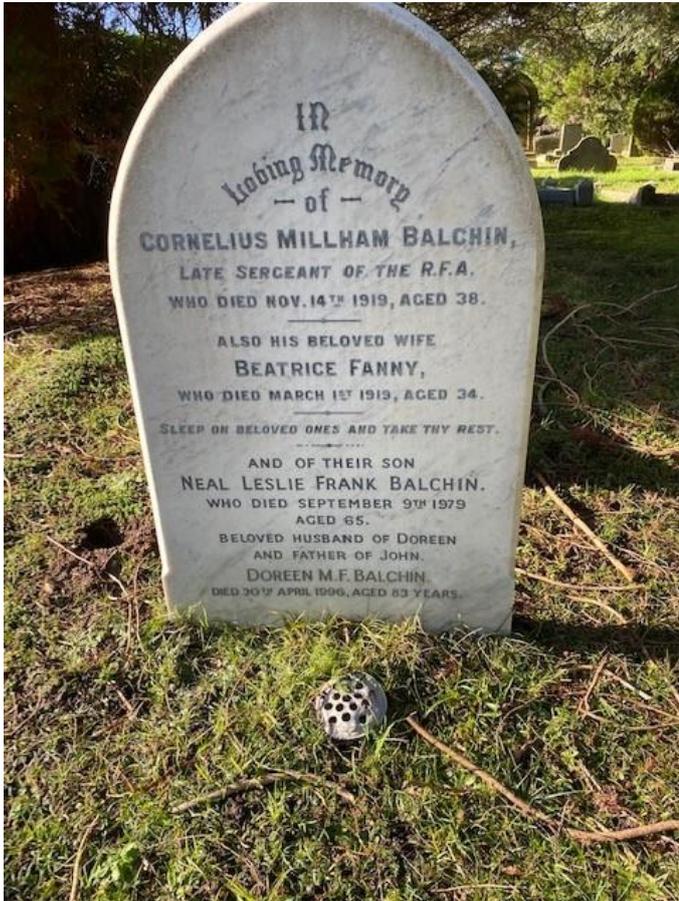


## MIDHURST CEMETERY - CEM10252

### Sergeant Cornelius Balchin



<http://ww1memorials.midhurstu3a.org.uk/sergeant-cornelius-millham-balchin/>

His grave is registered with the CWGC as a private memorial.

### Aircraft Mechanic Class 3 Reginald Bowyer

<http://ww1memorials.midhurstu3a.org.uk/air-mechanic-reginald-arthur-jack-bowyer/>

AM3 Bowyer's military service is revealed in a casualty card held at the RAF Museum. He was seriously injured while training at 55th Training Depot Station at RAF Narborough in Norfolk. He was struck by a propeller on 22nd November 1918 while swinging the propeller to start up the aircraft. He was admitted to East General Hospital in Cambridgeshire and died of his injuries on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1919. A court of inquiry on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1919 found the accident was due to the temporary failure of the aircraft ignition system due to a dirty contact. His grave is registered with the CWGC as a private memorial.



## Sergeant William Collins



<http://ww1memorials.midhurstu3a.org.uk/sergeant-william-edwin-collins/>

## Private Thomas Reed



<http://ww1memorials.midhurstu3a.org.uk/private-thomas-frank-reed/>

## Flight Lieutenant John Garland



An address by Brigadier (Retired) Arthur Douglas-Nugent, Chair of Midhurst and District Branch of the Royal British Legion at the Remembrance Day Event 2013

There stands in the cemetery in Carron Lane in Midhurst, a headstone of the design which is spread worldwide in the memorial gardens of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to quote:

“there is some corner of a foreign field that is forever England” but this stone is here in England and it is of this that I wish to speak tonight.

The story starts with Patrick Garland, who as a young man had gone out to the Gold Coast, as it then was, as a medical officer in the Colonial Service. There he was involved in the Ashanti Wars in the late nineteenth century earning two mentions in despatches. He subsequently became the Chief Medical Officer of the Northern Region and for his work he was made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George.

Patrick retired to Ballincor in County Wicklow, and took up general practice, and it was there that his four sons and daughter Sheila were born, the youngest Donald in 1918. Their mother, Winifred, was a devout catholic and so the children were brought up with faith. The old doctor, with all the troubles of Ireland at the time., brought his family over to London for their education. Sadly, he soon fell ill, plagued by a fever contracted in the Gold Coast, and in 1929 he died, leaving the young family in the care of his wife who showed courage and a motherly love that was to flower in the years to come.

At this point I will pick up the story of Donald who in 1937 became a pilot in the Royal Air Force. Soon after the outbreak of the war, Donald moved with his squadron to Amfontaine, Northern France flying the Fairey Battle 1, P2204, light bomber. During this period, he was asked what he would like to do after the war to which he replied “I do not expect to survive it, but if I do, I would like to become a doctor: it seems to me a better kind of life trying to cure people than to kill them”.

The Phoney War ended dramatically with the German invasion of Holland and Belgium and the rush forward, but too late, of the British Expeditionary Force to the line of the Albert Canal. Forced to retreat the allies were able to blow all the bridges over the canal bar one, that at Veldwezelt, near Maastricht. German armour and infantry began to pour across the bridge making its destruction imperative. Enter the RAF, but despite repeated and gallant attacks, the bridge, by this time heavily guarded survived intact.

As a last throw of the dice on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1940, the CO of 12 Squadron based at made a short speech to his officers: “Gentlemen, this bridge must be destroyed at all costs” and which point he called for volunteers. Every man stepped forward and as only 6 were needed, lots were drawn. Without delay the planes set off with Flying Officer Garland leading with his navigator Sergeant Gray and his rear gunner Aircraftsman Reynolds.

And so the attack on the bridge was carried out by dive bombing from the lowest possible height in the face of ferocious flak and machine gun fire. The bridge was destroyed with much of the success of the mission being attributed to the formation leader, Donald Garland and the coolness, resource and skill of his navigator Sergeant Gray. Of the five planes that reached the target area, only one returned to base. Donald and Sergeant Gray were shot down by flak at Lanaken and were posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, but no award was made to Reynolds. These were the first VCs to be won by the RAF in the war. Donald is buried in Heverlee War Cemetery, Belgium. He was 21.

And then a second tragedy hit the Garland family when another brother Desmond, also in the RAF, was shot down and killed off the coast of France on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1942 aged 27. He was flying a Manchester 1 aircraft, R5833, as part of 50 Squadron flying from their base at Skellingthorpe in Lincolnshire. His aircraft was shot down near Lorient during a mine laying sortie in the Gorse region off the Brittany coast. His Commanding Officer wrote to his mother:

"Your son was the most gallant pilot and a man of character and a charming personality, greatly respected by his brother officers and all who knew him."

He is commemorated on the Runnymede memorial.

And now of John – through ill health unable to achieve pilot status but commissioned as a doctor in the RAF and one who brought much succour to those in London during the Blitz and in his post as a Medical Officer in RAF Marham in Norfolk. Here he fell gravely ill due to his sacrifice for others and his refusal to take account of his own failing health. He was transferred to King Edward VII Hospital near Midhurst where he resigned his commission on 26<sup>th</sup> January and died of natural causes on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1943. It is his grave that is in the Carron Lane cemetery, recorded on the headstone together with the names of his father and three brothers.

And finally to the eldest son, Patrick, serving in 2 Squadron as part of the second Tactical Air Force based at Gilze-Rijen airfield, Holland. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1945 he was returning from a tactical reconnaissance sortie over Holland when his plane a Spitfire Mk XIV, RM803, bounced and overturned having stalled on landing due to engine failure. Patrick was killed and is buried in Bergen op Zoom War Cemetery, Netherlands. He was 36.

Thus had their mother lost all four sons in the course of the war. She said: "The future seems frighteningly empty but I try not to think about it. If I gave way to my feelings, I would be letting the boys down". She later added "I can only feel that this is a glorious thing to have brought up and educated four sons who now so willingly have given their lives for their country."

But that was not quite the end of the story as the boys' sister Sheila married John Glenny, Royal Navy, whose own gallantry during the war, although not carried out on such a spectacular stage as the boys, required that rare gift of unremitting and drawn out courage far removed from action – he was the top naval expert on dismantling and subsequently investigation of German magnetic mines. For his work, surviving numerous hair raising incidents, as if by a miracle, he was awarded a Distinguished Service Order and a Distinguished Service Cross for his gallantry in saving countless lives.

## Private Thomas Lewis



Thomas Lewis, 4545156, Private, 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales Own). He died on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1942 aged 30.

He joined up in September 1939, originally joining the Northumberland Hussars.

## Flight Sergeant Stephen Lynch

Stephen Lynch, 411364, Flight Sergeant, Royal Air Force died on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1944 aged 27. He was the son of Martin and Ellen Lynch and husband of Ethel Lily Lynch of Midhurst. He was born on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1916 in County Waterford and married Ethel Lily Prior in Midhurst in December 1939.

Flt Sgt Lynch was an instructor based at RAF Tarrant Rushton in Dorset. This base was home to glider borne operations for 6th Airborne Division and clandestine flights to drop supplies to the French Resistance.

Flt Sgt Lynch drowned while home on leave on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1944. He was bathing near Mill Piece in the River Rother near the Ruins. His wife lived in Dairy Cottage beside the Ruins and attempted to save him, but was unsuccessful. Geoffrey Budd from the Round House ran to the river to remove his body and administer artificial respiration. The Deputy Coroner stated the widow and Mr Budd acted bravely.



## Flight Lieutenant Anthony Melrose



Anthony (Tony) Melrose, 76061, Flight Lieutenant, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, 924th Balloon Squadron. He died on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1943 aged 53. He was the son of Andrew and Rosalind Melrose and husband of Georgiana Melrose, nee Burton, of Chandler's Ford.

He was born on 24 June 1890. In 1939, they were living in Streatham, London, Tony working as a journalist with the BBC.

His squadron was based in the Southampton area and their role was to protect docks and airports. 924th Squadron had four flights of eight barrage balloons and in 1940 were in the Eastleigh /Southampton area.

Flt Lt Melrose became ill early in 1943 and died in the King Edward VII sanatorium in Midhurst.

## Private Peter Nodin

Francis Roger (Peter) Nodin, T203115, Driver, Royal Army Service Corps. He was the son of Anderton and Annie Nodin of Southport Lancashire, who was a shipowner and broker, although listed as out of work in 1911.

In 1939, Peter was listed as single and living in Southport, as an author but also working as a special constable and as part of the Observer Corps.

He died at King Edward VII Sanatorium on 22nd May 1942.

A book called "These Charming Acres – a book of unknown England" published in 1934 is listed as authored by a Peter Nodin.



## Szer Jan Szreder



Jan Szreder, 703588, Szeregowiec (Aircraftman Class 2). Born in Kharkov, Ukraine on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1916.

He was employed as an aircraft hand (general duties). He died of tuberculosis at King Edward VII sanatorium in Midhurst on 12th November 1944, aged 27.

## Sub-Lieutenant George Tack

George Tack, Sub Lieutenant, Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. He died on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1943 aged 30. He was born on 23 September 1913, the son of Joseph and Lucy Tack and grandson of William and Kate Werry of Carron Lane. He was educated at Selhurst Grammar School.

He joined the RNVR in 1939 and served on HMS Vanquisher on Atlantic convoys. He was commissioned in July 1943 and transferred to Landing Craft Tank (LCT). HMLCT 2336 was laid down in June 1942 by Decateur Iron and Steel Company from Decateur, Illinois, USA and commissioned in August 1942. It had a crew complement of 13, one officer and 12 enlisted men.

Sub-Lt Tack was drowned in Southampton water after a dinghy capsized. The coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death. He is commemorated on the Midhurst war memorial and Croydon roll of honour.

