

Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent



Lest We Forget

World War 1



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT

B. D. ASH

ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE

30TH SEPTEMBER, 1914 Age 24

Basil Drummond ASH

Basil Drummond Ash was born on 16th May, 1890 at Southport, Queensland, Australia to parents Cyril Alfred Drummond Ash & Hester Elizabeth Ash (nee Alexander).

Cyril D. Ash, B.A., father of Basil Drummond Ash, was listed in 1890, 1891 & 1892 Queensland Post Office Directory under Ecclesiastical for Southport, Queensland, Australia.

The 1901 England Census recorded Basil D. Ash as a 10 year old pupil, boarding at Belle Vu Gardens "Arlington House, Eastern Road, East Brighton, Sussex, England. The Schoolmaster was Robert Burmann.

Basil Drummond Ash joined the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, as a Cadet, 18 Sept. 1905.

Basil Drummond Ash was a Midshipman on H.M.S. *Deadnought* from 5th January, 1907. He was transferred to H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* on 11th January, 1909 then transferred to H.M.S. *Africa* on 21st April, 1909. Acting Sub-Lieutenant Basil Ash was attending courses from 26th April, 1910 until June, 1911. He became Sub-Lieut. 12 Sept. 1910

The 1911 England Census recorded Basil D. Ash as a 20 year old, Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy at the Royal Naval College, Romney Road, Greenwich, London.

Sub-Lieutenant Basil Ash was due to be posted to H.M.S. *Pathfinder* for voyage to Gibraltar & back from 11th August, 1911 but this was cancelled due to him contracting tonsillitis. He was surveyed on 22nd August, 1911 & found to be fit.

Sub-Lieutenant Basil Ash was transferred to H.M.S. *Sappho* on 5th September, 1911 for voyage out then transferred to H.M.S. *Philomel*.

Sub-Lieutenant Basil Ash was promoted to Lieutenant on 1st October, 1912 then transferred in November, 1912 to H.M.S. *Espiegle*.

Basil Drummond Ash gained his Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate with his tests being passed on 24th January, 1914 & his certificate granted on 20th February, 1914. Basil Drummond Ash took his certificate on a Maurice Farman Biplane at The Farman School, Etampes, France.

Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash was transferred to H.M.S. *Pembroke* for additional courses of Instruction at Central Flying School on 27th January, 1914. He was transferred to Royal Naval Air Service & sent for an advanced Course of Instruction at Isle of Grain Air Station on 29th April, 1914.

Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash was transferred to Central Flying School at Isle of Grain Air Station on 9th May, 1914.

Flight Lieutenant Basil D. Ash & Flight Lieutenant Henry D. Vernon were on a scouting expedition in a Short Admiralty 74 Seaplane Serial No. 77 looking for German submarines off the coast of Scotland. They left at 4.15 pm on 29th September, 1914 & failed to return.



Short Admiralty 74 Seaplane

According to Service Register and Register of Deaths and injuries for Royal Navy – Flight Lieutenant Basil D. Ash & Flight Lieutenant Henry D. Vernon “*Went scouting in Seaplane 77 on 29th September, 1914. Not since heard of.*”

Flight Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash & Flight Lieutenant Henry D. Vernon died on or around 29/30th September, 1914. Their bodies were not recovered for burial.

It is believed that Flight Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash was the first Australian airman killed in World War 1.

Newspaper article – *Globe*, London 3 October, 1914:

MISSING NAVAL AIRMEN

UNAVAILING SEARCH IN THE NORTH SEA

A telegram from Kirkwall says it is feared that two aviators belonging to the Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps have been lost in the North Sea.

Lieutenants Vernon and Ash proceeded for a short flight in a hydroplane on Tuesday afternoon, and did not return.

Search was made on Wednesday, but no trace of the aviators can be found. The weather has been stormy.

Flight-Lieutenant Henry D. Vernon was formerly attached to the Naval Flying School, Eastchurch. Flight-Lieutenant Basil D. Ash was attached to the Isle of Grain Air Station.

Article from Army and Navy Gazette – 7 November, 1914:

NAVAL AIRMEN

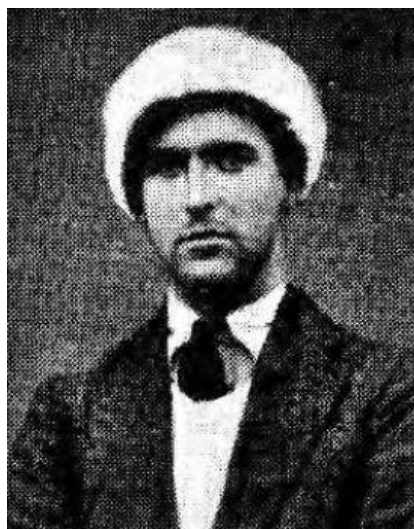
Lieut. H. D. Vernon, who has been missing since Sept. 30, when he left Kirkwall for a seaplane flight, entered the Navy in 1901, and became a Midshipman on June 15, 1903, a sub-Lieutenant on Feb. 15, 1907, and a Lieutenant on Oct. 1, 1909. He retired on April 20, 1910, but was reinstated on the Active List in January, 1913, on being appointed for instruction at the Central Flying School. On April 17, 1913, he was graded a Flying Officer and appointed to the Eastchurch School, where he remained until the outbreak of war, when he was appointed for special service with a group of other naval airmen under Flight-Com. D. A. Oliver.

*Lieut. B. D. Ash, who has also been missing since Sept. 30, entered the Service in 1905, and was rated Midshipman on Jan. 15, 1907. He served in the Dreadnought for two years, and in other battleships, being made a Sub-Lieutenant on May 15, 1910. He took firsts in seamanship and torpedo in his examinations for lieutenant, which grade he reached on Oct. 1, 1912. After a year in the *Espegle* in the East Indies, he joined the Central Flying School in January last, and on April 29 was graded a Flying Officer and attached to the Isle of Grain Air Station, being transferred for special service on Aug. 15.*

Flight Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Flight Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash, aged 24, of Royal Naval Air Service. He was the son of the Rev. Cyril and Hester Elizabeth Ash, of Saxton Vicarage, Tadcaster, Yorks, England. Born at Southport, Queensland. Awarded Naval General Service Medal (Persian Gulf).

From De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1919 (Volume 1):



ASH, BASIL DRUMMOND, Lieut. R.N., and Flight Lieut., R.N.A.S., s. of the Rev. Cyril Alfred Drummond Ash, B.A., Keble College, Oxford, Incumbent of Saxton, Tadcaster, co. York, by his wife, Hester Elizabeth, dau. of the late F. J. Alexander, B.C.S., India; b. Southport, Queensland, Australia, 16 May, 1890; educ. Preparatory School, Arlington House, Brighton and Mr Foster's School, Stubbington, Fareham, Hants; joined the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, as a Cadet, 18 Sept. 1905, and became sub-Lieut. 12 Sept. 1910 and Lieut. 1 Oct. 1912; served as Midshipman in H.M.S. Dreadnought (Flagship of Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman, Home Fleet), Prince of Wales (Flagship of Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg, Atlantic Fleet); and Africa (Capt. Leveson, Home Fleet); sub-lieut. and Lieut. in H.M.S. Philomel and Espiegle, in the Persian Gulf, Oct. 1911, to Nov. 1913; and in the R.N.A.S., 27 Jan. 1914, to 29 Sept. 1914, on which latter day he was lost in Seaplane 77 off the coast of Scotland, while engaged in scouting for German submarines. All his commanding officers testified to his ability as a Naval Officer. He was unm.

Flight Lieutenant Basil Drummond Ash is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.



Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial (Capital Photographer)

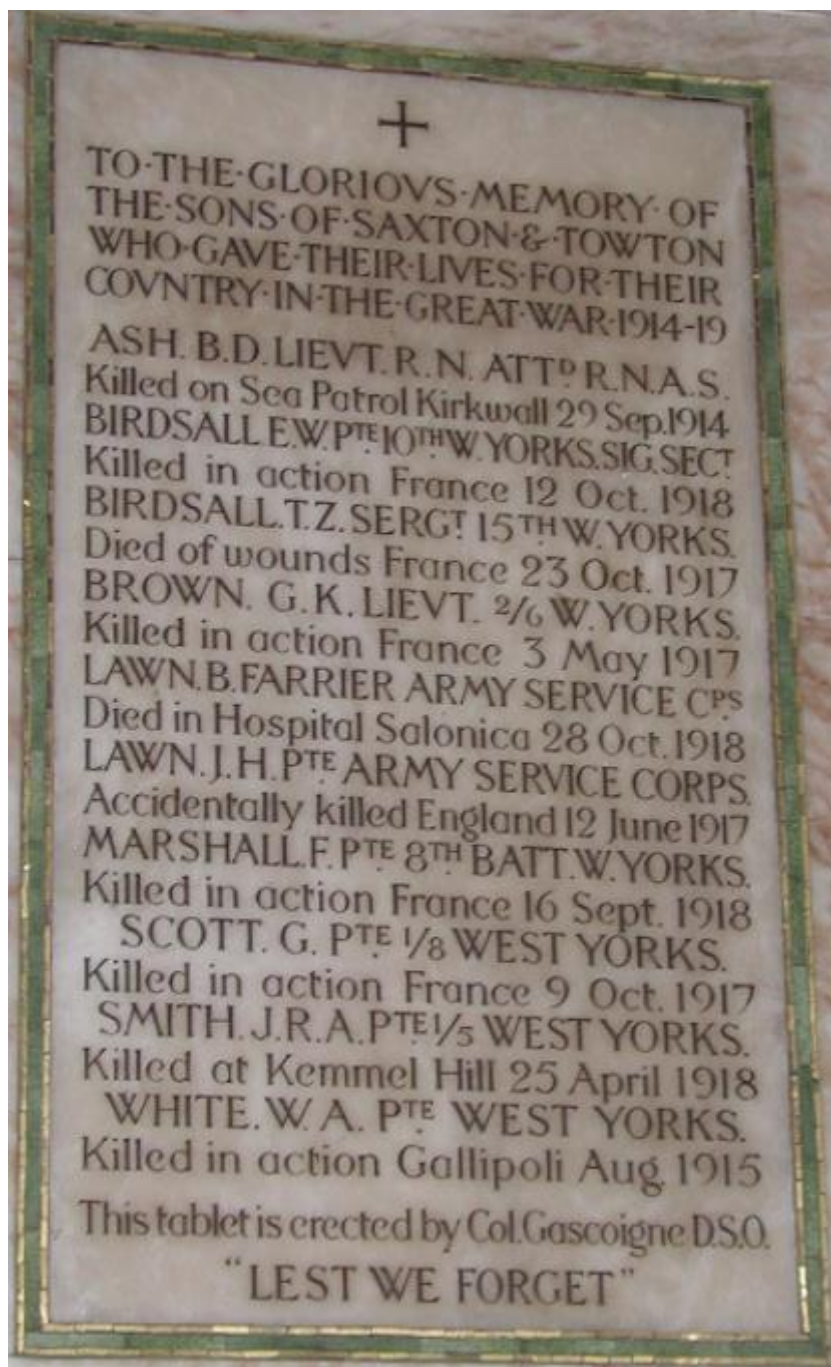
B. D. Ash is remembered on the Saxton & Towton War Memorial, located in churchyard of All Saints Church, Dam Lane, Saxton, Yorkshire, England.



Saxton & Towton War Memorial (Photos by Ian S)



Lieutenant B. D. Ash is also remembered on the Roll of Honour plaque located inside All Saints Church, Dam Lane, Saxton, Yorkshire, England.



All Saints Church Roll of Honour Saxton (Photo by Kevin Cameron)



Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England

Chatham Naval Memorial overlooks the town of Chatham, Kent, England. It commemorates more than 8,500 Royal Navy personnel from World War 1 & over 10,000 Navy personnel from World War 2 who were lost or buried at sea.

After the Armistice, the Naval Authorities and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission were determined to find an appropriate way to commemorate naval personnel who had no grave.

An Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping.

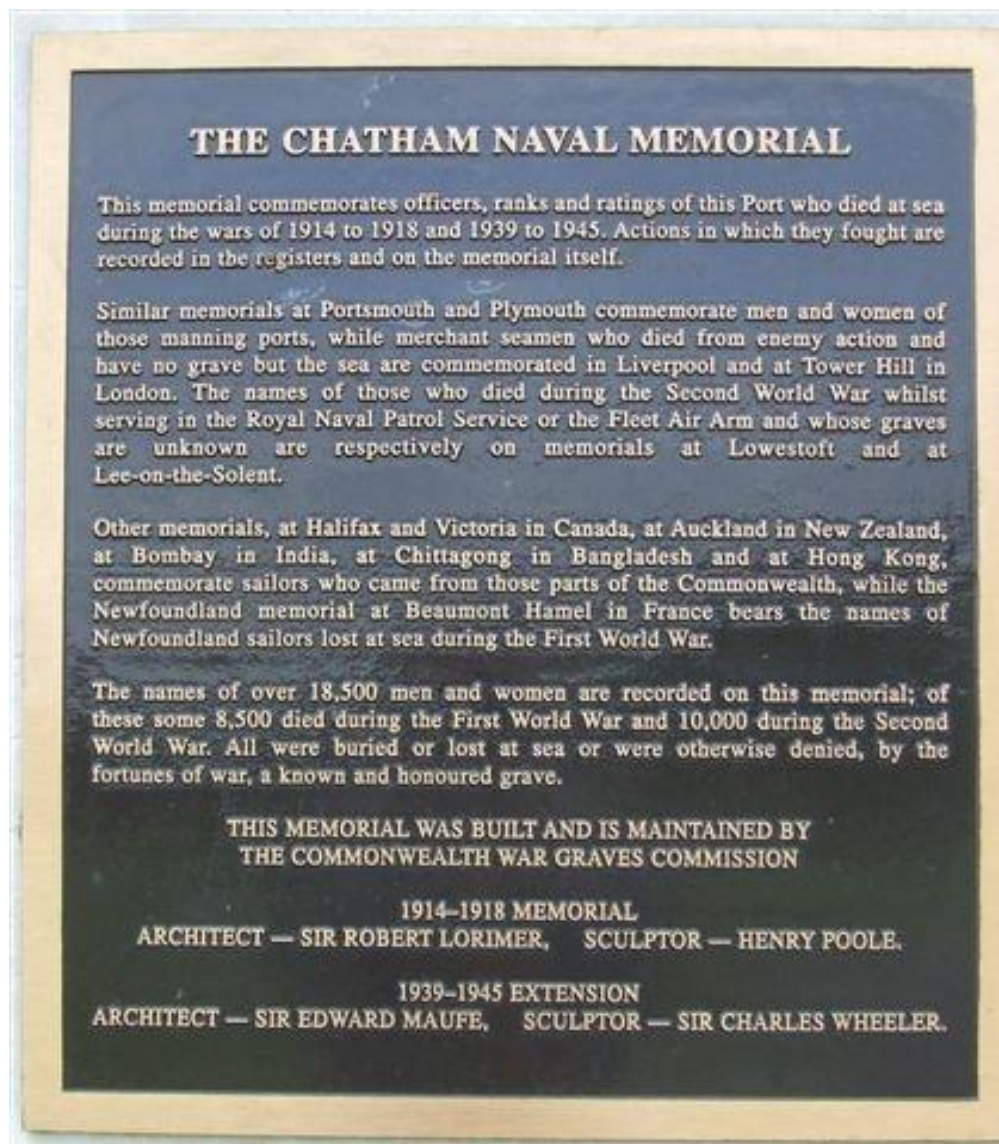
The Chatham Naval Memorial was unveiled by The Prince of Wales, the future Edward VIII, on 26 April 1924.



Chatham Naval Memorial (Photo above by Clem Rutter)



Chatham Naval Memorial (Photo from CWGC)

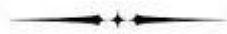


(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)

Flight Lieutenant B. D. Ash is remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England as he has no known grave - Memorial reference 7.



(Photo by Brad Evans)



Research on the Australians remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent, England was completed as part of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's "For Those In Peril" project.

'For Those in Peril' is an initiative to encourage people to research, remember and share local stories of those who left their homes to join the war at sea, whose names are engraved on the Commission's three naval memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham.

The project has been launched to coincide with the opening of the Poppies: Wave at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial, presented by 14-18 NOW: WW1 Centenary Art Commissions, to mark the centenary of the First World War.



Poppies: Wave By Paul Cummins, Artist and Tom Piper, Designer

at CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial

23 August - 19 November, 2017

(Photo from 1418 NOW)

Poppies: Wave, a sweeping arch of bright red poppy heads suspended on towering stalks, was originally seen at the Tower of London as part of the installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red. It can currently be seen at the CWGC Plymouth Naval Memorial.



(Photo from 1418 NOW)