

THE FINE AND RARE SECOND WAR 'DADS ARMY' OR HOME GUARD, GEORGE MEDAL GROUP AWARDED TO A SECTION LEADER VICKERS ARMSTRONG AIRCRAFT FACTORY PROTECTION UNIT FOR HIS GALLANTRY IN THE DISPOSAL OF A 500LB BOMB WHICH HAD FAILED TO EXPLODE AFTER AN ATTACK ON THE HAWKER HURRICANE FACTORY, BROOKLANDS, 27 SEPTEMBER 1940, A GEORGE CROSS BEING AWARDED TO THE OFFICER IN CHARGE. HE WOULD LATER BE KILLED IN ACTION WHILST SERVING WITH THE ROYAL ENGINEERS DURING A 1944 E-BOAT ATTACK IN THE CHANNEL



GEORGE MEDAL GVI, 'SEC. LDR. ALBERT HENRY TILYARD-BURROWS. H.G', 1939-45 STAR, FRANCE AND GERMANY STAR, DEFENCE AND WAR MEDALS.

GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL GVI, CLASP MALAYA '22686246. SPR. D. H. BURROWS. R.E.'

George Medal *London Gazette* 22 January 1941. The recommendation:

Section Leader A. H. TILYARD-BURROWS, VICKERS ARMSTRONG AIRCRAFT FACTORY UNIT, WEYBRIDGE [later part of 10th SURREY (VICKERS ARMSTRONG) BATTALION; then part of 3rd SURREY (WEYBRIDGE) BATTALION]

"On the morning of 21st September 1940 at about 08.30 hours the Vickers Aircraft Factory at Weybridge was attacked by an enemy aircraft. Three bombs were dropped, two of which exploded, doing slight damage. The other, a 500-lb. bomb, penetrated the factory roof, passed through a wall at the end and came to rest on the concrete driveway outside the erecting shed, having failed to explode. As the explosion of the bomb at the position where it rested would have caused considerable damage, its immediate removal was a matter of national importance. Lieutenant J. M. S. Patton, Royal Canadian Engineers, undertook to remove the bomb to a place of comparative safety and Section Leader Tilyard-Burrows together with Volunteers W. J. Avery, E. A. Maslyn and C. E. Chaplin, with

complete disregard of personal safety and having no previous experience of handling unexploded bombs, immediately volunteered to assist.

The bomb was lashed to a sheet of corrugated iron, attached to a truck by wire cable and towed to a crater about 200 yards away where it could do no harm. The task was accomplished in little more than half-an-hour from the time the bomb had fallen. The bomb exploded the following morning. "Throughout the operation these men displayed cool courage of the highest order and contributed largely to the removal of a serious threat to the production of this factory."

Notes: Lieutenant J. M. S. Patton was awarded the George Cross and Captain D. W. C. Cunningham, also of the Royal Canadian Engineers, the George Medal for their gallantry on this occasion (L.G. 13.12.1940).



Albert Henry Tilyard-Burrows of Poplar, London, was born on 12 March 1903. Having previously served in the 6th Battalion Essex Regiment (Territorial Army), at the outbreak of the Second War, he was on reserved occupation and unable to enlist into the army. However, like many other able bodied men on reserved occupation, he joined the Local Defence Volunteers which were formed in May 1940 (renamed Home Guard some months later). Serving as a Section Leader of the 1st Battalion, Vickers Armstrong Aircraft Factory, Brooklands, Weybridge, this was presumably his place of work and therefore being on reserved occupation, couldn't enlist into the Army .

An extremely important and large factory for the war effort, the Vickers Armstrong Factory at Brooklands produced Hawker Hurricanes and Wellington bombers among others and became a key target for the Luftwaffe. So much so, that on 4 September 1940 the factory was bombed resulting in horrendous losses of 83 workers killed and 419 injured:

<https://www.brooklandsmuseum.com/explore/exhibitions/Brooklands-Darkest-Hour>

Aircraft production continued but on 21 September, a lone Junkers Ju88 attacked the Hawker Hurricane factory, two bombs causing slight damage but another 500-pound bomb failed to explode and it was for his bravery in disposing of this bomb, despite having no previous bomb disposal

experience, that Albert Tilyard-Burrows would be awarded Britain's second highest civilian award for gallantry, the George Medal. The following extracted from the above website:

"A messenger from the factory came over to where Patton's team was working (Lieutenant Royal Canadian Engineers, chemical engineering officer), to enquire if there was a bomb disposal section in the company. There was not, but Lieutenant Patton at once undertook to remove the bomb. He attended the scene along with some members of the Home Guard stationed at Brooklands. He decided that the unexploded bomb had to be removed as soon as possible before it damaged the factory and so caused disruption to the manufacturing of Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft.

This operation was particularly hazardous as none of the band of volunteers had any instructions in, or experience of, the handling of bombs and were therefore unable to disarm it or remove the fuse.

About five minutes later Captain Cunnington, who was temporarily in command of the Canadian Engineers, was informed of what had happened and at once went to the scene. On arrival, he found that Lieutenant Patton had ordered a truck and a length of cable and was engaged in getting the bomb onto a sheet of corrugated iron.

Captain Cunnington at once set about clearing a path for the bomb to an old crater about 200 yards away. He then assisted in fastening the cable, which by this time had been fixed to the iron sheet with the bomb on it, to the truck. This done, he drove the truck with the bomb in tow while Patton sat on the tailgate of the lorry to watch over it. They lowered it into the crater and left. The bomb exploded harmlessly the next morning.

Patton was awarded the George Cross for his bravery. This made him the first of what was then known as a 'Colonial' citizen, ever to receive the George Cross. Cunnington and the Vickers Home Guard Section Leader AH Tilyard-Burrows were awarded the George Medal..."

Interestingly in the citation for awards notes that the bombs "*immediate removal was a matter of national importance*", which shows how critical it was to keep the aircraft factory running. Al

Section Leader Tilyard-Burrows was presented with the George Cross by the King at Buckingham Palace on 18 July 1941.

During the Second War, only 13 George Medals were awarded to members of the Home Guard, just 2 of these for bomb disposal. Also, just 3 BEM's were awarded for bomb disposal, one of these, also for 21 September 1940 was sold at Spink, 23 July 2015:

<https://www.spink.com/lot/15002000145>

Note: A section Leader was the equivalent of Sergeant and officially became the latter rank from February 1941

LATER SERVICE

On 4 September 1942, Sergeant Tilyard-Burrows was allowed to attest for the General Service Corps, which was formed to allocate men and women with specialised skills to the correct unit. His attestation form notes him as a Driver 1st Class and that he '*desires eventually to service in the Royal Engineers*'. On the reverse, it additionally lists the Local Defence Volunteers/Home Guard units he served in. This undoubtedly added by Albert:

"1st Battalion Vickers Armstrong Factory Protection

10th Battalion Vickers Armstrong Bomb Disposal (renamed 10th Surrey Battalion Home Guard)

1st East Surrey Battalion Home Guard

53rd East Surrey Battalion Home Guard

3rd East Surrey Battalion Home Guard Dispatch Rider

10th Headquarters Dispatch Rider”



An original letter within the group from the C/O, Royal Engineers Motor Transport Depot, dated 12 April 1943, tells how Tilyard-Burrows was still awaiting a posting but recommending him to the rank of senior NCO. It also tells how if he wished, he could have stayed at that unit as an NCO Driving Instructor. However it seems Tilyard-Burrows declined this, presumably wish a more 'active' service

Having been allocated to a Royal Engineers unit and serving with the rank of Lance Corporal, he was listed as missing in action on 27 July 1944. This was subsequently changed to presumed killed in action on 28 November 1944. Exact details of what happened were revealed to the family by a chance meeting with a fellow soldier *“who happened to visit a pub run by Albert’s brother Sidney, the Abingdon Arms in Kensington which was popular with the troops. He mentioned that Tilyard was an unusual name, he had only come across it once before but it was double barrelled.”* It turned out this soldier had been friends with Albert as they were in the same unit and they had been together when Albert was killed. Apparently, on 27 July 1944, they were aboard the SS Empress Beatrice in the Straights of Dover and Albert, having completed whatever task he had been given, had decided to go for a cup of tea. Unfortunately, at that moment the ship was hit by a torpedo from a E-Boat and Albert was instantly killed. (details from family with group).

Having no known grave, 14404353 Lance Corporal Albert Tilyard-Burrows GM, is commemorated on the Bayeux Memorial. His son, later also joined the Royal Engineers, serving with them in Malaya.

An outstanding website on the Home Guard can be found here:

<https://www.home-guard.org.uk/>

Additional much can be found on the Home Guard and Tilyard-Burrows actions online, including this article published in The Express:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/history/638734/Real-Dad-s-Army-World-War-Two-uk-history-tv>

DRIVER 1/C

National Registration No. CMQB111

CERTIFIED COPY OF ATTESTATION.

No. Name TILYARD-BURROWS Albert Henry *Paints eventually to come in Royal Engineers*
Corps GENERAL SERVICE CORPS

PART I. Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment

1. What is your full name and permanent postal address?	1. <u>Albert Henry</u> (Christian Name) (Surname) <u>TILYARD-BURROWS</u> (Address) <u>91 Gray Court, Wood Wood, West Molesey, Surrey</u>
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born?	2. In the Parish of <u>Poplar</u> In or near the Town of <u>London</u> In the County of <u>London</u>
3. (a) Are you a British Subject? (b) Nationality of parents at their birth.	3. (a) <u>Yes</u> (b) (Father) <u>English</u> (Mother) <u>English</u>
4. What is your trade or calling?	
YOU ARE HEREBY WARNED THAT IF AFTER ENLISTMENT YOU GIVE A FALSE ANSWER TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS YOU WILL BE LIABLE TO PUNISHMENT.	
5. (a) What was your age (in years) last birthday? (b) Day, month and year of birth	5. (a) <u>38</u> (b) <u>12-3-1904</u>
6. (a) Are you married? (b) How many children are dependent upon you?	6. (a) <u>Yes</u> (b) <u>Two</u>
7. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Marines, the Territorial Force (or Army), the Imperial Yeomanry, the Volunteers, the Auxiliary Air Force, the Army Reserve, the Air Force Reserve, the Militia Reserve or any Naval Reserve Force, or any O.T.C. or Cadet Unit? If so, state particulars of all engagements	7. <u>1st Bn Essex Regt T.A.</u> <u>Home Guard</u> <u>10th Bn Surrey</u>
8. Have you truly stated the whole, if any, of your previous service?	8. <u>Yes</u>
9. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?	9. <u>Yes</u>
10. (a) Are you willing to enlist for General Service? (b) Are you willing to serve outside the United Kingdom?	10. (a) <u>Yes</u> (b) <u>Yes</u>
11. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions until the end of the period of embodiment of the Territorial Army, provided His Majesty should so long require your services, which means that you will be required to serve for so long as His Majesty should require your services in connexion with the present emergency for which you are enlisting, and that if you are still serving at the termination of the period of embodiment you will be discharged as soon as your services can be dispensed with thereafter?	11. <u>Yes</u>
12. Are you in receipt of a disability pension?	12. <u>No</u>
13. Have you received a notice paper stating the liabilities you are liable to incur by enlisting and do you understand and are you willing to accept them?	13. <u>Yes</u>

I, Albert Henry Tilyard-Burrows do solemnly declare that the answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made; and that I understand that, should my health fail or should I sustain an injury during military service, I shall not be eligible for consideration for pension or gratuity on account of disability unless the disability is directly attributable to the conditions of Military Service.

Albert H. Tilyard-Burrows SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT
A. T. W. W. W. Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.
I, Albert Henry Tilyard-Burrows swear by Almighty God that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.
I, Captain T. H. Valden do hereby certify that, in my presence, all the foregoing questions were put to the Recruit above-named, that the answers written opposite to them are those which he gave to me, and that he has read and signed the Declaration, and taken the oath at KINGSTON on this 4th day of September 1942.

James Signature of Justice of Peace, Officer, or other person authorised to attest Recruits.
No. of Recruiting Centre.

If any alteration is required of the Attestation, a Justice of the Peace should be requested to witness and countersign the altered document. The Recruit should receive a Certified copy of the Attestation on Army Form E331A.

SOLD WITH THE FOLLOWING ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS:

- 1) Buckingham Palace Investiture admission ticket, dated 13 July 1941
- 2) A photograph of Tilyard-Burrows in uniform wearing his George Medal ribbon and another of his son in Royal Engineers uniform.

- 3) A letter to his brother regarding attendance at Buckingham Palace
- 4) Attestation papers for General Service Corps, dated 4 September 1942, this in 2 pieces but complete
- 5) Royal Engineers Letter, dated 12 April 1943, recommending the rank of senior NCO
- 6) Two named Under-Secretary of State for War medal transmittals
- 7) Buckingham Palace condolence
- 8) 3 1944 dated letters reporting Tilyard-Burrows as missing in action and presumed killed in action.
- 9) Transcript from family regarding E-Boat action etc



Condition GVF or better, court mounted and medals mounted on felt backed card frame, along with a Royal Engineers cap badge and a small name plaque. Additionally sold with a PDF of 1943 publication 'The Home Guard of Britain'. An extremely fine and scarce Home Guard award.

M^{rs} L. B. Lewis
The Queens Hotel
Regents Park R^o
N.W.1.

Sgt. D.H. TILYARD-BURROWS
9 GROVE COURT MOLESEY
SURREY

Dear B,

I have my notice to attend
Buckingham Palace it is on the
18th of July 1941,
if you and mum would like
to come I will get two tickets
I do not know if mum is with
you or not, if not would you
write to her and ask, let
me know as soon as possible
if she and you can come
Elsie cannot go as she has
no small clothes to go in.
I will be in service dress. you
will have to be at the Palace
no later than 10-15. P.M.

Yours of love
your lower Brother
Albert

will it be possible for me
to come up to your place
and sleep the night as
traveling is so bad here
in the mornings, But dont
worry if you cannot manage
it, I will have to get up about 6^{1/2} to
get over to the Palace,
cheerio Albert

78

Buckingham Palace.

Admit one to witness the Investiture.



Clara

Lord Chamberlain



The Under-Secretary of State for War presents his compliments and by Command of the Army Council has the honour to transmit the enclosed Medal granted for service in the war of 1939-45. The Council share your sorrow that

14404353 I/CPL A.H. TILLYARD-BURROWS, G.M.

in respect of whose service it is awarded did not live to receive it.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.

We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation.

George R.I.



The Under-Secretary of State for War presents his compliments and by Command of the Army Council has the honour to transmit the enclosed Awards granted for service in the war of 1939-45.

The Council share your sorrow that 14404353 L/Cpl. BURROWS, A.H in respect of whose service these Awards are granted did not live to receive them.

No. C2.F22.83. Army Form B. 104-83
 (If replying, please quote above No.)

ROYAL ENGINEERS Record Office,
BRIGHTON.
15.8.1944.

SIR OR MADAM,

I regret to have to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office to the effect that (No.) 14404353 (Rank) 4cpl (Name) TILYARD-BURROWS. ALBERT HENRY. (Regiment) ROYAL ENGINEERS. was posted as "missing" on the 27.7.44. IN ACTION AT SEA.

The report that he is missing does not necessarily mean that he has been killed, as he may be a prisoner of war or temporarily separated from his regiment.

Official reports that men are prisoners of war take some time to reach this country, and if he has been captured by the enemy it is probable that unofficial news will reach you first. In that case I am to ask you to forward any postcard or letter received at once to this Office, and it will be returned to you as soon as possible.

Should any further official information be received it will be at once communicated to you.

I am,
 SIR OR MADAM,
 Your obedient Servant,
W. K. Mahimla
 For. Col. Officer in charge of Records.

IMPORTANT.
 Any change of your address should be immediately notified to this Office.
 WL 30051249 400,000 116 9/39 KJL/8312 Op 6263 Form B.104-83/9


No. C1/82/21 Army Form B. 104-82A
 (If replying, please quote above No.)

Royal Engineers Record Office,
 Brighton, Sussex.
28 November 1944

Madam,

It is my painful duty to inform you that, no further news having been received relative to (No.) 14404353 (Rank) Lance Corporal (Name) TILYARD-BURROWS Albert Henry (Regiment) Royal Engineers who has been missing since 27th July 1944, the Army Council have been regretfully constrained to conclude that he is dead, and that his death took place on the 27th July, 1944. Casualty recorded as: (circumst) "Presumed Killed in Action at Sea".

I am to express the sympathy and regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

I am,
 Madam,
 Your obedient Servant,

 Colonel
 Officer in Charge of Records. RE 12.T.O.

(28728) WL 62900/605 25,000 244 A & E.W.Ltd. Op. 698
 60

OFFICER IN CHARGE,
 RECORDS SECTION,
 ROYAL ENGINEERS,
 BRIGHTON.

1440353 Mr. Tilyard-Burrows A.H. (C.M.)

The soldier has been in my Company awaiting posting for the past ten weeks and has proved to be a very good type indeed. He has been employed on building constructional work in this unit being in charge of 15 - 20 tradesmen. He is a good leader and has exceptional initiative. He has often worked long hours beyond his normal time to complete any work he thought might be urgent. He would certainly give very good service as a senior N.C.O.

There is no establishment in my Company for this man. I regret to have to lose him but it is only for his own benefit that I am posting him away from a few weeks hence and he so desired he could have been employed as an N.C.O. Driving Instructor in this unit.

Kebroyd,
 Triangle,
 Fr. Hillier,
 12 April 43

W. K. Mahimla
 Captain R.E.,
 C.O. "Depot" Coy.,
 No. 2 M.T. Depot R.E.

In reply please quote C1/21.

Royal Engineers Record Office,
 Ditchling Road,
 Brighton,
 Sussex.
28 November 1944.

Dear Madam,

No 14404353 L/Cpl Tilyard-Burrows, A.H.

It is with profound regret I have to advise you that the War Office, having failed after enquiries to obtain any evidence to show that your husband is alive, has notified this Office of the decision to presume that he is dead. Enclosed please find the official notification to the effect.

Whilst there is little I could say to comfort you in your sad bereavement, I would like to take this opportunity to convey to you a personal message of sincere sympathy and my regret that it has been found not possible to obtain undoubted evidence as to the fate which overtook your husband.

If there is anything in which you think I may be able to advise you, please do not hesitate to write to me.

Yours faithfully,
W. K. Mahimla
 Colonel
 Officer in Charge of Records.

Mrs. E. G. Tilyard-Burrows,
 9, Grove Court,
 Walton Road,
 Molesey,
 Surrey.

Encl - 1 AFB 104-82A.

1st BATT Victoria Armaments
 10
 1st EAST SURREYS REG H.Q.
 53RD
 3RD
 10th
 H.Q.

Factory Protection
 Bomb Disposal
 Dispatch Rider

Army Form E 531A.

NOTICE to be given to a person at the time of his offering to join the Territorial Army.

(DURATION ENGAGEMENT)

You (Name) William J. ...
 are required to attend forthwith at KINGSTON
 for the purpose of appearing before a Magistrate or Attesting Officer to be attested for His Majesty's Territorial Army, in which you have expressed your willingness to serve.



THE 13 HOME GUARD GEORGE MEDALS. From 'The Home Guard of Britain'

GEORGE MEDAL:



Pte. Samuel John Ferguson. 12th Essex Battalion. George Medal. For giving first aid to a badly injured woman in a wrecked and burning house. He remained with the woman until a stretcher party could reach her. (Since joined *H.M. Forces*. No photograph available.)



Lieutenant Reuben Haigh. 9th Birmingham Battalion. George Medal. For great gallantry during an air raid. Haigh climbed a 200-foot gas container which had been hit and was on fire. With wet sacks and clay he and two of his men extinguished the flames.



Captain Alexander Ballantyne. 2nd Dumbartonshire Btn. George Medal. For courage and devotion to duty in dealing with fires during an air raid in a factory.



Lieutenant Reginald Ernest Cooke. Austin Home Guard. George Medal. For bravery and devotion to duty in connection with bomb disposal.



Sgt. Charles William Lovelace Tozer. 2nd Birmingham Btn. George Medal. For gallantry and devotion to duty in assisting 2nd Lieutenant Brunges, mentioned above.



Sgt. William Thomas Whitlock. L.M.S. Home Guard. George Medal. Although badly injured by a bomb explosion during an air raid, he managed to rescue his Section Leader, who was buried under debris.



Platoon Commander Thomas Simpson. 6th Birmingham Btn. George Medal. For gallantry in rescuing people from an A.R.P. depot that had received a direct hit during an air raid.



2nd Lieutenant James Adamson Leslie. 6th Somerset Btn. George Medal. For great bravery in the rescue of persons trapped in a bombed building, despite great danger from falling masonry and fire.



Pte. David Lazarus. 2nd Btn. "H" Zone. George Medal. For the rescue of people from a wrecked building, during which he received severe injuries.



Section Leader Albert Henry Tilyard-Burrows. Vickers Home Guard. George Medal. For bravery and devotion to duty in connection with bomb disposal.



Pte. Albert William Bailey. B.S.A. Home Guard. George Medal. For great bravery in assisting in the rescue of ten people from a bombed building which was on fire.

Albert H Tilyard-Burrows

On 27th July 1944, Albert was on the Empress Beatrice in the English Channel. He had completed whatever task he had been given and decided to go and have a cup of tea.

Unfortunately, at that moment, the ship was struck by a torpedo launched by an E-Boat, and he was killed instantly, listed as missing in action.

The above details were obtained from a fellow soldier, who happened to visit a pub run by Albert's brother Sidney, the Abingdon Arms in Kensington which was popular with the troops. He mentioned that Tilyard was an unusual name, he had only ever come across it once before, but it was double barrelled. He was in the same regiment as Albert, and they had become friends, sailing together on that fateful day.

As a soldier with no know grave, Albert is commemorated on the Bayeux memorial. His son, Derek, visited the memorial in November 2010. He noticed that there was no mention of Albert's George medal.

On returning home he contacted the war graves commission, who after a few emails and photos, decided this could be put right. They arranged for a tablet to be inserted where his surname was, using a smaller font so that they could fit in the G.M.

Derek returned to France on the 70th anniversary of D-day and was able to see this for himself.

