

Codford St. Mary Churchyard Graves



Lest we Forget

World War II



1468187 LDG. AIRCRAFTMAN

T. R. STACEY

ROYAL AIR FORCE

30TH MAY, 1945

*Always A Beautiful Memory
Of One We Loved So Dear
Dad, Mum, Brothers and Sisters*

Thomas Robert STACEY

Thomas Robert Stacey was born on 14th February, 1903 to parents Charles Herbert & Eliza Jane Stacey (nee Deverill). His birth was registered in the March quarter, 1903 in the district of Hackney, London. Thomas was baptised on 28th September, 1904 at St Augustine's Church, South Hackney along with three of his brothers – Harold Frederick, Leonard Benjamin & Leslie William. At the time of the baptisms, the family were living at 39 Balance Road & Charles Herbert Stacey was a Police Constable.

Thomas' parents had married at St Michael the Archangel Church at Mere, Wiltshire in 1894.

The 1901 Census – before Thomas was born – recorded the Stacey family living at 35 Mansfield Rd, Wanstead, Essex. Their details were Charles Stacey (Police Officer, aged 27, born Bourton, Dorsetshire), Eliza (aged 28, born Mere, Wiltshire) & their 2 children - Charley (aged 2, born Clapton Park, London) & Harold (aged 6 months, born Clapton Park, London).

The 1911 Census recorded Thomas Robert Stacey as an 8 year old living with his family at Elm Farm, Chitterne, Wiltshire, in an 8 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Charles Herbert Stacey (Farm Steward, aged 38) & Winnie Stacey (aged 38). They had been married for 16 years & had 8 children, 7 of whom were still living. The children in this Census consisted of 5 sons & 2 daughters – Charles Herbert (aged 12), Harold Frederick (aged 10), Leonard Benjamin (aged 9, born Homerton, London), then Thomas, Leslie William (aged 6, born Homerton, London), Winnifred Isabella (aged 4, born Chitterne) & Hilda Deverill (aged 1, born Chitterne). Gertrude Mary Head, a 20 year old General Servant was also listed.

“Charles & Eliza Stacey eventually settled in 58 High Street, Codford where they opened a general store and newsagents. Tom was a keen footballer who worked in the family store. He was up every morning at 5.30 to sort the newspapers then set off on his round that included Codford St. Peter, Codford St. Mary and the surrounding villages. He was 38 when he volunteered to join the Royal Air Force in September 1941, training as a gunner and at some point served as an aircraft gunner. He took part in the North African Campaign going through Italy then returning to Egypt for a few months at the end of 1943 to beginning of 1944 after which he returned to England. He was stationed at Old Sarum just outside Salisbury before being posted to Eshott, a training airfield 20 miles north of Newcastle, Northumberland.

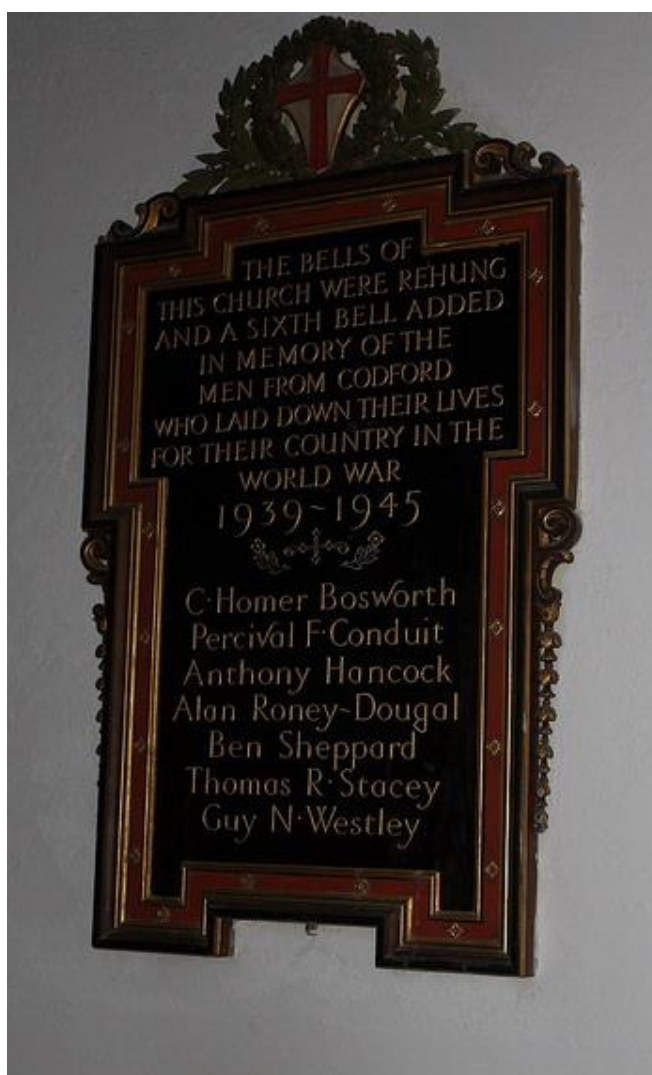
On 7th March, 1945 Tom was mustered to a fire-fighting unit. Official records state ‘1468187 Leading Aircraftman Thomas Stacey was with 54 Operational Training Unit at RAF Charter Hall, 15 miles WSW of Berwick on Tweed. On 30th May he was tragically killed when his fire tender overturned on the perimeter track.’ With the war in Europe over, Tom was waiting to be demobbed and intended to return to the family business. On the night he died, Tom was on Fire Tender duty having swapped shifts with a friend when the crew were called out to an emergency.”

Leading Aircraftman Thomas Robert Stacey died on 30th May, 1945, aged 42 years.

Leading Aircraftman Thomas Robert Stacey was buried in the Churchyard of St. Mary's, Codford. His death is acknowledged by Commonwealth War Graves Commission & as such he has a CWGC headstone. The CWGC lists Thomas Robert Stacey, of Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, as the son of Charles Herbert & Eliza Jane Stacey of Codford. His headstone has the following inscription - *Always A Beautiful Memory of One We Loved So Dear Dad, Mum, Brothers and Sisters*. He is buried close to Ben Sheppard in St. Mary's churchyard, another local young man who died on 11th March, 1944.

Probate was granted on 3rd December, 1945 at Winchester, England. Details were – Thomas Robert Stacey of 58 High Street, Codford died on war service. Administration to Eliza Jane Stacey (wife of Charles Herbert Stacey) Effects £410.

Thomas Stacey is remembered on the WW2 plaque located in Church of St Peter, Codford.



(Photo by Christopher Wright 2013)



Tom Stacey (c 1923)

(With thanks to Romy Wyeth for the above photo & information regarding Thomas Stacey's time with Royal Air Force – The Men of St Mary's & The Anzac War Graves by Romy Wyeth)



St Mary's Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire

Photo of Leading Aircraftman Thomas Robert Stacey's Headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard, Codford, Wiltshire.



(Photo by Andrea Charlesworth 2012)