



Military History Interest Group U3A Dorking

Newsletter Number 48 July 2024

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Parish Notes

Fellow enthusiasts

Some thirty-five members and guests enjoyed two most stimulating and insightful talks by members at our last meeting.

These moved away from the always popular ones on tactics and strategies of battles to focus on two men whose strategic thinking and decision making were behind some of those battles.

Peter Clarke gave us the story of Field Marshall Alan Brooke whose assertive challenging of Churchill's strategies on many occasions helped direct the war along more effective paths. A summary of Peter's talk is below.

Anthony Goodenough's story of the naval diary of his father, who rose to high rank within The Admiralty, commented on Churchill's 'fake strategies' and controlling behaviour. Anthony also described his family's steps to publish the diary and questioned some missing sections. a summary of his talk is below.

Many will recall James Chatfield's recent talk on the publishing of his father's diary.

A most pleasing aspect of our meeting was the number of attendees who remained behind after the talks to continue their discussions of them.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 1030 6th August, 25 Pine Walk, Great Bookham ,KT23 4AS

Then Barrie Ten Minute Slot, "The Ten Minute Victory. 0016 06.06.44."

I look forward to your stimulating company.

The Unsung Hero of World War Two - Summary

Member Peter Clarke



Winston Churchill is widely regarded as the man who saved the UK from Nazi domination and led the allies to ultimate victory in WW2. There can be little doubt that he was a brilliant politician with tremendous imagination and foresight. However, perhaps arising from his experience as a Major in WW1 he also regarded himself as a good military strategist, which he was not. He often proposed that allied military action should take place in largely irrelevant areas such as Norway and Sumatra. All would have depleted effort in vital areas and achieved little in strategic terms even in the unlikely event that they had been successful. One that was, in the event, carried out was the airborne invasion of Greece, and this turned out to be a total disaster and achieved nothing whatsoever for the allies. A further problem was that he was a very dominant individual and inclined to impose his ideas on others. Had he been allowed to dictate military strategy as he wished it is questionable whether the allies would have actually won WW2. What was needed was someone who not only had a profound understanding military strategy but who also possessed the strength of character to stand up to the inevitable bombardment from Churchill. Generals Wavell and Auckinleck had already suffered this treatment and had been sidelined as a consequence.

Alan Francis Brooke was born near Pau in the Pyrenees in 1883, and became fluent in French. He spent much of the summer of 1915 in reserve but was promoted to Brigade Major, Royal Artillery He was awarded the DSO for his part in the fighting on the Somme in 1916, and was posted as Staff Officer Royal Artillery.

In 1918 he was appointed temporary General Staff Officer I (Lieutenant-Colonel) Royal Artillery at 1st Army HQ where he acquired experience of Long Range Artillery.

In 1919 he was selected to be a student on the first post-war Staff College Course at Camberley, where he gave a first-class lecture without referring to a single note.

In 1929 he was offered and accepted the post of commandant of the School of Artillery at Larkhill, which meant instant promotion to Brigadier. The camp was a messy and muddy place of condemned huts and unmaintained roads. In a very short time he created a well-ordered camp with tree-lined avenues and proper shops.

In May 1939 he was, to his delight, designated to succeed Wavell as Commander-in-Chief Southern Command. However, on 31st August he was required to take up the appointment as Commander of II Corps of the British Expeditionary Force.

On 5th November 1939 AB's worst fears about the inefficiency of the French Army began to crystallize, and following two weeks of withdrawal through successive defensive positions he had formed a poor opinion of the capabilities of the Belgian army to his north. As the BEF withdrew towards the Channel, AB wherever he went, spread confidence. However, on 29th May he was ordered to relinquish command of II Corps and return home for the reforming of new armies. Although he remained in command until his Corps had reached the embarkation perimeter, he felt like a deserter. He handed over command to Montgomery with tears streaming down his cheeks. His Staff later described his handling of his Corps throughout the momentous days between 10th and 29th May 1940 as perfect. On 2nd June he went to London to see what his next duty was to be. When heard it from Dill (CIGS) he later described the moment as his blackest in the war. He was to return to France to form a new BEF. It was clear to him that France was totally beaten at least in so far as the current campaign was concerned and that the mission had no military value and had no possibility of success.

On 11th June he was made Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.



On 12th June AB left England and arrived at Cherbourg on the 13th. On the 14th he met with the French Generals Weygand and Georges and asked where, in addition to the British four, was the remainder of the 11 Divisions needed to defend the 150Km Brittany front. He had not been told that Weygand had already advised the French Government to seek an armistice. He then sent an official message requesting that the Brittany Plan be reconsidered in view of the

fact that Generals Weygand and Georges were agreed that it was absurd. His advice to the CIGS was to stop any plans to send more British troops to France, and to prepare to evacuate the remainder. He was telephoned from 10 Downing Street by Dill (CIGS); Churchill intervened and stated that he had been sent to France to make the French feel that we were supporting them. He replied that it was impossible to make a corpse feel, and that the French Army was dead. Churchill persisted but after a half-hour conversation Churchill agreed and three days later the evacuation from Dunkerque started.

On 20th June he reported to the CIGS and was greeted with an enquiry as to why he had not saved more vehicles and equipment. His priority was to save the soldiers who could form the basis for reconstituted armies. His prescience, decision and moral courage had facilitated the initial evacuation of 160,000 British and allied troops and over 300 guns. Eventually the total reached more than 500,000 men.

His encounters with Churchill were more demanding than any others, especially when they involved late nights at Chequers. One of these was concerned with Churchill's pet project, the invasion of Trondheim in Norway. At midnight on 3rd October 1941 he had received orders to prepare a plan for an attack and be at Chequers that evening to discuss the idea. The logistical problems were unsurmountable, but the crunch came a week later at 10 Downing Street. Churchill was already waiting in the Cabinet Room, and he saw at once from Churchill's face that he was in for a roasting. Churchill started the proceedings by staring hard at him and saying: 'I had instructed you to prepare a detailed plan for the capture of Trondheim. You have instead submitted a masterly treatise on all the difficulties and on all the reasons why this operation should not be carried out.' Churchill then cross-questioned him for two hours on many minor points, accompanied by sarcasm and criticism. Our hero subsequently admitted that was good training for what was to come in later years.

In early August 1942 he went with Churchill to Cairo to discuss the Middle East situation. Churchill was unhappy that there was to be no offensive action until 15th September, and offered him the command of the 8th Army to take over from Auckinleck. Although he would have liked to do so, he realised that, now that he had become accustomed to working with Churchill, his work as CIGS would be much more effective in terms of the overall conduct of the war, largely by exercising a degree of control over Churchill's wilder schemes. He therefore recommended that Montgomery assume command of the 8th Army. Churchill disagreed and Gott was appointed with some misgivings by AB. However, Gott's plane was shot down on 7th August and Montgomery immediately took over, and Auckinleck was effectively sacked.

AB was promoted to Field Marshall and presented with his Field Marshall's Baton by King George VI on 1st March 44. In September 1945 AB was made a Baron, but it was soon decided that he deserved more than that and was made a Viscount in January 1946.

In June 1946 AB retired as CIGS at the age of 63 and was awarded the Order of Merit.

In December 1946 he was made a Knight of the Garter and Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order.

In 1953 he was made Lord High Constable of England.

He died from a heart attack at home in Hampshire on 17th June 1963.



“The Admiralty Diary of Commander Michael G. Goodenough (MGG) RN: 1939-1941”

10-minute talk by member Anthony Goodenough



The manuscript

Found among MGG’s papers on his early death on 31 December 1955. It is a manuscript diary from 12 October 1939 to 20 June 1941 i.e. from shortly after the outbreak of war until just

before the German invasion of Russia in Operation Barbarossa. During this time, MGG was serving, as an RN Commander, on the staff of the Admiralty Plans Division in Whitehall.

Preserved by his widow until her own death in 1997 when it passed to his sons, Anthony (AG) and Simon (SG). Eventually, when retirement gave us the time, we considered what should be done with it in the longer term with a view to reaching a wider readership. We hoped that it might be useful to specialist historians of the period and subject.

Step 1 Typing: Given MGG's handwriting - distinctive but not easy to read, particularly the proper names of people, places, ships and operations - AG typed it all out over a period of years in between other preoccupations. He omitted most family material as well as a few personal remarks on colleagues.

Step 2 Editing: Then, by great good fortune, we happened to consult Professor Patrick Salmon, Chief Historian of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His first academic article had been devoted to the subject of Churchill at the Admiralty in 1939-40. He nobly volunteered to take on the Herculean task of elucidating the proper names mentioned in the diary. He also prepared an introduction.

Step 3 Printing: We then decided to get the result of all this work printed and we found a small printing business in Crediton, Hedgerow Print, who Simon had used for other work. Simon is a publisher and writer by profession - among other things.

Step 4 Distributing: We distributed it to the following, in the hope of reaching an academic and possibly wider audience:

The six Deposit Libraries of the:

British Library,
Bodleian Library,
Cambridge University Library,
Library of Trinity College, Dublin,
National Library of Wales
National Library of Scotland.

And to the:

Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge
Admiralty Librarian
Naval Historical Branch,
HM Naval Base, Portsmouth

Librarian (Special Collections), National Museum of the Royal Navy,
HM Naval Base, Portsmouth

Caird Library, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

Navy Record Society

Professor Andrew Lambert, King's College London

Some examples of the diary (quoted in Introduction)

The diary reveals Michael Goodenough as a young man of firm principles and strong opinions, often forcefully expressed: 'I'm a bolshie, disloyal, insubordinate, and always have been', he wrote in his first entry. He was scathing about Britain's hastily improvised war effort and dismissive of nearly all the senior officers at the Admiralty – most of all, the elderly First Sea Lord, Sir Dudley Pound. 'This is a morgue with the added horror that if you watch them closely they move', he wrote on 18 October 1940.

Here, for instance, is his first encounter with the First Lord on 19 January 1940:

Interesting meeting over Scapa defences. Winston presiding and as member of War Cabinet trying to persuade the Army to reduce number of men. Gorgeous language but wrong. Maj. Gen Lock excellent and did all the talking. Winston shaking his head all the time Lock was arguing. Quite unconvinced but had to give way. . . . Winston's baby complexion misleads. He is not genial. Thin bloodless lips, slant oval eyes, glancing sideways to note the effect of his talk. But technically ignorant and won't realise it.

A year later, on 7 June 1941, MGG was 'deeply depressed by our higher direction' and wrote:

WC is supreme, a dictator in every sphere, his decisions based on the advice of his jackal pack of quacks and not on his constitutional Senior advisers, his strategy still as fake as it has invariably been in the past. The country would not stand another Crete, the Dominions less so. At the moment the people fail to realise WC's intimate responsibility for every act (7 June 1941).

Yet MGG had acknowledged (12 March 1941) that 'Winston has certainly saved us from defeat and I doubt if we can win without him.'

And, as the war went on, life in London becomes increasingly hazardous, culminating on the night of 19 April 1941, when bombs fell on the Admiralty:

Part of the inner wall fell on my already empty bed. The reflection of the flash lit our basement bedroom. Then the dirt and dust of ages mixed with the fumes and smoke to choke and blind. We collected our clothes and groped to the other undamaged half of the basement. Bombs still fell. At 0500 I went out for a walk. Poor battered London. The scars now force themselves on one. In the Admiralty windows broken and rooms wrecked. My room like a mess of porridge and spent the morning sorting belongings and papers from the muck.

A year earlier (i.e. June 1940), at the depths of Britain's fortunes, Goodenough had anticipated the final outcome of the war with remarkable foresight. Over lunch with a US naval officer he had been asked: 'Did I think we would lose[?]'

"I said no, not militarily. But I took the broad view of our object being civilisation, not just this fight. Could we best re-establish civilisation starting now but handicapped by unfavourable peace terms or could we best do it after we had won militarily but when Europe was laid low by starvation, disease and communism. The answer depended on how long the fight went on and that depended on US financial and economic co-operation (28 June 1940)."

The diary is tantalisingly silent on three events in which MGG took part:

- A naval raid which he led, on secondment from the Admiralty, on the Dutch port of Ymuiden from 10 to 15 May 1940 to blow up port installations before German troops arrived. He and his men were lucky to escape across the North Sea afterwards. He was awarded the DSO for this.

- The management of the evacuation from Dunkirk when he was assistant to Admirals Ramsay and Somerville at Dover who masterminded the evacuation from Dover. Included with the printed diary, as an Appendix, is the text of a radio talk given by MGG in June 1941 on the anniversary of the evacuation, at the request of Admiral Ramsay.

- The Atlantic meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt at Placentia Bay in Newfoundland. MGG was a member of the Admiralty team which accompanied Churchill on HMS Prince of Wales in August 1941. MGG's diary stops just before that event.

Diary Web reference

<https://oa.churchillarchives.libnova.com/view/15695/admiralty-diary-of-commander-michael-g-goodenough> (An online copy of the diary is available from this archive link)

MGG's later career

1941 HMS Prince of Wales: on the staff of Admiral Tom Phillips. MGG survived her sinking.

SEAC, Planning Staff, with Admiral Mountbatten in India/Ceylon.

Admiralty, London.

1946 - 1947 HMS Pelican: Palestine patrol.

Admiralty.

1952 - 1954 HMS Newfoundland, Far East.

1954 - 1955 Admiralty: Assistant Chief of Naval Staff, as Rear-Admiral.

31 December 1955: died.

Statement on HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse

Date published 24/05/2023 ¹

The National Museum Royal Navy



- We are distressed and concerned at the apparent vandalism for personal profit of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse. They are designated war graves.
- We are upset at the loss of naval heritage and the impact this has on the understanding of our Royal Navy history.
- What we need is a management strategy for the underwater naval heritage to inform a national approach to the 5000 or so naval wrecks.

On 10th December 1941, the Royal Navy ships HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse were attacked and sunk by aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy, with the loss of 842 men, in what was one of the worst disasters in British naval history.

Their sinking sent shock waves through the country and occurred just days after Pearl Harbour.

The loss shocked the nation and at that time forced the navy to re-evaluate how they had fought for centuries. Now air power was the key to projecting maritime power and today, the Royal Navy's Carrier Strike Group is a legacy of this shift in focus.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill famously recalled in his post-war memoirs: "In all the war, I never received a more direct shock. As I turned over and twisted in bed the

¹ <https://www.nmrn.org.uk/news/statement-hms-prince-wales-and-hms-repulse#:~:text=On%2010th%20December%201941%2C%20the,disasters%20in%20British%20naval%20history.>

full horror of the news sank in upon me. There were no British or American ships in the Indian Ocean or the Pacific except the American survivors of Pearl Harbour, who were hastening back to California. Across this vast expanse of waters, Japan was supreme, and we everywhere were weak and naked.”

The bells of HMS Prince of Wales (still on display) and HMS Repulse (no longer on display) at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Professor Dominic Tweddle, Director General of The National Museum of the Royal Navy said: “Ours is the leading voice for the heritage of the Royal Navy and core to our mission is to memorialise and remember the role that men and women fulfilled in serving their country.

“We are distressed and concerned at the apparent vandalism for personal profit of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse. They are designated war graves. We are upset at the loss of naval heritage and the impact this has on the understanding of our Royal Navy history.

“What we need is a management strategy for the underwater naval heritage so that we can better protect or commemorate these ships. That may include targeted retrieval of objects.

“We want the Royal Navy to develop a policy we can help deliver. If resourced correctly, the existing Royal Navy loss list can be enhanced to be a vital tool to begin to understand, research and manage over 5,000 wrecks before they are lost forever.

“A strategy is vital to determine how to assess and manage these wrecks in the most efficient and effective manner. Above all, we must remember the crews who served on these lost ships and all too often gave their lives in the service of their country”

Newfoundland’s Unknown Soldier The Royal Newfoundland Regiment

Barrie Friend





With so many regiments originating in Britain it may be understandable that the British spend much time researching and describing their tales of success and tragedies on The Western Front and beyond.

Stories of heroism from the small Dominion of Newfoundland, population of just some 240,000 in 1914, are not so widely broadcast and even a significant event associated with The Great War that occurred on 1st July 2024 attracted little mention in the British media.

More than 12,000 volunteers from The Newfoundland Regiment sailed to fight for king and country in Gallipoli, Egypt, France and in Belgium. The first five hundred men sailed for Britain from St John's, Newfoundland on 4th October 1914. Five major sites of the regiment's action can be recognised today on The Trail of The Caribou where a bronze statue of a caribou faces the old German lines at Guedcourt, Monchy - le - Preux, Masnieres, Courtrai and Beaumont Hamel. 3,500 men were wounded or killed in these and other actions.²



² Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador

On 1st July 1916, the first day of The Battle of The Somme, 790 Newfoundland officers and men went into action. 272 lost their lives, 438 were wounded. 710, 90%, of the 790 became casualties in just thirty minutes. A black day for a noble regiment. That evening just 38 men turned up for roll call.

Their site of action is today within The Newfoundland Park a site of pilgrimage for all battlefield tourists at Beaumont Hamel.

At Guedcourt on October 15th, 1916 the Regiment suffered 239 casualties in two days and at Monchy on April 14th 1917 a further 460 casualties. Following their punishing battle at Masnieres, Cambrai, in late November the same year, King George V recognised the Regiment's fighting spirit and sacrifice by uniquely granting the title 'Royal' to it.

Their fighting moved to Belgium in the Hundred Days' Offensive in 1918 and a caribou proudly stands now at Coutrai. Casualties ultimately stripped Newfoundland's ability to maintain the Regiment at full-strength.







In May 2000 the Canadian Unknown Soldier, exhumed from a CWGC Cemetery near Vimy Ridge, was interred in front of the Canadian National War Memorial. Ottawa.

The Canadian government decided to acknowledge within Newfoundland its Regiment's fighting heritage on the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of Newfoundland's National War Memorial.



The Newfoundland Unknown Soldier, exhumed from Monchy le Preux CWGC Cemetery, was returned to St John's and interred, with full military and civic dignity and ceremony, in The National War Memorial on 1st July 2024, Newfoundland's Memorial Day.

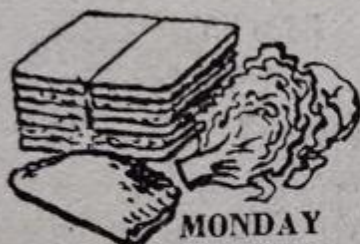


He had come home

FOOD FACTS

Packed Lunches for a whole week

SIX SUGGESTIONS FOR TASTY NOURISHING MEALS



MONDAY

Sandwiches filled with mixture of cold mashed potato, grated cheese, chutney, and chopped fresh parsley.
Lettuce.

Jam turnover.



TUESDAY

Turnover filled with mixture of chopped cooked beans, melted cheese, and chopped parsley; tomato.
Raw cabbage salad in a screw top jar.
Chocolate Pin Wheels.



WEDNESDAY

Potato scones filled with scrambled dried eggs, cooked mixed vegetables and chopped parsley.
Watercress.

Prune dumplings.



THURSDAY

Rissoles made with cooked meat, cooked beans and mashed potato.
Raw spinach and lettuce.
Fruit turnovers.



FRIDAY

Soup.
Sandwiches filled with scrambled dried eggs, mashed potato and chopped fried bacon.
Radishes or tomatoes.
Lettuce.



SATURDAY

Turnover filled with sausage meat, cooked dried peas, herbs, parsley, and chopped leek or onion.
Raw cabbage salad in a screw top jar.
Oatmeal scones and jam.

RATION BOOKS.

There is no General Re-registration, but you will be able to change a retailer *after August 8th.* by applying to the Food Office between August 8th and August 28th. You cannot change your milk retailer.

You may not be able to get all these things where you live, but they are available now in most places. Recipes for any of the above may be had from the Ministry of Food, Portman Square, London, W.1.

THIS IS WEEK I — THE FIRST WEEK OF RATION PERIOD No.1 (July 25th to August 21st)

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD

FOOD FACTS No. 160

PC 300 William Charles Tucker
Special Constable William Douglas Reffell
Surrey Constabulary
Kings Commendation for Brave Conduct
Second World War, Gomshall

Additional research by Jenny Tuffs, Jean Pelham, Henry Pelham and Robert Simonson. Documents from Surrey History centre and Ancestry World War II Civil Defence Gallantry Awards, 1940-1949

Robert Simonson: Below are the entries for William Charles Tucker from the Surrey Constabulary appointments book (ref. 9152/1/2/1/4). There is a file at the Archives described as 'Defence medal recommendations' (ref. CC98/8/6) and it seems to be a record of war service chevrons issued by Surrey Joint Police Force to regular and special constables in 1944 and 1945. The form has the appearance of something left over from the First World War.

There are a few hundred names of Specials (surnames and initials), but oddly I could not see William Douglas Reffell among them. Sections of the book have dividers labelled A-E (names of divisions), but surnames for all letters of the alphabet occur in each section.

SURREY CONSTABULARY William Charles TUCKER

AGE 19 Years in 25th Sept. 1926 HEIGHT 6 feet . inches. COMPLEXION Irish Hair Brown

EYES Blue Eyes MARKS Scar under chin no marks on face

BORN in the Parish of Chobham in the County of Surrey

TRADE Roundman LAST RESIDENCE College Road, Bagshot

BY WHOM LAST EMPLOYED AND WHERE W.C. Burrows, High St. Bagshot

WHAT RELATIVES RESIDING IN SURREY, AND WHERE Bagshot, Woking, Cranleigh

PREVIOUS PUBLIC SERVICE none

LENGTH OF SERVICE none

DATE OF APPOINTMENT 24th April 1927 No. ON COLLAR 200

WHEN SWORN IN AND WHERE 29th April 1927 Guildford

BEFORE WHAT MAGISTRATES Col. Ricardo, C.O. & Major Paul Phillips

WHERE FIRST STATIONED Godalming

Aug 15, 1932	Godalming	To	Cobham
5 Mar 1934	Cobham		Porting
23 Mar 1936	Dorking		Westerly
4 Feb 1938	Westerly		Peaslake
15 June 42	Peaslake		There
2 Aug 46	There		Headquarters (P.D.)
17 Nov 46	Godalming (Gford Stn)		Guildford (S/O) Jan 47
1 July 50	Guildford		Guildford
2 Oct 50			HQ (T. Dep. Gang)

CAUSE AND DATE OF REMOVAL FROM THE FORCE *Pensioned on completion of service*
 CONDUCT DURING SERVICE *exemplary* *24th May 1958*
 DATE OF PARCHMENT CERTIFICATE *24.6.58*

... Denis Smith VSMLE at Godalming 6.3.32

No. of Appointment, **1938.**

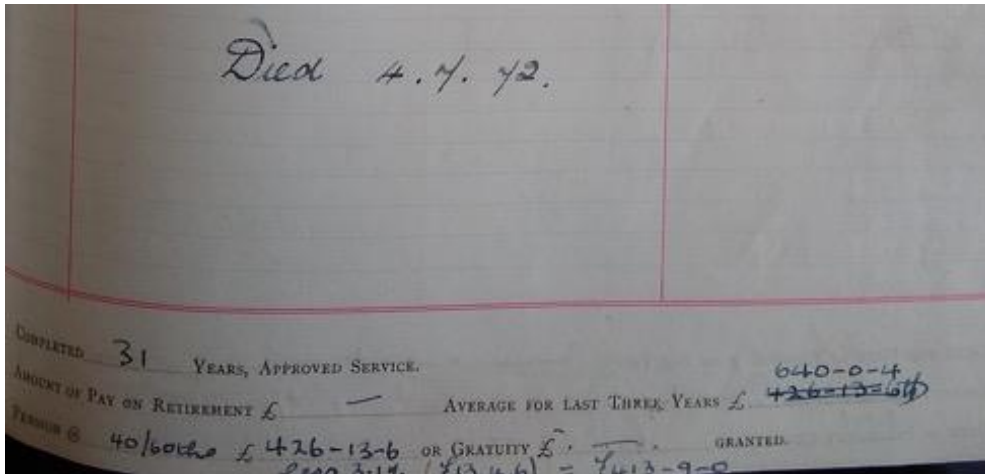
REMARKS.

1938
 1939
 1940
 1941
 1942
 1943
 1944
 1945
 1946
 1947
 1948
 1949
 1950

Passed 3rd Exam. St John Amb Assoc.
 sat for examination for promotion to Sergeant failed
 Ditto - failed
 Ditto - failed
 sat for Examination for Sergeant and failed
 Passed Official Anti-Gas Course
 Commended Lt in first class for bravery, determination & devotion to duty on 19th July 1944 at Bonshall, when with Special Constable 88 Wm D. Raphael, a sergeant to rescue an old lady from a burning house.
 The King in respect of the incident gave orders for the publication of the names of the two officers as having been conspicuous for brave conduct. The Commendation was published in the Supplement to the London Gazette of Sunday, the 16th July 1945.
Defence Medal.

GAVE NOTICE OF WISH TO PAY PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE *Higher* RATE
 ACCEPTED AVERAGING FOR PENSION. *Police Pensions Regs 1949.*

1951 Police Long Service & Good Conduct Medal.
 1956 Pensions Regs. 1956. Pension reduced by 3-1%.



William Charles Tucker
1907 Bagshot – 1972 Godalming

Parents: Father Thomas Tucker
Mother Ellen Tucker

1911 CENSUS Living College Road, Bagshot, Surrey

Living with parents Thomas Tucker aged 33 and Ellen Tucker aged 29.

Son George aged 6.

Son Edward aged 4.

Son – William Charles aged 3.

Daughter Lillian Ivy 14 months

1921 CENSUS Living College Road, Bagshot, Surrey

Living with parents Thomas Tucker aged 43 and Ellen Tucker aged 39.

Sons George Thomas aged 16, Edward James aged 14 **William Charles aged 13** Alec Henry aged 9.

Daughter Lillian Ivy aged 11

Married 6th August 1932 to Doris Emily Veale 26 at Godalming, Surrey

William Charles Tucker's age is shown as 24 occupation Police Constable

1939 Register living Police Cottage, Peaslake, Guildford William Charles Tucker Police Constable. Doris Emily Veale – wife

Electoral Rolls

1945 – 2 Police House, Shere, Guildford

1948 – Leapale Road, Guildford

1951- Chertsey

1953/1954 – Leapale Road, Guildford

1961 – Wolseley Road, Farnham

Died 1972 – Shackstead Lane, Godalming. Probate London.

William Charles Tucker, along with Special Constable William Douglas Reffell was awarded a Civil Defence Gallantry Award for Rescue work when a petrol tank fell from an aircraft and caught fire at “Holme”, Dorking Road, Gomshall, at midday on the 19th July 1944.

Surrey Advertiser 29th July 1944

<p>KILLED BY A PLANE'S PETROL TANK</p> <hr/> <p>RESCUE EFFORTS PRAISED BY CORONER</p> <p>Remains of an auxiliary petrol tank from an Allied aircraft were found near a house which, following an explosion, caught fire in a village in Southern England on Wednesday last week. The fire caused the death of an occupant of the house, Mrs. Hephzibah Elizabeth Charlotte Jane Cox (85), wife of Mr. Alfred Cox, a retired architect.</p> <p>At the inquest on Mrs. Cox on Saturday, James Wontham, who has done jobbing gardening for Mr. and Mrs. Cox, said when leaving the conservatory he said to Mr. Cox, who was about three yards away, "What is this coming?" There was a thud, and Mrs. Cox screamed. Her husband ran from the vinery in the direction of the conservatory and had almost reached it when there was an explosion, and witness saw Mr. Cox in flames. He ran to him and took his hat, which was on fire. Mr. Cox's clothing had caught fire, but the flames went out. Asking where his wife was, he ran to the back of the house, but was unable to get in because of the fire.</p>	<p>William Douglas Reffell, garage proprietor and special constable, said when in the yard at his garage he heard what he thought was a flying bomb coming. He looked up, but could see nothing. It seemed to stop when almost overhead. He heard a swishing noise, and falling in front of him he saw a cylindrical object. There was a slight explosion and a column of smoke. Witness went to the house and found the kitchen well alight. Mr. Cox said his wife was in the house, but witness found her in the conservatory attached to the house, alive but unconscious.</p> <p>P.C. William Charles Tucker, who was on duty in the village, said he heard what he took to be a flying bomb approaching, and as the noise got louder he threw himself to the ground. A thud was followed a few seconds later by a slight explosion, and smoke rose. He cycled to the scene and found the house on fire. Mr. Cox, seriously injured and burned, said his wife was in the kitchen.</p> <p>The constable said he rushed into the kitchen and crawled on the floor searching for Mrs. Cox. Owing to the intense heat he had to come out, and told a man to telephone the N.F.S. and doctor. He and Mr. Reffell then both entered the burning kitchen, where they crawled on hands and knees searching for Mrs. Cox. Satisfied she was not there, they searched the upstairs bedrooms, which were full of smoke. Mr. Reffell went outside and witness had gone back into the kitchen when he heard the former say, "Here she is." Mr. Reffell carried Mrs. Cox from the conservatory. Practically all her clothing was burnt off.</p>
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and there was a head wound.

The Rev. H. J. Colclough, son-in-law of Mrs. Cox, said he thought the police acted very expeditiously.

The Coroner said he felt that himself. For P.C. Tucker, in difficult circumstances of smoke, fire and flame, to repeatedly search the kitchen, where he thought Mrs. Cox was, was very commendable; and Mr. Reffell was likewise to be commended on the way he acted. The Coroner hoped the police superintendent would make a note of what he thought of P.C. Tucker's action.

Flying Officer W. J. R. C. Tuft, R.A.F., who made an inspection soon after the fire, said on a bank at the side of the house he found the remains of an Allied over-load petrol tank. It had come off an Allied plane, and witness thought it might have been fairly full. Impact would cause the petrol to ignite.

Recalled Mr. Reffell said just before he heard an aeroplane about and noticed that the engine was not firing properly.

A pathologist said he thought when the explosion took place Mrs. Cox struck her head on the iron pillar of the conservatory and fell unconscious. She was unconscious when the flames reached her. The cause of death was external superficial burns of the body when lying unconscious from a head injury.

"Accidental death" was the verdict.

MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE

ON CIVIL DEFENCE GALLANTRY AWARDS

NAME:- *William Douglas REFFELL* AGE: *58 yrs.* CASE NO. *2237 B.*

RANK: *Special constable*

PRIVATE ADDRESS: *The School House, Wotton, In. Dorking*

SERVICE: *Special Constabulary* LOCAL AUTHORITY: *Surrey*

TOTAL PERIOD OF SERVICE: *5 yrs.* NORMAL CIVIL OCCUPATION:

PREVIOUS HONOURS OR AWARDS WITH DATES:

BRIEF SUMMARY OF GROUND OF RECOMMENDATION:

As for 2237^A

DATE: *19th July* 1944 TIME: *Midday*

RECOMMENDATION ORIGINATED BY: *Chief Constable, Surrey Joint Police Force*

NO. *12* (S. Eastern) REGION: REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION: *B.E.M. dated 5.12.44.*

DOCUMENTS APPENDED:

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)
- (6)
- (7)
- (8)

As for 2237^A

CASE CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE: *19th January 1945* RECOMMENDATION: *Comm.*

CASE CONSIDERED BY TREASURY COMMITTEE: 194

TREASURY RECOMMENDATION: *Comm.*

AWARD (IF ANY) GAZETTED: *20th February 1945.*

/ADDITIONAL

MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE

ON CIVIL DEFENCE GALLANTRY AWARDS

NAME: - *William Charles TUCKER* AGE: *37 yrs.* CASE NO. *2237-A*

RANK: *Police Constable*

PRIVATE ADDRESS: *The Police Cottage, Shere, Guildford, Surrey*

SERVICE: *Police* LOCAL AUTHORITY: *Surrey*

TOTAL PERIOD OF SERVICE: *17 yrs.* NORMAL CIVIL OCCUPATION: *Policeman*

PREVIOUS HONOURS OR AWARDS WITH DATES:

BRIEF SUMMARY OF GROUND OF RECOMMENDATION:

Rescue work when a petrol tank fell and caught fire at "Holme" Dorking Rd., Tomshill.

DATE: *19th July 1944* TIME: *Monday*

RECOMMENDATION ORIGINATED BY: *Chief Constable, Surrey Joint Police Force*

NO. *12 (S. Gaslow)* REGION: REGIONAL COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION: *B. E. M. dated 5.12.44*

DOCUMENTS APPENDED:

- (1) *Particulars of Action*
- (2) *Statement by Police Constable W. C. Tucker*
- (3) *.. Special Constable W. D. Riffell*
- (4) *.. James Wanham*
- (5) *.. Supt. R. Webb.*
- (6)
- (7)
- (8)

CASE CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE: *19th January 1945.* RECOMMENDATION: *Com.*

CASE CONSIDERED BY TREASURY COMMITTEE: 194

TREASURY RECOMMENDATION: *Com*

AWARD (IF ANY) GAZETTED: *20th February 1945.*

/ADDITIONAL

CASE 2237A

William Charles TUCKER - 37 years

Police Constable

The Police Cottage, Shere, Guildford, Surrey
Police Service - 17 years

Local Authority - Surrey

Civil Occupation - Policeman

Rescue work when a petrol tank fell and caught fire at "Hulmo",
Dorking Road, Gomshall, at Midday on 18th July, 1944.

Recommended by - Chief Constable, Surrey Joint Police Force

No. 12 (South-Eastern) Regional Commissioner recommends - B.E.M. dated 5.12.44.

- Documents
- (1) Particulars of Action
 - (2) Statement by Police Constable W.C. Tucker
 - (3) " " Special Constable W.D. Reffell
 - (4) " " James Workan
 - (5) " " Supt. R. Webb.
 - (6) " " Vivian J. Skinner

CASE CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE: *19/1/* 1945. RECOMMENDATION: *600*

12 2 JAN 1945
TREASURY RECOMMENDATION: *600* GAZETTED: 194 .

CASE 2237B

(b)

William Douglas REFFELL - 58 yrs.

Special Constable

The School House, Wotton, Mr. Dorking.

Special Constabulary Service - 5 years

Local Authority - Surrey

Ground of Recommendation - As for 2237A

Recommended by Chief Constable, Surrey Joint Police Force.

No. 12 (South-Eastern) Regional Commissioner recommends - B.E.M. dated 5.12.44.

Documents - As for 2237A

CASE CONSIDERED BY COMMITTEE: *19/1/* 1945. RECOMMENDATION: *600*

TREASURY RECOMMENDATION: *600* GAZETTED: 194 .

19th February, 1945.

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State to inform you that His Majesty The King has been graciously pleased to give orders for the publication of the names of Police Constable W.C. Tucker and Special Constable W.D. Reffell as having received an expression of Commendation for their services.

The notice will appear in a Supplement to the London Gazette on the evening of Tuesday, 20th February, 1945.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

(sgd.) W. B. Vince.

17 FEB 46 - 59

TUNBRIDGE WELLS FROM HOME SECURITY

S E C R E T

FOLLOWING FOR MR. CHAPMAN AND FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER FROM MISS EMERSON.

GALLANTRY AWARDS AS SET OUT BELOW WILL APPEAR IN LONDON GAZETTE SUPPLEMENT ON THE EVENING OF 20TH FEBRUARY, 1945.

COMMENDATION. W.D. REFFELL AND W.C. TUCKER.

HOME OFFICE WILL NOTIFY REFFELL AND TUCKER /ND CHIEF CONSTABLE.

TOO 1148

HS 1156 HS NJK BS

TV-RD TV-INV

ND
Miss Emerson
Baker

Particulars of Action

At 12.00 p.m. on the 19th July, 1944 a petrol tank fell from an allied aeroplane into the yard at the back of the house known as "Holme", Gosshall. The tank fell approximately 5½ yards from the greenhouse door and approximately 2 yards from the back door, the actual spot being shown with an "X" in the photograph marked "A". All concerned were under the impression that the object falling from the sky was a "Fly" bomb, and there was in fact an explosion following the impact of the tank with the ground. After the impact it seems fumes from the petrol entered the kitchen of the house and ignited, and the fire that followed was very fierce, though short, and the police officers had no reason to think it was other than a substantial one.

Police Constable Tucker was quickly in attendance and he was told that Mrs. Hephjibah Cox, aged 84, was in the kitchen of the house, into which he at once went to search for her. The intense heat however drove him out, but later both he and Special Constable Reffell entered the kitchen and crawled on their hands and knees searching for the old lady. Not finding her there they searched the upstairs bedrooms, which were full of smoke. Reffell then went outside and Tucker back into the kitchen. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Cox was found in the conservatory very badly burned, and the two policemen removed her to a place of safety where she died.

It is difficult to assess the amount of danger to which the two policemen were exposed. The fire was very fierce for a time but was extinguished chiefly with foam extinguishers without the aid of the National Fire Service. Neither officer suffered any injury from fire, but S.C. Reffell sustained a small cut on the palm of his right hand when he forced the conservatory door to rescue Mrs. Cox. No damage by fire was caused to the clothing of S.C. Reffell, and only a scorching of the right shoulder of the tunic was caused to the uniform of P.C. Tucker.

In view however of the circumstances leading up to the incident, such as the belief of Tucker that a flying bomb was coming down, the explosion, the finding in the yard of what he thought was an oil bomb, and then his entering into the blazing kitchen, I respectfully submit that P.C. Tucker showed bravery, determination and initiative and acted in a very gallant manner worthy of consideration for an award of one of the decorations for acts of gallantry during the war which have been instituted by Command of H.M. The King. P.C. Tucker was absent from duty suffering from pneumonia and pleurisy and complications for 13 months between the period 30th December, 1942 and 2nd February, 1944, and serious consideration had to be given to whether he was fit for further police service, and having regard to these facts, which show that he is less fitted to withstand respiratory difficulties than the average constable, I feel that he acted without consideration for his own physical welfare and showed a degree of devotion to duty and self-negation which, having regard to his bodily weakness, make him worthy of the attention of the Authorities. Tucker's chances of incurring serious personal injury were considerable; he must have known the risk he was running and his act was quite definitely beyond his ordinary duty.

Whilst I do not think the action of S.C. Reffell was quite so commendable as that of P.C. Tucker inasmuch as his state of health is more robust, and he did not go into the blazing room until after Tucker had been in once and come out again, nevertheless as all the other circumstances apply in like manner to him I respectfully suggest that he too showed bravery and admirable initiative in assisting the constable, and in so doing revealed a devotion to duty and self-negation worthy of the attention of the Authorities, and I have no hesitation in submitting that the degree of gallantry shown by Reffell makes him also worthy of consideration for an award of one of the decorations for acts of gallantry during the war which have been instituted by Command of H.M. The King.

(Signed) G. Nicholson, Major.

Chief Constable of Surrey
Joint Police.

Copy of Statement by Police Constable William Charles Tucker.

● With reference to the incident and subsequent fire at "Holme", Dorking Road, Gosshill, on Wednesday the 19th July, 1944, I beg to report the courageous action of Special Constable William Douglas BEFFELL.

Mr. Beffell was the third person to arrive at the scene and together, we made another search of the kitchen, where we were given to understand this is where Mrs. Cox would be found. Satisfying ourselves, she was not there, we made a search of the upstairs rooms, this was difficult, owing to dense smoke and fumes, not finding her there, we came downstairs and Mr. Beffell went outside, as he was almost overcome by heat, smoke and fumes. I continued to search the remaining downstairs rooms and it was whilst I was making a third search of the kitchen, that I heard Mr. Beffell shout, "Here she is" and asked for help. I made for the direction from which I heard Mr. Beffell shout and got to the Conservatory, in time to see Mr. Beffell and another, carrying Mrs. Cox to the lawn, where she was left in the care of First Aid personnel.

We again returned to the inside of the house to tackle the fire and with many helpers, this was successfully done and Mr. Beffell left shortly after the arrival of the Fire Brigade.

(Signed) William C. Tucker.

P.C. No. 300.

Copy of Statement by Special Constable William Douglas BEFFELL.

At 12 mid-day on Wednesday the 19th July, 1944, I was standing in my premises (outside) when I heard what appeared to me to be a Flying Bomb, coming from an easterly direction. When I was looking up I was unable to see the machine owing to haze, but the sound of the engine stopped when it appeared to be overhead and I did not hear it restart again. I expected to see an Aircraft or Flying Bomb fall in a northerly direction but heard in front of me a swishing noise and saw a cylindrical object fall in an easterly direction on that side of the Railway embankment.

I realised that this object had fallen within 300 yards from where I stood. There was a pause for some seconds, when there was a minor explosion and a column of black smoke shot up and as smoke continued to rise, I realised that the object had caused a fire. I hurried along the main road in that direction and found a fire was burning at "HOLME", Dorking Road, Gosshill, the residence of Mr. & Mrs. COX.

On the way I was passed by P.C. Tucker and when I reached the house, I heard Mr. Cox say that his wife was inside he was too badly injured to render any help.

At this time, the kitchen and scullery part of the house was well alight and full of smoke and in company with P.C. Tucker we first searched the kitchen thoroughly, this was difficult as there was no light there, other than flames. We then went upstairs to all the rooms, which were full of dense smoke but no trace could be found of Mrs. COX. I left P.C. Tucker searching the other rooms downstairs whilst I went outside to the seat of the fire. I glanced into the damaged Conservatory, which was burning well at the North end. I was horrified to see the body of a woman lying across, west to east, of the Conservatory floor about half way in. The door was locked so I smashed through, calling for assistance and with help of a Mr. Hawkins we removed Mrs. Cox out on to the lawn, terribly burnt and injured, in an unconscious condition.

Mrs. COX, when I found her, was lying doubled up on her left side and her outside clothing burnt off and she herself partly covered with debris. Nurse Heather was then on the scene and attended to both Mr. and Mrs. Cox.

Together with the assistance of P.C. Tucker and other helpers, the fire was got under control before the arrival of the Fire Brigade.

(Signed) William Douglas Beffell.

I was working at "Holme" Gosnell, the residence of Mr. Cox, this morning, starting at 9 a.m. During the morning I had been carrying pot tomato plants from the Vinery to the Conservatory, Mr. Cox was handing me the plants from the Vinery to take to the Conservatory, whilst Mrs. Cox was inside the Conservatory, watering her flower plants.

At about mid-day, I was returning from the Conservatory to the Vinery, which is a distance of twenty yards and when about three yards from Mr. Cox, I said to him, "What's this coming" having heard the sound of a train coming from the sky. At that moment, I heard a thud and then heard Mrs. Cox scream. Mr. Cox ran in the direction of the Conservatory and when he had almost reached it, there was an explosion and I saw Mr. Cox in flames. I ran to him and took his hat from his head, which was on fire, his other clothing had caught fire but had gone out. I could see that he was badly injured. He kept asking where his wife was and he ran to the rear of the house but owing to the fire, he was unable to get into the house, he came back round the front where P.O. Tucker arrived and took charge.

I stayed with Mr. Cox until Nurse Heather arrived and attended him, I then left for my home as I had suffered shock and scorching to my left forearm.

(Signed) J. Wunham.

I was working at "Holme" Gosnell, the residence of Mr. Cox, this morning, starting at 9 a.m. During the morning I had been carrying pot tomato plants from the Vinery to the Conservatory, Mr. Cox was handing me the plants from the Vinery to take to the Conservatory, whilst Mrs. Cox was inside the Conservatory, watering her flower plants.

At about mid-day, I was returning from the Conservatory to the Vinery, which is a distance of twenty yards and when about three yards from Mr. Cox, I said to him, "What's this coming" having heard the sound of a train coming from the sky. At that moment, I heard a thud and then heard Mrs. Cox scream. Mr. Cox ran in the direction of the Conservatory and when he had almost reached it, there was an explosion and I saw Mr. Cox in flames. I ran to him and took his hat from his head, which was on fire, his other clothing had caught fire but had gone out. I could see that he was badly injured. He kept asking where his wife was and he ran to the rear of the house but owing to the fire, he was unable to get into the house, he came back round the front where P.O. Tucker arrived and took charge.

I stayed with Mr. Cox until Nurse Heather arrived and attended him, I then left for my home as I had suffered shock and scorching to my left forearm.

(Signed) J. Wunham.

Copy of Statement by R. NEED.

I beg to report, and bring to your notice, the gallant and commendable conduct of Police Constable No. 300 William Charles Tucker, when an auxiliary petrol tank fell from an aircraft, on to a house at Gosnell, on 19th July, 1944.

The facts of the case, as known to me, are as follows -

At 12.10 p.m., on 19th July, 1944, P.O. Tucker was on duty on the Dorking Road, Gosnell, when he heard something falling from the sky and almost immediately he saw smoke and flames coming from a house known as "Holme", Dorking Road, Gosnell, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Cox.

P.O. Tucker immediately went to the house, where he saw Mr. Cox, who was badly injured, just outside the house. He made him as comfortable as possible and Tucker was told that Mrs. Cox was in the kitchen, which was on fire from burning petrol. Tucker at once went into this room but was unable to find Mrs. Cox and was driven out by the smoke and heat. In spite of this, he went to the room again on two occasions but without success, on the first occasion being joined by Special Constable W.D. Reffell, who assisted Tucker to search all the other rooms in the house but without finding Mrs. Cox. Special Constable Reffell then went outside and P.O. Tucker continued the search in the house, S.C. Reffell eventually finding Mrs. Cox in the greenhouse at the side of the house and, with the assistance of Tucker, she was moved to a place of safety.

I saw the kitchen where the incident took place, some time afterwards, and by appearances I should say the fire for the time was very bad. Apart from P.O. Tucker's action in attempting to rescue Mrs. Cox, he did, with the assistance of S.O. Raffell and some other persons, take steps to get the fire under control. In this, he thought quickly, and utilised the fire extinguishers which were attached to the Fire Post, a short distance from the house. A very good example of "Incident Control", in fact, the fire, with the exception of a gas-main, was put out before the N.F.S. arrived.

Unfortunately, and in spite of all the efforts which were made, Mrs. Cox died shortly after being rescued. The cause of the fire being an auxiliary petrol tank which fell from an Allied aircraft.

(Signed) R. Webb. Superintendent.

Copy of Statement by Temporary Sergeant Vivian J. SKIDGEE.

I beg to report that on the 28th July, 1944, I visited the above address to photograph damage caused by fire from an exploded petrol tank, dropped by an aeroplane, and submit the following observations.

- 1 Photograph "A". The tank fell to the west of the building, about 6 feet from the house, making a crater about 6 feet in diameter and 2 feet deep. It landed in what appeared to have been a concrete yard, the surface of which was about 3 inches thick. The crater can be seen in the foreground of the photograph. It will be observed that all woodwork and trees were scorched and blackened, and there was evidence of the use of a patent fire extinguisher. The house was not seriously damaged structurally, with the exception of the roof of the outhouse, and the glass of the greenhouse. A strong smell of petrol still lingered in the vicinity.
- 2 Photograph "B". This was taken about 30 feet from the spot where the tank fell which can be seen by the square brick pillar, beyond the greenhouse wall, which stands on the edge of the crater (see photograph "A"). This photograph shows the other aspect of the greenhouse from which the deceased was taken. Most of the foliage on the shrubs on the left of the picture had disappeared, all the remainder were brown and lifeless, as were the bushes to the rear of the camera.
- 3 Photograph "C". This shows the inside of the kitchen which is situated approximately at the rear of the outhouse (see photograph "A"). Here again there is no extensive fire damage, although it was obvious that a fire had occurred in the kitchen, as seen from the blackened and cracked ceiling and walls.



World War Two

Police Auxiliary Messenger Service³



Robert Bartlett. Additional research by Jenny Tuffs

3

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Police_Auxiliary_Messengers#:~:text=The%20PAMs%2C%20as%20they%20were,or%20in%20helmets%20during%20raids.

Police Auxiliary Messengers (PAMS) were operational in the UK during World War Two. Lads aged 14 (some say 15) but under eighteen with their own bikes were employed by local police forces with the primary role of taking messages during and after air raids if telephone communication was not practicable. In Surrey they were certainly active in the Reigate Borough Police and Guildford Borough Police areas.

The police during World War Two. Police had a crucial role as part of the civil defence arrangements during World War Two. In addition to their normal duties, they were responsible for enforcement of the blackout restrictions, monitoring enemy aliens, finding and arresting deserters, and dealing with drunken servicemen.⁴ They also attended all air raid incidents and depending on local civil defence arrangements would co-ordinate the response to a bombing. Most forces set up new sub-stations throughout their area.⁵ At the outbreak of War working in the police was not regarded as a reserved occupation, although this changed in 1940, and many young constables joined the military voluntarily or were conscripted; many constables were ex-servicemen with reserve commitments and were called immediately. Police were subject to a freeze on recruiting enhancing their numbers by recalling police pensioners and by increasing the number of special constables (mainly men in reserved occupations). These were supplemented by War Reserve Police who were men over the age of conscription but who were not doing work that was considered essential for the war effort.

Police Auxiliary Messenger Service - Formation

The Home Office had foreseen that communications would become difficult in the event of an air raid when it was likely that telephone communications would be cut either by wires coming down, by a power failure or where a telephone link could not be established. Civil Defence committees set up their own messenger services in 1939, in some cases pressing entire troops of Boy Scouts into service. This enthusiasm had to be tempered at the prospect of boys, and in some cases girls, of 14 out riding bikes with bombs flying around. A UK wide scheme was then set up in 1941 for volunteers over 18 – those under 18 were used post raid only.⁶ The Police however needed their own messengers and from 1940 they took on lads below the age of 18, with their own bikes, (some forces recruited at the age of 14 or 15, others at 16). The PAMs, as they were universally called, were to act as messengers during and after raids. They were issued with uniforms – army surplus dyed black - and wore berets, or tin helmets during raids. They were employed full-time although it is thought that some Police Authorities also took on volunteer PAMs who only worked when the sirens went off.⁷

1939 16th June Dorking and Leatherhead Advertiser - National Service Campaign. From the beginning of the National Service Campaign in January up to the middle of May the figures

⁴ British Civilian Life – Civil Defence and Home Guard – Wearcam.org

⁵ Memories of Thomas Renton Gordon – document deposited at South Tyneside Local History Library

⁶ Put That Light Out – Britain's civil defence services at War – (1939 – 1945) Mike Brown – Sutton Publishing Ltd. - 1999

⁷ BBC The Peoples War – the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service – the PAMs

for the Auxiliary Police Service were -Establishment 254,000, strength at mid-May 234,800, (76,300 enrolled since January) leaving a further requirement of 30,000.

1941 May: Boy “Police Messengers.” The Guildford Borough Police enrolled twelve boys who used their own cycles and were issued with a uniform of blue dungarees, steel or fibre helmets and an arm band “Police Messenger”.⁸



Guildford Borough Police initially issued dungarees and armband

During the early part of the war in Guildford Bert Hacker, later a career constable in the Surrey Constabulary, was a boy messenger⁹ when aged 15 undertaking voluntary duties on two evenings a week and on some weekends. He had a uniform similar to army service dress but dark blue with a belted tunic. There was an oval cloth badge over the left pocket with “PAMS” thereon. Also, the boys were issued with peaked caps, tin helmets and used their own cycles. Duties consisted of standing by at police stations and ARP posts to carry messages in the event of normal methods of communication being put out of action.



Bert on the day he received his Long Service Medal

1941 26th September Surrey Mirror Meeting of Reigate Town Council - Uniforms for Messengers. Subject to approval of the Home Office, authority was given for the expenditure of £191 for provision of 30 uniforms for members of the Special Constabulary Motorcycle Corps and Police Boy Messengers.

⁸ They Guarded Guildford by Richard Ford Surrey 1969 internal publication Surrey Constabulary

⁹ Biographical note from Mr Hacker

1941 31st May Surrey Advertiser At a meeting of Guildford Town Council it was noted that twelve boy cyclists had been enrolled to act as police messengers if communications break down.

PAMS wore a more modern and smart uniform than the police (button up to the collar) with a collar and tie and a jacket recognisable to a later generation of Police Cadets.



This is Messenger Bridger of the Reigate Borough Messenger Service. It seems Bert Hacker of Guildford wore a similar uniform¹⁰

From this press report setting out the huge voluntary hours served in just one borough during a busy stage of the war with many attacks from the air. The PAMS played their part throughout. 1942 January 30: Surrey Mirror: 100,994 Hours Work without Pay: Special Constables in the Borough of Reigate put in 100,994 hours of duty during 1941 equivalent to over thirty years' work on an eight-hour day basis, those at Reigate doing 53,735 hours and at Redhill 47,259 hours. In addition, the police bicycle messengers who have been under the charge of Chief Special Constable Capt. CJ Sutton, have done 6541 hours of duty 2316 at Reigate and 4225 at Redhill. The strength of the force is over 150 despite the fact that 14 members joined HM Forces and four were transferred for full-time duty with the Police War Reserve. Reigate's total was made up of 38,447 by the foot section, 11,607 mobile section, 3681 by motor-cyclists. At Redhill the foot section did 42,996 hours and mobile 4,293. The so called "foot sloggers" duties are from 7pm until 11 in all areas and at police action posts two are on duty from 11pm, until 6 am daily. All ranks assist in the night duty. Practically all are equipped with complete uniform, tunic, trousers, Macintosh and cap and by the end of the month overcoats.

Throughout the "blitz" period. The average number of specials on duty at any one time was 38. Member gave evidence in 46 cases before the magistrates.

Motorcyclists are on duty every evening as are messengers. These are lads aged 15-18 with all expected to turn out in the event of an air raid. They meet once a month for gymnasium and another evening attend practical lectures and exercises, first aid, telephonic communication, ARP and Fire Services, map reading, stirrup pump, drill and fifth column activities.

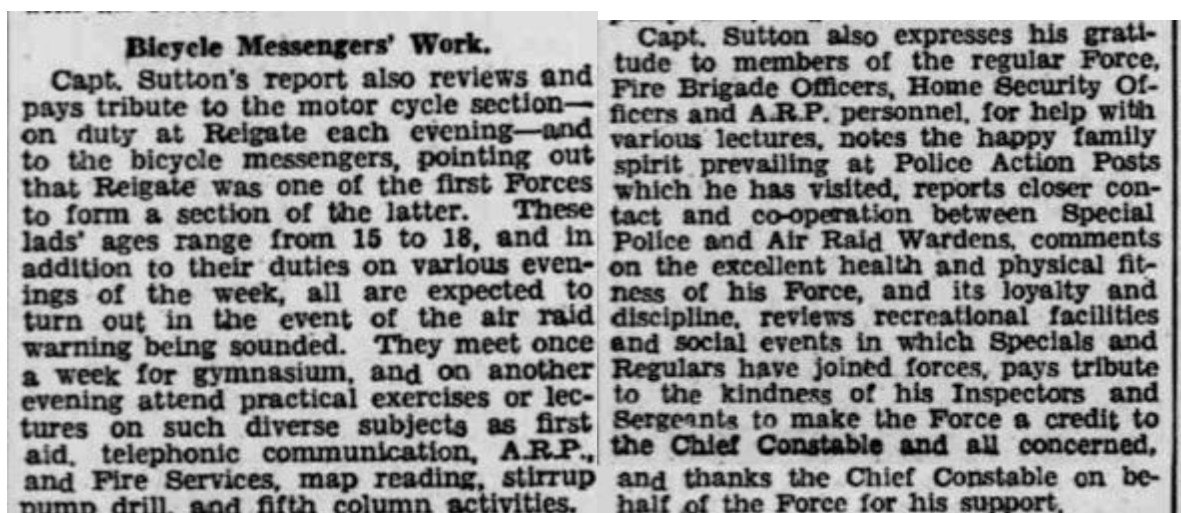
Superintendent Beacher¹¹ gave the following statistics:

Hours worked by Special 78,822 from September 1939 to December 1940; 100,994 hours in 1941; 85,770 1942; 120,431 1943.

Hours worked by Police Messengers: 6541 in 1941; 6690 1942, 5,239 1943¹²

Captain Sutton a member of the Special Constabulary since 1926 when they guarded railway trucks now handed over command of the special constabulary to a distinguished soldier Colonel Waley. Captain Sutton praised the messengers during the war and thought that would be an admirable thing if a special constable's cadet organisation were founded.¹³ (There is no mention of Police Cadets in Surrey Newspapers until 1955 when they were asking for recruits.)¹⁴

January 30, 1942, Surrey Mirror



¹¹ This was Chief Constable Beacher but 1943 wartime merger with county and Guildford Borough Police

¹² Unknown and undated newspaper cutting obviously post war passed to Robert Bartlett by Tony Collman.

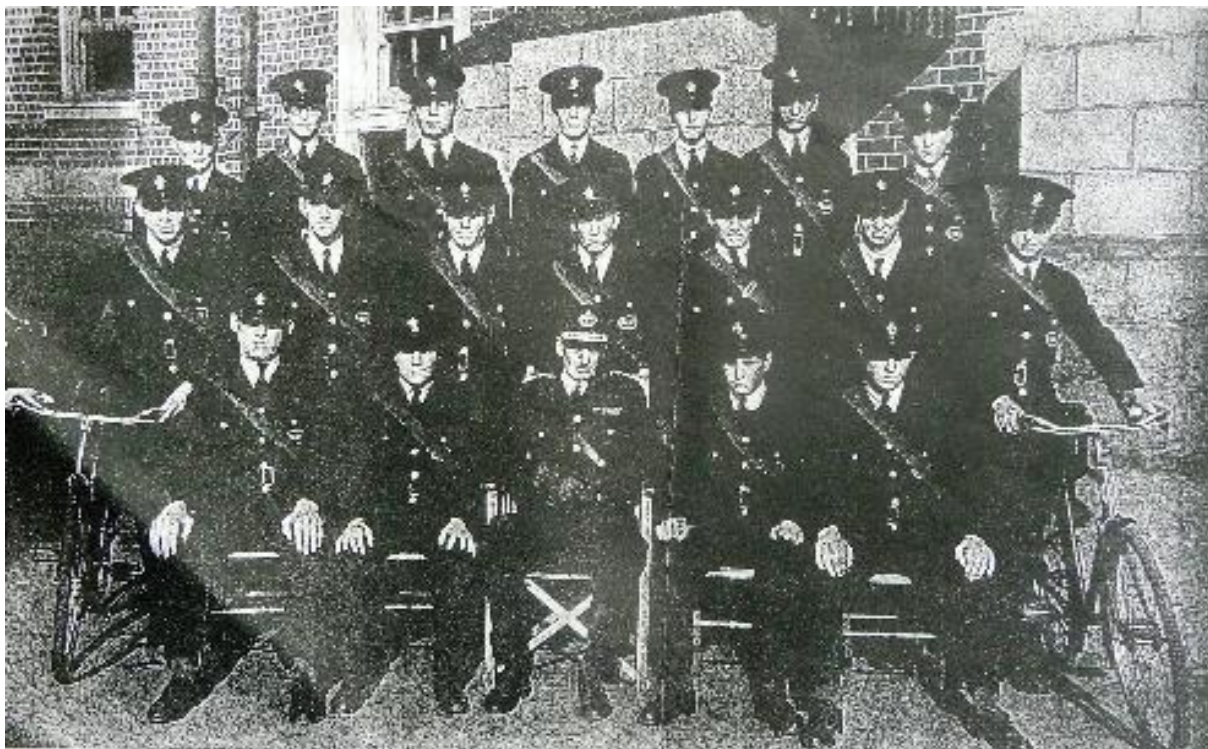
¹³ Unknown and undated newspaper cutting obviously post war passed to Robert Bartlett by Tony Collman.

¹⁴ From Jenny Tuffs March 2023

In a comment on the report, the Chief Constable congratulates the Special Constabulary on its general efficiency, and adds, "I would have been compelled to have a much stronger whole-time paid Police Force if it had not been for the voluntary service of the Special Police; therefore, a considerable saving has been achieved. I appreciate the co-operation and ever-ready assistance given at all times to the regular and auxiliary Police."

1942 30th January Surrey Mirror During 1941 the Police Bicycle Messengers under the charge of Cpt C J Sutton did 6,541 hours of duty in the Borough of Reigate- 2,316 at Reigate and 4,225 at Redhill

1942 7th March Surrey Advertiser – Chertsey- Cadets of the Chertsey Squadron A.T.C. are to receive flying instruction at an R.A.F. Station tomorrow. Members enrolled as Police Messengers are instructed to parade in the morning at Headquarters, when PS Booley is to give a lecture. (Joseph William Booley who later became an Inspector.)



Reigate Borough Police Messengers – believed Captain Sutton head of special constables for the Borough.

Jimmy Bridger I was a police messenger at the town hall, Reigate, during the war - you had to join something then - with Inspector Ted Ayres. Mr Solomons from Reigate Tailors was also a police messenger. They had a canteen and Ted would often get me and the other boys a jacket potato. I was not in the Home Guard; I was a messenger boy for the police. The uniforms badges say 'PAMS' - Police Auxiliary Messenger Service. It was run by Captain Sutton who lived in a house called 'Elmsfield' in Clarendon Road, Redhill. I used to be on the switchboard.

Our action post for the police messengers was at the top of Redstone Hill in a lodge about where Chanctonbury Chase is. I was on duty with Walter Pendered when an air raid was on. Walter and I walked out the back and were standing by Redstone Hollow - there are houses in it now - and we saw a doodlebug coming. It was night and we could hear it and see the red glow from its exhaust. We wondered where it was going when suddenly it spun round - someone said it hit a Barrage balloon cable, but I don't know whether it did or not. Down it went; it nearly knocked us off our feet up there, it was a hell of a bang. The phone was going and I was told to report to the action post in Earlswood Road. I jumped on my bike and sped down Redstone Hollow. I saw an air raid warden coming along and asked where the action post was. He said it was by the waxworks. I told him he was joking. I didn't mind biking a little way, but I wasn't going to London. I didn't know there was a waxworks in Earlswood where they made wax for various uses. Anyway, once I realised where the action post was, I was one of the first messengers there.

As a messenger I went all over the place, to Redhill police station, Reigate police station - there were very few phones in those days people just didn't have them in their homes. Look at the Redhill 'phone numbers, mine at Latty's was 955, Linters was 950, John Roberts shop was 90, they were all under two thousand, and the telephone area was quite large. So, I would get given messages and I would take them wherever was necessary. Several times I went to St. John's School; I never knew why I had to go there. ¹⁵

Walter Pendered was in the police. Lots of local trades' people joined the police. There were WRs (war reserves), TCs (temporary constables) and PCs, (police constables). I think Walter was a WR. All were like extra policeman. Each had his own job to do and all had to do nights as well. Many of the local trade's people joined. It was easier than the Home Guard. I could have gone into the air cadets, army cadets or sea cadets, but as Captain Sutton was a customer in our shop, I thought I'd join the police service as a messenger. A bonus was that it had a smarter uniform. ¹⁶

Reigate 2211 was the 'phone number for Reigate Joint Police Force on the switchboard at Reigate. Of course, it was all disbanded at the end of the war. I've got a letter thanking me for my service and saying that I would be welcome back to continue with my duties, unpaid of course, any time you feel like it. I've a good mind to take the letter down to the police station now and say that I've come back to have a go at the switchboard. ¹⁷

Training PAMs were given a basic training in first aid and in the use of stirrup pumps. They had to know where all the civil defence and Police out-stations were – they would often be

¹⁵ redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/bridger(No longer active)

¹⁶ redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/bridger(No longer active)

¹⁷ redhill-reigate-history.co.uk/bridger(No longer active)

riding their bikes at night in the black out and would not always be able to see such street signs as there were; during or after an air raid, streets could be blocked with rubble and debris.¹⁸

PAMs at work From the first-hand account of those who served as PAMs it seems that in some areas where there was little enemy bombing, e.g. Oxfordshire, that PAMS were used as extra pairs of hands to make up for lack of manpower particularly in the headquarters offices.¹⁹ In areas targeted by the enemy the PAMs filled their primary role of taking messages during air raids but would also help the rescue services when needed. This was clearly the case in Coventry where PAMs proved their worth during the heavy bombing raids. George Frederick Barratt of the Coventry PAMs was awarded a British Empire Medal in June 1941 – his citation reads “Police Messenger Barratt, who was in the lower corridor of a building when it received a direct hit from a H.E. bomb, was blown by the blast for some distance. When he recovered he immediately made his way to report to the Main A.R.P. Control Centre and was sent out with a message. On the way he was blown off his cycle by blast. He remounted and continued his journey but ran into some broken telephone wires and sustained injuries to his neck. He delivered the message and returned with the reply. First aid treatment was obtained for him and although he was badly shaken again he went out through the rain of falling bombs to deliver other vital messages.”²⁰ Another Coventry PAMs' citation for the B.E.M. reads: "Howard George Miles, Police Messenger, Police auxiliary Messenger Service, Coventry. During a severe enemy air attack Police Messenger Miles rendered great assistance by delivering urgent and important messages. He dealt with many incendiary bombs and, at grave risk to himself, helped to rescue a baby who was trapped in the wreckage of a house. Miles showed courage and devotion to duty.”²¹

1942 11 July Surrey Advertiser Woking County School Air Training Corps has well over 100 cadets. The training syllabus keeps the boys busy, but a rapid increase in numerical strength is testimony to the enthusiasm of the cadets, some of whom are joining the Fleet Air Arm and Royal Air Force at the end of the summer term. Cadets form the entire Woking Police messenger service and others are Home Guard and Civil Defence Messengers.

1942 3rd October Surrey Advertiser West Horsley – At a meeting at West Horsley Village Hall convened by the Invasion Committee volunteers were asked to become messengers. The Police agreeing to accept and train young persons from the age of 16 as Police Auxiliary Messengers.

1943 5th February Surrey Mirror In his Annual report at Reigate, the Chief of the Borough Special Police, Captain C.J. Sutton mentioned there were 18 Police cycle messengers with ages ranging from 15-18 who were described as ‘keen and smart’ but the section was continually changing its personnel owing to lads leaving the borough or being called up to the Forces.

¹⁸ BBC The Peoples War – the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service – the PAMs

¹⁹ Fred’s Memories – Episodes in my life – Police duties – Fredsmemories.wordpress.com

²⁰ London Gazette -20 June 1941 p 3491

²¹ London Gazette – 20 June 1941 p3493

During the year 55 lectures had been given to the messengers and practical exercises carried out.

1943 31ST July Surrey Advertiser Among those attending a Youth Rally at Leatherhead were members of the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service (Commanding Officer H J Prickett)

Discontinuation of the service

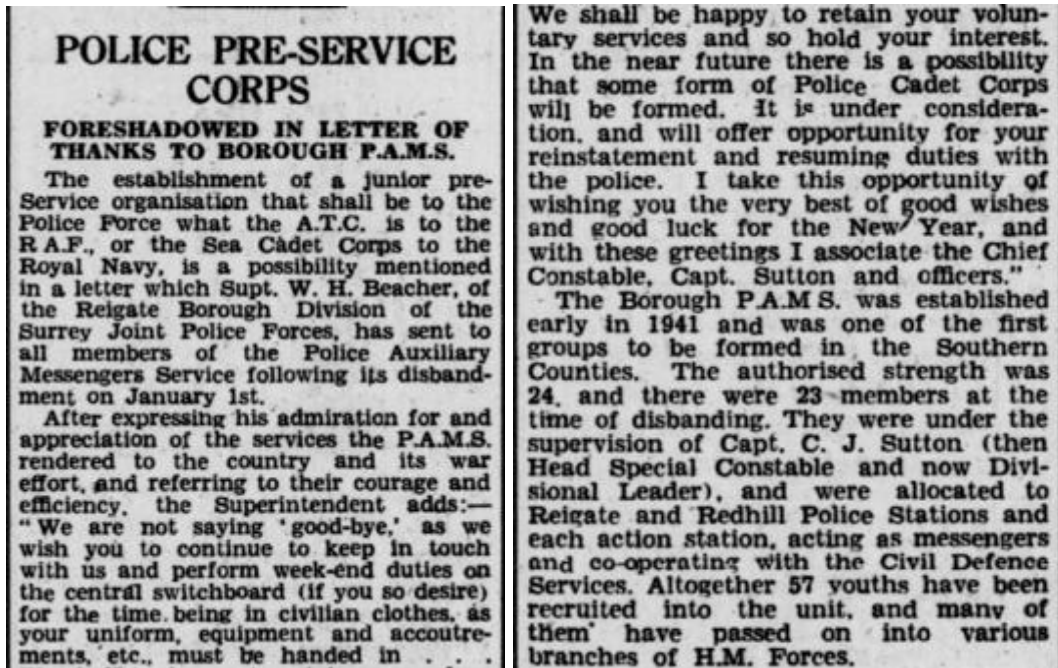
During wartime, police officers and their auxiliary support were not allowed to resign. In June 1945, in response to a question in the House Sir D Somervell, Secretary of State for the Home Department announced the discontinuation of this restriction on PAMS: "Yes, Sir. I am glad to say that the war-time restrictions on the liberty to resign of part-time special constables and part-time members of the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps and the police auxiliary messenger service will come to an end on the 1st July."²² This effectively resulted in the disbandment of the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service and its replacement in the next decade with Police Cadets.



The photo shows His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary with Southampton County Borough Police Chief Constable Frederick Tarry, inspecting young lads who had volunteered to act as Messengers.

1945 12th January Surrey Mirror

²² Hansard - HC Deb 14 June 1945 vol 411 cc1757-81757



1948 24th September Surrey Mirror. At the Reigate Special Constabulary Dinner, Captain Sutton, Chief of the Borough Special Police, said that long before the county began to get busy they had police messengers who did great work and he believed it would be an admirable thing if a Special Constable Cadet organization was founded.

1992 22nd July Leatherhead Advertiser Yesterday's Advertiser. Fifty Years ago - Many people saw for the first time at the Savings Fair the newly created and uniformed Messenger Service which is run in conjunction with the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service in connection with the local Civil Defence Services. Mr. H G Prickett* is the organiser and chief officer of the force and he tells me he is very pleased with the performance the members of the service put up on the day. Apart from routine exercises the members have never before been called upon for duties. On the fair day they had a number to perform, the most important was four outriders who escorted Lady Snowden's car to the ground.

*Mr Prickett was the manager of the Crescent Cinema Leatherhead during the war years.



*Message to the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service
of England and Wales*

Now that the time has come to disband the Police Auxiliary Messenger Service I should like to thank you all, both whole and part-timers, for the loyal and ungrudging service which you have given during the years of war. However long and arduous your duties, or however dangerous, you have responded generously to every call that has been made upon you and in doing so have lived up to the finest traditions of the Police Service. It is a record of which everyone of you has reason to be proud. I am sure that you will bring to your new tasks the same steady and cheerful courage, and the same high sense of public service as that which you have always shown in the discharge of your war-time duties.

D. B. Somerville

HOME OFFICE,
WHITEHALL,
S.W. 1.

June, 1945.

J. W. Bridger

Messenger Bridger June 1945

1954 December 17 Surrey Mirror- Sudden death of Captain Sutton

SUDDEN DEATH OF CAPT. C. J. SUTTON

A life of usefulness in varied spheres has been terminated by the sudden death on Wednesday morning of Capt. C. J. Sutton, of Elmfield, Clarendon-road, Redhill. While on his way to London to carry on his honorary work at the office of Officers' Association in Belgrave-square, he had a heart seizure in the train before it reached Merstham. He was lifted from the compartment on to the platform at that station, and found to be dead. For some years he had suffered from gastric trouble, but it was not known that there was any cardiac complication, and so sudden a death was completely unexpected. He was 68 years of age.

As a young man Capt. Sutton emigrated to Canada, and after working on the land in that Dominion for a while he felt the call to enter the Anglican priesthood, and entered St. John's College in Ontario to prepare for ordination. His college career was interrupted by the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, and he joined the Canadian Army as a cavalryman, afterwards transferring to the Royal Engineers and gaining a commission. After service in France, in the course of which he earned mention in dispatches, he ended his military career with the rank of Captain.

Settling down in this country after the war, Capt. Sutton did not pursue his pre-war project of becoming a clergyman, but threw himself actively into Church work in a lay capacity. For a number of years he was on the staff of the Young Men's Christian Association in Great Russell-street, being especially concerned with work among emigrants, and thereafter he became emigration officer for the Boy Scouts' Association at their headquarters in Buckingham Palace-road. Meanwhile, as long ago as 1926, he had become a Special Constable in the Borough of Reigate, and when the 1939-45 war broke out he was released from his appointment in London to become Chief Special Constable for the Borough. This responsible office he held throughout the war. In recent years he had undertaken the duties of an honorary representative of the Officers' Association, attending at its London office on three or four days each week.

Capt. Sutton found an outlet for his deep religious feeling and his strong desire to influence others for good as a Diocesan lay reader, and in this capacity was a welcome visitor to many of the Churches in the Reigate district and elsewhere in Southwark Diocese. When not so engaged, he was regular in attendance at St. Matthew's, Redhill, and spent much of his leisure time in ministering as a kind of lay chaplain to the residents at St. Anne's, Redhill. A keen cricketer in his day, he was for many years Chairman of the Redhill C.C., and latterly its President. He willingly lent a helping hand to the younger members, and his work for the club was highly valued. He was a Freemason of many years standing, and officiated as Chaplain to the Royal Albert Edward Lodge, of which he was a Past Master.

Capt. Sutton married a daughter of Dr. W. D. Haslam, his wife being a cousin of a former curate at St. John's, Redhill, who afterwards became Bishop of Warrington. A W.V.S. worker during the late war, and an accomplished artist, Mrs. Sutton died early in 1949. There are two sons of the marriage.