



John Gunnell

John Gunnell was born in Uppingham in 1895. His mother was Elizabeth Gunnell. John had a younger sister, Elise Annie Gunnell, also born in Uppingham.

In 1898, Elizabeth married Robert Tee Boon of Gretton.

The Family

In the 1901 Census the family were living in Gretton. Robert was an ironstone labourer. Robert & Elizabeth had a son, Robert, who was John & Elsie's half-brother.

By 1911, the family were living in Newton near Geddington. John Gunnell has joined his step-father Robert working as an ironstone labourer. Robert & Elizabeth have had four more children Daisy, Rose, Harry & Lilian.

Military Service

John Gunnell's service records have not survived. It is known that he enlisted in Kettering and served as a Private (G/13432) in The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

Private John Gunnell died as a prisoner of war at Soltau Camp (Lager Soltau) in Lower Saxony on 3rd June 1917. Soltau was the largest German prisoner of war camp of the First World War, constructed in 1914.

When or where John Gunnell was taken prisoner is currently unknown as are the exact circumstances of his death.

Private John Gunnell is buried at the Hamburg Military Cemetery and commemorated on the Gretton War Memorial.

During the First World War, Hamburg Cemetery was used for the burial of over 300 Allied servicemen who died as prisoners of war. In 1923, it was decided that the graves of Commonwealth servicemen who had died all over Germany should be brought together into four permanent cemeteries. Hamburg was one of those chosen, and burials were brought into the cemetery from 120 burial grounds* in Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg, Oldenburg, Hanover, Saxony, Brunswick and Westphalia. The majority died as prisoners, but a few were sailors whose bodies were washed ashore on the Frisian Islands.



There are now 708 First World War servicemen buried or commemorated in the Commonwealth plot at Hamburg. This total includes special memorials to three casualties buried in Parchim Prisoners of War Cemetery whose graves could not be found, and 25 unidentified sailors whose remains were recovered from HM Submarine E24, which was sunk by a mine off Heligoland in March 1916, when the vessel was raised in July 1974.

The Commonwealth section of the cemetery also contains 1,466 Second World War burials, mostly of servicemen who died with the occupying forces, or airmen lost in bombing raids over Germany. There are also 378 post Second World War graves and 14 war graves of other nationalities.

* The following cemeteries are among those from which graves were brought to Hamburg:

GUSTROW PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Mecklenburg-Schwerin. 59 burials of 1914-1918. Gustrow was one of the main camps in which prisoners in Germany were registered.

HANNOVER (LIMMER) MILITARY CEMETERY, Hannover. 31 burials of 1914-1918.

HELIGOLAND CHURCHYARD, Helgoland. one burial of 1916.

MINDERHEIDE PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Westphalia. 55 burials of 1916-1918.

MUNSTER CAMP PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Hannover. 130 burials of 1917-1919.

PARCHIM PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Mecklenburg Schwerin. 83 burials of 1917-1919.

SOLTAU PRISONERS OF WAR CEMETERY, Hannover. 25 burials of 1916-1918.

VERDEN GARRISON CEMETERY, Hannover. 29 burials of 1916-1918.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton History Society

Surrey County Council



A burial detail at Soltau Camp, Lower Saxony.

Lest We Forget

John Gunnell
of The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

d.3rd June 1917

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John Gunnell's half-brother, Robert Tee Boon, also died during the War whilst serving as a Private (106625) with the Sherwood Foresters. He contracted influenza and died on 4th July 1918. Robert is buried in Kettering.