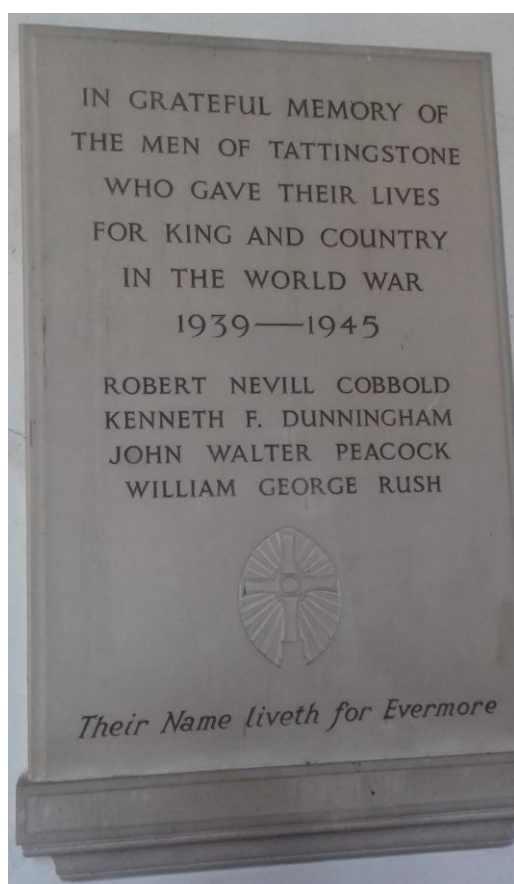


## Tattingstone Remembers ... World War Two



Five men from Tattingstone died fighting for their country in World War Two and as an act of remembrance I plan to write about their lives, their military background and how and where they died. The aim will be to publish each story in the month of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their death. All I know about them so far is:



**William George A Rush**, Able Seaman Royal Navy HM Submarine Traveller, age 27, son of William Edgar and Bella Marion Rush of Rushmere, died 12 December 1942.

**John Walter Peacock**, Captain Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment), age 23, son of Herbert St George and Marguerite Olive Peacock, died 15 October 1943.

**Harold William Columbus**, Signaller Royal Navy HMS Cromarty, age 19, son of William John and Dorothy Lucy Columbus, died 26 October 1943

**Kenneth Frank Dunningham**, Private Royal Army Ordnance Corp, age 33, survived by two children Susan and Brent, died 1 February 1945.

**Robert Nevill Cobbold**, Major in the Welsh Guards, age 39 son of Philip Wyndham Cobbold and Cicely Nevill, husband of Patricia of Tattingstone Place, died 27 May 1944.

Immediately there is a question to be answered – why is Harold Columbus not named on either of the village memorial plaques when the Commonwealth War Graves Commission state that his parents lived in Tattingstone?

Which brings me neatly to another mystery, also about WW2 but this is about an RAF Spitfire that crash landed near Road Farm in 1940.

Sheila Hardy mentions it briefly in her book about Tattingstone “A Village and its People” and I quote “*Great must have been the excitement of the young in particular when a spitfire*

*came down close to Road Farm in 1940. I believe that relics of that aircraft are still to be found in some homes in the village."*

And indeed Russel Abbott has one such relic – a piece of a Spitfire wing in his barn! His father, Robbie, remembers that the aircraft part came into his hands when he purchased Garden House across the road from the main entrance to his farm. A whole wing was roped to the roof inside and he gave it away soon after buying the house. This was just part of it that never went. The house was originally owned by a doctor who had died at the time hence it was up for sale. But can I put any meat on the bones of this story, no I cannot??!!



Without the usual research facilities at The Suffolk Record Office being available partly due to the Covid situation but also because all the archive records are being moved into a new building on the Waterfront, it's been impossible to research newspaper and other archive records this year. However, through the internet I found two experts on the subject of WW2 bombs and aircraft crashes, each taking a slightly different interest on the subject but unfortunately neither had a definitive answer about this Spitfire and this crash.

Photo of the aircraft part and Russel's feet!

Nevertheless there were several incidents in the area and in total between 1940 and 1945 there were almost 30 instances of bombs being dropped on villages in the Shotley Peninsula, two of which landed in Tattingstone in February 1944. Regarding aircraft a Hurricane attacked in error by Spitfires force-landed in Wherstead in 1939; a Henley target tug force-landed at Bentley; a German bomber crashed in Holbrook in 1940 with the loss of all five on board and a USAAF B-24 Liberator bomber force-landed and hit an electric pylon at Holbrook in 1944. But nothing on the mystery Spitfire!

Unless that is, one of the specialists came up with the answer without realising it. He told me about the Henley target tug force landing at Bentley and also commented on the interesting colour of the paint outside the roundel, a faded yellow, and yellow he said was normally only used on two types of aircraft – training aircraft and target tugs! And some western parts of Tattingstone used to be in Bentley before a boundary change!

Hopefully the answer is out there somewhere and maybe this article will jog a distant memory – I'd certainly be very grateful to hear from anyone who can help.

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(with thanks to Russel Abbot, Bob Collis, Ian DB and Sheila Hardy)