. G.52), and his name is on the Axminster War Memorial (north face).

He served as a Sergeant in the Devonshire Regiment. His service number was 5616925.

Links to Axminster:

Charles' birth was registered in Axminster district in 1Q1915. His parents were Henry Willey, a gardener from Chardstock, and Ellen (Nellie) (née Chant, married in 1907) of Axminster. Charles was the third of their four sons (they also had two daughters). In 1911 the family was living on Fairy Lane, Musbury Road, and remained in or around Axminster for many more years. By 1938 Charles and his widowed mother were living on Widepost Lane, and later that year he married Mary Elizabeth Hoare (in Exeter district in 3Q1938). They had two sons and Elizabeth lived in Axminster after his death.