

Germoe War Memorial

1914 - 1918

1939 - 1945

Andrew Marshall

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Introduction

This book records the lives of the men commemorated on the Germoe War Memorial and seeks to place them within the context of the parish from which they came. Though small and rural, Germoe was part of a wider world shaped by migration, economic change and, ultimately, by war. The names inscribed on the memorial represent individuals whose lives were rooted in this community, even where their service and sacrifice took them far beyond it.

The First and Second World Wars drew men from Germoe into a range of military roles across multiple theatres of conflict. Some served in local regiments, while others were part of forces raised elsewhere in Britain and across the wider Empire. A number had already left Cornwall before the outbreak of war, reflecting long-established patterns of movement, yet they remained connected to the parish through family, memory and identity.

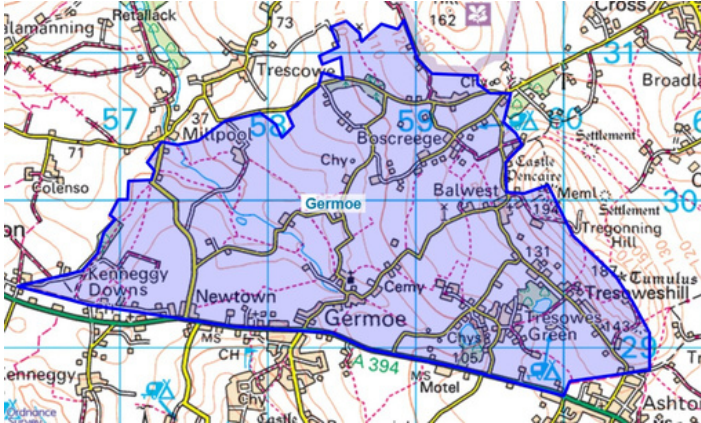
The aim of this work is to move beyond the brief details recorded on the memorial and to reconstruct, as far as possible, the lives behind the names. By drawing on military records, census material and other contemporary sources, it seeks to place each man within his family, occupation and community, and to trace the circumstances of his service and death.

In doing so, the book also reflects the impact of war on a small rural parish. In a place such as Germoe, loss was not abstract. Each death affected families, neighbours and the wider fabric of the community. The relatively small number of names on the memorial should not obscure the depth of that impact.

This study stands as a record of those men and their connection to Germoe, ensuring that they are remembered not only for their service, but also for the lives they lived within the parish.

Germoe

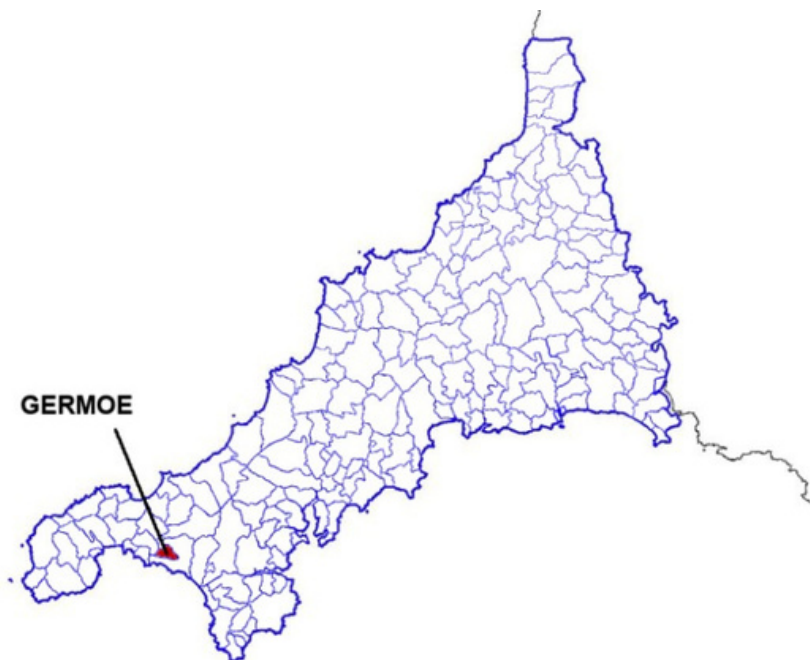
Germoe (Cornish: Germogh) is a village and civil parish in West Cornwall. The parish's main settlement, Churchtown, lies approximately five miles west of Helston and seven miles east of Penzance, with the A394 forming its southern boundary. Other settlements within the parish include Balwest, Boscreage and Tresowes Green.



The parish is named after Saint Germoe, an early medieval figure associated with the Christian settlement of West Cornwall. The Church of St Germoe, of Norman origin with later medieval additions, stands at the centre of the parish and reflects its long ecclesiastical history.

Geologically, Germoe lies on the southern edge of the Tregonning–Godolphin granite, an area historically associated with tin and copper mining. During the nineteenth century mining formed a major part of the local economy, but its decline after the 1860s led to significant social and economic change. The population fell sharply as employment shifted towards agriculture or migration out of the parish.

By the early twentieth century Germoe was predominantly rural in character, with dispersed farms and small settlements. Agriculture formed the basis of local employment, though the legacy of mining remained evident in the landscape and in family histories.



Map of Cornwall

Tregonning Hill forms a prominent feature within the parish, rising to 194 metres and offering extensive views across West Cornwall. The hill has been a focus of activity since prehistoric times, with the remains of an enclosure known as Castle Pencaire, dating from around 250 BC, still visible near the summit.

In the eighteenth century the hill was also associated with the early development of the English porcelain industry. In 1746 William Cookworthy identified deposits of china clay there, recognising the quality of the decomposed granite as suitable for porcelain manufacture. Although large-scale extraction was later concentrated elsewhere in Cornwall, this discovery formed part of the wider industrial history of the region.

Today the hill remains a defining landmark within the parish, its elevated position making it visible across a wide area and giving it a long-standing association with both local history and remembrance.

Germoe War Memorial



The Germoe War Memorial stands on the summit of Tregonning Hill. Constructed of Cornish granite, it takes the form of a rough-hewn Celtic cross rising to a height of approximately 17 feet from a three-stepped base. The inscriptions, in raised black lettering, are set into the base.

The memorial commemorates seven men of the parish: four who died in the First World War and three in the Second World War.

The names of those who died in the Second World War were added later, and were dedicated on Sunday, 16 November 1947, during a service at Breage Parish Church.

Inscription

TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND IN REVERED AND HONOURED MEMORY
OF THE BRAVE MEN OF ST. GERMOE,
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR KING & COUNTRY

1914 - 1918.

ERNEST ANDREW.
LEONARD LAITY.
ERNEST RICHARDS.
SAMPSON RICHARDS.

"LEST WE FORGET."

ALSO IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO
FELL IN THE WAR 1939-1945.

ERVIN ANDREWS
STANLEY JOHNS
WILLIAM COURTENY WHITE



Unveiling Ceremony

The Germoe War Memorial has a commanding and highly visible position overlooking the surrounding countryside. From this elevated site, much of West Cornwall can be seen, including St Michael's Mount, the Lizard, and St Ives Bay, making the memorial a landmark as well as a place of remembrance.

It was erected in memory of the men of the parish who died in the First World War.

The memorial was unveiled and dedicated on Saturday, 2 October 1920, in the presence of a large gathering from Germoe and neighbouring districts. The ceremony was organised by a local committee chaired by Mr John Pryor, and including Lady St Levan, Mr James Curnow, chairman of Germoe Parish Council, and Captain J. M. Cowls, M.C. (secretary).

Proceedings began at Balwest Wesleyan Chapel, from which a procession formed and made its way to the hill. Among those present were the Rev. H. R. Coulthard, vicar of Breage with Germoe, the Rev. W. J. Goodall (Wesleyan minister), and Lord St Levan, who performed the unveiling. Representatives of the parish council and local organisations also attended.

The service opened with the hymn "O God, our help in ages past," followed by prayers and a reading from Psalm 46. After the singing of "For all the saints," Lord St Levan formally unveiled the memorial. In his address, Lord St Levan spoke of the shared sacrifice of towns and villages across the country, noting that Germoe, though small, had borne its part in the war. He emphasised that the memorial served both as a tribute to those who had died and as a reminder to future generations of the cost of their freedom.

Lord St Levan also drew attention to the prominence of the site, remarking that, unlike many memorials placed in churchyards or towns, this one could be seen across the countryside for many miles.

The dedication was carried out by the Rev. Coulthard, who also reflected on the historical significance of Tregonning Hill, suggesting that it had long been a place of importance and that it was fitting that it should now bear a memorial to those who had fallen.

Music played a central role in the ceremony. The Germoe Male Voice Choir, under the direction of Mr J. Pryor, sang “Soldiers’ Farewell,” and the service concluded with the sounding of the “Last Post” by Mr J. Pascoe of Deveral.

Floral tributes were laid at the foot of the memorial, including a laurel wreath from the committee inscribed “To our glorious dead.” The ceremony reflected both the deep sense of loss felt within the parish and the determination to create a lasting and visible memorial to those who had not returned.



First World War

1914 – 1918

Ernest Charles Andrew

Private 24532

7th Battalion, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Killed in Action 16 August 1917

Aged 28 years



Ernest Charles Andrew was born on 9 June 1889 at Breage, the son of Joseph Andrew and Elizabeth Jane Andrew (née Woolcock). He was raised at Coppernoon, Germoe, where his father worked as a labourer. By 1911 Ernest was still living at home and employed as a farm labourer.

Ernest was most likely conscripted into the Army following the introduction of conscription in 1916, as he is entitled only to the British War Medal and Victory Medal. He enlisted at Helston and joined The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, being posted to the 7th Battalion, a service battalion of Kitchener's Army, which formed part of 61st Brigade in the 20th (Light) Division.

By 1917 the battalion was serving in the Ypres Salient during the Third Battle of Ypres. In the days leading up to the main assault, the division had already been heavily engaged in fighting around the Steenbeek stream and the strongly defended position at Au Bon Gîte, where determined German resistance and repeated counter-attacks caused significant casualties.

Battle of Langemarck

On 16 August 1917 the 7th D.C.L.I. took part in the Battle of Langemarck. During the night of 15/16 August the battalion assembled east of the Steenbeek (a small stream) under extremely dangerous conditions, with the enemy positioned only a short distance away. Engineers worked under fire to prepare crossings, while troops formed up in darkness on ground already churned by shellfire.

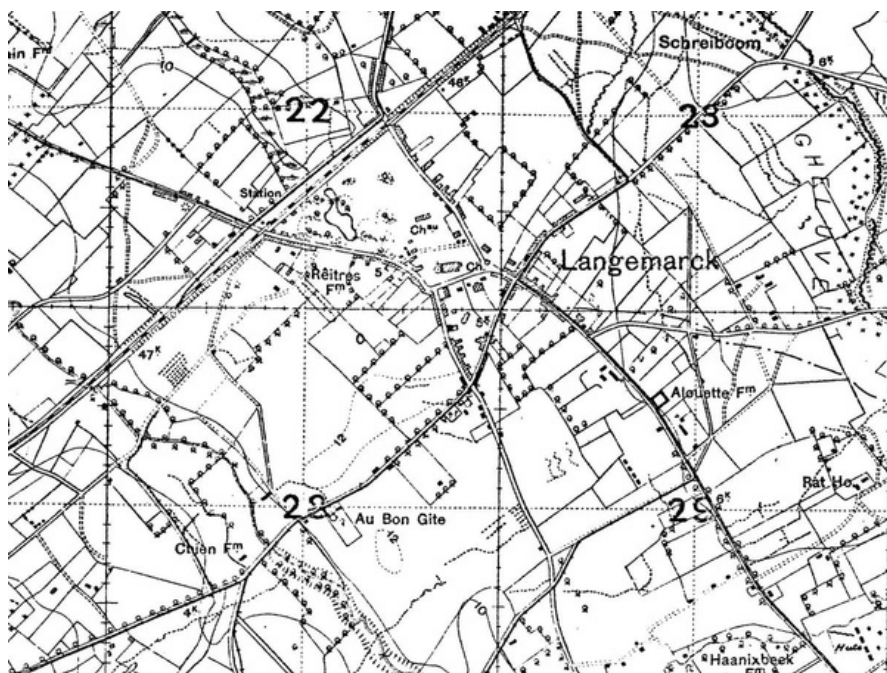
At 4.45 a.m. the artillery barrage began and the infantry advanced behind it. The ground was described as a swamp of shell-holes filled with mud and water, making movement slow and exhausting and forcing men to advance in small groups or single file. Despite these conditions, the attack pressed forward. The strongpoint at Au Bon Gîte, which had checked earlier attacks, was overcome during the opening phase, allowing the advance to continue.



The German strongpoint Au Bon Gîte - a fortified concrete blockhouse



Stretcher bearers struggle in the mud IWM (Q 5935)



Trench map showing Au Bon Gîte

Advancing on the left of the brigade, the 7th D.C.L.I. moved towards their objectives beyond Langemarck. Although resistance on this sector lessened after the initial fighting, German blockhouses and machine-gun positions still caused casualties, and progress depended largely on the initiative of small groups of men pressing forward under fire. By around 8 a.m. the brigade had secured its final objectives, capturing prisoners and enemy positions, but at heavy cost, particularly among officers and experienced men.

The remainder of the day was spent consolidating the captured ground under continued shelling and the threat of counter-attack. In the afternoon a determined German counter-attack temporarily forced back parts of the line and inflicted further losses before the position was stabilised. The conditions made all movement difficult, and the evacuation of the wounded placed a heavy burden on stretcher-bearers working under constant fire. Carrying men across waterlogged ground, through mud-filled shell-holes and over long distances to dressing stations, they faced the same dangers as the fighting troops, often making repeated journeys to bring the wounded to safety.

Private Andrew was acting as a company stretcher-bearer when he was killed on 16 August 1917, aged 28. He was struck by a shell while returning from duty in the trenches before reaching shelter.

His sergeant, W. H. S. Moore, wrote to his family that he “was loved by all ranks” and “is greatly missed,” adding that he was buried “with every mark of respect.” He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the missing of the Ypres Salient.

He is also commemorated on the Germoe War Memorial.

KENNEGGY.

Concerning the death of Gun. Ernest C. Andrew, R.G.A., of Kenneggy, Breage, near Helston, who was killed in France on the 16th August when returning from active duty in the trenches, being hit by a shell before getting to safe shelter, further particulars are to hand. His sergeant (W. H. S. Moore), writing to his family from France, says he was performing the duties of company stretcher-bearer, when, on the morning of an advance, a shell killed him outright. "He was buried with every mark of respect," adds the writer, "in a place which some future date may permit me to tell you of. He was loved by all ranks, and he is greatly missed." Deceased was 25 years of age.

The Cornishman 11 October 1917 p.05

A report published in the Cornishman, incorrectly describes him as a gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery. His service records and Commonwealth War Graves Commission entry confirm that he served with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

(To be rendered in duplicate.)

DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY
 SUPPLEMENTARY
 ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders

REGIMENT

On 11/11/18 or on becoming non-effective		NAME	Unit previously served with. Regt. No. and Rank in same on entry into theatre of war	Theatres of war in which served												Clasps awarded
Regt. No.	Rank			From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To	From	To			
24532	Pte	ANDREW, ERNEST	7/DCLI.24532.PTE.													
		CHARLES.														
34956	Pte	ANDREW, JAMES.	1/4.DCLI.34956.PTE													
202271	Pte	ANDREW, JOSEPH.	1/5.DCLI.32026.PTE.													
		HAROLD.	1/5.DCLI.32026.													
			1/4.DCLI.202271.													
2240	Pte	ANDREW, PERCY.	1/5.DCLI.2240.PTE.													
10046	Pte	ANDREW, RICHARD	1/DCLI.10046.PTE.													
		HENRY.														
200300	Pte	ANDREWS, FREDERICK.	1/4.DCLI.1982.PTE.													
20149	Pte	ANDREWS, FREDERICK	2/R.N.W.I.20149.PTE.													
		WILLIAM.	2/DCLI.20149.													
12419	Pte	ANDREWS, JAMES.	2/DCLI.12419.PTE.													
			2/DCLI.12419.													
2184	Pte	ANDREWS, JOHN THOMAS	1/5.DCLI.2184.PTE.													
32264	Pte	ANDREWS, JOSEPH.	1/4.DCLI.32264.PTE.													
22866	L/Cpl	ANDREWS, OLIVIER.	7/R.N.W.I.22866.PTE.													
			1/5.DCLI.22866.													
26445	Pte	ANGOVE, BERTIE.	251/R.N.32400.PTE.													
			6/DCLI.26445.													

Private 24532 Ernest Charles Andrew - British War Medal and Victory Medal roll

DEPENDANT'S PENSION.

11D/97336

Name Andrew Ernest Charles Regimental No. 24532 Case No.
D.P. 20A.

Regiment or Ship BB29 7th Rank Pte. D.P. 936

Documents received from Paymaster 8.2.18 R 4/2/35

Date and cause of death 16.8.17 Killed in Action. DEAD
1934

Dependant Mr ^{junior} Andrew SE 5888

Address Copperknown Lymoe Marazion

Relationship Father.

Pension 5/- a week from 5.3.18.

Date awarded 23.2.18. If refused {

Papers Dec R. 24.2.18. reason {

(1128*) Wt 50720/6 30000 1/17 H & J, Ltd
(22056) Wt 8055/763 50000 11/17

Private 24532 Ernest Charles Andrew - War Pension index card

Joseph (Dec^r) **CLAIMANT.** Dr. 20/A. M.P.W. 5.

Surname 11D 97336
(Block Letters)

Christian Name _____

Man's Name ANDREW Ernest Charles.
(Surname first : in block letters)

Regimental } No. 24532 Rank } Pte.
Official } Rating }

Regiment } D. C. L. I. Relationship }
Ship } to Man }

(7563) Wt. 26840 20m (3) 2/34 Gp. 619 C&SLtd

Private 24532 Ernest Charles Andrew - War Pension index card

Leonard Henry Laity

Sapper 2006972

2nd Battalion, Canadian Engineers

Died 25 October 1918

Aged 27 years



Leonard Henry Laity was born on 2 January 1891 at Germoe, the son of Jane Rosetta Laity, of Newtown Cottage, Germoe. He was brought up in the parish and by 1911 was living at Newtown, Germoe, where he was employed as a farm labourer.

In September 1913 he emigrated to the United States, settling at Globe, Arizona, where he worked as a tunneller. Following the expansion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, he travelled to Canada and enlisted at North Vancouver, British Columbia, on 7 January 1918, joining the Canadian Engineers.

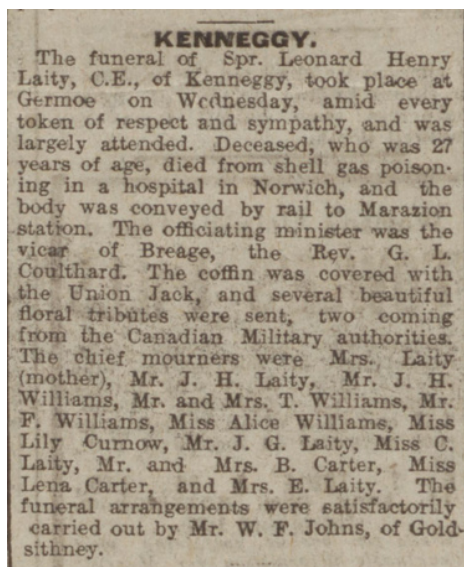
After training he proceeded to England in March 1918 and was sent to France on 24 June 1918. He joined the 2nd Battalion, Canadian Engineers, on 4 July, undertaking engineering duties in support of front-line operations.

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Sapper Laity was wounded by a gas shell on 29 September 1918. On 1 October he was admitted to 15 Casualty Clearing Station suffering from the effects of gas poisoning, and was subsequently transferred to a base hospital before being evacuated to England a week later. He was admitted to Lakenham Military Hospital, Norwich, where his condition deteriorated, and he died there on 25 October 1918, aged 27, the cause of death being recorded as acute rheumatism complicated by acute anaemia.

Contemporary newspaper reports record that his mother had travelled to see him but arrived too late, and that he had lived in America for five years prior to his death. His funeral took place at Germoe, where he was buried with full military honours, his coffin draped with the Union Jack and attended by family and local mourners.

Sapper Leonard Henry Laity is buried in Germoe Church Cemetery (Grave 65) and is commemorated on the Germoe and Breage War Memorials.



The Cornishman 6 November 1918 p.65

Germoe Cemetery



Edward Ernest Richards

Corporal 12894

6th Battalion, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Killed in Action 16 October 1917

Aged 24 years



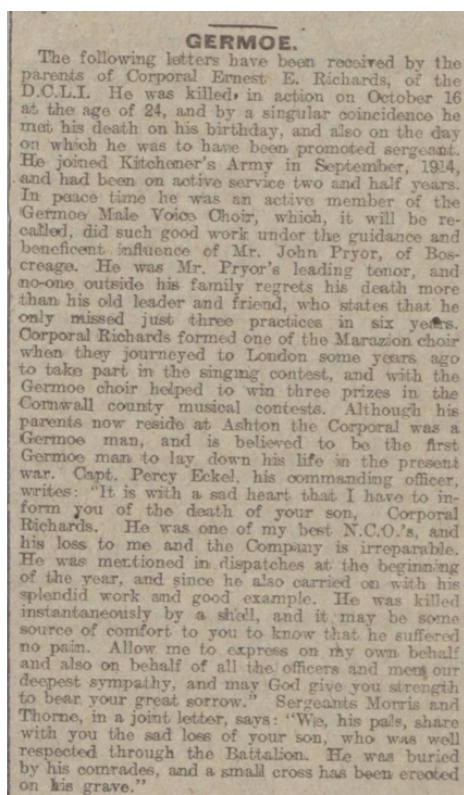
Edward Ernest Richards was born on 16 October 1893 at Breage, the son of William Henry Richards and Margaret Ann Richards (née Dwyer), of Rinsey Cross, Ashton. He was brought up in the Breage parish and by 1911 was living at Tresowas Hill, where he was employed as a farm labourer.

He enlisted in September 1914, joining Kitchener's Army, and served with the 6th Battalion, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, a Territorial Force battalion forming part of 43rd Brigade in the 14th (Light) Division. He proceeded to France on 21 May 1915 and served on the Western Front for over two years, during which time he was promoted to Corporal and was due to be promoted Sergeant at the time of his death.

In civilian life Richards had been an active member of the Germoe Male Voice Choir, where he was a leading tenor under the direction of John Pryor of Boscreage. He was widely respected locally, and had taken part in musical competitions, including appearances in London, helping the choir to win several prizes.

In 1917 the 14th Division was engaged in the Third Battle of Ypres. On 16 October 1917, during the later stages of the Passchendaele campaign, Richards was killed in action, reportedly on his twenty-fourth birthday, although official Army records and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission record the date of death as 17 October 1917. He was killed by a shell, dying instantly. His commanding officer described him as “one of my best N.C.O.’s,” whose loss to the company was “irreparable,” while comrades stated that he was well respected throughout the battalion and was buried by his fellow soldiers.

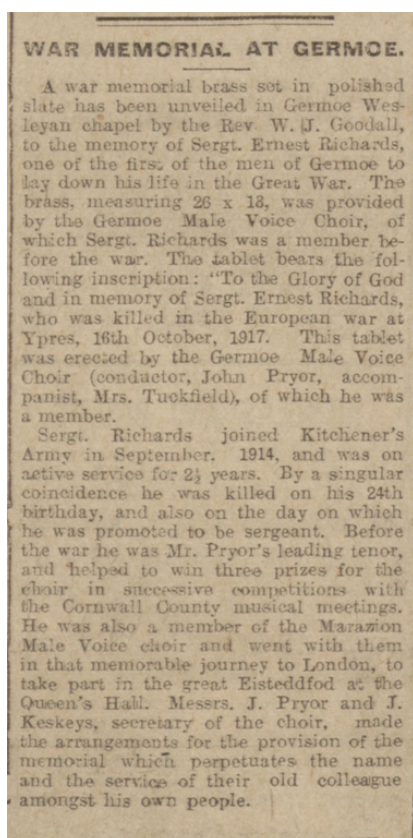
Corporal Edward Ernest Richards is buried in Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium (Grave LIX. E. 26). He is also commemorated on the Germoe and Breage War Memorials.



The Cornishman 11 Nov 1917 p.05

Corporal Richards is also remembered locally by a more personal tribute. In 1919 a memorial tablet was unveiled in Balwest Wesleyan Chapel, reflecting both his place within the local community and the impact of his loss.

The memorial, consisting of a brass plaque set into polished slate and measuring approximately 26 by 18 inches, was provided by the Germoe Male Voice Choir. It was unveiled by the Rev. W. J. Goodall and dedicated to the memory of Richards, described as one of the first men of the parish to lay down his life in the Great War. The inscription records that he was killed at Ypres on 16 October 1917 and was erected "to the Glory of God and in memory of Sergt. Ernest Richards."



The Cornishman 22 October 1919 p.08

Campaign: —		1914-15.		(A) Where decoration was earned.	
				(B) Present situation.	
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)	
(A) RICHARDS	896028	Pte	12894	MEDAL	X. ROLL
(B) EE	—	—	—	15	STAR
Action taken				K in A	
THEATRE OF WAR.				(1) France	
QUALIFYING DATE.				21-5-15	
(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [OVER.]					

Medal Index Card

D.D.C. 1065	
DEPENDANT'S PENSION.	
D.1	
Name	Richards Ernest Edward
Regimental No.	12894
Regiment or Ship	D.C.L.I. 6 th
Rank	Cpl.
Documents received from Paymaster	15.4.18.
Date and cause of death	17.10.17. Killed in Action.
Dependant	Mrs Margaret Ann Richards.
Address	Rinsey Rd, Ashton Helston, Cornwall.
Relationship	Mother
Pension	5/-
Date awarded	6.5.18
Papers	
a week from 14.5.18	
If refused	
reason	
F 6496 Wt 18109 975 50 000(12) 218 J.P. Op. 159	

War Pension Index Card

Sampson Richards DSC

Corporal 97,564

167th Infantry, 12 Division, United States Army

Died of Wounds 14 October 1918

Aged 24 years



The Fresno Morning Republican 30 Nov 1918 p.17

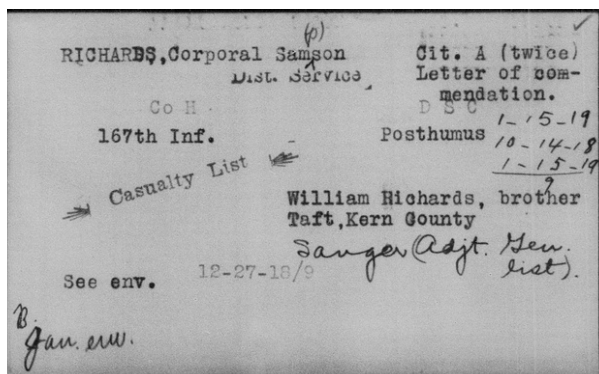
Sampson Richards was born on 8 May 1894, at Germoe, the son of Mary Ann Richards. He was one of several children, including his brother William and younger sister May. His brother William emigrated to the United States and later settled in Taft, Kern County, California, where he was named as Sampson's next of kin in U.S. Army records.

In May 1913, at the age of nineteen, Sampson also emigrated to the United States, sailing from England to New York on the *Campania*. He subsequently settled in California, where he worked as a farmer near Fresno and later in the Taft area.

Following the United States' entry into the war, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was initially posted to Company C, 148th Machine Gun Battalion, part of the 41st Division. He sailed for France in January 1918 and was later transferred to Company H, 167th Infantry Regiment, 42nd (Rainbow) Division. During 1918 the division was heavily engaged in operations on the Western Front, culminating in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

On 14 October 1918, during fighting near Landres-et-St. Georges, Richards was severely wounded while displaying conspicuous leadership and bravery after his platoon became disorganised and its commander had been killed. Despite being wounded, he reorganised the platoon under heavy shell and machine-gun fire and ensured it was ready to continue the assault before allowing himself to be evacuated. He died of his wounds later the same day, aged 24.

For his actions he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the citation noting his "utter disregard for danger and remarkable coolness and courage in the face of the enemy." Contemporary newspaper reports in California record that he had been recommended for the award on two separate occasions and was widely regarded as one of the most capable and respected non-commissioned officers in his unit.



Corporal Sampson Richards - Family Search - California, Geographical and Name Index of Californians who served in WWI, 1914-1918

Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery



Corporal Sampson Richards is buried in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France.



Distinguished Service Cross

Acting Serg't. Samson Richards, Taft Boy, Twice Recommended For D. S. C., Dies From Wounds

TAFT, Dec. 5.—William Richards, of this city, a brother of Acting Sergeant Samson Richards of the 167th infantry in France, was notified today in a letter from First Lieut. Ernest T. Bell of the 167th that Sergeant Richards had been severely wounded on the 14th of October, and died from his wounds at a base hospital the same day. This was the first word received by his relatives here of his death. Sergeant Samson Richards was cited for bravery on two separate occasions, and his commander writes to his relatives here telling of his fearlessness and courage on the battle field. The letter from Lieutenant Bell is as follows:

Dear Sir:

By the time this reaches you you will undoubtedly have been officially notified of the death of your brother, Samson Richards.

Corporal Richards was wounded on October 14th and died in a field hospital on the same date. His loss is a keen one to us for he was respected and admired by every officer

and enlisted man in his organization.

It has never been my privilege to know a man who possessed such an unusual degree of coolness and courage as did your brother. Time after time he demonstrated that he was absolutely without fear, and his coolness and never failing cheerfulness even in the most desperate conditions always served as a stimulant and example to his comrades. At the time of his being wounded he was acting sergeant and we have never had one more capable. On a previous occasion he had been recommended for decoration with the Distinguished Service Cross and received a personal letter of commendation from our divisional general. He has again been recommended for the D. S. C. Accept, sir, the most heartfelt sympathy of the officers and men of this division.

ERNEST T. BELL,
First Lieutenant, U. S. A., 167th
Infantry, Co. H.

Second World War

1939 – 1945

Ervin Andrews

Private 5441913

1st Battalion, The Herefordshire Regiment

Killed in Action 18 July 1944

Aged 27 years



Ervin Andrews was born on 25 June 1916 at Pengersick, Breage, the son of William John Andrews and Janie Andrews (née Bawden). He was raised at Trescowe, Germoe, where his father worked as a labourer, and by 1939 he was employed locally as an agricultural labourer. In January 1941 he married Beatrice Ann Tossell.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War he enlisted in the British Army and served as Private 5441913 in the 1st Battalion, The Herefordshire Regiment, a battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry.

The battalion landed in Normandy in mid-June 1944, approximately one week after the D-Day landings, as part of the steady build-up of Allied forces within the expanding bridgehead. It was soon committed to operations east of the River Orne, in an area of open fields, orchards, and scattered farmsteads, where German forces had established deep and well-prepared defensive positions covering the approaches to Caen.

On 18 July 1944 the battalion took part in Operation Goodwood, one of the largest British offensives of the Normandy campaign. The attack opened with a vast aerial bombardment by British and American heavy and medium bombers, followed by an intense artillery barrage designed to suppress German defences. The objective was to break through east of Caen and allow armoured forces to advance into the open country beyond.



That morning, after moving up to their forming-up positions, the infantry advanced behind a creeping barrage across open ground covered in tall summer crops. Although the bombardment had caused disruption, many German positions remained active, and as the battalion pushed forward it came under heavy and accurate mortar and artillery fire. Wooded areas, orchards, and likely assembly points had been pre-registered by the enemy, and these quickly became dangerous zones as the attack developed.

The advance brought the battalion into close fighting around farm buildings, hedgerows, and patches of woodland, where resistance was encountered from infantry and supporting weapons. While some enemy troops, disorientated by the bombardment, surrendered in large numbers, others continued to resist, and shelling and mortaring intensified as the day went on. Even ground already taken was subjected to sustained fire, causing mounting casualties among units attempting to consolidate their positions.



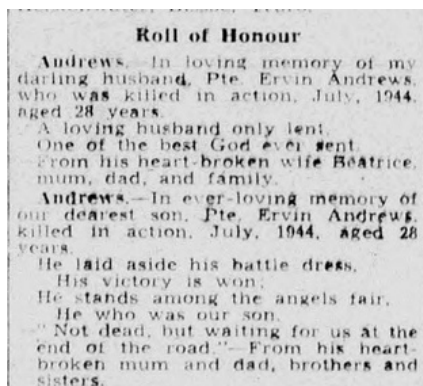
Men of 15th (Scottish) Division await the order to advance - IWM B 5950



1st Welsh Guards near Cagny during Operation 'Goodwood' - IWM B 7759

Private Ervin Andrews was serving with the battalion during this attack and would have been among the forward rifle companies advancing across this exposed and heavily contested ground. It was in the course of these operations, on 18 July 1944 near Ranville, that he was killed in action, aged 27. Given the nature of the fighting that day, it is likely that he fell either during the advance under fire or shortly afterwards, as the battalion came under continued shelling while holding newly captured positions.

He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Bayeux Memorial, Panel 16, Column 2, which bears the names of those who died in the Normandy campaign and whose resting places are unknown. He is also remembered on local memorials at Germoe and Breage.



West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser 17 August 1944 p.05

Stanley Johns

Private 10686124

7th Battalion, The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)

Killed in Action 23 March 1945

Aged 21 years



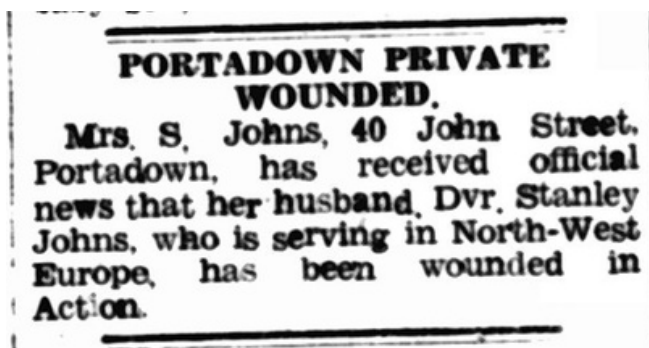
Stanley Johns was born on 22 June 1923 at Churchtown, Germoe, the son of John Johns and Gwendoline Johns (née Laity). He was raised at Tresowes Hill, in the parish of Germoe, and by 1939 was living there with his family, employed as an electrical apprentice. He had an elder brother, Cedric John Johns.

During the Second World War he enlisted in the British Army and initially served as a Driver with 28 Company, Infantry Brigade, Royal Army Service Corps, a unit responsible for transporting supplies and equipment to forward units. At a later stage he transferred to an infantry role and joined the 7th Battalion, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders).

On 5 December 1942 he married Olivious Gertrude McAdams at Craigavon Register Office, County Armagh. The couple made their home at 40 John Street, Portadown, where their daughter was born.

The 7th Battalion, Black Watch formed part of 154 Infantry Brigade in the 51st (Highland) Division, which landed in Normandy in June 1944 as part of the Allied build-up following D-Day. The division was subsequently engaged in the fighting in Normandy, the advance through France and Belgium, and later operations in the Netherlands.

By November 1944 the battalion was holding positions on the Maas front, where conditions were difficult and dangerous, with frequent shelling and patrol activity. On 21 November 1944 Private Johns was wounded during these operations, as recorded in the official casualty lists. Although he initially survived, his injuries proved severe.



Portadown News 9 December 1944 p.05

He died of wounds on 23 March 1945, aged 21, during the final phase of the Allied advance into Germany.

He is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Germany (Grave 52. B. 10).

Contemporary newspaper reports in Portadown recorded his death and noted that he left a widow and young daughter. His Army will, written while on active service, named his wife as Mrs Olivious Gertrude Johns of 40 John Street, Portadown.

PORTADOWN FOLK BEREAVED BY DEATH IN ACTION.

Pte. Stanley Johns, whose wife and little daughter reside at 40 John Street, Portadown, has been killed in action. His parents live in Cornwall.

Belfast Telegraph 25 April 1945 p.02

20

SOLELY FOR USE ON ACTIVE SERVICE. This Will page must NOT be used until you have been placed under orders for Active Service.

WILL.

(For use if the soldier has not already made a Will or wishes to alter one already made. See instructions on previous page.)

ON COMPLETION TO BE DESPATCHED TO OFFICER IN CHARGE RECORDS BY O.C. UNIT.

In the event of my death
I leave my whole
property and effects to
my wife Mrs. Oliverious
residing at 40 John
Street Portadown
Ireland

Signature *T. Johns*

Rank and Regiment *Pte. 38 84th Inf Bde R.A.C.*

Army Number *410 11 14*

Date *24.4.45*

Books 64 (Part 1) 2.
Wt. 46863/B1162. 400 M. 2/43. CHG&Co Ltd. 51-6357

Private Stanley Johns Army Will

W/42759

INFORMAL WILL.

W.O. No.: D/177742

DOMICILE

English

Record No. 177742

The enclosed document

Name Stanley Johns

dated 27/7/44

and signed

S. Johns

Regtl. No.
and Rank

{ 10686124, Pte. 1

appears to have been written

Regt.

Black Watch

or executed by the person

named in the margin while

he was "in actual military

service" within the meaning

of the Wills Act, 1837, and

has been recognised by the

War Department as constitut-

ing a valid will.

Died at

W. Europe

Date of Death

23. 3. 45

WAR OFFICE.

Date

23. 4. 45

Auto also

H. 16/1905,

Private Stanley Johns Army Will

William Courtney White DFM

Warrant Officer (Air Bomber) 1311804

635 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Killed in Action 20 April 1944

Aged 34 years



(L-R): S/L Donald William Mansbridge, F/O Gerald Herbert Cruwys, W/O William Courtney 'Whitey' White DFM, W/O John Richard 'Happy' Hanson, F/S Ernest 'Butch' Hambling DFM, F/S Ernest Rowe Newton Barrell RAFVR, W/O Albert Stanley 'Tich' Palmer DFM - Photo taken after they had joined 635 Squadron - copyright Jean-Michel Dominique @ ww2cemeteries.com

William Courtney White was born on 15 February 1910 at Breage, the son of William Henry White and Christian Jane White (née Kitto). His mother died on 27 February 1910 at the age of 21, approximately two weeks after giving birth to her son.

He was brought up in an extended family setting at Boscreage in the parish of Germoe. In 1911 he was living with his widowed father and his paternal grandfather, also widowed, together with his older cousin Olive M. Sampson and a housekeeper, Margaret Nicholas. By 1921 the household still reflected this arrangement, with his father heading the family, alongside William, Olive—now recorded under the surname White—and Margaret Nicholas, indicating a stable but unconventional upbringing following his mother's early death.

In civilian life he worked as a builder's foreman and later lived at West Croydon, Surrey. In January 1935 he married Gertrude May Westhorpe, and by 1939 they were residing at 14 Midhurst Avenue, West Croydon, where he was employed in the building trade.

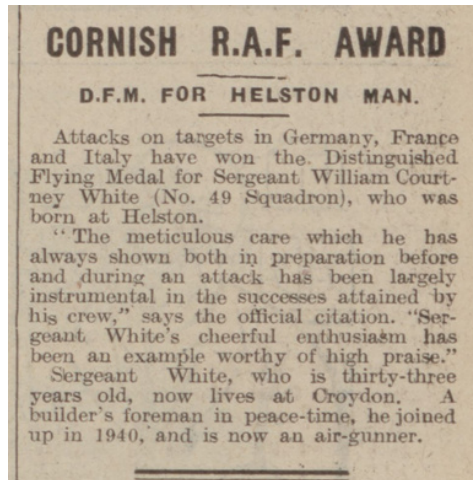
He enlisted in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in 1940 and trained as an air gunner. Serving with No. 49 Squadron, he completed a full operational tour of thirty sorties over enemy territory. His skill and reliability were recognised with the award of the Distinguished Flying Medal, published in the London Gazette on 18 May 1943, which praised his "gallantry and devotion to duty in the execution of air operations."

Contemporary newspaper reports noted that he had taken part in attacks on targets in Germany, France and Italy, and described him as a particularly capable and determined member of his crew whose "cheerful enthusiasm has been an example worthy of high praise."

After completing his first tour, White was posted to No. 635 Squadron, part of the Pathfinder Force, serving as an air bomber. Pathfinder crews undertook especially hazardous duties, marking targets for the main bomber force.

On the night of 20–21 April 1944, Lancaster ND826 took off from RAF Downham Market to attack the railway junction at Ottignies, Belgium. While approaching the target the aircraft was lost and crashed at Dion-le-Mont, near Wavre. All seven members of the crew were killed. Warrant Officer White was buried alongside his comrades in a collective grave at Heverlee War Cemetery.

He is also commemorated on the Germoe War Memorial, where his middle name is incorrectly recorded as Courteny.



The Cornishman 20 May 1943 p.05



CWGC headstone Heverlee War Cemetery
Copyright Werner Van Caneghem @ ww2cemeteries.com



Distinguished Flying Medal

Distinguished Flying Medal.

Can/R.90244 Flight Sergeant George Douglas
 AITCHESON, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 78
 Squadron.
 1280273 Flight Sergeant Geoffrey Guy BELLAMY, No.
 49 Squadron.
 551833 Flight Sergeant Gamaliel Ozwyn Pugh
 BOWEN, No. 192 Squadron.
 Can/R.79195 Flight Sergeant Charles Henry
 BULLOCH, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 10
 Squadron.
 Can/R.82285 Flight Sergeant Lewis Johnstone
 BURFEE, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 106
 Squadron.
 1168345 Flight Sergeant Frederick Stanley
 COPESTAKE, No. 49 Squadron.
 Aus.408167 Flight Sergeant Darrell William
 CUTHBERT, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 78
 Squadron.
 Can/R.95750 Flight Sergeant Desmond Michael
 De SILVA, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 218
 Squadron.
 978009 Flight Sergeant Dennis William HELPS, No.
 51 Squadron.
 Can/R.76770 Flight Sergeant Alexander Manson
 HORNE, Royal Canadian Air Force, No. 49
 Squadron.
 1283354 Flight Sergeant Ralph Ernest JEFFREY, No.
 51 Squadron (since deceased).
 Aus.408052 Flight Sergeant Bertram John
 MIDDLETON, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 49
 Squadron.
 1004918 Flight Sergeant Harry Wyndham MILLS,
 No. 49 Squadron.

LYONS, Royal Australian Air Force, No. 50
 Squadron.
 1051508 Sergeant Arthur Robinson McALHONE, No.
 97 Squadron.
 1016822 Sergeant Frederick MARTIN, No. 97
 Squadron.
 1379481 Sergeant Ernest Albert MORRIS, No. 49
 Squadron.
 657115 Sergeant Harold Edward PEARCE, No. 44
 Squadron.
 635070 Sergeant Charles QUINE, No. 10 Squadron.
 1109139 Sergeant Edward Arnold ROBERTS, No. 61
 Squadron.
 1136183 Sergeant Willie ROBINSON, No. 10 Squadron.
 1311952 Sergeant Albert Henry RUDGE, No. 49
 Squadron.
 1271123 Sergeant Ronald Charles SIMENDINGER, No.
 78 Squadron.
 Aus.401250 Sergeant Benjamin SINNAMON, Royal
 Australian Air Force, No. 50 Squadron.
 987724 Sergeant Ronald Charles SWETMAN, No. 97
 Squadron.
 1368871 Sergeant James Myles THOM, No. 49
 Squadron.
 1334031 Sergeant William Thomas TROTMAN, No. 78
 Squadron.
 1064007 Sergeant Peter WALKER, No. 78 Squadron.
 1351227 Sergeant Henry Leonard WALTERS, No. 49
 Squadron.
 1311804 Sergeant William Courtney WHITE, No. 49
 Squadron.
 1380548 Sergeant Alfred WILLIAMS, No. 49 Squadron.
 The above awards are for gallantry and devotion
 to duty in the execution of air operations.

London Gazette 18 May 1943 p.2201

1941 Tregonning Hill Aircraft Crash



217 Squadron Crest Badge

Pilot Officer James Richards Harrison (pilot), aged 24

Pilot Officer Paul Francis Opperman (observer), aged 19

Sergeant Harold Leslie Carter (wireless operator/air gunner), aged 25

Sergeant Dennis Albert Ryder (wireless operator/air gunner), aged 21

On 26 September 1941, a Hudson aircraft on patrol in the Bay of Biscay sighted a suspected enemy merchant vessel. Three Beaufort aircraft of 217 Squadron, Coastal Command, were dispatched from RAF St Eval at 11:50 hrs to attack the target.

Two of the aircraft were unable to locate the vessel, while the third sighted it but did not carry out an attack. The aircraft then turned for home and, in worsening weather conditions, broke formation.

One aircraft landed at RAF Chivenor and another at St Eval. The third aircraft, Beaufort Mk I W6483 (MW-A), failed to return.

It was later established that the aircraft had flown into high ground in poor visibility, crashing at approximately 16:20 hrs on the edge of County Quarry on Tregonning Hill. The aircraft was completely burnt out and all four crew members were killed. The crash was heard in several surrounding villages, including Breage.

Beaufort Mk1



Beaufort I AW242 © IWM TR 31

217 Squadron ORB 26 September 1941

W/Cdr.Bower, P/O.Harrison and P/O.Aldridge on shipping strike in formation, to attack M/V of 1500 tons sighted and reported by a Hudson. No vessel of this size was seen, although P/O.Aldridge did see a three island vessel of approximately 500 tons. (continued)

The weather became bad and the formation were compelled to separate. W/Cdr.Bower landed at Chivenor. P/O.Aldridge struggled through to land at Base, but P/O. Harrison and his crew (P/O.Opperman, Sgt.Carter and Sgt.Ryder) failed to return. Reports came in that they had struck the County Quarry, Tregouning Hill, Breage, and the plane blown to pieces. Congratulations to P/O.Thomas Shield Kitching on his award of the D.F.O. so richly deserved in the opinion of us all. Sgt.McGregor, and P/O.Etheridge to Chivenor to join detached flight. This is a secret mission and Group inform us that Ws W/Cdr.Constable-Roberts its Commanding Officer reports direct to Coastal Command we are unable to be given any of their hush-hush doings for our diary. We wish them all the best of luck. S/Ldr.Simmonds to Group to collect S & C documents and to be shown Group Operational Control. Visited by F/Lt.Halley of the Chivenor Detachment - he seems delighted with his new job.

WEATHER: Cloudy and overcast with intermittent drizzle or rain. Cloud height 200 to 500 feet. Visibility 1 to 4 miles. Wind SE mainly 15 to 20 m.p.h.

AIR-27-1341-17

Memorial Stone

In later years, a memorial to the four airmen was carved into the rock face near the crash site by the Balwest Heritage Society. Situated at the edge of the former County Quarry and now largely concealed by undergrowth, the memorial is difficult to access and stands close to a steep drop. Although likely created in the 1990s, when the area was more accessible, it has since fallen into relative obscurity.



Memorial photo © Ricardo Donovan from Atlas Obscura

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Acknowledgments

Without the generous assistance of many individuals, this work would not have been possible. I am deeply grateful to everyone who has shared their time, knowledge, and encouragement.

Much of the information has been drawn from a wide range of online sources, created through the dedicated efforts of others. I am sincerely thankful to those who make such material freely available, helping to ensure that the people recorded in this book can be remembered. Every effort has been made to acknowledge these contributions where possible; however, if any have been unintentionally overlooked, I would be grateful to be informed.

This work began with a simple curiosity about the memorial on Tregonning Hill and developed into a wider effort to understand and record the lives behind the names inscribed upon it.

Andrew Marshall
April 2026

andrewpaulmarshall@outlook.com

