

## **WILFRED EDGAR COLLINS - Private 500078, 652 Agri Coy, Labour Corps**

In 1891, before the birth of Wilfred (Wilf) in 1899, his parents Fred & Bessie and older sisters Rosina and Eva were living at Ham, Combe St Nicholas (on Ham Hill, beside the now A303). By 1901 the family were living at Silver Street, Dommett, next door to the North family – Stanley North, who was to die in WW1, was 10 years old, the same age as Rosina Collins. Fred is variously described as a hurdle maker and agricultural labourer. During Wilfred's war service, they're at Little Forest in the same part of Buckland.

We have a detailed record of Wilfred's war service, as his Service Records survived the blitz in 1940. He enlisted on August 14 1916 when he was only 17, a date then amended to being reckoned from August 14 1917, after his 18th birthday. Before enlistment he was working at Forest Mills, Broadway, his occupation variously farmer, carter & miller's carter. After enlistment he appears to have been shuffled between Regiments – the RFA, 4<sup>th</sup> Wilts, 36 Squadron RASC Remounts, 652 Agricultural Company, moving from Durrington to Fovant to Egg Buckland to Taunton to Ormskirk. On his initial medical form, at 18 years, 3 months he's described as a Carter, his height 5ft 8 3/4ins, his weight 128lbs.

He seems to have been a puzzle to the Army as he was 'unable to train – defective speech'. This was variously ascribed to 'strain caused through drill' or a 'kick from a horse in his side'. Whether the disability was permanent it was deemed 'impossible to state'. In fact it appears not to have been something that continued to trouble him.

He was married to Martha Hardwill (known as Pat) in 1919 at Buckland. She was the sister of James Hardwill, killed in France the year before. They had five children: Peggy, James, Ruth, Fred and Patrick.

Wilf Collins' story, Part 2, moves on to WW2. Here is his grandson Tim's account of it:

'The Wilf adventures in WW2 are far more interesting as after joining the Royal Engineers on 28th September 1939, aged 40 (he was one of the oldest in his unit) he started formal training as part of a demolition squad. The lads travelled to France and were tasked with blowing up ammunition and fuel dumps ahead of the Germans. After the Dunkirk evacuation, 27th May to 4th June 1940, his unit remained in France and were making their way west along the coast.

Near the town of Le Havre on 11th June 1940 a French language speaking young Second Lieutenant from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment called Randell Sly was put in charge of the men and they were ordered to carry on heading west for evacuation to England. After a series of skirmishes with the Germans including Randall Sly shooting down a Stuka with a rifle the men eventually arrived in Brest. Alas, there was no established evacuation route so the troops negotiated with the local French authorities to make use of a coal boat for their return to England. The boat was emptied and made ready but the French crew refused to sail it as it was unidentified and at risk of being bombed. However, Randall Sly had some sailing experience and took charge again and they set off for England just twelve hours before the town was captured by the Germans.

The boat arrived in Falmouth and, as I understand, was featured in two newspapers. One story apparently included an image of a line of troops (I have yet to find a copy), whereas the second story was featured in the News of The World on 23rd June 1940 and includes a picture of the coal boat ... but the story does not end there.

Shortly after arrival in Falmouth the soldiers were hastily loaded onto a troop train and departed, heading east ... destination unknown. After heading out of Cornwall into Devon and through Exeter, Wilf realised the train must pass reasonably close to his family home in Buckland St. Mary, so he hatched a plan as he knew the train would head either south through Chard Junction or take the northerly 'mainline' route via Taunton. Wilf was keen to let his wife know he was alive and well as he had been 'missing' for at least eleven days, the plan was to find paper and pencil and to write a letter to throw from the moving train hoping that it would be found and posted home. The hastily written letter was apparently found on the platform, it was posted and arrived at Buckland St. Mary, as I understand after the normal delivery round, but the postman made a special trip; the letter survives to this day.'



*'The last to leave Brest'*

### *News of the World*

300  
ARMY FORM W5258

ROYAL ARTILLERY  
Record Office Stamp  
RECORDS

**6 JUL 1945**

**SAVOY HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH.**

**RECORD OF SERVICE**

No. 2183705 Rank Pte Name COLLINS W.E.  
(in block letters)

Served in Regts/Corps as follows:

	Regt./Corps	From	To	Assn. joined with date	Remarks by Assn. (if any)
a	RE	28.9.39	19.12.42		
b	CMP	20.12.42	6.9.45		
c					
d					

Date 6.7.45

*A. S. [Signature]*  
Record Officer

For NOTES see reverse.

(1761) Wt. 10100 480m (14) 5145 Gp. 407 CASL.24.

As will be seen, Wilf left the Army in 1945; he continued to farm in Buckland St Mary. He died in 1967, his funeral being held in Buckland St Mary Church and his ashes scattered at the Crematorium in Taunton.

*Grateful thanks to Wilf's grandson Tim Collins for much of the information and many of the documents used or referred to here.*

Administrative County of Somerset The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

Page 18

Civil Parish		Municipal Borough		Municipal Ward		Urban Sanitary District		Urban or Village Hamlet		Rural Sanitary District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Ecclesiastical Parish or District	
of <u>Crook &amp; Nettle</u>								of <u>Kam</u>		of <u>Chard</u>		of <u>Wulphinston</u>		of <u>Crook &amp; Nettle</u>	
Coln. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Number of Rooms	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employed	Employed	Employed	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame, Imbecile or Idiot		
101	(Continued)			Walter Godhead	Head		37	Schooler				Somerset, Crook & Nettle			
				William do	Son		17					do			
				William do	Son		15					do			
				Mary do	Wife		72	Rising on own means				do			
				John do	Son		70	General servant, Domestic	X			do	Chard		
				Edith do	Daughter		18	Domestic				do			
				James do	Son		15	Plough boy / Ag	X			Somerset, Chard			
102	Adams	1		William & Dinah	Head		64	General servant	X			do	Crook & Nettle Blind		
				Frederick do	Son		15	General servant	X			do	Chard		
103	do	1		Frederick Collins	Head		26	General servant	X			do	Wulphinston		
				Thomas do	Son		22					do	Wulphinston		
				Thomas do	Son		17					do	Crook & Nettle		
104	do	1	18	Robert Whalley	Head		33	General servant	X			do	Wulphinston		
				Elizabeth do	Wife		36	Base mender	X			Somerset, Chard			
				Richard do	Step-son		12	Schooler				do	Chard		
				Thomas do	Son		6					do	do		
				Elizabeth do	Daughter		4					do	do		
				Ellie Whalley	Son		2					do	do		
105	Little Common	1	18	Thomas Parsons	Head		50	Small farmer	X			do	Diplom. Acromioid		
				Elizabeth do	Wife		57					Somerset, Crook & Nettle			
106	do	1		William Fowler	Head		54	do	X			do	do		
				do	Wife		52					do	do		
107	do	1		Thomas Perry	Head		64	Rising on own means				do	do		
108	Pollinard	1		John Breanney	Head		60	Agricultural labourer	X			do	do		
				Emma do	Wife		30					do	Wulphinston		
				Joseph do	Son		17					do	Crook & Nettle		
				Alice do	Daughter		9					do	do		
7	Total of Houses and of Tenements with less than Five Rooms ...	17	34	2	Total of Males and Females...		10	17							

Note.—Draw the pen through each of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Reference: **RG12/1892**

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1891 CENSUS





COLLINS  
 Wilfred Edgar  
 500078  
 34828  
 NT Non Inve  
 1-11-19  
 500078  
 34828  
 Army Form W3997.

Regtl. No. 42468? Rank Private  
 Name Wilfred Edgar Collins  
 (Christian Names in full) (Surname)  
 Unit D Regt. Somerset L.I.  
 or Corps  
 Date of Discharge\* 16 10 1917  
 Disenbodiment\* Z  
 Transfer to the Reserve\*  
 \* Strike out whichever inapplicable

Buckland 1880/1334  
 St Marys.  
 W Chard  
 Som



**COVER**  
 FOR  
**DISCHARGE DOCUMENTS.**

NOTE.—In every case where A.F. Z.22 is included among the documents the letter Z is to be stamped in the space provided below.



**Award Sheet.—First Award.**

Code Number <sup>869.</sup> 2/R7A/1923.

Surname Collins. Christian Names Wilfred Edgar.

Regiment R 7A. Rank Pte. Regtl. No. 500048.

Date of Discharge 16/10/19.

Cause of Discharge } transfd class 2.  
as on Army Form B.255 }  
Enlisted. 14/8/16.

**SERVICE.**

**FOREIGN SERVICE.**

		Init.	Date.	<b>AWARD.</b>	
A.F. W. 2484 sent				<b>Pension, Gratuity, or Weekly Allowance.</b>	
not sent					
A.V. to Records		BDC		Defective Speech. non attrib: " Aggrav: ml Rejected.	
DIS		'			
NOT. to man		'			
Notification to I.O.		'		Proposer's Signature and Date <u>Scott. 16-11-19.</u> Approver's Signature and Date	
(Continuation of)					
A.V. to N.H.I.C.		'	16/10/19	<b>Awarders' Instructions.</b> Initials and Date when issued.	
A.V. to W.P.C.		'			
Record Card Completed		SBI	16/10/19	<b>Particulars of any Pension or Gratuity awarded in respect of previous service.</b> To be left blank for award of Service pension by the Chelsea Commissioners.	
Entered on Conditional List					
Examined by F. Branch				Pension Expires— <u>Rejected</u>	

2/ Som L.1. / 1923.

Army Form 2. 25.

STATEMENT AS TO DISABILITY.

(This form is not applicable to Officers and Soldiers in Hospital or on leave therefrom who will be brought before a Medical Board.)

On Demobilization every Officer and Soldier, whether remaining with the Colours or not, will be given an opportunity of filling in this Form. Should he not wish to put forward any claim in respect of a Disability due to Military Service he must sign the Statement hereunder to this effect, in the presence of an Officer of the Unit with which he is serving, who will witness the Signature. Whether a Claim is made or not, this Form will be forwarded by the Unit Commander, in the case of every Officer, direct to the Secretary, War Office; and in the case of every Soldier, to the Record Office of his Unit.

Unit: A. Company
Regiment or Corps: Som. Co. 9th?
Regtl. No. 57046 Rank: Plt.
Surname: COLLINS
Christian Names: William Edgar
Permanent address: Beach Road St Mary's N. Devon Somerset.
Age last birthday: 20.
First joined for duty: (Date) 14-8-17. at (Place) Taunton
Medical Category or Grade in which joined: A I

I do not claim to be suffering from a disability due to my military service.
Place of Examination:
Date:
Signature of Officer or Soldier:
Signature of Officer witnessing:

Before the claimant answers questions 1-6 the following should be read by, or to, him:-
Your statement will be checked by Official Records. In answering question 2, any special matters which in your opinion caused or aggravated any suffering from which you are suffering, must be clearly stated.
The claimant will answer the questions in his own words and after completing the form will sign it. The Officer will witness the signature. If the claimant cannot write, he will affix his mark, such act being witnessed.

1. (a) In what countries have you served during this war and for what periods? England. 14-8-17 to 16-9-19.
(b) In what capacity? Infantry.
2. If you are suffering from any disease, wound or injury, state what it is, the date upon which it started, and what in your opinion was the cause of it. Strain through Drills.
3. Give the names of any Hospitals in which you have been treated for the above disabilities during this war.
4. Did you suffer from the disease or injury mentioned in above answer to Question 2, or anything like it before joining the Army? If so, give details and dates.
5. Give the names and addresses (if you know them) of any Hospitals you were in or Doctors who attended you before you joined the Army.
6. Give the name of your National Health Approved Society and, if possible, your membership number.

7. What is the name and address of your last employer before joining the Army? *Sanderson & Clark Mills Broadway*

8. What was—  
 (a) your Industrial Group occupation before joining the Army? *I*  
 (b) your trade or calling before joining the Army? *Farmer*

(To be checked from A.B. 439, A.B. 64, or A.F.B. 103).

The above statement has been read over to me, and I agree to it and have nothing to add to it.

Place of Examination *Taunton* Signed *P. G. Collins* (Claimant).  
 Date *15-9-19* Signed *[Signature]* (Witness).

**OPINION OF THE EXAMINING MEDICAL OFFICER.**

(i) Clear and definite answers to the following questions are to be carefully filled in by the Examining Medical Officer, as it is essential that the Minister of Pensions should be in possession of the most reliable information to enable him to decide upon the applicant's claim to pension.

Expressions such as "may," "might," "possibly," &c., should be avoided.

(ii) The rates of pension vary according to whether the disability is (a) caused or aggravated by service in the present war, (b) due to causes not connected with the present war, viz.: (1) previous active service, (2) climatic diseases in pre-war service, (3) ordinary military service before the war. It is therefore essential when assigning the causes of a disability to differentiate between them.

(iii) When there is more than one disability the replies will distinguish between them.

9. Give Diagnosis and particulars of:—

(a) Each disability claimed or discovered.

*Claims defective speech caused by strain through drill.*

(b) The present condition thereof.

*speech defective, otherwise normal.*

THIS PORTION IS NOT TO BE COMPLETED IF A CLAIM IS NOT MADE.

10. State whether each disability is:—

- (a) Service during the present war.
  - (b) Previous active service.
  - (c) Climate in pre-war service.
  - (d) Ordinary military service before the war.
  - (e) Serious negligence or misconduct on the part of the claimant.
- Give details:—

(i) Attributable to or (ii) Aggravated  
*doubtful.*

11. (a) Is each disability in a final stationary condition?  
 (b) If not is re-examination before the expiration of the period of twelve months specially advised?

*no*  
*6 months less than twenty.*

12. (a) What is the degree of disablement at which in your opinion he should be assessed at present?  
 (Degrees of disablement should be expressed in words in the following percentages: 100, 80, 70, 60, 50, 40, 30, 20, less than 20, or nil).  
 (b) In case of aggravation, what in your opinion was the degree of disablement which existed before joining the Army?

Examining Medical Officer's Signature } *J. G. Barry* Rank *Major*  
 Unit to which attached. *Taunton Military Hosp.*  
 Place of Examination. *Taunton* Date *15-9-19*





*Original Card*

Army Form B. 179.

Medical Report on an Invalid.

Station No 10 Camp: Lunnigton Camp  
Date 21st October 1919

500078

- 1. Unit 2nd Cavalry Division: 7th Cavalry Regt.
- 2. Regimental No. 34928
- 3. Rank Pte.
- 4. Name Collins: Melhus Edgar.
- 5. Age last birthday 18.
- 6. Enlisted on 11th Aug. 1919.  
at Yarmton.
- 7. Former Trade or Occupation Yarn Carter

8. Disability.

*Infective Opus*

Statement of Case.

*Note—The answers to the following questions are to be filled in by the Officer in medical charge of the case. In answering them he will carefully discriminate between the man's unsupported statements and evidence recorded in his military and medical documents. He will also carefully distinguish cases entirely due to venereal disease.*

- 9. Date of origin of disability. 1913
- 10. Place of origin of disability. Kendalton W. Mary, Somerset
- 11. Give concisely the essential facts of the history of the disability, noting entries on the Medical History Sheet bearing on the case.

*Notes that he had a tick from a horse in the field & that as a result he lost the power of speech for some days.*

For opinion of Medical Branch of M, see form A30

- 12. (a) Give your opinion as to the causation of the disability. Result of injury.
- (b) If you consider it to have been caused by active service, climate, or ordinary military service, explain the specific conditions to which you attribute it (See notes on page 3).

## 13. What is his present condition?

Weight should be given in all cases when it is likely to afford evidence of the progress of the disability.

*Defective Mouth.*

*Referred by C.O. to be unfit for  
training*

## 14. If the disability is an injury, was it caused

(a) In action?

(b) On field service?

(c) On duty?

(d) Off duty?

*Off duty*

## 15. Was a Court of Inquiry held on the injury?

If so—(a) When?

(b) Where?

(c) Opinion?

*N.A.*

## 16. Was an operation performed? If so, what?

*No*

## 17. If not, was an operation advised and declined?

*N.A.*

## 18. In case of loss or decay of teeth. In the loss of teeth the result of wounds, injury or disease, directly\* attributable to active service?

*N.A.*

## 19. Do you recommend

(a) Discharge as permanently unfit,

or

(b) Change to England?

*Discharge*

*Mr. Hall H. Paul.*

Officer in medical charge of case.

I have satisfied myself of the general accuracy of this report, and concur therewith, except†

Station *Lark Hill*

*Mr. Hall H. Paul.*

Officer in charge of Hospital.

Date *Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917*

\* Loss of teeth on, or immediately after, active service, should be attributed thereto, unless there is evidence that it is due to some other cause.

† Delete this word if no exceptions are to be made.

WARR. FORM '04 (REV. M. & H. L. L. (M. 2200). FORM 11 2016

Army Form D. 400A.

**Descriptive Return of a Soldier discharged on account of Disability.**

**INSTRUCTIONS.**—This form is to be completed in the case of every discharged soldier whose claim to pension, on account of disability, is to be submitted for the consideration of the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital. Statement A should be completed in the Hospital at which the man is attending at the time of his examination by a Medical Board, and the soldier should be given a full opportunity of examining it, as, if awarded a pension, his subsequent identification depends on his confirming this declaration. The "Rank," "Station," and "Date" should be in his own handwriting. The Form will then be attached to the Proceedings of the man's Medical Board, to be completed by the Officer i/c Records when received by him, and will be forwarded by him, together with the remainder of the man's documents, to the Secretary, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London, S.W. Changes occurring in the description subsequent to the date of admission to pension should be noted in red ink.

**A Name in full** Collins: Milner Edgar  
**Regiment from which discharged**  
**Regimental Number** 34928 500078  
**Where born (Parish, Town and County), and when** Buckland St. Mary: Somerset: 20th March 1899.  
**Intended address** Little Grist: Bonnet: Buckland St. Mary: Somerset.

**Height on discharge** Feet Inches  
**Colour of Hair on discharge** Colour of Eyes  
**Descriptive marks** Complexion  
**Figure on discharge**  
**Christian name of Father** Fred.  
**Christian name of Mother** Beccie  
**Wife's Maiden name in full**  
**Date and Place of Marriage**  
**Christian names of Children**  
**Nature and locality of civil employment desired** Farm or Agricultural Work about Buckland St. Mary or Little Grist.

I declare that I am the soldier referred to above, and that all the particulars contained in the above Statement are, to the best of my knowledge, correct.

(Soldier's Signature in full) *Frederick Edgar Collins*  
 (Rank) Private  
 Station *Durhampton Camp.*  
 Date *22-10-11*

I certify that the above-named soldier signed the foregoing declaration in my presence, and that the above description and details are, to the best of my knowledge, correct.

*W. R. H. H.* Medical Officer i/c  
 Station *Lark Hill* Hospital.  
 Date *Feb. 22nd 1917*

B Period of Service and in what Corps ...	Regiment	Years	Days	All Service Abroad with Stations	
				Years	Days
				India	
				S. Africa	
Disallowed ... ..					
Service towards Pension ... ..					
Date inclusive to which pay has been issued	Sum due on account } of advance of pension }				
Sums due on account of public debts ...					

**Rank on Discharge**  
**Character (as on Certificate of discharge)**  
**Where born, and on what date**  
**Date and Place of first Enlistment**  
**Trade on Enlistment**  
**Cause of Discharge**  
**Number of G.C. Badges** Medals  
**Wounds, and Actions in which received**

**Other distinguishing marks**

I certify that the above details of service and other particulars are, to the best of my knowledge, correct.

Station \_\_\_\_\_ Officer in Charge  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ Records.

[OVER



### Opinion of the Medical Board.

NOTE.—(i) Clear and decisive answers to the following questions are to be carefully filled in by the Board, as, in the event of the man being invalided, it is essential that the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital should be in possession of the most reliable information to enable them to decide upon the man's claim to pension.

- (ii) Expressions such as "may," "might," "probably," &c., should be avoided.
- (iii) The rates of pension vary directly according to whether the disability is attributed to (a) active service, (b) climate, or (c) ordinary military service. It is therefore essential when assigning the cause of the disability to differentiate between them (see Articles 1162 and 1166, Pay Warrant, 1913.)
- (iv) In answering question 20 the Board should be careful to discriminate between disease resulting from military conditions and disease to which the soldier would have been equally liable in civil life.
- (v) A disability is to be regarded as due to climate when it is caused by military service abroad in climates where there is a special liability to contract the disease.

20. (a) State whether the disability is the result of (i.) active service, (ii.) climate, or (iii.) ordinary military service.

(b) If due to one of these causes, to what specific conditions do the Board attribute it?

*Not result of 1.2.3.*

21. Has the disability been aggravated by

- (a) Intemperance? *No.*
- (b) Misconduct? *No.*
- (c) Any of the conditions mentioned in question 20, and if so, which? *No.*

22. Is the disability permanent? *Impossible to state.*

23. If not permanent, what is its probable minimum duration?  
*To be stated in months.*

24. To what extent is his capacity for earning a full livelihood in the general labour market lessened at present?  
*No. Not lessened by military service but*

In defining the extent of his inability to earn a livelihood, estimate it at  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ , or total incapacity. *inability = 0*

24a. Is the man suffering from a disability which would obviously, as far as you can judge, cause him to be rejected by an Approved Society under the National Insurance Act? *No.*

25. If an operation was advised and declined, was the refusal unreasonable? *Not applicable.*

26. Do the Board recommend

- (a) Discharge as permanently unfit, or
- (b) Change to England?

*Cii (two) Agincourt Regt Co 4  
Owen & Plew*

Signatures:—

STANDING INVALIDING BOARD,  
SOUTHERN COMMAND DISCHARGE  
Station CENTRE, WINCHESTER.

Date: 30 OCT 1917

STANDING INVALIDING BOARD,  
SOUTHERN COMMAND DISCHARGE  
Station CENTRE, WINCHESTER.

Date: 30 OCT 1917

*J.F. Livingston Major* SURGEON GENERAL A.M.S. PRESIDENT  
*E. Grant Lt Colonel* Members.  
*John Sims Colonel*  
*Owen & Plew* SURGEON GENERAL A.M.S. ADMINISTRATIVE MEDICAL OFFICER.



YEOVIL 7097

Regimental Number 500073  
30823

Army Form B. 103

### Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 4th Res. Batt. Milt. Regt.

Rank Pte Surname Collins Christian Name Wilfred Edgar

Religion MSA of C Age on Enlistment 18 years 8 months

Enlisted (a) MSA of C Terms of Service (a) of war Service reckons from (a) 13 Feb

Date of promotion to present rank \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank \_\_\_\_\_

Extended ( ) Re-engaged ( ) Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_

or Corps Trade and Rate 29371

Occupation Printer's Clerk Signature of Officer H. K. L. Col.

Report		YEOVIL 7097	WARD SUB AREA	Remarks
Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 211, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Taken from Army Form B. 211, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents
		Emarked ...		
		Disembarked...		
	POSTED	Posted to 4th Res. Batt. Milt. Regt. New Zealand	1887	
		SOUTHERN ISLAND	Eg. Auckland	1917
		LABOUR CENTRE		
		6524th Coy	Taunton	1917
		Unit: C.S. C. 200048 (A) 1917		
30 MAY 1919	LABOUR CORPS	6th Coy. Front.	TAUNTON.	30 MAY 1919
		Unit: 6th Coy. 1919		
		Quartermaster Coy		
		6th Agricultural Coy,		
		LABOUR CORPS.		
		TAUNTON.		

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
(b) Signaller, Shipping-Office, etc.

GPO: W. 1364/M/1477 2,400,000 1/17 MCA & W Ltd Form: B.1031 (E. 88)

Occupational working  
 detached 29/11/17  
 by S.C. Centre.

17 AUG 1917  
 THE CHIEF CLERK





500,078

Army Form B. 103 Regimental Number ~~500~~

**Casualty Form—Active Service.**

Regiment or Corps *L. Col. Co.*

Rank *Pte* Surname *Collins* Christian Name *H. E.*

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Age on Enlistment *17* years \_\_\_\_\_ months

Enlisted (a) *14 Aug 1916* Terms of Service (a) *Four Years* Service reckons from (a) *13-5-17*

Date of promotion to present rank \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank \_\_\_\_\_

Extended: { } Re-engaged: { } Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
or Corps Trade and Rate \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation *Cook* Signature of Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Report		Remarks Need of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents
Date	From whom received				
		4th Res Batta Wiltshire	Embarked <i>Exminster Camp</i>		
	<i>Yance</i>	<i>S. B. L. Co. 84th</i>	Disembarked <i>By Beachland</i>	<i>1-11-17</i>	
	<i>Goold</i>	<i>652 Agri Company</i>	<i>Launceston</i>	<i>13-12-17</i>	<i>Admitted</i>

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
(b) Signatures: Shewing Smith, Ac. 4220 W. 1106/11477 4-00-000 117 M&A & W Ltd Forms B.103/4 (B. 206) (P.T.O.)

Name	Corps	Reg. No.	Rank	Date of Discharge	Cause of Discharge
<i>Collins</i>	<i>L. Col. Co.</i>	<i>9893</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>28.7.17</i>	<i>Lic'd</i>
<i>Wilfred</i>	<i>P. S. Pool R.</i>	<i>474570</i>		<i>Enlistment</i> <i>6.3.17</i>	<i>Para 2. 2. 1</i> <i>2.0.265/17</i>

Date of application \_\_\_\_\_ (a) Badge \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Medal \_\_\_\_\_

No. of File \_\_\_\_\_ " \_\_\_\_\_ "

Address of applicant:—

Action taken *Lic'd. C. 129*

*mt*

W6749—H5226 200,000 8/17 HWV(P932) H17/1831

**BUCKLAND ST. MARY.**

WEDDING.—Very quietly a wedding was celebrated on Saturday morning at the parish church of Miss M. Hardwill, youngest daughter of Mr. Hardwill, of Meanwood Farm, and Pte. Wilfred Collins, only son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Collins, of Donnett. The bride, who was given away by her father, wore a dress of crepe de chine, with large black hat with white rose. The bridesmaid was Maggie Podbery, the little niece of the bride. After the ceremony Pte. W. E. and Mrs. Collins left to spend the honeymoon.



E.D. Letter Code. <i>W.P.J.G.</i>		Borough, U.D. or R.D. <i>Chard, Somb. R.D.</i>		Registration District and Sub-district <i>308/1</i>						See INSTRUCTIONS.
ADDRESS.	SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.	O. V. S. P. or I.	M. or F.	BIRTH.		S. M. W. or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION.	11
	No.	Sub No.				Day.	Year.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<i>Mannings</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Fogwill, Mary L.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>5 Dec</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties.</i>	
		<i>3</i>	<i>Fogwill, William J.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>16 May</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Farm labourer - assisting father</i>	
		<i>4</i>	<i>Bennett Raymond B.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>26 Apr</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>At School</i>	
This record is officially closed.										
<i>The Castle Inn</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>White, Herbert J.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>26 Mch</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Inn-keeper &amp; Smallholder</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>White, Elsie</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>21 Feb</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
		<i>3</i>	<i>Williams Marjorie M.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>28 Aug</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>At School</i>	
<i>Penair</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Collins Martha</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>29 Jan</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties.</i>	
This record is officially closed.										
This record is officially closed.										
<i>Blackwater</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Hill, Alfred G.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>24 Apr</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Dairy farmer - Smallholder</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Drake, Ivy A.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>29 Apr</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties.</i>	
<i>Coal Furze</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Herod, Dorcas</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>17 Oct</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>" " "</i>	
<i>Woodside, Blackwater</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Brandon, Levi</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>1 June</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Dairy farmer - Smallholder</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Brandon, Ellen</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>7 June</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties.</i>	
		<i>3</i>	<i>Brandon, Frederick G.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>7 Mch</i>	<i>07</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Foreman bricklayer</i>	
<i>Fair View, Blackwater</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Poiting, Charles</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>27 Apr</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Police Constable - Retired</i>	<i>Somerset Police Force</i>
		<i>2</i>	<i>Poiting, Laura</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>27 May</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
<i>Fair View, Blackwater</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Rooke, William C.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>22 Aug</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Postman (auxiliary) and odd job gardener</i>	<i>A.P. Warden Buckle</i>
		<i>2</i>	<i>Rooke Evelyn M.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>30 Oct</i>	<i>02</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
This record is officially closed.										
<i>Yard NN</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Rooke Stella M.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>8 Dec</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>At School</i>	
This record is officially closed.										
This record is officially closed.										
This record is officially closed.										
<i>Rose Cottage, Blackwater</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Willie, Ellen M.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>16 Mch</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Willie, Stella M.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>3 Oct</i>	<i>02</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Incapacitated.</i>	
<i>Blackwater</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Mutter, Henry</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>10 Nov</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Smallholder farmer</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Mutter, Ada</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>19 Nov</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties.</i>	
This record is officially closed.										
<i>Pennys Farm, Blackwater</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Doble, Frederick T.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>4 May</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Smallholder and farm worker - helping Uncle</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Doble, Lily</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>25 Feb</i>	<i>00</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
		<i>3</i>	<i>Doble, Brian J.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>4 Aug</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>At School</i>	<i>B 303</i>
This record is officially closed.										
<i>Pennys Cge, Blackwater</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Meade Lawrence J.</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>29 Nov</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Thatcher</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Meade Dora E.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>12 Sept</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
		<i>3</i>	<i>Meade Nellie</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>22 Dec</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
		<i>4</i>	<i>Meade Nema J.</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>14 Mch</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Domestic servant seeking work</i>	
This record is officially closed.										
This record is officially closed.										
This record is officially closed.										
This record is officially closed.										
<i>Blindmoor Farm</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Wyatt, Ellen</i>	-	<i>F</i>	<i>16 Aug</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid domestic duties</i>	
		<i>2</i>	<i>Wyatt, John</i>	-	<i>M</i>	<i>22 May</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Farmer - retired.</i>	<i>Special loan tab</i>





COLLINS SIBLINGS – WILF ON THE RIGHT



**THE LAST TO LEAVE BREST.**  
This naval demolition party, shown arriving at a British port, was left behind at Brest to destroy the docks after the evacuation of the B.E.F.



*DID you nominate an unsung hero for one of our peace medals? We received some fascinating letters from readers detailing actions by people both during the war and afterwards which they felt should be publicised and recognised. Here are the stories and the names of the unsung heroes we are proud to honour today ...*

### **By Rachel Carlyle**

**I**T WAS June 11, 1940 and the young Second Lieutenant Randell Sly was about to embark on the most dangerous mission of his life.

During a terrifying six days in occupied France he and his men were bombed from the air, confronted by German soldiers and endured terrible conditions as they marched towards freedom.

But Mr Sly, now aged 82, was never rewarded for his bravery — and it has taken until 1995 for his amazing story to be told.

French-speaking Mr Sly, then aged just 27, was working as assistant area commandant in Bolbec for the Royal Warwickshire Regiment when he was ordered to take charge of 200 troops from another regiment in 1940.

The men, from the Royal Pioneer Corps, had lost all their officers and found themselves in Le Havre in the chaotic days after the occupation.

Mr Sly was told to take the men to the River Loire to join the French army. "We were told there was going to be another line at the Loire, but of course there was no French army there at all," said Mr Sly, from Whiteway Road in Bath.

"It was absolute chaos for six days as we travelled around France trying to get out, and stay one step ahead of the Germans."

The weary party was under constant pressure from German Stukas, once stumbled across a German column at night — and were on board a train when it was bombed.

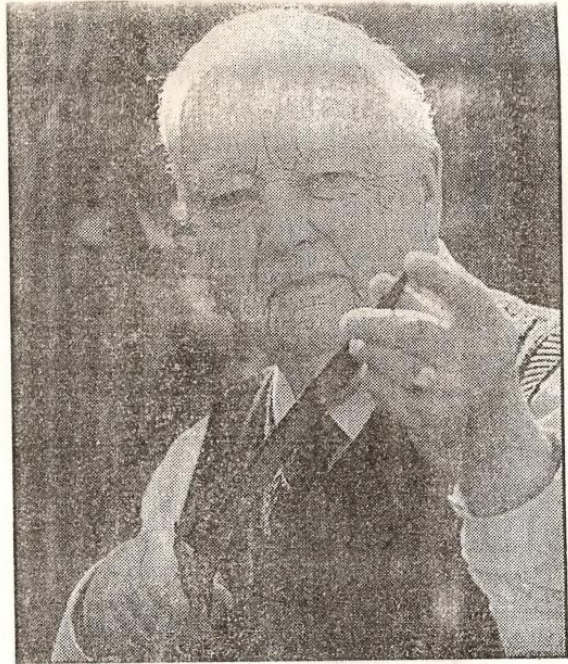
Mr Sly said: "We were being chased round by the Stukas, and one day I suddenly thought 'I've had enough of this.' I sent two volleys of rifle fire and they luckily hit the engine. The plane crashed two miles away in the woods."

"Nobody believes me now when I say I shot down a plane with a rifle!"

Having lost just two men, the exhausted troops finally arrived in the Brittany port of Brest on June 17 — just 12 hours before it was captured by the Germans.

There they boarded a ship bound for Britain, and the second lieutenant's arduous task was finally over. But Mr Sly was back on the front line the following year when he was promoted to the rank of Captain and sent to Greece.

**AND ON THE  
WAY HE  
DOWNED A  
STUKA WITH  
HIS RIFLE!**



**Sharpening his bayonet: Randell Sly**

## West Somerset News

### Wartime escape hero identified after 55 years

RETIRED national park warden Fred Collins has tracked down the mystery man who helped his father escape from occupied France 55 years ago.

Mr Collins, who lives at Timberscombe, has discovered from a newspaper feature the identity of "a mad lieutenant," who brought hundreds of British troops across the English Channel in an unmarked coal ship.

He explained: "My father always told us about this coal ship commanded by a mad lieutenant.

"Now, after reading a newspaper

article commemorating VE-Day, I realised this man must have been 2nd Lieut Randall Sly. And I have written to him in Bath thanking him for his bravery in steering a ship across the channel when it could have been bombed by German planes."

Mr Collins said his late father, who lived at Buckland St Mary until 1958, joined the army immediately war was declared in 1939. He served with Pioneer Royal Engineers and was with the British Expeditionary Force in France blowing up fuel and ammunition dumps ahead of the Germans.

He added that his father's group missed the Dunkirk evacuation and was missing for a fortnight.

"His group got into Brest about 12 hours ahead of the enemy and emptied a French coal boat to make room for troops to sail home," he said.

"The French refused to sail the ship because it was unidentified and likely to be bombed once at sea. But father told us there was this mad lieutenant with some sailing experience who volunteered to navigate the ship back to Britain."

The ship duly arrived in Fal

mouth and Mr Collins' father sent word of his safety by throwing an unstamped letter out of his train window as it rattled through Taunton station.

"My mother was convinced he was safe and when the village postman made a second trip to bring this letter we found she was right."

Mr Collins senior was also a veteran of the First World War and was 40 when he joined up for his second war.

Report by  
**BOB BARRON**

Somewhere  
in Dear old  
England

June 17 1940

My Darling

just arrived in England safe, and am writing this in train so I cant put no address for I dont know where we are going but I'll write as soon as I get there, and then could you send me a small postal order for I have ~~no~~ no English money. and I cant change French, we have just landed at ~~St Albans~~ ~~some~~ in Cornwall but I'll tell you all about it on my next letter and now I am going to try and get a wash & shave for I havnt had one for some time

So Cheere Dear

I am always your  
ever loving Hubby

the whole company  
is come

Will  
XX XXXX



## Son's praise for unsung hero of wartime escape

AN unsung hero finally commemorated by the Western Daily Press has solved a wartime mystery for one West family.

Retired Exmoor ranger Fred Collins never learned how his father Wilf, a veteran of two world wars, managed to escape from France after it was overrun by the Nazis in 1940.

But a Press article on how Second Lieutenant Randell Sly saved 200 men by sailing them out of occupied France has finally solved the 45-year riddle.

Now Mr Collins has passed on his thanks to Mr Sly, from Bath, for his bravery in steering a coal ship across the Channel where it could have been bombed by German planes.

Wilf Collins, who fought for his country in World War I, signed up again the minute Britain declared war on Nazi Germany — despite having passed his 40th birthday.

He joined the Pioneer Royal Engineers and was with the British Expeditionary Force in occupied France blowing up fuel and ammunition dumps ahead of the German advance.

"They got into Brest about 12 hours ahead of the enemy and found a French coal-carrying boat, which they had to shovel empty to take the weight of the troops," said his son, now of Timberscombe, near Minehead.

"My father always told how the French refused to sail it as the boat was unidentified and likely to be sunk by anyone when it entered the sea.

"But he told me there was a mad lieutenant on board who had some yachting experience and volunteered to navigate the boat to Britain."

That "mad" lieutenant was 27-year-old Randell Sly, who was sent to command the regiment when they had lost all their officers.

By Andy Smith

For six terrifying days Mr Sly and his 200 men marched through France, dodging enemy fire and avoiding Stukas.

At one point, Mr Sly even shot down a Stuka with his machine gun — and the party duly arrived in Brest 12 hours before the Germans arrived, and sailed to Britain.

"It appears my father owed his safety to Mr Sly, along with all those other men and families who owe him a great debt of thanks," said Mr Collins.

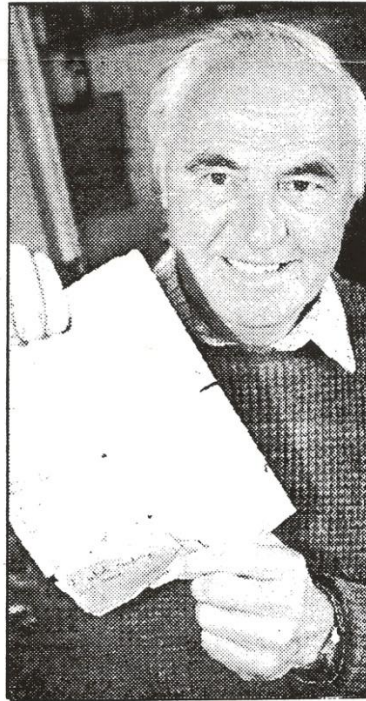
"My father actually got word of his safety to us by throwing an unstamped letter in an open envelope out of the train window as it went through Taunton to his next posting.

"Our village postman made a second trip out to bring it to us, so that my mother would not have to worry any longer than was necessary.

"But my mother was convinced he was safe and the letter she wrote to him while he was missing in France shows the resilience of women in that era.



Escaped: Wilf Collins



Thanks: Fred Collins

**Campaign Stars, Clasps and Medals**  
 instituted in recognition of service  
 in the war of 1939-45

NUMBER OF STARS, MEDALS,  
 CLASPS or EMBLEMS ENCLOSED **3**

Order of Wearing	Description of Ribbon	Clasp or Emblem (if awarded)
1 1939-45 Star	Dark blue, red and light blue in three equal vertical stripes. This ribbon is worn with the dark blue stripe furthest from the left shoulder.	Battle of Britain
2 Atlantic Star	Blue, white and sea green shaded and watered. This ribbon is worn with the blue edge furthest from the left shoulder.	Air Crew Europe or France and Germany
3 Air Crew Europe Star	Light blue with black edges and in addition a narrow yellow stripe on either side.	Atlantic or France and Germany
4 Africa Star	Pale buff, with a central vertical red stripe and two narrower stripes, one dark blue, and the other light blue. This ribbon is worn with the dark blue stripe furthest from the left shoulder.	8th Army or 1st Army or North Africa 1942-43
5 Pacific Star	Dark green with red edges, a central yellow stripe, and two narrow stripes, one dark blue and the other light blue. This ribbon is worn with the dark blue stripe furthest from the left shoulder.	Burma
6 Burma Star	Dark blue with a central red stripe and in addition two orange stripes.	Pacific
7 Italy Star	Five vertical stripes of equal width, one in red at either edge and one in green at the centre, the two intervening stripes being in white.	
8 France and Germany Star	Five vertical stripes of equal width, one in blue at either edge and one in red at the centre, the two intervening stripes being in white.	Atlantic
9 Defence Medal	Flame coloured with green edges, upon each of which is a narrow black stripe.	Silver laurel leaves (King's Commendation for brave conduct. Civil)
10 War Medal 1939-45	A narrow central red stripe with a narrow white stripe on either side. A broad red stripe at either edge, and two intervening stripes in blue.	Oak leaf

**ROYAL ARTILLERY**  
 Record Office Stamp  
 (C&S) L.S. & M.P. RECORDS  
**6 JUL 1945**  
**SAVOY HOTEL, BOURNEMOUTH.**

300  
 ARMY FORM W5258

**RECORD OF SERVICE**  
 OF  
 No. 2183705 Rank Pte Name COLLINS, W.E.  
(in block letters)

Served in Regts/Corps as follows:

	Regt./Corps	From	To	Assn. joined with date	Remarks by Assn. (if any)
a	RE	28.9.39	19.12.42		
b	CMP	20.12.42	15.9.45		
c					
d					

Date 6.7.45 Asst. Comm.  
 Record Officer

For NOTES see reverse.





Skittles - Wilf Collins far left

# ON ACTIVE SERVICE

## MEN SERVING IN H.M. FORCES

BLACKMORE Pte S SEACd  
 BLACKMORE F.G.  
 BAMBRICK EWMS SEACd  
 BURT Captain R RE  
 CALLOW Pte TA RC/Sigs  
 COLLINS Pte J POW Germany  
 COLLINS Pte WE MP  
 COLLINS P/O JE RN  
 CLARKE Cpl S RAF India  
 CROSS Gnr G RA  
 COLMAN Pte C P.M Dept  
 DICKS L/Cpl G S.L.I India  
 DYMOND Flt Lt J RAF  
 EVERY Gnr F J CMF Italy  
 EVERY A/B DA RN  
 FOSWILL CFN W REME  
 FULLER Major R G India  
 GOODLAND L/Cpl M.F.  
 GRABHAM ARM Sgt A India  
 GREASY Pte K S.L.I BAA  
 HARTNELL A/B T RN  
 HARTNELL A/B R.F RN  
 HARRIS Gnr K.T. RA  
 HAYWARD Pte Welsh Regiment  
 HECTOR L/Cpl D. S.L.I  
 HILL Gnr P.F. RA B.L.A.  
 HINE Gnr W.E.J. RA  
 HOUNSELL Pte D. BAT  
 JEFFREY Sgt S. War Office  
 JENKINS Dvr H.W. B.L.A.  
 KEITCH A/W G. M.V.R.  
 KNIGHT Pte G. S.L.I  
 LUTHER Lieut D. RE  
 LEE Pte R.S. PC  
 McDERMOTT L/Cpl AFC Range  
 MADDOCK C/P/O B.L. RN  
 MITCHELL F.G.

MUDGE L/R/M TE. RNA'S  
 MUTTER Spr H. RE  
 MUTTER Gnr C.E. RA  
 PATON L/Bomb J. RA CMF  
 PATON S/Officer T.S. M.N  
 PAULL A/B F. RN Hospital  
 READING Brig. AHC. RMT  
 SALTER Spr J.W.F. RE CMF  
 SATURLEY German C. REME B.L.A.  
 SELICK Cpl W. S.M.E DBRE  
 SHIRE Dvr S. RASC B.L.A.  
 SHIRE D/R A.C. RAF  
 SMITH P/L/Y V.A. RM  
 STREET San Ldr. CK. RAF  
 STREET Sgt R.R. RE  
 SPILLER Pte F. RAOC  
 VINCENT Cpl J. I.T.C. S.L.I  
 WHITEFIELD Sgt D. RASC  
 WHITEFIELD Quartermaster L/Bomb RA B.L.A.  
 WATTS Guardsman L.  
 WENSLEY Pte C. Q.R. Regt B.L.A.  
 WOODLAND Tpr P.W. R.C.C. SEAC  
 YARDE Pte C.C. R.A.M.C. M.E.F.  
 YARDE Pte C. POW Japan

## WOMEN SERVING IN H.M. FORCES

ASHFORD LACW W.E. RAF  
 BONDITCH Pte B.D. AT'S  
 BURT Captain S.M. R.A.M.C.  
 COLLINS VAD P. RN  
 COLLINS Nurse R.  
 COOPER LACW M. RAF  
 DOBLE LACW M. RAF  
 DYMOND Nurse M.  
 GOODLAND LACW R.B. RAF  
 HARTNELL Pte R.F. A.A.R.A.  
 MUDGE L/W/ten J. WREN'S  
 POBBURY LACW A. RAF  
 POBBURY LACW F. RAF

Those who died in the Liberator crash at Buckland St. Mary on 22 November 1945

Aircraft	BRZEZINSKI	F.S.A.T.	Flt Eng	MIERS	Flyng	GT	Co-Pilot
	KLEYBOR	Flt S.	Nav	WIZE	Flt	A.	Nurses
	MIELECKI	Flt Lt	Flt Lt				
Passengers	ANDERSON	Sigmn	R.O.	DONOVAN	Sig.	H.	
	ANDERSON	Sig.	R.C.	DOWNES	Sig.	L.H.	
	ATTWOOD	Sig.	J.H.	DYER	Sig.	L.R.	
	BENTAMIN	Sig.	D.B.	FAIRBAIRN	Sig.	P.B.	
	BILES	LF.	P.T.	FAIRRANCE	Sig.	R.D.	
	BIRCH	Sig.	A.T.	FOX	Sig.	W.W.	
	BREWIS	Sig.	T.W.A.	GENT	Sig.	F.W.	
	BULLOCK	Capt.	H.C.	GRUICK	Lieut.	A.G.	
	CHARLTON	Sig.	W.A.	STANTON	Lieut.	H.W.G.	
	CLARK	Sig.	A.E.	WILLIAMS	Sig.	O.	
	CURRY	Sig.	L.T.	WILLIAMS	Sig.	R.	

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE  
LEGION