

HAVANT REMEMBERS

RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF BOROUGH RESIDENTS IN TIMES OF CONFLICT



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL



INTRODUCTION



When 'Country' called, men and women of Havant answered. Through the generations, loved ones have left the borough for foreign climes and oceans in the service of our country, some never to return. Our churchyards and local memorials bear witness to those who fell in the service of our nation, not just in the two great wars, but in more recent conflicts such as the Falklands and in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many people have engaged in supporting activities that have had profound benefits to our servicemen and women engaged in operations overseas. It is not possible to record all of their achievements. This document seeks to acknowledge the contribution and in many cases, the ultimate sacrifice of some of our men and women.

Venues across the borough will be holding remembrance events and displays. The map opposite highlights silhouettes installed across the borough to remember the fallen. Please take the time to read through this booklet, take part in the commemoration of our fallen and help ensure the efforts of so many people over the years who have fought to preserve our way of life are not forgotten.

Councillor Gary Hughes

Havant Borough Councillor

“Remembrance honours those who serve to defend our democratic freedoms and way of life. We unite across faiths, cultures and backgrounds to remember the sacrifice of the Armed Forces community from Britain and the Commonwealth.”

Royal British Legion

This booklet has been produced to commemorate those in the borough who have contributed to the nation's good in times of conflict. **Please be aware** that the stories told are on the basis of available (and occasionally conflicting) data, in addition to volunteered content from the local community. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the total accuracy of all content in this document.

Silhouettes located in Havant Borough



1. St Peter's Church, Northney
2. Rowans Hospice, Living Well Centre, Purbrook
3. St George's Church, Waterlooville
4. Waterlooville Library
5. Wecock Farm Memorial Garden
6. RBL Memorial Garden, Hayling Island
7. Staunton Country Park, Leigh Park
8. St James' Church, Emsworth
9. Park Community School, Leigh Park
10. St. Faith's Church, Havant
11. Asda, Havant
12. Bedhampton Community Centre
13. Havant Crematorium
14. Emsworth Business Association
15. Havant Borough Council

For more information on the commemorative silhouettes please visit www.therebutnotthere.org.uk

Captain Harold Glasspool Baker



T./Lt. (A./Capt.) Harold Glasspool Baker, I.C., Dorset, R.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He commanded the leading Company in the attack, and when all the Officers of the supporting Company had been killed or wounded he took charge of that Company as well, and supervised the work throughout the day under most trying circumstances. Although the two Companies were greatly reduced in strength, he set such a splendid personal example of energy and determination that they were encouraged to dig themselves in. His cheerful and gallant behaviour throughout the action had the most inspiring effect upon his men. (M.C. gazetted 17th September, 1917.)

Captain Baker's actions were covered by the press – as seen in this January 1918 excerpt from the London Gazette

Born in Waterlooville in 1889, Captain Harold Glasspool Baker was one of only 16 officers awarded three Military Crosses during World War One. Educated in Petersfield, Harold went to work for the National Provincial Bank of England. From 1909 to 1913 he served in the Hampshire regiment of the Territorial Army. With the onset of World War One, he transferred into the Dorset regiment in November 1914.

Injured during the Battle of Ypres in 1917, he transferred to the Somerset Light Infantry with a promotion to captain. He was awarded his first Military Cross on the 17th of September 1917, with a bar (his second) only three days later. His last Military Cross was awarded on the 19th of January 1918.

On the 5th of April 1918, Captain Baker was mortally wounded halting a German offensive action near Gommecourt - a commune in the Hauts-de-France region. Aged 28, he was buried at Doullens Cemetery, 16 miles away from where he fell.

Able Seaman James Henry Chapman



James Henry Chapman – born on Hayling Island in 1922 – was a mischievous boy who loved to play improvised games of hockey and football with whatever resources were available. Known as “Tich” to his friends, he had a fondness for fishing – particularly mackerel fishing in boats off the coast of Hayling.

He sought adventure, and joined the Royal Navy straight from school. He served on HMS Somali – a Tribal class destroyer completed in 1938. HMS Somali was a notable ship – it captured the first enemy merchant ship of World War II, and also recovered from a German ship valuable codebooks and documentation on the Enigma encryption device. In August 1942 it rescued all 105 crew from the torpedoed American cargo ship Almeria Lykes.

On the 20th of September 1942, HMS Somali was torpedoed whilst protecting Convoy QP14, south west off the Norwegian archipelago Svalbard. Crippled from the damage, she was towed by the destroyer Ashanti through violent seas, whilst a skeleton crew (including James) worked desperately on the Somali. After five days of valiant effort, heavy weather broke the Somali, snapping her in half. James died as she sank quickly in freezing waters. He is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial.



The Tribal class destroyer HMS Somali

Captain John Philip Blake RM



Captain John Philip Blake RM

Born in Portsmouth in 1917, John moved to Havant early in his childhood – the hometown of his mother. Studying at first in Emsworth, he then went to the prestigious Aldenham School in Hertfordshire where he excelled. He became the Head of School, Head of House and Captained their cricket team. After studying at Cambridge (where he continued to excel at cricket and hockey), he returned to Aldenham as a mathematics teacher in 1939.

With the arrival of World War II the same year, John was called up and transferred to Greenwich where he was a Naval instructor. Joining the Royal Marines in 1940, John fought in French West Africa the same year. Late in 1941 he transferred to the Mediterranean. By July 1943, he commanded a troop of 70 men in the 43rd R.M. Commando.

In January 1944, John was awarded a Military Cross for his bravery, leadership and navigational skills after capturing Monte Ornito – a precarious site at 2,400ft - between Rome and Naples. On the 13th of June 1944, John took part in Operation Flounced - a joint British/Partisan force attacking the island of Brac in Yugoslavia (now Croatia). After negotiating a minefield with his troop, John died in a German counter-attack. John is commemorated on the lectern at St Faith's church in Havant, and Belgrade War Cemetery in Serbia.

ALCK Michael P Foote



Warren Park resident Michael P Foote was born in 1958. He served in the Royal Navy as Leading Cook on the Type 21 frigate HMS Ardent, commissioned in 1977.

In May 1982, HMS Ardent was providing key support in Operation Sutton – a two-pronged mission to land British armed forces following the invasion of the Falkland Islands. During the operation, it was the target for at least three waves of attack by the Argentinian Air Force. Struck multiple times during the course of the 21st of May, it sank the following day. Michael was one of 22 crew members lost during the attack. He died aged 23.



The Campito Hill memorial overlooking Ajax Bay

Michael is commemorated with a memorial on Campito Hill, overlooking Ajax Bay in the Falklands. The memorial is to all those lost on HMS Ardent and her sister ship HMS Antelope.

Private Arthur Lewis and Lance Corporal John Melton Lewis



Arthur Lewis (born 1884) and his brother John Melton (born 1886) were born in Westbourne and spent their childhood on the Middle Park Farm estate in Bedhampton. Losing their father before 1901, they worked on the farm in their childhood.

With the outbreak of World War One, they both served in the Army. Both served in the Hampshire Regiment - Arthur as a Private in the 15th Battalion and John as a Lance Corporal in the 1st Battalion.

Confusion exists about Arthur's involvement in the war; the War Office listed him as wounded on the 9th of November 1916 and missing by the 24th. The War Graves Commission has his date of death as the 15th of September 1916. John died the following year, on the 4th of October.

Arthur is interred at the Bulls Road Cemetery in Flers, and John at the cemetery in Poelcapelle, Belgium. John is commemorated on the Catherington War Memorial.



Bulls Roads Cemetery in Flers,
north east France

Private Harold Lavell and Private Owen Lavell



The Machine Gun Corps were a new development of the British Army in World War One, as they became aware of its tactical value

Originally from Oxfordshire, Owen (born 1892) and Harold (born 1900) grew up in Stoke on Hayling Island.

Both brothers served in World War One. Owen started in the Rifle Brigade before serving in the Machine Gun Corps. His Company - the 17th - was formed on the 17th of January 1916. He was killed in action on the 16th of February 1918.

Harold started in the Training Reserve Battalion before serving in the 1st Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

By April 1918 Harold's Battalion had returned from Italy and was fighting in France - most likely part of the Battle of the Lys (also known as the Battle of Hazebrouck). He died - aged 18 - on the 22nd of April, a week before the German offensive ended.

Owen's remains were never recovered - he is commemorated on the Menin Gate memorial at Ypres. Harold is buried in the cemetery at Morbecque.

Private Harry Ripley



Harry Ripley - born in 1886 - was one of eleven children and grew up in the Emsworth area. He appeared to enjoy being physical at a young age, even to the point of debuting in a three-round boxing match at The Circus in Landport, Portsmouth in 1897.

Harry served in World War One, joining the 1st Battalion of the Dorsetshire Regiment. He served in the first major action of the British Expeditionary Force - the Battle of Mons - which commenced in August 1914.



Fame for Private Ripley, August 1916

Taking part in the Battle of La Bassée in northern France during October 1914, Harry was captured by the enemy. Treated exceptionally poorly from the outset, Harry was transferred (along with many other prisoners) from site to site and considered his treatment as "too filthy and disgusting to describe". Beaten for not working in coal mines for the Germans, he was transferred to woods near Münster in western Germany for other work. When sent to another coal mine after several months, he was forced to stand to attention against a wall for 10 hours a day with minimal food after refusing the labour.

Over a year and a half after first being captured, Harry escaped his captors - with three allies he tunnelled under a sentry post and spent eight long days on the run before reaching safety. Private Ripley caused a stir for the press in August 1916, gracing the front page of the Sunday Pictorial and further coverage in the Western Mail and Oxfordshire Weekly News.

Squadron Leader Derrick W Grubb



Squadron Leader
Derrick W. Grubb

Squadron Leader Derrick W. Grubb - a Bedhampton resident - served in the RAF during World War II, joining in July 1942.

Derrick joined 112 Squadron - one of the first squadrons in the world to receive the Curtiss P40 Kittyhawk. Based in Italy from September 1943, Derrick was shot down whilst flying and captured as a Prisoner of War. In early 1945, Derrick has forced to march hundreds of miles as the Germans retreated from the east. In one of the coldest winters of the 20th century, over 80,000 prisoners of war marched great distances westwards with inadequate clothing, poor supplies and they were malnourished from the outset.

Derrick survived the war and served in the RAF until 1975. Derrick also published a book in 2018 entitled "My Life in the RAF".

Beatrice Shilling



Tilly Shilling – a master engineer, lifelong motorsports enthusiast and winner of the BMRC Gold Star

Born in 1909, Beatrice Shilling - known as Tilly to her friends - spent her childhood in Waterlooville. From the outset, she showed great enthusiasm for engineering and considerable ability in its application. In a later interview with Woman Engineer magazine, she proudly recalled spending her pocket money on penknives and tools. Her Meccano skills were formidable, winning her a national competition aged just 12.

By 14, Tilly had bought her first motorcycle and became adept at dismantling and rebuilding it. By 15 she had committed to a career in engineering. She worked hard - and following a £100 loan for her tuition from the Women's Engineer Society - gained a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1932, followed by a Masters in Mechanical Engineering the following year.

Joining the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) in 1936, Tilly specialised in aircraft carburettors. In 1940, Tilly invented a device critical to the combat capability of Spitfires and Hurricanes, which were powered by Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. At the start of the war, pitching these planes into a hard nose dive - a vital capability in combat - caused the engines to stall. Tilly invented the RAE restrictor (also known by the unflattering name of 'Miss Shilling's orifice') - a simple and effective solution which could be retrofitted to the planes without taking them out of service.

Awarded an OBE in the 1949 New Year Honours list for her wartime efforts, Tilly continued to work at RAE on projects such as the Blue Streak ballistic missile system. She also worked on the Eagle Mk1 racing car in the late 1960s - no doubt influenced by her life-long passion and involvement in motorcycle and car racing.

Tilly retired in 1969, and died in 1990, aged 81. However, her inspirational legacy continues to inspire - she is recorded in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography for her engineering contributions and is the namesake of engineering centres of excellence at two universities.

This document was produced by the Communities Team at Havant Borough Council - our thanks to all those who have contributed towards this remembrance document. For more information on our work with the armed forces visit www.havant.gov.uk/armed-forces.