

## **CODDINGTON**

*Remembering the Fallen of the Second World War*

### **Gunner 1629553 EDWARD HUXLEY**

**5 Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery**

**Died 26 October 1943 aged 32**



Edward (Ted) Huxley was born on 3 June 1911 and lived with his siblings and parents Arthur (born 1877 Hatton near Chester) and Alice Mary (born 1874 Wrexham North Wales). The 1901 and 1911 census showed the Huxley family living in Huxley near Tattenhall, Chester but soon after, when Ted was born, the family had moved to Aldersey Lane, Handley near Chester.

Ted was a chorister at All Saints Church in Handley where he met his future wife Annie Taylor who worked at The Rectory in Handley. Ted and Annie married on 30 October 1935 and had two children Alison Margaret and Edward Harry - they lived at The Lodge, Aldersey Lane, Aldersey, Chester.





*All Saints Church, Handley*



*The Old Rectory, Handley*



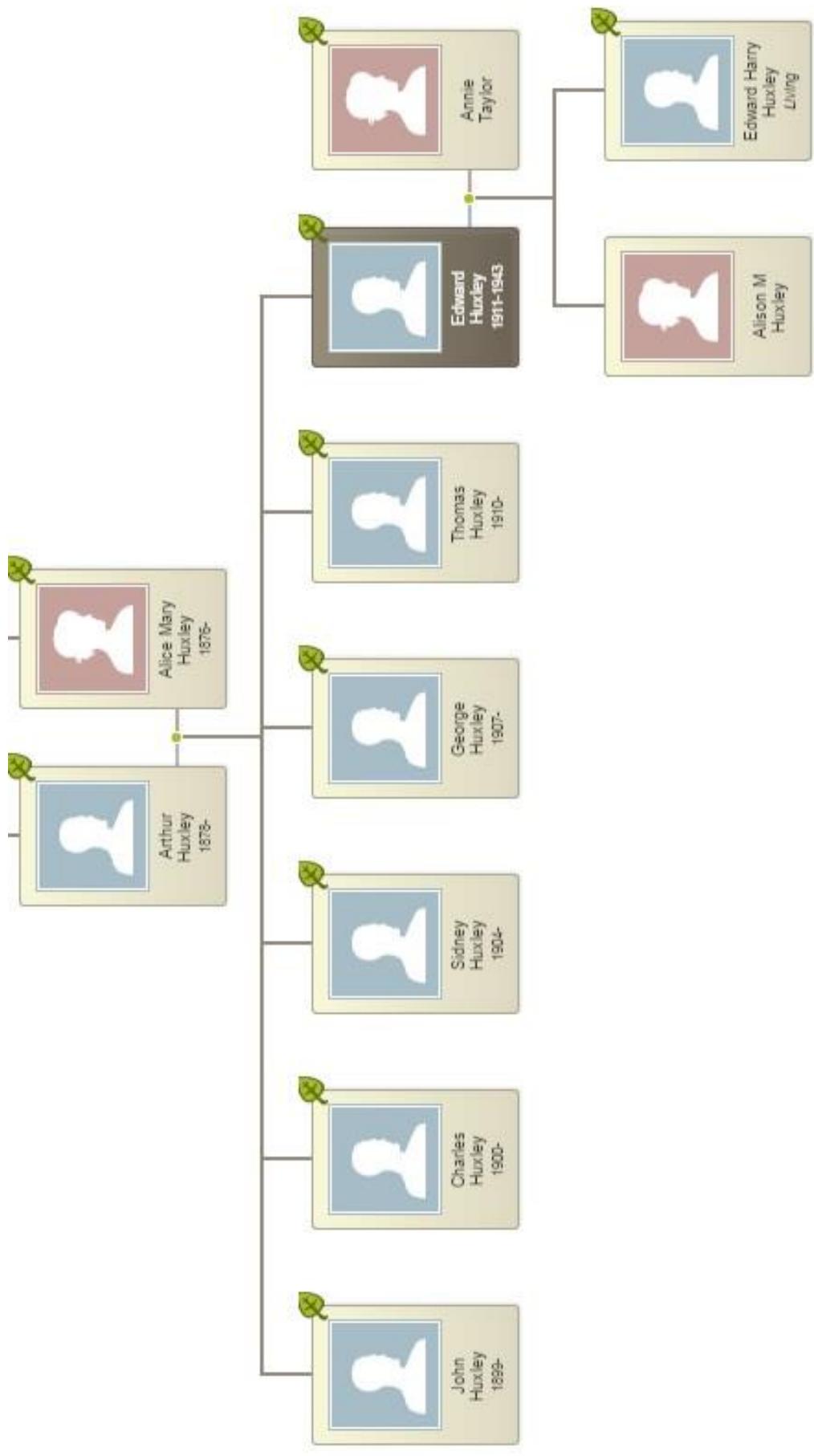
*Top Lodge, Aldersey Lane*



### *The Crook Aldersey*

Ted worked as a gardener for Captain Aldersey at The Cook, Aldersey prior to his call up in 1940.

On 17 October 1940 Ted reported to the Royal Artillery at Kimnel, near Rhyl. He was posted to the Far East and was given a certificate on 9 April 1941 to commemorate the ship "Crossing the Line". One can only wonder how a young man from a small Cheshire village coped with being so far away from his family and in such an alien environment.



Ted was posted as missing on 15 February 1942 when the garrison of Singapore capitulated to the Japanese.

A BBC report from that day follows;

### **1942: Singapore forced to surrender**

British forces in Singapore have surrendered unconditionally to the Japanese seven days after enemy troops first stormed the island. A war correspondent of the Japanese News Agency in Singapore reported that fighting ceased along the entire Malayan front at 2200 local time.

The British and Japanese commanders-in-chief, Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival and Lieutenant-General Yamashita Tomoyuki met in the Ford motor plant at the foot of Bukit Timah Hill to sign the surrender documents.

The British capitulation comes one week after Japanese forces invaded Singapore and only two weeks since their onslaught on the Malay Peninsula forced the British troops' withdrawal to the island.

According to reports from Japanese headquarters the final deal was signed at 1900 local time and the ceasefire came into effect three hours later. Under the terms of the surrender, 1,000 British troops will be left in Singapore city to maintain order until the Japanese Army complete their occupation.

The invasion began under cover of darkness on the night of 8 February when at least 50 boats laden with members of the 5th and 18th Japanese army divisions crossed the narrow Johore Straits, which is all that separates Singapore from the Malay Peninsula. By morning thousands more troops had landed. The well-trained and battle-hardened Japanese forces were also supported by aircraft and tanks.

Although they met some spirited counter-attacks, it was soon clear the island's defence had been poorly planned. In attempting to defend the island's entire coastline, the General Officer Commanding, Lieutenant-General Percival had spread his forces too thinly.

The Allied force consisting of Australian, Malay, Indian and British soldiers, many fresh from defeat on the Malay Peninsula, were also short of weapons and poorly trained and with inadequate air support.

Against them, the Japanese troops moved swiftly across the island. The last line of defence, Singapore City, fell earlier today.

The BBC put it in context;

*Prime Minister Winston Churchill described the fall of Singapore as "the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history".*

*The Japanese claimed to have taken 60,000 Imperial troops in Singapore - 16,000 British, 14,000 Australian and 32,000 Indian soldiers. They also captured a large amount of equipment.*

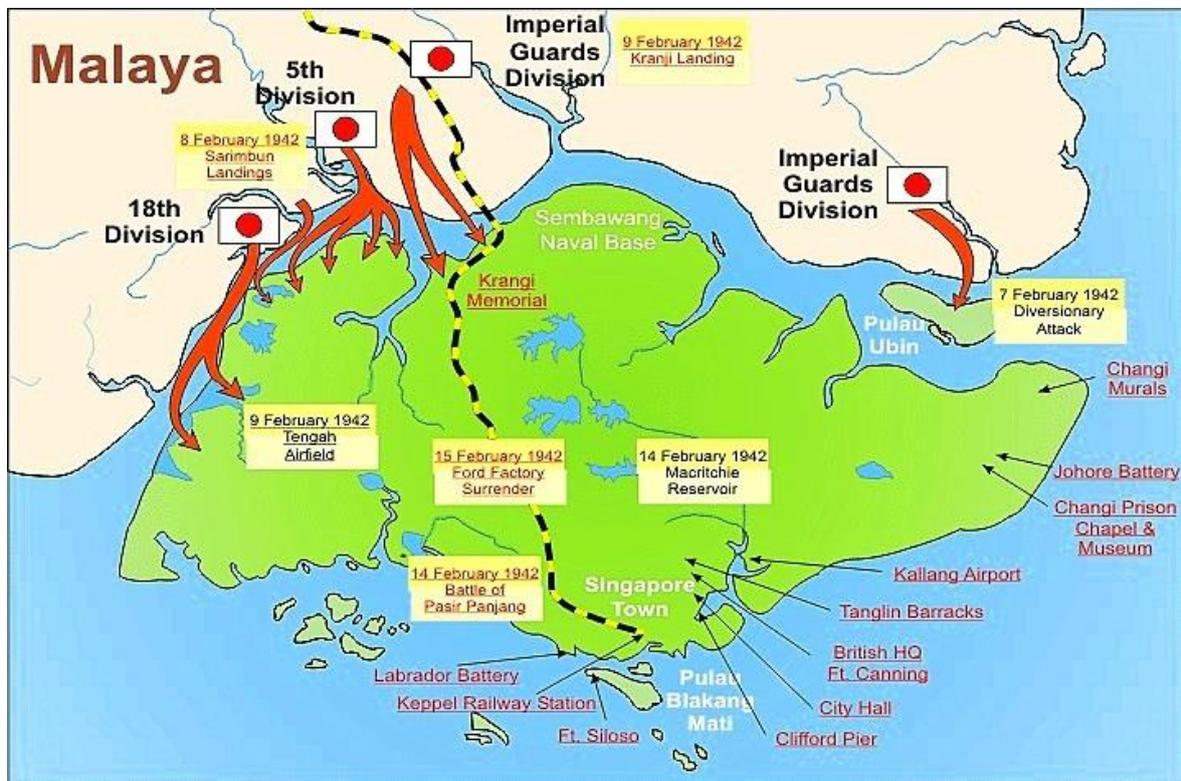
*The high number of prisoners was not surprising as the troops had been ordered to defend Singapore until the last possible moment so no major evacuation had been ordered.*

*Lt-Gen Percival, the British General Officer Commanding, said he had been forced to surrender when the loss of food, water, petrol and ammunition made it impossible to carry on the struggle.*

*The Japanese advance continued, taking US held Guam, Wake Island and the Philippines. The heroic resistance of the US garrison at Corregidor ended on 6 May 1942.*

*In Burma Japanese forces reached the Indian border before pausing for breath.*

*The Japanese advance in the Pacific was only finally halted in June when all four of its aircraft carriers were destroyed by the US in the Battle of Midway. An attempt to invade India from Burma was halted by British and Empire troops in 1944*



*Capitulation of Singapore February 1942*

On 12 October 1943 Annie Huxley was advised that her husband was a prisoner of war and in Japanese hands. She was not advised until 22 November 1945 that he had, in fact, died on 26 October 1943 whilst a prisoner in Thailand. It was a long way from home.



Ted's grave is marked in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand. His grave reference is 2.B.3. The town of Kanchanaburi is 129 kilometres North-West of Bangkok and is best reached by road, along the National Highway which runs north from the capital. Kanchanaburi War Cemetery is situated adjacent to Saeng Chuto Road which is the main road through the town.





It was not long after receiving the awful news that Ted had died, that a memorial service was held at All Saints Church, Handley. The following is a report of the service (kindly provided by the family)

## HANDLEY

**MEMORIAL SERVICE.**—An impressive memorial service for Gnr. Edward Huxley, R.A., was held in the Parish Church on Sunday morning, news of his death in Thailand on Oct. 26th, 1943, having been received during the week by his



widow. He is the only one of the village Servicemen who has not returned. The Rector (the Rev. H. W. Comber) officiated. The church was filled with relatives and friends. Mr. J. Yates was the organist. The hymns, "O Valiant Hearts,"

"Jesu, Lover of my soul" (his and his mother's favourite hymn), "Peace, perfect peace," and "Abide with me," were sung, and special prayers were offered. The Lessons were both taken from the Book of Revelation, XXI., 1-7, and VII., 9-17. The Rector preached a touching sermon, at the end of which he asked the congregation to stand while he said "the Commendation," often used at the graveside at the end of a funeral service.

In Memory of

Gunner

# Edward Huxley

1629553, 5 Searchlight Regt., Royal Artillery who died on 26 October 1943 Age 32

Son of Arthur and Alice Huxley; husband of Annie Huxley. of Aldford. Cheshire.

Remembered with Honour  
Kanchanaburi War Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

**Researched and written**

**by**

**Helen Sadler**

**with the help of the Huxley family**