

BENJAMIN BUSS

1886 – 1918

Battalion/Regiment: 1st/5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)



Surname/Christian name: Buss, Benjamin

Rank/Service No: Captain

Regiment/Unit: 1st/5th Battalion, The Buffs, East Kent Regiment



Regiment Badge

Date of Death: 4th November 1918

Age: 32

Type of Casualty: Died after an operation necessitated by wounds

Theatre of War: Middle Eastern, Mesopotamian Campaign

Born/Year/Location: Born in 1886 at Elphicks Farm, Horsmonden, Kent.

Enlisted/Attestation: No details available

Son of/Address: Son of Edwin and Ann Buss, nee Weston of Elphicks Farm, Horsmonden.

Husband of: Although he was engaged, he never married

Buried/Commemorated/Memorial: St. Margaret's Churchyard, Horsmonden

Prior Occupation: Farmer

Family History: The Buss family were farmers and came to Horsmonden from Merriment Farm, Hurst Green, Sussex in the mid 1840's, when Benjamin's grandfather, also Benjamin Buss, leased Spelmonden Farm and also nearby Elphicks Farm, which became the family home.

In 1852, the elder Benjamin Buss married Mary Matilda Cheesman at St. Mary's, Salehurst (coincidentally, the same date that Capt. Ben Buss died of his wounds 66 years later).

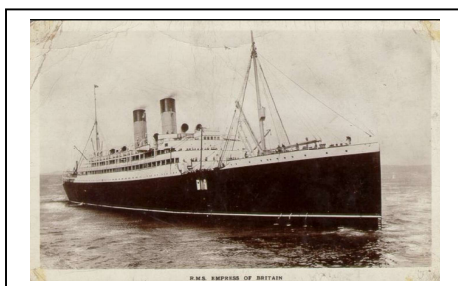
They had 3 sons born at Elphicks, Thomas 1853, Benjamin 1857 and **Edwin** Buss, (Ben's father) in 1859.

Edwin Buss married Ann Weston in Benenden, Kent, in 1885. They lived at Elphicks Farm, Horsmonden, and had 8 children, all born in Horsmonden, Kent.

Benjamin Buss, b.1886, Edwin Buss, b.1887, Mary Muriel Buss, b.1889, **Thomas Weston Buss**, b.1891, Ann Isabel Buss, b.1892, Helen Elizabeth Buss, b.1895, Edith Frances Buss, b.1898, Henry Buss, b.1902

Capt. Benjamin's brother, **Thomas Weston Buss**, also lost his life in the great war and is commemorated on the Horsmonden War Memorial

Benjamin's parents Edwin & Ann (Weston) Buss emigrated to Canada in 1907 with their children, sailing on the "Empress of Britain" from Liverpool to St. Johns, New Brunswick then on to Vancouver, B.C.



Empress of Britain

Siblings: * Ben Buss's closest family will be the descendants of his siblings in Canada, family names in Canada, apart from Buss, may include descendants from his sister's marriages, possibly in the Saanich area or Oak Bay B.C., and include: **George Mankubin Wood**, husband of **Mary Muriel Buss**, **Ann Isabel Buss** married **William Paterson** who died in 1917, her 2nd marriage to **Karl B Spurgin**. **Helen Elizabeth Buss** married a **John Mudie Milligan** and **Edith Frances Buss** married **Reginald Leake Gale**. * Please See footnote 5:-

Their eldest son, **(Capt.) Benjamin**, remained at Elphicks Farm to assist his uncle Benjamin on Elphicks farm, and others, in Horsmonden.

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Relevant Military Record/Diary of Events:

In 1909, Benjamin jnr. joined the 5th Battalion (Weald of Kent) The Buffs Territorials where he was gazetted to 2nd Lieutenant in 1910.

Benjamin Buss jnr. joined D Coy. 5th (Weald of Kent) battalion, East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) Territorial Force, and was gazetted to 2nd Lieut. in 1909. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 25th March 1911.

He tirelessly recruited in the Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Brenchley and Paddock Wood area during the early 1910's, and was the driving force that kept D Company at full strength in the years leading up to the outbreak of war, despite the apathy that was prevalent towards the military at that time.

Education:

Benjamin attended Heath School as a day pupil, 1900 - 1902, when Arthur Morley was Headmaster. He was a good all-round sportsman, playing both cricket and football for both School and Village when time permitted.



Horsmonden Heath School

He attended Tonbridge School and was an Old Tonbridgian, playing rugby at a high level. Ben was named in the squad as a forward for the game against London Irish 'A' played at the Racecourse on Sat. 5th Feb. 1910.

Please see Footnote 4 about Tonbridge School

There are a number of newspaper reports showing details of Benjamin Buss's promotions and activities.

The Kent & Sussex Courier of Fri. 28th Jan 1910 reported the following :-

"Mr. B. Buss jnr., of Elphick's, Horsmonden, has been appointed to a commission in the 5th Batt. (Weald of Kent) The Buffs, Territorials, and will be attached to 'B' Company under Capt. Eric Clarke.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Buss is the son of an old Volunteer officer, Mr. Edwin Buss, who now resides in Canada, having held a commission in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the Buffs."

Kent & Sussex Courier Fri. 26 Aug. 1910. "Church Parade"

"On the morning of Sunday last, there was a church parade of the members of the "D" Company of the 5th Weald of Kent Battalion, The Buffs, under Lieut. B. Buss, headed by the Cranbrook Bugle Band and followed by the members of the Goudhurst Patrol of Scouts, under Scoutmaster Basil Clarke.

The weather was favourable, the Territorials, in their scarlet uniform, looking all the better for their recent training in camp, and a great number of their friends turned out to welcome and encourage the defenders of our hearths and homes."

Kent & Sussex Courier, Fri. 18 Nov. 1910 - "Horsmonden."

Territorial Smoking Concert, Sat. 12th November 1910.

"The men of "D" Company, 5th Buffs, met at The Gun Hotel at nearly full strength, where they were entertained to a very enjoyable social evening.

Mr. J.G. Hodgskin very kindly took the chair and was supported by Lieut. B. Buss, Lieut. G. Wickham, Mr. B. Buss, Mr. B. Spring-Rice and the Rev. H.R.C. Smith-Marriott.

Discussion followed about the Territorial system, and Lieut. Buss briefly dealt with the subject of recruitment.

The services of Mr. Clifford (of Ashford) had been secured who delighted the company with some excellent character songs, recitations, etc.

Songs were also sung by Lieut. Buss, Pte. G. Standen, Pte. C. Waghorn, Pte. F. Bateup, Pte. G. Cheesman, a Pte. of the 16th Lancers and Mr. C. Apps.

Bugler Clifford, of the "H" Ashford Company, most ably presided at the piano.

The evening was brought to a close by the singing of the National Anthem and cheers for the chairman and Lieuts. Buss and Wickham.

London Gazette 12 May 1911

"INFANTRY.- 5th (Weald of Kent) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regt.)
Second Lieutenant Benjamin Buss jnr. to be Lieutenant, 25th May 1911."

In July 1914 Ben was promoted to Captain and appointed to command a Company in the Weald of Kent Territorial Battalion at the outbreak of war (midnight 4th August) shortly after, volunteered for overseas service

London Gazette 21 Aug. 1914

"INFANTRY,- 5th (Weald of Kent) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regt.)
Lieutenant Benjamin Buss jnr. to be Captain, 22nd Aug. 1914."

At Horsmonden Captain Buss was practically the pioneer of the old Territorials, and it was due to his efforts that Horsmonden contributed a fair quota of trained men to help stem the tide at the commencement of the war.

Most people in and around the village will remember our send off to them at the railway station and also Captain Buss's words of farewell, at the conclusion of which many were unable to hide the emotion they felt. This illustrated how highly Capt. Buss was esteemed, and his friends and neighbours are proud in their remembrances of him.

Capt. Buss was always sure of his men, and was much respected by them; in fact, wherever his duties took him he always gained friendship, and it is safe to say that there were few more popular officers than he was in his Regiment.

Benjamin Buss sailed for India with the 1/5th Bn. Weald of Kents in October 1915 and then to Basra in November 1915 as part of the 35th Indian Brigade attached to the 7th (Meerut) Division.

Primarily, this was to protect British oil interests and the oil flowing out of Basra from the Anglo Persian Oil Company via the Persian Gulf.

Medal Roll Index Card

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
B U S S	5 th Buffs (R.F.F.)	Capt	
Benjamin		x M.A.F.	
16 MEER	151	30	Secured 14-1-16
Theatre of War first served: Basrah Date of entry therein: 9.12.15 25/5/22 116/5/2+300 K. 1880			

Correspondence

Address: Mrs E. Buss (mother)
 100 Stenton
 Banickton
 B.C.
 Canada

(L43) H.L. WOODHEAD LONDON 1921 J.P.W. & SONS

According to his Medal Roll Index Card shown above Benjamin entered the war at 'Basrah' on 9th Dec 1915. When the 6th (Poona) Division were besieged by the Ottoman Army in the town of Kut, the 7th Meerut Division were sent to relieve them, before pushing on to take Baghdad.

The Ottoman Army dug themselves in on both banks of the Tigris, in flat open country, at Sheik Sa'ad, south of Kut, to stop the 7th Division reaching the besieged town, and it was during this action Benjamin Buss received a shrapnel wound to the left temple from an enemy field gun as he led his company of Buffs in a final assault on the Ottoman trenches, on or around the 9th January 1916.

Ben was taken to Colaba Hospital, Bombay (Mumbai) where he underwent an operation to remove shrapnel from his brain, which involved the removal of his left eye. He recovered sufficiently enough to enable him to re-join his unit.

On the 9th Sept. 1916 he was appointed to Temporary Major, a rank he relinquished when the 35th Brigade were attached to the newly formed 14th Indian Division in May 1917

London Gazette 20 Oct. 1916
 INFANTRY. - East Kent Regiment.
 Captain B. Buss to be temp. Major, 9th Sep. 1916."

London Gazette 4 May 1917
 INFANTRY. - East Kent Regiment.
 Capt. (temp. Major) B. Buss relinquishes the temporary rank of Major on alteration in posting 23rd Dec. 1916

Benjamin was in Bangalore and whilst there, enlisted into the United Grand Lodge of England Freemasons, at the Southern Brotherhood Lodge, Bangalore, shown on the Freemason Register copy below.

He was initiated on 25th May 1917. The records show he was aged 30, resided in Bangalore, his occupation was simply given as his temporary rank, Major.

The subscription was 7/6 (seven shillings and sixpence) per quarter. Ben was paid up until December 1918 and a note in the January column for 1919 states that he had died.

Southern Brotherhood Lodge.								Bangalore																								
No. 3311 continued								Members																								
R. OF STON.	FADING	BIRTH	SURNAME	CHRISTIAN NAME	AGE	RESIDENCE	PROFESSION	CERTIF. DATE	1910		1911		1912		1913		1914		1915		1916		1917		1918		1919		1920		1921	
									J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A	J	A
Oct 12	Prigg	17	James	John	36	Bangalore	Lawyer	5/6																								
Nov 10	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943

Freemason Register above

At the outbreak of war, Ben Buss immediately volunteered for overseas service

Ben never married, but before he went away to war, he announced his engagement to Mis Phyllis Baker

Kent & Sussex Courier 17th July 1914

"An engagement is announced between Mr. Benjamin Buss, 5th Buffs, of Elphicks, Horsmonden, Kent, eldest son of Mr. Edwin Buss, Victoria, B.C., and Phyllis Yvonne Marian Baker, elder daughter of Mr. Sidney H. Baker of Poulhurst, Brenchley, Kent."

This may have been the reason why his engagement to Phyllis was broken off.

Ironically, had he chosen to marry Phyllis instead of volunteering for overseas service, he would not have taken part in the action at Sheikh Sa'ad which eventually cost him his life. He would not have been called upon for Military service until the May of 1916 when the Military Service Act was amended to include married men. Even then he would have very likely been exempted from joining up as farming was considered a civilian occupation of national importance. The ultimate military man who chose combat over marriage.

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Benjamin was wounded in the action at Sheikh Sa'ad in January 1916, receiving a shrapnel wound to the temple, and underwent an operation at Colabah Hospital, Bombay. India, to remove both the shrapnel and his damaged left eye before being invalided back to England where he recovered enough to return to his unit in January 1917.

His condition gradually deteriorated and he was again sent back to the 3rd Military Hospital in Wandsworth, London in 1918 to undergo a very risky, but necessary operation in to remove the remaining life-threatening pieces of shrapnel from his brain. Sadly, he didn't survive the operation and died of his wounds on the 4th November 1918. His body was taken home to Elphicks at Horsmonden.

He was buried at St. Margaret's, Horsmonden in the South part of churchyard, with full military honours. Four officers and some fifty men of his unit including his old drill Sgt. James Riglatt acted as guards of honour As Captain Buss's coffin was placed on the bier, the men stood at 'present arms'. As they made their way to St. Margaret's, the military preceded the cortege with arms reversed. At the churchyard the men lined up on each side with reversed arms.

The Rev. Cheesman, a cousin of Benjamin, assisted by the Rev. H.C. Smith-Marriott, read the burial service, at the conclusion of which, the firing party of some fifty rifles fired three volleys over the grave, and the "Last Post" was sounded.

Hundreds of Horsmonden villagers turned out to pay their respects to this popular local man.

Besides the immediate mourners present were Messrs. J.G. Hodgskin, G.P. Hinds, H. Manwaring, G. Manwaring, S.T. Manwaring, W.A. Dives, Mr. Le May, F.E. Bound, E. Seal, F. Larkin, Miss Austen, a number of farm employees and many more.

About forty of the Horsmonden and Goudhurst Platoon of Volunteers were also present under Capt. Morley, Lieut. Nolder and 2nd Lieut. C.W. Noakes.

The Captain's old sergeant, Sgt. Riglatt, who had been at his right hand for some years, performed his last sad duties at the graveside and sung Ben's favourite hymn, "For All Angels".

Ben was awarded the 1915 Star, British War and Victory Medals which were sent to his mother, Mrs. E. Buss, Cottenden, Saanichton, British Columbia, Canada.

His war gratuity and outstanding service pay was sent to his Uncle Benjamin at Elphicks who forwarded to his mother Ann in Canada, as well as the money in Ben's Will.

Ben's grave at St. Margaret's Churchyard, Horsmonden, is registered as a Commonwealth War Grave. Att'd PDF) CWG Certificate

**Kentish Express issue, Saturday, 16th November, 1918.
Death of Captain B. Buss - Military Funeral at Horsmonden**

The death occurred at No. 3 General Hospital, Wandsworth, S.W., on the 4th instant, following an operation for wounds received in Mesopotamia in January 1916, of Captain B. Buss, 1/5th Buffs.

The deceased officer, who was the son of Mr. Edwin Buss and Mrs. Buss, of Victoria B.C., joined the Territorials in 1909 as 2nd Lieut., and was instrumental in raising his Company to full strength in spite of the general apathy concerning military affairs existing at that time.

He volunteered for foreign service immediately on the outbreak of war in 1914 and was ordered to India for which destination he sailed with his regiment in October that year. He was engaged in the battle of Sheikh Saad, which resulted in the loss of his left eye and other serious head wounds.

He was invalided home soon after, but rejoined and was appointed temporary major, being sent out to India again in January, 1917, with a draught of infantry battalions. Ultimately, he returned to Mesopotamia to rejoin his old regiment, and was present at the taking of Baghdad, and was also engaged in many battles and skirmishes with the Turks to the north of this ancient citadel.

The body was brought to his birthplace, Elphicks, Horsmonden, on Thursday, the 7th instant, and the funeral, with full military honours, took place at St. Margaret's Church on the following day.....

Continued.
Kentish Express issue, Saturday, 16th November, 1918.
Death of Captain B. Buss - Military Funeral at Horsmonden

The mourners included –

Mr Edwin Buss, brother, Mr. Benjamin Buss snr., uncle, Mr. P. and Miss Weston, uncle and aunt, Mr. W. G. and Miss Buss.

Captain A. E. Cheesman, Royal Engineers and 2nd Lieut T. B. Cheesman.

Amongst the general congregation were noticed:-

The Rev. H. F. S. Marriott (rector), Mrs. Mears, Miss Austen, Miss Ayers, Miss Gregory, Miss Butler, Messrs. C. Colman, E. G. Levett, J. G. Hodgskin, E. Clements, W. K. E. Winterton, H. B. Wickham, M. A. Dines, W. J. Noakes, C. W. Noakes, T. Nicolson, J. Beach, J. Goldsmith, H. Goldsmith, J. Button, T. King, E. Seale, F. Bound, F. Southon, G. Lambert, F. Larkin, G. P. Hinds, M. T. Hillier, Guy Manwaring, H. Manwaring, J. Crouch, S. Jeans, Ed. Le May, W. Hoadley, J. Fielder, the employees from Elphicks, Limes Heath and Hazel Street farms, and many others.

The service was conducted by the Rev. H. C. Smith Marriott, of Horsmonden, and the Rev. R. P. E. Cheesman, of Salford, Surrey.

The inscription on the coffin which was draped with the Union Jack and borne to the church on a gun carriage preceded by a firing party from Tonbridge under the command of Captain Lloyd, was as follows:

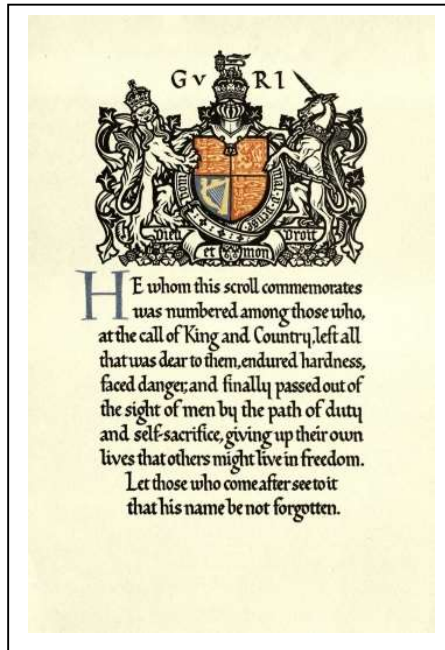
Captain Benjamin Buss, 1/5th Buffs, East Kent Regiment, died 4th November, 1918, aged 32.

Other officers present included Major E. Clarke, Captain F. S. Flower, Lieutenant C. A. H. Wood, Lieutenant C. Searles, 2nd Lieutenant W. Thornton and Captain Harris, Army Service Corps.

The Buss family erected a special gravestone in St. Margaret's churchyard, Horsmonden, which is registered as an official Commonwealth War Grave.

His medals and plaque were sent to his mother in Canada and hopefully are still treasured by the Buss descendants.

**Medals Received:
1914--15 Star, Victory and British War Medals, Plaque and Memorial Scroll etc**



Benjamins British War and Victory Medals, Memorial Scroll and Memorial Plaque (Death Penny) which were sent to his mother Ann, in Saanich B. C. Canada

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United Kingdom War Memorials.

Horsmonden War Memorial



1922

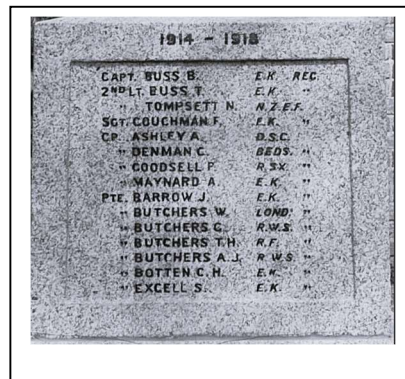


Photo of respective part of WM



Present Day



2

Oak Memorial Plaque

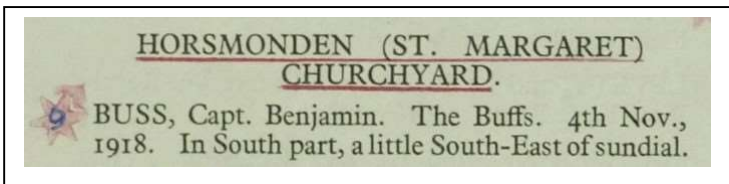
Capt. Benjamin Buss shown left block, row 2, no. 3



St Margaret's Church Memorial Scroll

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CWGC Grave Registration Documents



GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM										
Name of Cemetery Horsmonden (St. Margaret's) Churchyard						Command EASTERN		Report Number 120.		
Parish Horsmonden						Schedule Number 1.		Category of Graves (d)		
County KENT.						Date of Death 4.11.18.		Remarks		
Dist.	Regt. No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Pla	Row	Grave	Type of Material	Type of Grave	Remarks
East Kent.		Buss,	Capt. P.	4.11.18.		1.	F.F.	Fr.		

SCHEDULE "A" FORM									
REGIMENTAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION					NAME OF CEMETERY				
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) OF REGIMENTAL INSPECTORS					REGIMENTAL (OR PARISH) INSPECTOR				
TO THIS REPORT IS ATTACHED					HORSMONDEN, KENT.				
OUTFITTERS LIST (B) REGIMENTAL USES					HORSMONDEN, KENT.				
AND					HORSMONDEN, KENT.				
OTHER INFORMATION TO BE SUPPLIED WITH THIS REPORT					TO BE SUPPLIED ON FOOT OF				
AND					GRAVES (SEE FORM 187A)				
AND					AND				
AND					AND				
1st line	2nd line	3rd line	4th line	Centre of Stone	to be situated on foot of headstone or base of ground	to be situated on foot of headstone or base of ground	to be situated on foot of headstone or base of ground	to be situated on foot of headstone or base of ground	to be situated on foot of headstone or base of ground
Number and rank	Initials, full name and surname	Regiment	Date of Death	Age	Religion	Plot or Row	Grave	Material	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1202/1A	CAPTAIN	P.	BUSS	4TH NOVEMBER 1918	ROD	F.F.	1.		

SCHEDULE "B" FORM									
REGIMENTAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION					NAME OF CEMETERY				
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT B REGIMENTAL INSPECTORS					REGIMENTAL (OR PARISH) INSPECTOR				
TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH					HORSMONDEN (ST. MARGARET) CHURCH				
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT A REGIMENTAL INSPECTORS					HORSMONDEN, KENT.				
TOGETHER WITH					HORSMONDEN, KENT.				
TWO SEPARATE LAYOUTS (THE LAYOUTS TO BE USED ARE QUOTED ON THE BADGE DESIGN).					HORSMONDEN, KENT.				
Line 1	Line 2	Line 3	Line 4	Line 5	Line 6	Line 7	Line 8	Line 9	Line 10
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1									

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Entry

CWGC CERTIFICATE

In Memory Of

Captain

BENJAMIN BUSS

The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) who died on 04 November 1918

Remembered with Honour

HORSMONDEN (ST. MARGARET) CHURCHYARD

South part.



|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

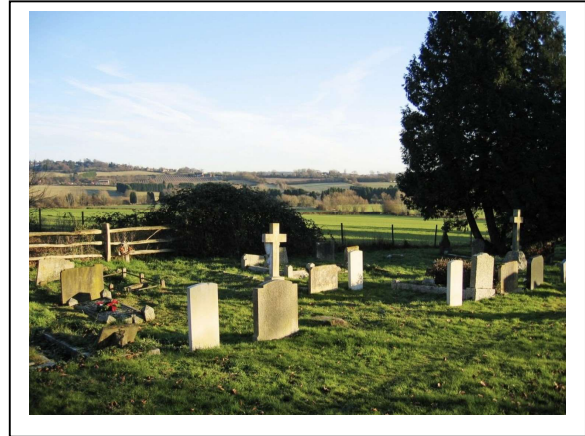
COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCHYARD, HORSMONDEN

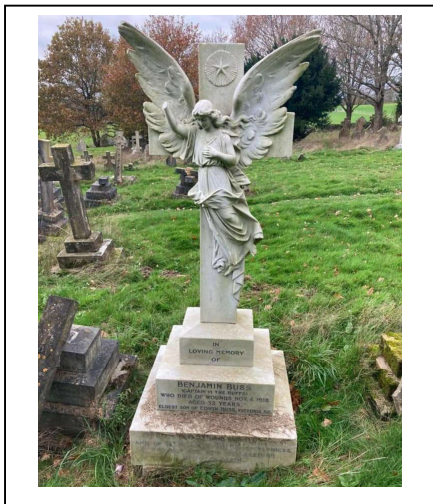
(South part)



St Margaret's Church



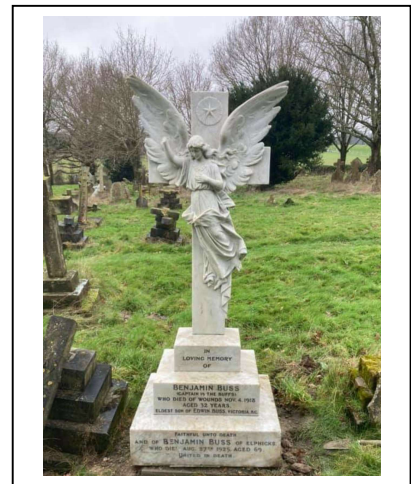
South part graveyard



Before Cleaning and restoration



(see Footnote 3)



After cleaning and restoration

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CPTN BENJAMIN BUSS



1886 - 1918

Footnotes and additions

Footnote 1: War records are not available in digitised format for Capt. Buss and can only be viewed by visiting the National Archives in Kew. Records can be ordered or viewing in advance, or a quotation can be requested for a copy to be sent although there is no guarantee of comprehensive details in the record.

Footnote 2: Benjamin's younger brother Thomas Weston Buss was also in the Buffs and is commemorated on the Horsmonden War Memorial

Footnote 3: In January of 2021, Steve Davies aka 'Military Grave Restorer', cleaned and repositioned Captain Benjamin Buss's monument at St Margaret's. A survey carried out by him showed the monument was tilting 15 degrees to the right.

The monument had slightly shifted over the period of time since Captain Buss's funeral and was becoming in urgent need of restoration to prevent it toppling over

Footnote 4: Tonbridge School attended by Benjamin Buss is one of the leading boys' boarding Schools in the UK.

On Sunday 11th November 2018, the Centenary of the ending of World War One, Tonbridge School's Service of Remembrance included a tribute to the final ten Old Tonbridgians who lost their lives in the Great War.

The names which included Captain Benjamin Buss were read by five boys at the school which drew to a close the complete recitation in chapel between 2014 and 2018 of the names of fallen Tonbridgians. All names have been read as near as possible to the centenary of their deaths. There were 415 Old Tonbridgians that died by the end of WW1.

The ten were also honoured in the form of named silhouettes place in the Chapel cloisters. The silhouettes are part of the national 'There but not There' installation which honours the Fallen of the First World War.

This was a very special commemoration remembrance but not held every year in this format.

Footnote 5: We believe there are nephews and nieces living in Vancouver B.C. today in the names of Buss, Wood, Paterson, Spurgin, Milligan and Leake-Gale. We are continuing research in the hope that we will be able to learn more about Captain Benjamin Buss and whether his War medals and documents can be located, also to inform the descendants of Benjamin about our research findings.



Research and Compilation:

L Burgess and J Freeman

HORSMONDEN HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP