



Eric Walter Pierce

Date of Death: 12 October 1941. Age: 20

**Rank & Unit: Leading Aircraftman (Pilot), Royal Air Force
Volunteer Reserve. 16 EFTS, RAF Burnaston**

Buried: Morden Cemetery, Section G4, Grave 5564



The first Dulwich Hamlet casualty of the Second World War was 20-year-old Eric Pierce, who tragically died in a flying accident whilst undergoing his Royal Air Force Pilot's training.

Eric Pierce was born on 15 June 1921 in Camberwell and on the outbreak of war was still living at home with his parents at 150 Aragon Road, Merton together with his sister Vera. Eric's father Walter was described in the 1939 Register as an Iron and Metal Warehouseman, whilst his mother Florence performed "unpaid domestic duties" to use a phrase of the time.

Relatively little is known about Eric's playing career with the Hamlet but a clue to the embryonic nature of it can be found in the programme notes for the match against Ilford on 26 March 1949, before which the plaque adding the four Second World War casualties to the Club's Roll of Honour was unveiled.

"...and Eric had only just left the Juniors. May their memories be always cherished in the minds of all sportsmen. With the passing of the years, we must never forget that they gave their all that our way of life should continue."

From the above statement, it would be fair to speculate that Eric had played the majority of his football for the Juniors but perhaps had just broken through into the First Team for some of the matches played under wartime conditions. Unfortunately, the level of local football reportage during the war varied greatly, with full team line-ups rarely published and as a result of this, we have so far been unable to establish exactly how many appearances Eric made for the Club and in which teams he played. The Wimbledon News, in a report of a match against the Dons in October 1941, refers to Dulwich Hamlet as being able *"to call upon youngsters*

who have helped the club for the past two seasons” and it can only be assumed that Eric fell into this category before he joined the RAF.

Eric enlisted into the Royal Air Force on 23 January 1941, initially reporting for duty as an Aircraftman Second Class at the Central Recruiting Centre at Euston before being posted to No. 2 Recruiting Centre at Cardington, Bedfordshire, followed by yet another move to No. 4 Recruiting Centre at Bridgnorth on 5 February. As his training continued, Eric was posted on 14 May 1941 to 20 OTU (Operational Training Unit) at Lossiemouth in Scotland. Until this point, Eric appeared destined to serve on the ground in some capacity but reading between the lines of his Service Record, it would appear that at about this time, he was accepted to train as aircrew as he received a posting on 21 June 1941 to 9 ITW (Initial Training Wing) at Stratford-upon-Avon to begin his Pilot's training, at which point he was also promoted to Leading Aircraftman.

Eric was posted on 16 August 1941 to 16 EFTS at RAF Burnaston (now the site of Derby Airport) where he learnt to fly the single engine Miles Magister training aircraft, during which time he must have been a satisfactory student as he was not washed out of his course. Bomber and fighter pilots tended to have differing temperaments and the outcome of this training would have determined whether it was felt if Eric was more at home piloting large multi-engine aircraft such as bombers or transport aircraft, or whether he was better suited to become one of the “Glamour Boys” with Fighter Command flying high performance fighters such as the Spitfire or Hurricane.

Had he lived to qualify as a pilot, Eric would have been promoted to Sergeant and posted to an Operational Training Unit to complete

his training. Sadly it was not to be, for on 12 October 1941, whilst he was performing 'Solo Aerobatics' duty in Magister aircraft N5417, it was seen by an eyewitness to stall at about 1,000 feet and spin into the ground at Broken Flats Farm, near Repton, Derbyshire. It was thought that the aircraft either suffered engine failure, or that the pilot had inadvertently stopped the propeller. The eyewitness reported that he thought that the pilot was trying to carry out a forced landing with a stopped airscrew but in the event, he had insufficient altitude to recover and the aircraft plunged into the ground, killing Eric instantly.

Eric Pierce had completed just 263 days service with the RAF and is today buried in Morden Cemetery, not far from the family home in Merton. The inscription on his headstone reads *"To live in the hearts of those we love is not to die."*

Ronald William Ebsworth (Ron)

Date of Death: 30 November 1941. Age: 35

Rank & Unit: Sergeant (Wireless Operator/Gunner), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 214 Squadron, RAF Stradishall

Buried: No known grave - remembered on the Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede, Panel 42



Ronald William Ebsworth was born on 27 October 1906 in Ilford, Essex and was the second of three sons to parents Charlotte and Hubert Ebsworth. The 1911 Census found the four-year-old Ronald and his family living at 35 Mafeking Avenue in the Seven Kings area of Ilford during which time his father was employed as a Fire Insurance Clerk and earned a sufficient wage for his family to employ a live-in domestic servant.

Ebsworth joined his local club Ilford FC, founded in 1881 and who were also long time Isthmian League rivals of Dulwich Hamlet. A trial at Champion Hill in the summer of 1936 resulted in Ron signing for the start of the 1936-37 Season but although he was to make ten First Team appearances during that campaign, he played no part in the cup run that saw the Hamlet lift the FA Amateur Cup for the fourth time in the Club's history when they defeated Leyton 2-0 at Upton Park. Ebsworth could play at either wing-half or at full-back and also featured regularly for the Reserves, scoring two goals for them during that first season at the Club, which saw the team finish as runners-up in the Isthmian League Reserve Section. The following season saw Ron again play regularly for the Reserves and he was indeed made Vice Captain of the team at that time. For the 1938-39 Season, Ron was Captain of the Reserves and led the team to the runners-up spot of the Isthmian League Reserve Section in what must have been an extremely tight competition, as his team remained unbeaten until 13 April 1939 but still didn't win the league, being pipped at the post by his former club Ilford. Despite predominantly featuring for the Reserves, Ron also appeared for

the First Team as war approached. In February 1938 he featured in a 4-0 win over Redhill and in November the same year he featured in a match at Chelmsford City in the FA Cup in which the home side, who were a professional outfit, won 5-1. Ron's last known appearance was on 26 April 1939 when he was unfortunate enough to score an own goal as Hamlet lost 1-2 at Kingstonian in a match which also featured fellow war casualty Bill Parr. The 1939-40 Season again saw Ron named as Reserve Team Captain but in common with all senior football, the Isthmian League was to be suspended upon the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939.

Ron was a popular figure, both on and off the field and must have enjoyed his time at Dulwich Hamlet as when he joined us, his family home had relocated to Mountnessing Road, Billericay. This would surely have presented Ron with an awkward journey to Champion Hill but such was his devotion to the cause, he didn't move home and continued to commute from Essex to Southeast London. The programme notes for the match versus Ron's old club Ilford on 26 March 1949, at which the additional names were added to the Roll of Honour, says of him:

"Ron was a grand type who did not mind which team or in what position he played."

Ron enlisted into the RAF on 13 July 1940 and like many of his Dulwich Hamlet team-mates volunteered to serve as aircrew, qualifying as a Wireless Operator/Gunner and posted to Bomber Command. After completing his initial training at places as diverse as Uxbridge, St Eval and Wattisham, Ron was posted on 12 July 1941 to 20 OTU (Operational Training Unit) at RAF Lossiemouth, where he narrowly missed serving with Eric Pierce, who had been posted away less than one month previously.

At the OTU, arguably the most important part of the training process, that of welding individuals into crews, or “crewing up” was undertaken. This procedure was unique to Bomber Command and basically involved placing the requisite number of men needed to form a certain number of crews into a large space, quite often an aircraft hangar and effectively leaving them to sort things out for themselves. After the stringent processes employed to select and train aircrew, the RAF would then rely on human chemistry and a huge leap of faith in allowing the men to form bomber crews from amongst their own numbers. Invariably, they would seek out others from their own neighbourhoods or from similar backgrounds, sometimes people they had befriended in training or men who came highly recommended by one of their prospective crew-mates. More often than not though, it was simply a case of whether or not the men liked the look of one another and many mixed crews of British, Canadians and New Zealanders for example, became lifelong friends as a result of this seemingly random process. Once a crew was formed, the plan would be for them to remain together for their whole tour of thirty missions and despite the forbidding statistics mentioned earlier, most crews simply got on with the job in hand and tried not to think too hard about the potentially gloomy prospects for survival that loomed over them.

The composition of Ebsworth’s crew was a typical result of the process and apart from Ron, who lived in Essex but spent much of his time in London, the Pilot Michael Fitzgerald was from Chiswick, Ron’s fellow Wireless Operator/Gunner Gordon Fleming came from Hammersmith, whilst Air Gunner Herbert Loveday hailed from Stanmore. John Boland, the Second Pilot was from Stockton-On-Tees but he was somebody whom Fitzgerald had undoubtedly befriended whilst training and come to know and trust as a good

pilot. The home town of the Observer, Sergeant Ian Flower, is not known at the time of writing. Upon completion of their Operational Training, Ron and his crew-mates were posted on 17 September 1941 to 214 Squadron, based at RAF Stradishall in Suffolk from where they flew twin-engine Vickers Wellington bombers, at that time one of the workhorses of Bomber Command and which had been designed by the great Barnes Wallis, of later 'Bouncing Bomb' fame.

Ron's first operational flight was a raid on the docks at Boulogne on 13 October 1941, followed by missions to Emden, Bremen and a further flight to Emden on 26 November which was aborted due to the aircraft's intercom becoming unserviceable. His fifth mission came on 30 November 1941, when he and his crew mates departed at 19:30 in Wellington serial number Z8953 for a raid on Hamburg. The exact circumstances of what happened on the flight will remain shrouded in mystery as the squadron's Operations Record Book simply records 'Failed to Return' alongside the aircraft's serial number. There were no Luftwaffe night-fighters patrolling in the area that the aircraft was thought lost and no unaccounted claims made by German pilots elsewhere that night. A few weeks later, the body of the Second Pilot, Sergeant John Boland was washed ashore on the Dutch island of Texel and he now rests in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Den Burg Cemetery. Of the remaining five crew members including Ron, there was no trace and they are today remembered on the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede in Surrey. This impressive monument on a hill overlooking the banks of the Thames commemorates the 20,547 men and women of the Royal and Commonwealth Air Forces killed over North and West Europe during the Second World War but who have no known grave. Ron is also commemorated on the War

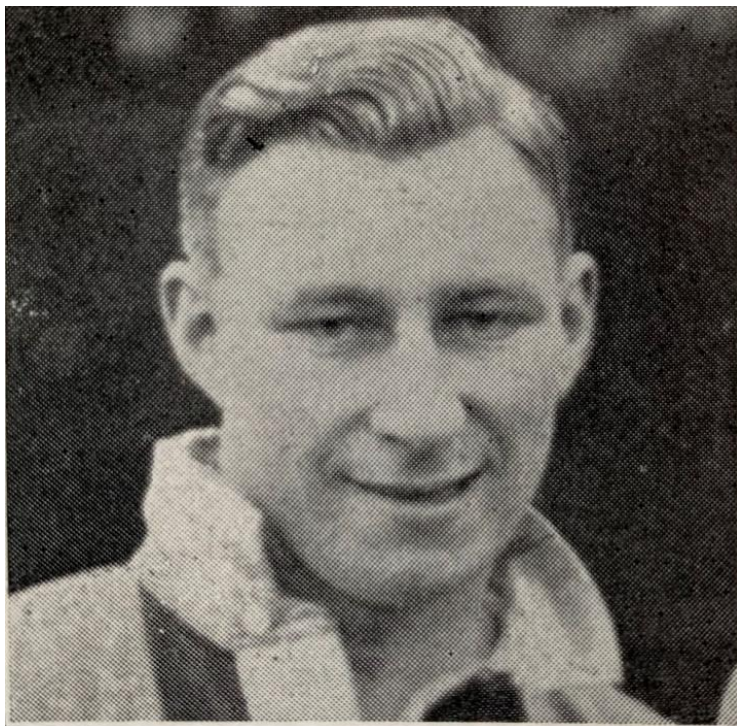
Memorial at St Mary Magdalene Church at Great Burstead in his native Essex.

Reginald Stephen Anderson (Reg or Reggie)

Date of Death: 24 February 1942. Age: 25

**Rank & Unit: Sergeant (Observer), Royal Air Force Volunteer
Reserve. 106 Squadron, RAF Coningsby**

Buried: Kiel War Cemetery, Grave Reference 3 B 17



Reginald Stephen Anderson was born in Peckham on 13 September 1916 to parents William Thomas Anderson, who was a printer by profession and Ellen Leete Anderson. The family home was at 19 Woodward Road in Dulwich, the same road in which Dulwich Hamlet's home ground had been located until 1895 and therefore a fitting place for a future Hamlet player to reside.

The young Reggie, as he appears to have been known at that time, became a pupil of Wilson's Grammar School in Camberwell, where in addition to his academic studies he represented the school at football. Upon leaving school, Reg played for his old boys' club, scoring 27 goals for the Old Wilsonians First Team in the 1933-34 Season, a feat which presumably attracted the attention of the Dulwich Hamlet scouts, as he moved to Champion Hill at the end of that season. Reg then progressed from playing for the Dulwich Hamlet Junior Teams through to the First Team and by the outbreak of war was the Club's Vice-Captain. He played on the right wing and came to be regarded as one of the finest players ever to wear the Pink and Blue shirt. Indeed, one elderly fan who had also seen the great Edgar Kail play, once opined to Roger Deason that Reg Anderson was the best Dulwich Hamlet player he had ever seen.

Reg was also an enthusiastic cricketer and it is known that he represented Dulwich Hamlet Cricket Club on occasions. For example, in July 1940 shortly before enlisting into the RAF, he featured in a 125 run defeat to London Counties. He didn't have a great game on this occasion, scoring 10 runs batting at number 9 and failing to claim a wicket during his bowling stint. Many of his team mates in this match were familiar names from the history of

Dulwich Hamlet FC including Doug Waymouth, George May, Len Thornton and Alf Solly.

Anderson broke through into the First Team in late 1936, quickly making an impression on Hamlet fans by scoring the winner in a shock FA Cup victory over Margate in just his second game in November of that year. Margate was a nursery team for Arsenal at the time and they were widely considered to be the strongest team remaining at that stage of the competition. Reg also attracted media attention and on 27 November 1936 the Ballymena Observer reported: - *"A good deal of interest has centred on RS Anderson, from Dulwich Hamlet's nursery, who in his second match for the senior team, scored the winning goal against Margate."*

Anderson had timed his breakthrough into the senior team well and 1937 saw Dulwich win the FA Amateur Cup for what would prove to be the final time in the Club's history, with Reg collecting a winner's medal in a rematch of the famous 1934 Final v Leyton which had been played at West Ham. This match had seen Hamlet end the game a physically battered team with four players concussed or swathed in bandages but despite this, they had held on to defeat the favourites Leyton 2-1. In 1937 Dulwich again beat Leyton at Upton Park, this time watched by 33,000 spectators. Both teams missed penalties in a match that was won as much by sterling defence as good attack. The Hamlet fans chaired goalkeeper Haydn Hill off the pitch at the end such was the nature of his performance. Leslie Morrish grabbed a brace of goals midway through the first half to win the game 2-0. Shortly after the match Millwall signed Ernie Toser from Dulwich. Ernie played a few games in their Division 3 South championship winning side of 1937-38, before he was struck by injury whilst still working as a manager at a printing firm. He represented the RAF during the war but retired

soon after the coming of peace following a short spell with Notts County. The TOFFS replica 1930's Dulwich Hamlet shirts are based on the shirt Ernie Toser wore that day and he kindly made it available to the fans organising the first order. The club had presented the shirts to the players at the end of the season. The team are seen pictured celebrating their win below. Reg is in the front row kneeling, second from left.

Reg played in another cup final that season, featuring in a 2-0 victory against Kingstonian in the Surrey Senior Cup Final on 24 April 1937. The match was played at Plough Lane and was scoreless at the end of normal time. Both Hamlet goals came in extra time, with Henry Ball scoring the first before Reg scored what proved to be the winner.

Anderson's form for Dulwich quickly caught the eye of representative bodies. He started out in the Surrey team as early as 1937, representing them in September of that year in a 0-4 defeat v the Royal Navy & Royal Marines at Portsmouth. His first England amateur international cap came on 28 January 1938 when he grabbed a hat trick in an 8-2 win over Wales at Rhyl. Reg's future Hamlet team-mate and fellow war casualty Bill Parr, at that time a Blackpool player, scored four goals and another Hamlet man, Horrie Robbins also featured. The Wales win was followed up with a disappointing 1-1 draw with Ireland at Leicester on 19 February 1938, watched by 5,000 in which fellow Hamlet men Haydn Hill and Horrie Robbins also played. What proved to be Reg's last game for England was at Champion Hill with the home team defeating Scotland 8-3 on 11 March 1939. Bill Parr also played and scored twice, watched by a crowd of 14,111. Reg dropped out of a representative FA XI for a match v Guernsey on 11 May 1939 and was one of nine of the eleven players originally selected to drop

out. Bill Parr was one of the two original selections to travel. Two months later, Reg was part of the Middlesex Wanderers team who toured Turkey. He was also one of four Dulwich men to win their Surrey caps in 1939, although Doug Waymouth went one better, winning both cap and badge.

Almost certainly as a result of his performance on international debut against Wales, Reg was approached by Sir Herbert Merrett, a former amateur footballer himself but also an industrialist and chairman of Cardiff City, to play for his club as an amateur but with the offer of a job as a sweetener. Anderson accepted the job and moved down to Cardiff in time for the tail end of the 1938-39 Season. He made two appearances for his new team over the Easter weekend of 1939, with both matches against Notts County. His debut came in a 1-1 draw at Meadow Lane on Saturday 15 April 1939 before he played and scored in a 4-1 victory two days later at Ninian Park, in which he was by all accounts, man of the match. Anderson also played in three wartime matches for Cardiff City, with his final appearance coming on 6 January 1940 in a home friendly against Birmingham City, in which he scored during a 4-5 defeat for the Bluebirds. It seems that Cardiff thought he was going to be their player but were to be disappointed as Reg spent most of his time assisting Dulwich. He had been one of several amateur players approached to make up numbers in the playing squad when Cardiff realised that six of their players fell under the jurisdiction of the Military Training Act. On 28 July 1939, Merrett told the Western Daily Mail that Anderson had been transferred back to London by his employers and that *"Anderson will play again for Dulwich Hamlet next season but he has agreed to turn out for City whenever he is needed."* Reading between the lines it would seem that Reg chose to leave Cardiff City. The reasons for this will remain unknown but perhaps the answer could lay in the

appointment of Cyril Spiers in 1939 as Cardiff City's manager. Spiers had been Assistant Manager to the legendary Major Frank Buckley at Wolverhampton Wanderers and it is possible that Reg did not care for the style of football he was being asked to play by the new manager.

Whatever the reasons, one can only speculate that Reg's heart remained at Dulwich as we know from programme data that he continued to play for the Hamlet whenever possible, appearing in some early wartime matches at Champion Hill, as well as continuing to play representative football in which he was always described as a Dulwich Hamlet player. In view of the fact that he would go on to represent the RAF following his enlistment, it was somewhat ironic that Reg was selected to play as a member of a Football Association XI against his future 'employers' at Champion Hill on 30 March 1940 in front of a crowd of 11,745. Unfortunately, he was on the losing side, with the FA XI going down 2-3 against a strong RAF team that included the likes of Charlton's Sam Bartram in goal, Arsenal's Alf Kirchen who scored twice, Vic Buckingham of Spurs and Peter Doherty of Manchester City, who scored the winner. The match had initially been planned for February and was a great honour for Dulwich as they were the first amateur club to be allocated an FA Red Cross fund raising game.

Reg enlisted into the RAF at No. 1 Receiving Centre, Uxbridge on 22 July 1940 just as the Battle of Britain was beginning to erupt in the skies above Southeast England. He followed many of his Hamlet team-mates in volunteering for aircrew duties and trained as an Observer, posted to Bomber Command. Reg continued to play whenever possible and whilst undergoing his training at 6 Air Observer Navigation School at RAF Staverton in Gloucestershire, he represented his unit in a match at Gloucester City's ground in April

1941, shortly before he qualified. On completion of his training, Reg was promoted to Sergeant and posted to 16 OTU at Upper Heyford on 12 July 1941.

On completion of his Operational Training, Reg was posted on 1 November 1941 to 207 Squadron, based at Waddington in Lincolnshire, which had been formed with the express purpose of bringing the new Avro Manchester bomber into service. The Manchester would eventually evolve into arguably the finest heavy bomber of the war, the iconic four engine Lancaster but in its original incarnation, it was a troubled design that suffered with what proved to be insurmountable technical issues with the two Rolls Royce Vulture engines that powered it. These problems, coupled with a troublesome hydraulic system, caused the type to be grounded on two occasions.

As a result, Reg soon found himself surplus to requirements at Waddington and was posted on 11 December 1941 to 106 Squadron at RAF Coningsby, which flew the twin engine Handley Page Hampden, an older design which should have been in the process of replacement by the Manchester but which had been of necessity retained in service due to the newer aircraft's shortcomings. Incidentally, this squadron was later to be commanded by the legendary Wing Commander Guy Gibson before he won the VC and achieved wider fame outside the RAF for his exploits in commanding 617 Squadron during the attacks on the Ruhr Dams in May 1943.

As Reg did not fly operationally for 207 Squadron and because the Manchester required a crew of seven, as opposed to the four men needed for the Hampden, it appears that his original crew – the composition of which is not recorded – was disbanded and posted elsewhere. For his first two operational flights with 106 Squadron

(the first of which was before his official posting came through) Reg flew as a 'spare bod' and thus filled in temporarily for sick or injured airmen in other crews. The first of these missions was targeted on Nazi Party HQ at Aachen on 8 December 1941, with the second on a chemical works at Hülse in the Ruhr area on 28 December but by the time of his third flight, a North Sea minelaying mission on 22 January 1942, Reg was part of a new crew that had a very local feel to it. As well as the Woodwarde Road based Anderson, the pilot Sgt Stanley Kent hailed from West Dulwich, whilst Wireless Operator/Gunner Sgt Albert Blake came from Brockley. The second Wireless Operator/Gunner Sgt Stanley McLeod was from Carlisle and thus broke the Southeast London monopoly but had perhaps been a member of the same training course as his Brockley-based crew mate. This crew was to remain together for the rest of Reg's short time with 106 Squadron.

The task of naval minelaying was one of Bomber Command's lesser known duties and was seen by some crews as being an easier number than bombing German cities and military targets. It thus became laconically codenamed within the service as 'Gardening' although in reality, because of the lower altitudes required to drop the mines accurately and without damaging them, it left the slow bombers vulnerable to anti-aircraft 'flak' from any German naval vessels that they might encounter.

For his fifth operational flight, Reg and his crew were tasked with a 'Gardening' mission in the Heligoland Bight area and at 02:00 on 24 February 1942, took off from their Lincolnshire airfield aboard Hampden 'ZN-Z' serial number P4323. It was to prove a far from easy mission, as the bomber was to fall victim of a German 'Flak' ship which hit the Hampden with accurate fire, causing it to crash on the island of Sylt killing all four men on board. This was the only

RAF bomber to be lost out of the twenty three despatched on that night. The crew are buried alongside each other at the Kiel War Cemetery, which like all of those maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is a place of almost heart-rending beauty and which contains 992 British, Commonwealth and Polish burials from the Second World War, the vast majority of whom are RAF aircrew. He is also commemorated on the Wilson's School Roll of Honour which moved with the school from their former location in Camberwell to their current site in Wallington in 1975.

The esteem in which Reg Anderson was held, both as a player and as a man, can be judged from this excerpt from the programme of the British Army v Czech Forces Inter-Allied Services Cup match which was played at Champion Hill on 7 March 1942, shortly after he had been posted as missing.

"It is with regret we hear that our vice-captain, Sergeant RS Anderson, is reported missing from an operational flight abroad. Reg was on short leave a fortnight ago and we hoped he would be available to play but he had to return the day before the game. He had been chosen to represent the RAF in their Inter-Allied Services Cup tie v Belgium last Saturday. He was probably the cleverest forward we have had since Edgar Kail's day and was equally popular with players and the crowd. A grand sportsman and charming personality both on and off the field, a keen cricketer and possessor of a very dry wit – a real Englishman. We trust that his parents may soon have word from him and in the meantime, we ourselves anxiously await news of his safety."

It is poignant to reflect that perhaps one of the last things Reg did before what proved to be his final flight may have been to sort out his football kit in preparation for the Belgium match which was to

be played at Molyneux Stadium. Had he returned, he was due to be transported to Wolverhampton ahead of the game but given the exigencies of war, the RAF had travelling reserves and a Sgt Collins took his place. Both the British Army and RAF fielded teams consisting of amateur players in this tournament and Reg was one of nine amateur internationals named in the original RAF XI.

Reg Anderson was the third Dulwich Hamlet player to perish in the Second World War and his loss at the still young age of 25 was arguably the one felt the most keenly, for had war not intervened, he would have surely been a mainstay of the Hamlet team for many years to come.

William Wilfred Parr (Bill or Billy)

Date of Death: 8 March 1942. Age: 26

Rank & Unit: Sergeant (Pilot), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. 233 Squadron, RAF St Eval

Buried: Marton (St Paul) Church Burial Ground, Lancashire, Plot 10, Grave 122



William Wilfred Parr was born in Blackpool on St George's Day, 23 April 1915 to parents Clara Ann and John Wilfred Parr, who was a pork butcher by trade. Bill made eighteen appearances as an amateur for his local Football League club Blackpool between 1935 and 1938 during which time he also played for Lancashire as well as the England Amateur XI. He made his international debut on his home ground at Bloomfield Road on 15 February 1936 helping England to a 5-0 win over Ireland in front of 3,000 spectators. Fourteen days later 4,000 gathered in Porthmadoc to watch him help England defeat Wales 7-3. Another two weeks on and 6,000 watched England lose 0-1 to Scotland at Inverness. His first goal for his country came on 23 January 1937 as England defeated Wales 9-1 at Fratton Park, Portsmouth. His dying grandmother, whom Bill had lived with for most of his life, urged him to go although he had wanted to stay with her. He played not knowing that she had passed away one hour after he left home. Incidentally, this match was the first time that the England Amateurs wore numbered shirts. On 13 February 1937, Bill was part of the England team that was defeated 1-5 by Ireland at Cliftonville, watched by a crowd of 10,000 and perhaps as a result of this, he was absent when England played next, a 0-1 defeat to Scotland at Champion Hill on 13 March 1937 in front of 17,980 spectators.

However, Bill was selected for a twelve week FA Tour of New Zealand, Australia and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) which consisted of twenty fixtures including matches against the New Zealand and Australian national teams. He was duly granted permission by his employers to undertake the trip, which for an amateur footballer in those days, was a rare opportunity but in order to justify the spell of leave the tour would entail, the Mayor of Blackpool presented him with a letter of introduction to civic officials he may meet in Australia or New Zealand, so that he could research how waste

departments functioned in the southern hemisphere. Bill, who at that time worked for Blackpool Corporation's Cleansing Department, was career-minded and had turned down professional football contracts in order to pursue his ambition of becoming a Director of Waste.

Although some of the team selections appear to have been lost in the mists of time, we do know that Bill played in at least ten of the tour fixtures and definitely scored six goals, although as with the teams, the names of the goal scorers in some of the matches are not now known. The first match took place on 27 May 1937 at Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, with the last in Colombo, Ceylon on 11 August, during a break in the sea voyage home. The team won eighteen of the tour fixtures, which is not surprising given that they scored 138 goals and conceded just 28 during the whole tour but they did lose two out of the three 'test' matches against Australia. These were the first matches ever lost by a touring side of the FA, having previously enjoyed an incredible 131 successive victories on tours to Germany, Austria, South Africa, Australia, Canada, Southern Rhodesia and New Zealand. The matches on the 1937 tour were not classed as full amateur internationals, although a commemorative cap was awarded to those selected for the tour party.

Following the tour, Bill resumed his domestic footballing activities and on 28 January 1938, featured in Reg Anderson's England debut, an 8-2 win over Wales at Rhyl in which Bill scored four and Reg three goals. This was followed on 19 February by a disappointing 1-1 draw with Ireland at Filbert Street, Leicester in which both men featured. Unlike Anderson, he was retained for the next match, a 5-2 win over the Scots at Hampden Park on 12 March 1938 watched by 10,000 which was the Amateur team's first win in Scotland. Bill

then missed the next two matches before featuring in what proved to be the last peace time amateur international, an 8-3 victory over the Scots at Champion Hill on 11 March 1939 in which Bill scored twice, watched by 14,111 spectators. Reg Anderson also played in what was destined to be the last amateur international appearance for either player.

By this time, Bill was a Hamlet player, having moved to London due to his having taken up a job offer with Wembley Borough Council. Unusually for the era, he was already an established player when he signed for Dulwich. It had been widely rumoured that he would sign for either Spurs or Brentford as an amateur but it seems likely that the opportunity to rekindle his England Amateur partnership with Reg Anderson influenced his decision to sign for Dulwich Hamlet and as would be expected, he immediately replicated the effective partnership on the right side of the field with his amateur international team-mate.

This partnership bore early fruit at the end of the 1938-39 Season when Dulwich Hamlet beat Kent League side Erith & Belvedere 3-0 in the Final of the London Senior Cup at The Den in front of 18,000 spectators. This was Dulwich's sixth appearance in the final and their second victory in the tournament. The Kent side conceded an early own goal when a Bill Parr cross was turned home by the Erith right back. Dulwich were then pressured by the Kent Leaguers before Henry Ball scored late in the first half with Reg Anderson making the game safe in the 85th minute. On 14 May 1939, The Daily Herald noted *"Anderson, clever tactician did much as he pleased. Parr responded to his scheming with dangerous runs on the wing, and Ball held the line well with neat passes to both wings."* Before the second goal, Cecil Murray had missed a penalty awarded for a foul on Bill.

Arsenal had announced the signing of two more amateurs, Bill Parr and outside left Leslie Lack and Bill celebrated his move to Arsenal by representing the FA XI in Guernsey on 11 May 1939. Due to the outbreak of war he didn't make his Arsenal debut until the following April when he featured in a 5-0 win over Southend United at Grainger Road. The Southend manager that day was David Jack, the first man to score at Wembley and the first footballer in the world to be transferred for more than £10,000 when signed by Arsenal from Bolton Wanderers in 1928. Bill's team mates at playing at Southend that day included Cliff Bastin, George Male and Leslie Compton, brother of Denis, the England and Middlesex cricketer who was no mean footballer himself.

Bill also made nineteen appearances for Wealdstone FC as a guest player in wartime football, scoring twelve goals in that time for the Stones. In December 1939 the Surrey Advertiser reported Bill as having returned to Dulwich Hamlet after he featured in a game v Woking. In February 1940 Parr was listed in the press as a Dulwich Hamlet player when he featured for an FA XI against Oxford City & Oxford University, with team mate Henry Ball also selected. The biggest name on display was Bernard Joy of Arsenal. To confuse matters further, during the same month Parr was listed as Dulwich Hamlet and Wealdstone when he represented London Amateurs v London Professionals at Selhurst Park. Fellow Hamlet players Haydn Hill and Reg Anderson also featured in this match.

The following month Bill was selected to represent the FA XI in a Red Cross fund raiser versus the Surrey County FA at Guildford City in front of a crowd of 3,000. The match was a 2-2 draw and brought in gate money of about £150 with £100 profits to the Lord Mayor's Red Cross fund. Reg Anderson featured for Surrey and was

reported to have been man of the match. In the event, Bill didn't play as he had to drop out due to his enlistment date being advised to him on the day of the match.

Upon the outbreak of war in September 1939, Bill was living at 7 Park Chase, Wembley, which was convenient for his job with the local authority. He returned to Blackpool to enlist in the RAF on 16 August 1940 and was posted to Middle Wallop early the following month to begin his initial flying training, with a further posting to 4 Initial Training Wing at Paignton, Devon on 19 October 1940. Like many of his Hamlet team mates, Bill had volunteered to serve as aircrew and in his case, trained as a Pilot. In the early days of Bill's RAF career, a senior officer was trying to find footballers for a representative game and enquired whether he could play. *"Oh just a bit."* replied Bill, who was duly selected as reserve. After a chastening defeat the officer commented *"If only you were the Parr who played for Dulwich!"*

Upon completion of his Pilot's training at 11 Service Flying Training School at Sywell in Northants on 8 August 1941, Parr was promoted to Sergeant and posted to Coastal Command to perform Maritime Patrol duties. He received a further posting on 6 November 1941 to 6 (Coastal) OTU at RAF Thornaby in North Yorkshire for his Operational Training on the Lockheed Hudson light bomber. The Coastal Command 'crewing up' procedure resulted in a somewhat more cosmopolitan look for Bill's crew than for those we have seen in Bomber Command. Apart from Blackpool born Parr, his Observer Sergeant Sydney Benson came from North Bondi, Australia and his Wireless Operator/Gunner Sergeant Stanley Hyam was from Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Upon completion of their Operational Training, Bill and his crew were posted on 4 February 1942 to 233 Squadron, based at St Eval in Cornwall, where they were to fly anti-

U Boat patrols over the Western Approaches, covering the vital North Atlantic convoys.

Bill had yet to undertake an operational flight for his new squadron when he took off from St Eval on a night navigational training flight at approximately 23:00 on 8 March 1942. The exact circumstances of what happened next are not known but shortly after taking off, the Hudson 'ZS-E' serial AM535 that Bill was piloting crashed into a field at Lower Treburrick Farm, one mile north of St Merryn and just a short distance from RAF St Eval. The aircraft, with a full fuel load, immediately burst into flames and all on board were killed. It was thought that the aircraft had probably suffered an engine failure and was attempting to land at the nearby Royal Naval Air Station at St Merryn when it overshot the runway and crashed.

The loss of Bill Parr less than a fortnight after the death of his team mate Reg Anderson was a devastating blow for Dulwich Hamlet, even though it is far from clear which club he would have represented had the war not intervened. His death was also big news in his home town. On 10 March 1942, the Lancashire Daily Post reported: -

"Official notification has been received by Mr and Mrs JW Parr of Le Marie, St Leonards Road, Blackpool of the death of their son, Sgt-Pilot William Wilfred Parr, the amateur international footballer, who assisted the Blackpool club for several seasons.

Parr was killed on active service on Sunday, only a few months after gaining his wings. A native of Blackpool, he was educated at Palatine Road Council School and up to 1938 when he took a position with Wembley Borough Council, was employed in the cleansing department of Blackpool Corporation.

Parr could have signed for several famous clubs as a professional, but he always preferred to play as an amateur for Blackpool, for whom he made 80 appearances with the reserves and 17 with the first team.

He later played with Dulwich and Arsenal but stuck to his amateur status up to the time of joining the RAF 18 months ago.

Aged 26, he is the elder of 2 sons and the news of his death comes at a time when his mother and father are wondering what is the fate of his 22-year-old brother Ronald who was in Singapore when it was captured.

Parr had ten international caps, including one celebrating his tour in 1937 of Australia and New Zealand.

Mrs Parr told our reporter this morning that she received a letter from Billie posted apparently on the day of his death in which he wrote 'It's a great life.'"

Bill was returned to his parents and he was buried at Marton St Paul Churchyard, in his native Blackpool. It appears that when news was eventually received regarding Bill's brother, it was positive, for whilst Bill is one of 616 Second World War victims commemorated on Blackpool's War Memorial, Ronald's name does not appear.

Despite his relative lack of first team games at Blackpool, it is clear that Bill was highly regarded. When he moved south, Blackpool requested permission from the FA to grant him an inscribed gold watch in recognition of his services and permission for this was granted. Coincidentally, the watch was presented to him ahead of a match v Arsenal

Charles Edward Ede

Date of Death: 20 November 1942. Age: 31

Rank & Unit: Bombardier, 45 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment,
Royal Artillery

Buried: Dely Ibrahim War Cemetery, Algeria. Grave
Reference: 3 E 8



Charles Ede was born in Croydon on 9 May 1911 to parents Harry and Eva Ede. His father was a removal contractor who ran the family removal and storage business, whose vehicles can still be seen to this day on the streets of South London and Surrey.

Charles was a forward who played on the right hand side of the pitch and joined the Hamlet as a junior, during which time he also represented Surrey at junior level. He broke through to the Reserve Team during the 1929/30 Season and scored four times in twelve appearances during that campaign.

Ede's goal scoring record would suggest that he was a decent enough player in his own right but as far as his Dulwich Hamlet career was concerned, he had the misfortune to play at the same time and in the same position as the legendary Edgar Kail, so opportunities for First Team football were somewhat restricted and largely limited to appearing whenever the great man was injured or absent due to representative duties elsewhere.

During the 1930/31 Season, Charles scored nineteen goals in sixteen appearances for the Reserves and also appeared for the First Team in a 2-2 draw at Tufnell Park, in which he scored both of the Hamlet goals. His next recorded First Team appearance is in the programme line-up for a Boxing Day friendly in the 1931/32 Season versus Swindon Corinthian, which Dulwich won 5-0, although we do not currently know whether Charles featured on the scoresheet. Another First Team opportunity for him came towards the end of the same season, on 23 April 1932 in a home Isthmian League game against Oxford City, which came exactly one week after the Hamlet had lifted the FA Amateur Cup by defeating Liverpool Marine 7-1 in the Final at Upton Park. The match programme for the Oxford game promised that *"The Cup will be taken around the ground today at half time"* but whilst Edgar Kail was listed in the

printed team line-up, in the event he did not play. The Amateur Cup Final had been played on a heavy, muddy pitch on which perhaps he had picked up a minor injury that was not worth risking in an end of season match. Whatever the reasons for Kail's absence, Charles duly understudied for him in a game which the visitors comfortably won 3-0 and which was clearly a case of *"After the Lord Mayor's Show...."* as far as the home side were concerned. Incidentally, Edgar Kail returned for the next league match, in which Clapton were seen off in a 6-1 hammering!

A further appearance for Charles came the following season on 7 January 1933, for the London Senior Cup tie against London Caledonians when it was reported in the match programme:-

"Owing to the amateur international trial at Wolverhampton, we are compelled to make changes..... CE Ede our regular Reserve inside right will play for E Kail."

Incidentally, some three months earlier, Ede had played outside right for the reserves in a 10-1 victory over the same opposition. In total, Charles made eleven First Team appearances during the 1932/33 Season in which he scored seven goals, as well as scoring a further seventeen times for the Reserves.

No doubt frustrated by these tantalising glimpses of First Team football, during which he never let the side down, Charles decided during the 1933/34 Season that his footballing future lay elsewhere, as the programme for the Amateur Cup tie against Walthamstow Avenue dated 13 January 1934, informed us that he had been transferred to Kingstonian and quoted from a letter that he had written to the Hon. Secretary:

"Although I hate leaving the Hamlet, I do not wish to go back to Reserve Team football."

The programme notes then went on to state:

"In the circumstances it was decided not to object to the transfer. However, we desire to express our appreciation of the services of Chas. Ede to Dulwich Hamlet Football Club. It is unfortunate that at the moment, we could not find him a regular place in the First Team. We wish him every success with his new club."

Charles went on to make 43 appearances for the Ks and scored 20 goals for them during his time there but left at the end of the 1934/35 Season, at which point he seems to disappear from the footballing map.

Charles married Ellen Elizabeth Copeland on 29 August 1936 at St Anselm Catholic Church, Balham High Road and settled down to live at 17 Netherfield Road, Upper Tooting, where they were still living at the time of the declaration of war three years later. In the 1939 Register, an emergency census taken shortly after the outbreak of war, Charles described himself as a Periodicals Editor and the entry contains the enigmatic note *"Food and Teaplate"* alongside the job description. Sadly, so far we have not been able to establish the existence of any such periodical of this title, although being a full-time journalist and editor could possibly be the reason why his footballing career was curtailed.

Following the declaration of war on 3 September 1939, Charles had to wait over a year for his call-up but was duly enlisted into the Army as a Gunner in the Royal Artillery on 12 December 1940 and undertook his basic training with 226 Light Anti-Aircraft Training Regiment at Rhosneigr, Anglesey. On completion of his training on

29 July 1941, he was promoted to Lance Bombardier but continued to serve with the same Training Regiment as a Clerk. He continued to play football during this time as his Army service record tells us that on 16 August 1941, during an Inter-Battery match of NCOs versus Gunners, Charles suffered a dislocated left elbow, which put him out of action for about a week. The medical report on his injuries stated that *"Recovery of all movements may be slow but the injury is not likely to interfere with future efficiency as a soldier."*

Charles then attended a course of instruction as a Muster Clerk and duly qualified on 15 April 1942, at which point he was promoted to Bombardier and transferred to Headquarters, 45 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. This regiment was equipped with 40mm Bofors guns for low-level anti-aircraft defence and formed part of the anti-aircraft defence for the important industrial and railway town of Crewe.

However, the unit was earmarked to be deployed overseas and on 1 November 1942, sailed from the Clyde on a vessel of Convoy KMF2 bound for Algiers as part of Operation Torch, the joint Anglo-American invasion of French Morocco and Algeria. This operation was designed to force the Vichy French and Axis forces out of North Africa concurrent with the advance of General Montgomery's Eighth Army from the east following their victory over Rommel's Afrika Korps at El Alamein.

The convoy arrived off Algiers on 12 November, four days after the initial invasion and whilst it had been the original intention to land part of the regiment at Djidjelli (now called Jijel), about 320 kilometres east of Algiers, poor weather and sea conditions precluded this and the entire regiment instead disembarked at Bougie (now called Béjaïa). Algiers itself had quickly fallen to the Allies – the senior Vichy French officer located there had

surrendered the city on the same evening as the initial landings – but despite this collapse of their erstwhile collaborators, Hitler ordered German forces to continue to resist the invaders.

By 20 November 1942, 45 Light AA Regiment had reached Djidjelli and their twelve 40mm guns were deployed, along with eight heavier 3.7” guns of 72 Heavy AA Regiment to provide anti-aircraft defence for the Allied aerodrome which had been established there, with Regimental Headquarters located in the adjacent town. The Regimental War Diary records that at 20:05 a single Ju88 aircraft approached from between 4-5,000 feet in a low level dive bombing attack. The bombs missed the airfield but caused considerable damage to nearby buildings, including the Regimental HQ. Charles was initially posted as missing but later the same evening, his body was found beneath the rubble of the building. An officer from the US Army and a further four American servicemen were killed in the town during the same air raid.

Charles’s wife Ellen received the heart breaking telegram informing her of her husband’s death on 9 December 1942 and was subsequently awarded a War Widow’s Pension of 19 Shillings per week effective from 22 March 1943. Charles is buried at Dely Ibrahim War Cemetery along with 493 other British and Commonwealth Servicemen killed during the Second World War, as well as eleven of other nationalities.

Despite the fact that he had left the Hamlet some eight years before his death, we have added Charles Ede’s name to the Roll of Honour in order that we can continue to remember his service both to Dulwich Hamlet and to his country.

Richard Alexander Adams (Alan or Allen)

Date of Death: 18 September 1944. **Age:** 19

Rank & Unit: Serjeant, E Squadron, No. 2 Wing, Glider Pilot
Regiment, Army Air Corps.

Buried: Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, Netherlands.

Grave Reference: 6 D 12



Whilst the omission of a former player from the club's Roll of Honour could perhaps be viewed with hindsight as a policy decision by the then Club Committee, the exclusion of Alan Adams, who was very much a current player at the time of his death, can only be viewed as an inexplicable oversight, especially as his loss in action had been well documented at the time in an official match programme.

Although Alan was a local boy from Camberwell, he was a first generation Londoner. His father, Richard James Adams came from West Derby on Merseyside, whilst his mother, Pyarea Victoria Adams (nee Rhind) had originally hailed from Aberdeen. Alan had an elder sister, Patricia, who was born on 13 August 1923 at the former family home at 18 Oban Road in the Walton district of Liverpool but sometime after this event, the family had moved to London and were established at 22 Bushey Hill Road, Camberwell by the time of Alan's birth on 22 May 1925. The reason for the move south is unknown but could possibly be connected with Richard's job as an accountant with a steamship company or was perhaps symptomatic of a general lack of work on Merseyside at that time.

By the time of the 1939 Register being taken shortly after the outbreak of war, the family had moved to 58 Sunray Avenue in Herne Hill but the then 14 year old Alan does not appear in the census. He had become a pupil of Archbishop Tenison's Grammar School at Kennington in 1936 and had been evacuated out of London with his school to the relative safety of Reading. Alan served with the school's Officer Cadet Corps but later transferred to their Air Training Corps when this was established in 1940 and so appears to have taken a keen interest in the military from a young age, as well as perhaps having an eye on a future career as a flyer.

Alan was also an accomplished sportsman who represented his school at athletics, cricket and football – the latter two at First Eleven level.

Alan left school in mid-1941 and returned to live at the family home in Herne Hill, from whence he took up a job as a Junior Insurance Clerk for the Liverpool Victoria Insurance Company. Alan's military life continued after leaving school, as he served in his local Home Guard Unit, the 18th County of London Battalion, based at Dulwich, from 1942 pending his enlistment into the Army proper.

It was whilst serving with the Home Guard that the then 17 year old made his senior debut for the Hamlet on Saturday 7 November 1942 at Champion Hill in a 4-4 draw against the London Fire Force. Ironically, despite the match being played at Dulwich, this was in fact an away fixture for the Hamlet as the Fire Force also used the ground for their home matches – such oddities were not entirely uncommon in wartime football. Adams didn't feature on the original team sheet but the following week's programme explained that Alan was a late call-up due to the regular left back Roger Bishop being detained at work and unable to reach Champion Hill in time for kick-off. Dulwich fielded a youthful team and in addition to Alan, there was another debutant on display, a young centre forward by the name of Charles Birdseye, himself a late replacement for Stan Smith who was suffering with influenza. Birdseye made an instant impression by scoring one of the goals during the Hamlet's spirited fightback from 1-2 down at half time. Arthur Phebey with two and Gillespie were the other scorers in a match which the following week's programme described as *"...reminiscent of the peace time days when it was a bye-word that Dulwich Hamlet always played their hardest when up against it."*

This same programme, which was for a match against the RAF on 14 November 1942, went on to say that *"...the youngsters mentioned will be heard of again."* so we can only assume that Alan performed well on his senior debut.

Alan was attested into the Army and duly swore allegiance to the Crown on 19 March 1943 but his actual enlistment date did not come until the following 6 May. It would appear that previous experience with the school Air Training Corps had hardened Alan's ambition to become an airman, as after completing his basic training with the Gordon Highlanders, he transferred to the Army Air Corps on 14 January 1944 having volunteered to train as a pilot with the Glider Pilot Regiment. At this point, Alan was promoted to the rank of Corporal, with a further promotion to Serjeant following on 15 June 1944. He was awarded his Army Flying Badge to signify qualification as a glider pilot on 27 July 1944 and was then posted to E Squadron, No. 2 Wing, Army Air Corps, where he would fly the Airspeed Horsa glider. These large wooden aircraft could either carry 30 fully equipped soldiers, or a freight load of three tons on airborne operations.

The role of a glider pilot was an extremely hazardous one, for not only were they expected to fly the heavily laden gliders into their landing zones through invariably hostile skies but upon landing, they were then expected to fight as infantrymen alongside the airborne troops they had just transported, until such time as they could be evacuated out of the landing zone back to friendly territory. The photograph that illustrates this article shows a young pilot wearing civilian clothes rather than Army uniform – this type of photograph was taken in case a false identity was required to smuggle the glider pilots from behind enemy lines following airborne operations and further demonstrates the precarious

nature of the glider pilot's life. Whilst we are not absolutely certain that the photograph, which was kindly supplied by Dutch military historian Luuk Buist, definitely depicts Alan, we see a hitherto unidentified pilot of E Squadron who is simply described as "Boy". Given Alan's extreme youth, coupled with his position as the youngest pilot in his squadron, it must be a fair assumption that this is him, especially as the physical description given on his Army service record "*fair complexion, grey eyes and brown hair*" matches that of the person in the photograph.

In September 1944, Alan's Squadron was required to take part in Operation Market Garden, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's bold plan to seize the bridges over the River Rhine and thrust directly into Germany.

On 18 September 1944, as part of the Second Wave of landings, the Horsa glider piloted by Alan, which was chalked "837" left from RAF Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, towed by a Douglas Dakota transport aircraft of 271 Squadron RAF. Alan's glider carried a heavy load of a Jeep plus two trailers full of ammunition as well as two passengers from Headquarters, 1 Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery. The Second Pilot on board was Serjeant Richard Ennis from Wallasey on Merseyside who thus had something in common with Alan, whose parents had lived in that part of England prior to moving to London.

Whilst en route to the drop zone, shortly before 20:00 on 18 September, Alan's glider was taken under fire by German anti-aircraft guns and when almost over the Landing Zone at Wolfheze, a flak shell burst close to the glider's starboard wing. Alan was hit by shrapnel and slumped in his seat over the controls, at which point, the Second Pilot Serjeant Ennis took over. Unfortunately, he could not recover full control in time and as a result, the glider

overshot the Landing Zone and ploughed into trees at over 100 mph. Ennis was catapulted through the Perspex windscreen whilst still strapped into his seat but amazingly survived unscathed, as did the two Army passengers in the rear. Sadly, Alan was crushed by the load behind him which shifted forward with the momentum of the crash. At first, Adams was given a field burial in a garden behind the Psychiatric Home at Wolfheze but on 24 August 1945, as part of the general peacetime consolidation of British and Allied war graves in the area, he was re-interred at Oosterbeek War Cemetery, which contains the graves of 1,691 British and Commonwealth servicemen as well as a further 79 Polish and three Dutch servicemen.

Alan's death was reported in the match programme for the fixture against Pinner on 2 December 1944, which went on to describe him as *"a promising left back for the Reserves, who had one or two games for the senior side before joining the Forces."* The same article also hints at a wider family connection with the club as it mentions that *"his father used to referee some of our games on the top pitch..."*

The 1939 Register recorded that Alan's parents both served as Air Raid Wardens within the Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell and the same Hamlet programme that reported Alan's death mentioned that his mother Pyarea had *"been killed by enemy action"* at the relatively young age of 43 on 19 February 1944. This is something of a mystery, as although there was indeed an air raid on the day of her death, the family home was not bombed and no fatalities were recorded elsewhere in the immediate area. Her Death Certificate records the cause of death as being *"Cardiac Asthma"* at home in Sunray Avenue, rather than any obvious injuries caused by enemy action. The mystery is further

compounded because Pyarea is not recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as a Civilian War Death, which tends to lend credence to the theory that her death may have been caused by the shock of a bomb explosion nearby, or perhaps the cumulative effect of the strain brought on by her work as a Warden, rather than a specific injury caused by enemy action.

There is also some confusion regarding Alan's Christian names; his Birth Certificate records him as Richard *Alexander* Adams, whilst his Army service record and those of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission show him as Richard *Allen* Adams, although Archbishop Tenison's Grammar School's obituary in December 1944 gives his name as *Ronald Alan* Adams. To compound matters further, Dulwich Hamlet programmes and the "*Tenisonian*" yearbooks refer to him simply as *Alan* Adams. However, the details concerning his Army records, parents, schooling and home address leave us in no doubt that despite the various permutations of his name, these all refer to the same man mentioned in the Dulwich Hamlet programmes, who has now been added to our Roll of Honour.

James Alfred Hoather DFM (Jimmy)

Date of Death: 9 May 1943. Age: 21

Rank & Unit: Flight Sergeant (Pilot), 58 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, RAF St Eval

Buried: No known grave – remembered on the Air Forces Memorial, Runnymede, Panel 137



James Alfred Hoather was born on 26 September 1921 in Camberwell and was the son of Frederick Hoather, an Assistant Engineer for the London County Council and Rose Elizabeth Hoather. Jimmy was the second eldest of four siblings – two boys and two girls, who at this time lived at 8 Lomond Grove, Camberwell.

By the time that Jimmy was old enough to go to school, the family had moved to 147 Eswyn Road, Tooting, whilst Jimmy attended the nearby Ensham Central Middle School in Franciscan Road, where he was a prolific sportsman, playing cricket and football for his school, as well as representing them at Athletics. He was a good enough footballer to be selected for Dulwich Hamlet's Junior team and played alongside Ronnie Dicks, later to find fame with Middlesbrough, as well as post-war Hamlet stars Arthur Phebey and Pat Connett. The team in which Jimmy played were good enough to win the London Minor Cup in the 1939/1940 Season and although he appears in the attached team photograph, we are uncertain at present as to whether he actually played in the Final.

When the 1939 Register was recorded in September 1939, Jimmy had left school to enter the world of work and was employed as a Clerk at an LCC Hospital, although we do not know which hospital this would have been.

We can only speculate whether Jimmy ever appeared for the Hamlet first team in wartime football, as programmes for these matches were not always produced and for those that were, surviving examples, especially for the early war years, are few and far between. In common with many Dulwich Hamlet playing staff, both senior and junior, Jimmy volunteered to serve with the Royal Air Force as aircrew and enlisted into the service on 22 July 1940 at No. 2 Receiving Centre at RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire. After his

initial training in the United Kingdom, Jimmy was posted to Canada on 5 April 1941 to undergo his elementary flying training at 16 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS) at Edmonton, Alberta. Somewhat confusingly, there was another 16 EFTS located at RAF Burnaston in Derby where Jimmy's Dulwich Hamlet Junior colleague Eric Pierce trained and sadly lost his life in October 1941 but the two establishments were unrelated, other than in their function of training novice pilots.

Happily, Jimmy completed his elementary flying training on Tiger Moth aircraft without incident and returned to England on 23 August 1941 and promoted to Sergeant, was given a short period of leave. He was then posted to 10 Operational Training Unit (OTU) at RAF Abingdon in Oxfordshire, where he was to learn how to fly the venerable Armstrong Whitworth Whitley bomber, one of the early mainstays of the British bomber force but a type that was to be phased out in favour of more modern four-engine heavy bombers.

On completion of his operational training, Jimmy was posted on 10 December 1941 to 58 Squadron at RAF Linton-on-Ouse in North Yorkshire. The squadron was part of 4 Group, Bomber Command and was engaged in flying the elderly Whitley aircraft on raids sometimes deep into Germany. Jimmy was part of a crew as Second Pilot and flew his first mission on the night of 6/7 January 1942 to Stavanger in occupied Norway. The flight was completed without incident and during the following month he flew a further three operational missions to Mannheim, Aachen and Wilhelmshaven.

On 3 April 1942, 58 Squadron was transferred to the control of Coastal Command which was engaged on the vital work of defending Britain's supply convoy lifeline across the North Atlantic, often at this point with aircraft that were wholly inadequate for the

task, such as the Whitley bombers that they had inherited with 58 Squadron. The Squadron was initially based at RAF St Eval and we can only speculate as to whether Jimmy knew that he had arrived at the Cornish airfield less than one month after his senior Dulwich Hamlet playing colleague Billy Parr had been killed whilst flying from this very same station.

If Jimmy was aware, he didn't allow it to bother him as by now First Pilot, or Captain (whilst still holding the rank of Sergeant), he flew eleven missions, mainly anti-submarine patrols over the Bay of Biscay during this time. At the end of July 1942, Jimmy was part of a detachment sent north to Wick on the very north-eastern tip of Scotland from where he flew three patrols over northern waters before returning to St Eval on 5 August 1942, where further patrols over the Bay of Biscay were the order of the day. Jimmy received a promotion at this time, being confirmed in the rank of Flight Sergeant from 1 August 1942. This return to Cornwall was short-lived as the squadron headed north again on 29 August, this time to Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, in the Western Isles of Scotland. Jimmy flew a further three patrols at this time over Icelandic waters but on 2 December 1942, the squadron returned south, this time to Holmsley South airfield in Hampshire to begin converting to the more modern Handley Page Halifax II aircraft and during this time, Jimmy attended a "Blind" or instrument landing course, no doubt as part of this process.

The conversion completed, the squadron began flying operationally once again in February 1943 and Jimmy skippered three further missions over his old stomping ground of the Bay of Biscay. Another move saw the squadron return to St Eval from 15 March 1943, from where Jimmy was to complete a further seven missions flying from this now-familiar airfield.

On 10 April 1943, Jimmy was recommended for a Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) after a sortie over the Bay of Biscay to locate a German blockade runner, guarded by four destroyers and a strong air escort of Ju-88 aircraft. The enemy convoy was located and a striking force successfully homed in despite strong opposition from the Ju-88s. Although his aircraft was attacked and initially forced away from the enemy convoy, Jimmy flew back to the convoy and despite being attacked and driven off for a second time he persisted and remained in contact, successfully homing in British forces to attack the convoy. During the action, Jimmy's crew possibly shot down one Ju-88 and damaged another.

On 9 May 1943 at 06:11, Jimmy and his crew took off for another anti-submarine patrol in the Bay of Biscay, flying Halifax aircraft HR743, code BY-N and for this trip had on board a supernumerary pilot, Sergeant Harold Stuart Butler of the Royal Canadian Air Force, who was no doubt "learning the ropes" prior to beginning his own operational tour with the squadron. This was also the day on which Jimmy's DFM was confirmed and gazetted but sadly he was never to be able to receive the decoration, as the crew were posted missing having failed to return from their patrol.

Although the cause of the crew's loss was initially unknown, it was eventually discovered after the war (based on the records of the enemy) that Hoather's aircraft had attacked U-666 at 10:28 that morning. The submarine was a Type VIIC U-Boat commanded by Kapitänleutnant Herbert Engel and was proceeding on the surface from its base in L'Orient, France to take up a patrol position in the North Atlantic. Although the U-Boats possessed a formidable anti-aircraft armament, this manoeuvre was fraught with danger for the U-Boat crews and many were lost in this way due to the Allies overwhelming air superiority by this stage of the war.

Jimmy's plan had undoubtedly been to drop depth charges on the surfaced submarine but the U-Boat's anti-aircraft defences prevented an attack on the first run and the aircraft circled to make another attempt. On the second approach, the Halifax was hit on one of the port engines, causing the aircraft to crash into the sea about 500 metres from the submarine, with the loss of all on board. No survivors were sighted by the U-Boat, which continued on patrol but which was not to sink any merchant shipping on this patrol.

Including his time spent with Bomber Command, Jimmy was flying his thirty-fifth operational mission when he was posted missing and must have been very close to being rested by being posted as an instructor to an Operational Training Unit. Sadly, it was not to be and he is today commemorated on Runnymede Memorial, Panel 137.

Whilst we cannot explain why Jimmy was omitted from the club's war memorial, we will be ensuring that his name is added to the Roll of Honour as soon as possible.