



Military Graves Education Pack



Foreword

This inspiring project began when a member of Cradley and District Ex-service Association was walking through the churchyard at St Peter's when a Princes Trust team was working at taming the six feet of bramble which covered most of the churchyard.

"Have you found Sergeant Tyler's grave? It's here somewhere, he asked.

It took a second Princes Trust Team, together with local volunteers and a petrol strimmer, to uncover Sergeant Tyler's grave. The excitement of finding this long lost grave inspired the idea of uncovering and making accessible all the military graves in St Peter's churchyard in time for the Commemoration of the beginning of the First War in August 2014.

"Those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it," said George Santayana. Remembrance is an important custom in our society, begun so that generations to come would remember the carnage of war and work to avoid warfare wherever possible. It is poignant to stand before these military memorials, reading the details. It is not difficult to imagine the family, the friends, the career, all the potential to develop and enjoy in life behind these names and service numbers, all cut short because of war. Remembrance is an important observance. These graves a visual reminder of the suffering and sacrifice of war.

With help from Dudley Council Regeneration Officer funding was sought to begin the long term task of transforming six feet of bramble into accessible churchyard. We are very thankful that Ibstock Corey made this possible with a Grant.

We hope that the work will continue to keep the graves clear and to make more information about all the military graves and other graves of interest available to the people of Cradley and the general public so that our children and their children will remember the sacrifices of war and learn to walk slowly when it comes to making decisions which will affect generations to come.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

From Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen*, written in September 1914

Acknowledgements

This education pack has been created in collaboration with the Cradley + District Ex-service Association, St Peter's Cradley and Midland Film and Art who provided the information and photographs.

Thanks to Ibstock Corey for the funds to complete this project.

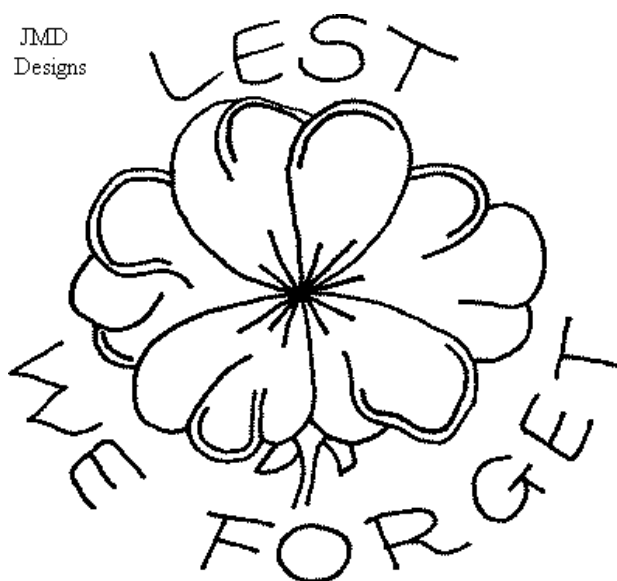
Further Information

A short film tour of the WW1 Military Graves in St Peter's Churchyard is to be found on:

www.stpeterscradley.org

For other information the following link is very useful.

www.cradleylinks.co.uk



IF I KNEW I WOR CUMMIN' BACK

If I knew I wor cummin' back, thairs things I 'ood 'ave sed
I'd 'ave tode 'er mooer times 'ow much I luv'd 'er
an' tucked the kids up tieter in bed
A good nite in the boozier with me mates, me last goodbyes ter all
But I thort I woz invincerbul I wor ever gooin' ter fall
I woz gooin'ter do me bit, I woz that sort of mon
I'd jine the Woosters, for I 'new they'd got many a Craidlee son.

If I knew I wor cummin' back, I'd 'ave rote mooer oftun than I did
I'd 'ave tode 'er it 'ood be alrite and sum of the things I'd done an' sid
Me mates woz all around me, born an' bred in Craidlee town
I thort we woz soopermen and wor ever gooin' down
The Woosters 'ad trained us well, we 'new wot we 'ad ter do
But we wor gooin' ter France, but ter sumw'eer new

If I knew I wor cummin' back, I think I'd still 'ave gon
She 'ood 'ave whanted me ter jine, an' be proud of 'er mon
Ter plairces, sum I'd never 'erd on afower, we went
Befower we got ter Gallipoli, w'eer we 'ad bin sent
We landed at a plairce nairmed Helles, an' it woz truly hell
On the sond we woz 'ommered with bullet, shrapnul an'shell

If I knew I wor cummin' back,
I think I'd 'ave tried ter med mooer of me life
But I 'oodn't 'ave changed 'er, she woz the perfect wife
We got used ter life under fire, we knew w'en ter duck and dive
We woz the Woosters from Craidlee and knew 'ow ter stay alive
Ower time 'ood soon be 'ere, we 'ood mek them Turks run
We 'ood soon be up out of ower trenches, chargin' with bayonet and gun

If I knew I wor cummin' back I'd 'ave rote that fineul day
She 'ood 'ave red it ter the kids the last things thair dad 'ad ter say
In swelterin' 'eat we waited for ower time ter charge the foe
Wot'ood it be like? We woz soon gooin' ter know
As we charged the Turkish lines, not a slacker woz there 'ere
We went forward, feelin' a mixture of excitement, pride an' fear

If I knew I wor cummin' back I'd 'ave left 'er picture back at camp
This lickwid cummin' from me chest ull meck it sticky an' damp
A'ommer like blow 'ad 'nocked me down, an' I lay in the dust
I'd got ter get up an'goo on an' 'elp me mates, I must
Jimmy Clark, Tummy Green and Dave Reynolds were lyin' not far away
It woz if the flower of Craidlelee woz dyin' all around me that day

I just lay theer, I felt so tired, I coodn't move, no matter 'ow I tried
Surely this wor the end, this coodn't be 'ow yo felt w'en yo died
Suddenly I saw the missus an' the kids sittin' around me bed
I 'erd 'er say "Yo've dun yower bit, now goo ter sleep, rest yer weary
yed"
'er fairce slowly vanished an' everything went black
Then I knew - I wor never cummin' back.

*Dedicated to all who fought in the Gallipoli
Campaign, especially the men from Cradley with
the 4th and 9th Battalions of the Worcestershire Regiment.*

Terry Evans

William George Carradine

Rank: Corporal

Service Number: 5348

Date of death: 30/07/1918

Age: 26

Regiment: Royal Air Force

Grave Ref.: B 42



William George Carradine 2nd Flight Lieutenant "B" Squadron, Central Flying School Royal Air Force. Number 5348

William was killed in a flying accident on Tuesday, July 30th 1918, at the age of 24 years and was buried in St. Peter's Churchyard, Cradley on August 3rd 1918. His Grave is in Plot B Number 42, and also contains his parents.



William had been a pupil of Colley Lane School and was the goalkeeper for the Colley Gate (Providence Methodist) Sunday School team which won the Cradley Heath League Second Division Championship for the 1912-13 season.



Charles William Fowkes

Rank: Stoker 1st Class

Service Number: K/12738

Date of death: 29/11/1918

Age: 28

Regiment: Royal Navy

Grave Ref.: B 251

Born in Brierley Hill on January 27th 1892, he lived at 76, Lodge Forge, Cradley and was the son of Richard and Annie Fowkes. He died on Friday, November 29th 1918 of pneumonia at Haslar Royal Hospital, Gosport, Hampshire and was buried on December 5th 1918 in St. Peter's Churchyard, Cradley. He was 27 years old.

Although the killing had stopped with the Armistice the dying hadn't and Charles Fowkes became the second Cradley victim to succumb to the flu pandemic in November 1918.

He died on Friday, November 29th 1918 at the age of 27 years of pneumonia at Haslar Royal Hospital, Gosport, Hampshire, and was buried on December 5th 1918 in St. Peter's Churchyard, Cradley. The family inscription on his headstone reads

HE GAVE HIS LIFE
FOR KING AND COUNTRY



Walter Reece

Rank: Private

Service Number: 59684

Date of death: 08/12/1919

Age: 21

Regiment: South Staffordshire Regiment

Grave Ref.: B 287

Walter Reece died on Monday, December 8th 1919 and was interred in St. Peter's Churchyard, Cradley on December 13th 1919. He had lived with his parents at 17, Foredraft Street, Cradley.

On October 26th 1918 the *County Express* reported that on October 10th 1918 he had been wounded for the third time whilst acting as a despatch runner for his battalion. He was subsequently evacuated from France and at the time of the article was in the 1st Southern General Hospital, King's Heath, Birmingham.

On December the 20th 1919, the same newspaper printed an account of his funeral in which it briefly reported that he had died after a long illness and was aged 21 years (the Burial Register for St. Peter's records his age as 20 years.)

Walter died on Monday, December 8th 1919 of nephritis (kidney disease) and was interred in St. Peter's Churchyard, Cradley on December 13th 1919.



John Joseph Tyler

Rank: Sergeant

Service Number: 97

Date of death: 27/08/1916

Age: 27

Regiment: 16th Battalion, 3rd Royal
Birmingham Regiment (Royal United
Warwickshire Regiment)

Grave Ref.: Section F



John was born in 1889 and was aged 1 year in the census of 1891 when he was living with his parents Walter William and Selena in Colley Orchard, Cradley. At this time his father who was aged 26, Coseley born and was working as a gas meter inspector and his mother Selena was a year older and from Brierley Hill and he had an elder brother William Thomas (2).

John was an ex-pupil of Cradley National School and had worked as the Midland Representative of Messrs. Lyons and Company. He was a chorister and Sunday School teacher at St. Katherine's and a member of the Conservative Club. He had enlisted at Moseley, Birmingham into the 16th Royal

Warwickshire regiment on September 21st 1914 at the age of 24 years. His service papers have survived but as usual are difficult to read in places and impossible in the areas where they are damaged.

On enlistment John was 5 feet 6.1/4 inches tall, weighed 130 pounds, had an expanded chest measurement of 36 inches and had a dark complexion with blue eyes and dark brown hair. He also carried two long scars on the right side of his neck. He seems to have taken well to army life as he was promoted to Corporal on December 9th 1914 then to Sergeant Master Cook on April 17th 1915.

In March 1915 the battalion was training at Malvern before joining the 95th Brigade, 32nd Division at Wensleydale in June 1915. By August 1915 it was at Codford, Salisbury Plain before on November 21st 1915 it embarked from Folkestone to France, and Joe was with them.

In December 1915 the battalion was at Pont Noyelles



until the 11th when they then moved to Veux-sur-Somme for trench instruction. They were attached to the 15th Infantry Brigade and received their first casualty on December 18th. After their baptism of fire they moved to Candas in February 1916 where the weather was that of severe cold with snow and ice making the roads slippery and marching into a north easterly blizzard made travelling hazardous. These weather conditions were to have an ultimate effect on Joe's future health.

On April 26th 1916 Joe's medical problems seem to have started as he was admitted to No. 14 Field Ambulance with "NYD" (Not Yet Diagnosed) and moved later the same day to 43 CCS with Neurasthenia¹⁰. Three days later No.9 Ambulance Train moved him to No.2 General Hospital at Havre where he was admitted. From here he was transferred to England on May 5th 1916 on board the *HS Panama* suffering from tubercular glands of the neck.

A medical report dated July 13th 1916, and carried out at Devonport Military Hospital, stated that John's disability was due to tuberculosis of the lungs. It goes on to say that it was first noticed when in France he had great difficulty in walking any considerable distance owing to pains in the stomach. He was sent to Havre and then was moved to Parquton where he spent nine weeks recuperating. Prior to this he had had no previous medical problems according to his medical history. It then went on to say T.Bacilli had infected him, probably due to lowered vitality after seven months in the trenches. It then continued to report that he had enlarged glands in the supraclavicular area and also in the abdomen and that there was a loss of weight and T.B. was present in his sputum.

John Joseph Tyler was discharged from the army as permanently unfit on July 27th 1916 and subsequently returned to his home at 27, Colley Orchard, Cradley. He died there of pulmonary phthisis (tuberculosis) on Sunday August 27th 1916, aged 27 years and was interred at St. Peter's Churchyard, Cradley on Thursday, August 31st, 1916.

His funeral and obituary were printed in the September 2nd 1916 edition of the *County Express*, under the headlines "Military Funeral at Cradley – A Striking Demonstration", an abridged account follows: -

'There was a striking demonstration of public sympathy at Cradley on Thursday, at the funeral with full military honours, of Sergt. John Joseph Tyler, 3rd Birmingham City Battalion, and son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Tyler, 27, Colley Orchard, who died from dysentery on Sunday. Deceased, who was 27 years old, was a traveller in the Midlands for Messrs. Lyons and Co., and joined the Warwicks almost at the outbreak of war, attaining the rank of sergeant-cook before going to France last autumn. He had seen much fierce fighting, and was the first to reach the late Pte. Bert Coley, of Cradley Heath, when he was hit last Christmas Several months ago, Sergt. Tyler was invalided with dysentery to a Devonshire hospital, and five weeks ago came home. Sergt. Tyler is mourned by many friends. He was an old scholar of the church day schools, a Sunday school teacher and chorister at St. Katherine's, and a member of the Conservative Club, at which building the flag floated at half-mast on Thursday.

The Funeral.

There were impressive scenes at the funeral, large crowds lining the route to the church, the signs of regret and respect being universal. The coffin, covered with the Union Jack and

flowers, was borne to the gun carriage, a firing party from the Worcestershire Cadet Battalion stood at the “present”. The bearer party and escort were from the Royal Engineers. Headed by a police sergeant and a police constable the procession moved away, the “Dead March” being played by Cradley Heath Salvation Army Band. The band was preceded by the firing party with arms reversed.

In Colley Lane the headmasters and head mistresses of the boys, girls and infant schools had lined the scholars along the front of the schools, the boys standing to attention, and the girls and infants at the salute till the cortege passed. At the Church Schools the scholars and teachers also lined the walls as the party passed into the churchyard adjacent. Here order was maintained by a police sergeant and four constables

At the church steps the party was met by the vicar, Rev.R. A. Norris, the curate and robed choir. After the service the cortege left the church headed by the cross and clergy. The vicar conducted the last rites at the graveside, and after the firing of three volleys, a bugler sounded the “Last Post”. It is believed to be 50 years at least since there had been a military funeral at Cradley.’

It then goes on to list the mourners, amongst who was Miss Helen Hodgetts, his fiancée, his parents, three sisters and younger brother.

In the Cradley Parish Council meeting held on September 12th 1916, a motion by the chairman, A. Westwood was unanimously resolved that a vote of sympathy and condolence be passed to the father and family of Sergt. Jos. Tyler.

A meeting of the council on November 16th 1916 reported: -

‘The expenses incurred at the military funeral of the late Sergt. J. Tyler were 18/-.

It was unanimously resolved that the clerk collect the amount of 18/- from members of the council – the chairman promised to make up any deficiency – 10/- was collected at the meeting.’

Whether the public was deliberately or undeliberately led to believe that he died from dysentery the facts are that he lost his life to tuberculosis of the lungs. Possibly at this time there was a stigma attached to anyone with T.B and by now dysentery was a well known disease of the battlefield and maybe more acceptable.

Perhaps the cause of death didn’t fit the image of the “soldier died doing his duty” that local newspapers and Cradley Council wanted to portray with his military funeral. Although other Cradley soldiers died at home later in the war there were no large military funerals held for these.

It’s possible it may in some ways have been put on to show that Halesowen wasn’t the only town that could put on a military funeral and was intended to match the funeral that Halesowen Rural Council had put on for Alfred Heath.

Joe Tyler died doing his duty from a disease that he contracted in the trenches of France and was much a hero as Alfred Heath who had died of wounds.

Richard Asman

Rank: Bombadier

Service Number: 835917

Date of death: 11/04/1945

Age: 35

Regiment: Royal Artillery

Grave Ref.: Section G3, Row B1, Grave 5

The County Express for April 21st, 1945, reports:

“Mrs May ASMAN widow of the late Richard ASMAN of 40 Beecher Road, Colley Gate desires to thank relatives and many friends of Beecher Road, Wordsley and Sandfield Hospital, also his colleagues at Smethwick Drop Forgings, Kidderminster for their expressions of sympathy extended to her in her recent sad bereavement, also floral tributes”.



John Henry Billingham

Rank: Private

Service Number: 5251708

Date of death: 30/07/1946

Age: 30

Regiment: Manchester Regiment

Grave Ref.: Section G3, Row B2, Grave 6

Evacuation and repatriation

In January 1945, as the Soviet armies resumed their offensive and advanced into Germany, many of the prisoners were marched westward in groups of 200 to 300 in the so-called Death March. Many of them died from the bitter cold and exhaustion. The lucky ones got far enough to the west to be liberated by the American army. The unlucky ones got "liberated" by the Soviets, who instead of turning them over quickly to the western allies, held them as virtual hostages for several more months. Many of them were finally repatriated towards the end of 1945 through the port of Odessa on the Black Sea.

Lamsdorf, now called Łambinowice, is a small town in Poland, once the location of one of Germany's largest prisoner of war camps for allied servicemen. The camp originally opened during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, and was also a prisoner of war camp in the First World War. In 1939 it housed Polish prisoners, then from 1940 until it was evacuated in January 1945, it housed more than 100,000 prisoners from Britain and other Commonwealth countries, as well as from the Soviet Union, Poland and various European countries occupied by the Germans. In 1943 many prisoners from Lamsdorf were transferred to other camps, and the number was changed from VIIIB to 344



Victor Alexander George Carpenter

Rank: Gunner

Service Number: 1059774

Date of death: 24/01/1945

Age: 42

Regiment: Royal Artillery

Grave Ref.: 1882 extension Row 2
Grave 3



Victor came from a farming background with his father following work on farms about Broadheath, Worcestershire in the Malvern Hills district. Following school Victor also became a farmer and enjoyed working with animals.

Enlisted in Royal Artillery on 29th December 1924, aged 22 yrs worked first as a driver and then tended horses. After 6 months training in England spent 18 months on service in Germany (19-05-1925 to 26-10-1926) before returning to homeland duties. Transferred to Reserve Army 28-12-1939 as a driver. On a visit to Cradley with an army colleague met Nellie Edwards whose parents lived at 12 Church Road. Nellie's father George was a lay member of St Peter's Church and attended the Good Shepherd on Lyde Green. The couple fell in love married at St Peter's Church and lived first at Broadheath before moving to 4 Lyde Green.

On the outbreak of WW2 Victor was amongst the first to be called up on the Saturday before the war began on Sunday to serve with the Royal Artillery guarding the homelands. In December 1944 Victor was stationed near to Salisbury and became seriously ill with a kidney infection whilst on home leave at Christmas time. He was transferred to

hospital at Worsley and after a short while was told he was fit enough to rejoin his unit and given a travel warrant back to Salisbury. During the train journey Victor's illness became steadily worse so that he had to be transferred by ambulance back to hospital at Shaftsbury where his condition got worse. He had sent letter home to Nellie telling her not to worry but she decided to make the trip to visit him travelling down with her sister Doris. The children were left at home to look after themselves with John, then aged 11 years in charge and neighbours helping out where they could. On arriving at the hospital at Sturminster, Dorset Nellie met a nurse about to take a drink to Victor on a tray. Nellie took the tray from the nurse and surprised Victor. Things looked bad and during the illness Victor lost his sight but Nellie put on a brave face telling Victor to get well and not to worry about the kids saying "I'll look after them"

When Victor died his body was taken to 12 Church Road before the funeral at St Peter's Church.

R.A. Range detachment
Greenlands farm

Ohnewton
26th Jan 1945

Dear Mrs Carpenter

On behalf of all ranks of the Range detachment, I wish to express our deepest sympathy in the very sad loss which you have sustained in the loss of your husband.

I personally, will miss Carpenter, he being my key man in ploughing, & his excellent work towards the unit effort of agricultural has been very helpful. Your husband was an excellent soldier, much liked by all members of the unit & will be missed by all.

If I can help in any military matter which may arise will you please write me.

I have sent Sgt Morrison & Bob Flanagan to represent the unit at the funeral on Sunday.

Yours sincerely

Horton Major RA

Raymond Robinson

Rank: Able Seaman

Service Number: D/JX559048

Date of death: 26/08/1944

Age: 19

Regiment: Royal Navy

Grave Ref.: Section F Row B 2 Grave 3

Raymond Robinson served on HMS President 111

He was the son of Wilfred & Maria Robinson (nee Raybould) of Colley Gate. He was born July 26th, 1925 and baptised August 9th, 1926. Parents then living in Butchers Lane, Cradley and father was a Chain Striker.



The Vision – The Angel of Mons

They came, each summoned by the
clarion call
That hereafter might yet become their
tolling bell of effigy.
Each had come to defend freedom, a
hope, a cause...
A country, threatened by evil
catastrophe.

Were we never so strong, never so
vulnerable, never so unprepared?
And yet, gladly we fought. But at what
cost, for what gain and at what price?
Every soldier's wounded soul, made
whole only by healing messages of love

—
The muted hopes and dreams of dear
ones left at home.

Obliteration, annihilation - war - call it
what you will.

Fighting for glory - a barbed-wire
crown?

And yet - many have trod this path,
Not knowing to what victory they
aspired.

Our song of triumph deadened in the
lingering mists of battlefield agony.
Never to be repeated?

Did a vision once inspire us?
Had God been on our side?
Were there shining angels there to
sound our victory?
Or was it just a mirage, as the new day
dawned at last?

Thomas William Rudge

Rank: Able Seaman

Service Number: D/JX570020

Date of death: 30/09/1944

Age: 19

Regiment: Royal Navy

Grave Ref.: Section F Row B 2 Grave 1

Thomas Rudge served on HMS Arbiter. Son of Thomas & Beatrice Rudge of Cradley he was born on June 26th, 1925 and baptised at St Peter's Church on July 20th, 1925. Parents living at 59 High Street, Cradley.

Father was a general worker at British Thomson-Houston, Blackheath [electrical engineering]

The Crosses

I stood there before the crosses
glowing white in row on row
Everyone a young life cut short
as the names upon them show.

The dates they died below the names
tell of wars now passed and gone
Passchendaele, the Somme, and Mons
of battles fought, and lost or won.

History remembers, as it should
these men who fought and died
Whilst for their families left behind
a dull sorrow tinged with pride.

The faces of boys held now in Sepia
who died in days long gone
yet living on in memories
and hearts, still holding on.

Yet despite the hurt and grief here
what with horror makes me fill
Is that when I look behind me
there are more new crosses growing
still.

Bill Mitton



Clifford Russell

Rank: Craftsman

Service Number: 7650279

Date of death: 12/06/1946

Age: 29

Regiment: Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Grave Ref.: 1882 extension Row 3 Grave 8

Clifford was the son of George & Amy Russell and husband of Tamar Russell of Colley Gate.

A Soldier's Daughter

When I first came into this world
You could not be there.
But mommy promised every night
That you would always care.

Each day I grow a little more
And I'm beginning to look like you
Mommy always says you love me
And daddy, I love you too.

Don't think that I am mad at you
my heart is full of fear.
but daddy I forgive you
I want to make that clear.

I know each day you think of me
and wish you could come home,
each day you also fight for me
so that I am free to roam.

You should know I miss you daddy
And I really need you near.
so please be safe at least until
the next time you are here.

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Albert Timmington

Rank: Driver

Service Number: T/14363323

Date of death: 07/05/1943

Age: 19

Regiment: Royal Army Service Corps



Grave Ref.: Section F Row B 1 Grave 8

Albert Timmington was the son of Benjamin & Ida Timmington of Cradley, Overend Road

War Child

I wake up in the morning to the
cries of hurt and anger
I wish I'd wake up to cries of joy
and laughter
I wake up every morning hoping
it will all be gone
But the fighting the war has only
just begun
I'd play out in my mind that I
could beg for them to stop just
for a while
But no! What do they care I'm
just a war child

I'd go to sleep every night with
the fear of not being able to last
another day
Oh please please help this child
many would say
But deep down I know those
people's urgent calls
Will be returned with bombs
shooting or nothing at all
The shock that they turn to

shooting even if you smile
Is abhorrent but what do they care
I'm just a war child

I'd hope for a place to truly call
home
But how can it be with all the
peace and harmony gone
It hurts and pains to know the
people doing this have neither
regret nor remorse
But instead curfews and more
undeserved punishment is what
they've enforced
Enemies upon us our country
reviled
But what do they care I'm just a
war child

I'd cry puddles full of tears day to
day
Hoping someone my mummy or
even my daddy come by say it's ok
But no one will ever care I'm just a
war child.

Prayer for Remembrance Day

For those who were killed in battle,
For those who gave up their lives to save others
For those who fought because they were forced to,
For those who died standing up for a just cause
For those who said war was wrong,
For those who tried to make the peace
For those who prayed when others had no time to pray
For those creatures who needlessly die
For those trees that needlessly are slaughtered
For all of mankind

Let us quietly pray:

May your God hold them in peace
May Love flow over the Earth and cleanse us all
This day and for always.

Marianne Griffin
11am 11 November 2004