

Florence Davis (nee Ryland)

Killed by a Flying Bomb on 29 July 1944

Her death is now commemorated by the CWGC.

In 2005 we believed that the death of **Florence Davis** was reported by the *Register* on 5 August 1944¹:

Local Victim of Flying Bomb.

The victim was **Florence Davis** (and her husband), daughter of **Mrs. Charles Ryland of Jeynes Row**, a rural postman. Known as "*Flossie*", she had married a tiler and had gone to live in London 25 years ago (she married on 26 March 1921); she had previously worked for Mrs Whittaker of the High Street. The *Register* informs us that, for a time, they must have lived in South Wales since, in 1922, she gave birth at Rhymney to a son.² Her other two children were born after the family moved to Essex. Her husband - but not mercifully her children - was killed with her in a **V1 "flying bomb"** attack.



In 2005 the CWGC had not commemorated her name. We then asked why such names had been omitted nationally and locally. Although Tewkesbury was aware of her death and her nephew still lived in the town, her name was also omitted from our War Memorial. Her father, a possible advocate for her inclusion, pre-deceased her, being buried in the cemetery on 3 September 1943 aged 76. World War II was a "total war" in which all were involved, be they civilians or combatants.

Recent Addition Research Courtesy of Ann Dawe and Ian McGill



Ryland Family Photograph c 1914 with Florence back row and Cecil, killed 1943, middle sitting

¹ Her name has been included in a *Memorial to Civilian Victims of Bombing* in London.

² 28/01/1922 p4/4

1939 Census 5 Hampton Road, Ilford, Essex

First name(s)	Last name(s)	DOB	Sex	Occupation	Marital status
William C F	Davis	24 Aug 1893	Male	Tile Fixer Wall Floor Mosaic	Married
Florence G	Davis	08 Aug 1894	Female	Unpaid Domestic Duties	Married
Leslie E	Davis	20 Jan 1922	Male	Shop Assistant (Butcher)	Single
Sidney C	Davis	28 Jan 1926	Male	At School	Single
Betty J	Wood (Davis)	24 Mar 1933	Female	At School	Single

The death and destruction which came to Ilford, 66 years ago

[This is a later V2 attack on the same area]

PUBLISHED: 14:43 28 October 2010

By Zjan Shirinian of Ilford Recorder

Damaged houses in Kensington Gardens, Ilford

THERE was no warning, no sound, no siren, just death, frantic rescuers looking for signs of life among homes turned into charred rubble.

Amidst the terror stood a 14-year-old boy who 66 years on, vividly remembers the bombing campaign waged on Ilford.

*John Barfoot was in his last few weeks at Loxford School when, on Thursday, October 26, 1944, a German V2 rocket projectile crashed on to **Courtland Avenue, off The Drive, Ilford.***

The attack wrecked eight houses, killed eight people and wounded 30 and signalled the start of a five-month campaign of terror which was to claim 100 lives in Ilford and its surrounding districts and seriously injured 435.

“With the V1 flying bombs, we could hear them coming a long way off and there were air raid sirens,” says Mr Barfoot, 80, of Ilfracombe Gardens, Chadwell Heath.

“But with the V2 rockets we had no warning.”

A few weeks later, the youngster, who at the time of World War Two was living in Windsor Road, Ilford, covered window frames shattered by the silent killer as part of his work for a building company.

The dad-of-two and grandfather-of-one said: “My memories are of seeing the devastation caused by the rockets.

“I remember the rescuers searching and when they blew whistles there would be a deathly hush while they tried to locate people buried under the rubble.

“It was an experience that made a real impression on me at 14.”

Thirty-five V2s landed on Ilford and its surrounding districts, with the Ilford Hippodrome badly damaged after an attack of January 12, 1945.

It was that attack which Mr Barfoot says was his most “terrifying” moment of the V2 rocket campaign, when he feared, it would prove wrongly, his mother had been caught up in the blast.

“Looking back, people seemed to just carry on with their daily lives,” said Mr Barfoot. “Then, all of a sudden, there would be this massive explosion.”

On March 3, 1945, three weeks before the final V2 fell on Ilford, Mr Barfoot saw the devastation caused by an attack in Breamore Road, Seven Kings.

Only years later did he learn the attack on the road, which he saw as part of a call out with the building firm he worked for, claimed the lives of his future wife's grandparents.

The devastating V2 rockets were about 46ft long and 5ft 6ins in diameter.

The launching of the rockets ended when the territory on mainland Europe from where they were fired was overrun by allied armies towards the end of the war.

Another person who remembers what it was like living in Ilford when it experienced the V2 onslaught, is Leonard Beacham.

The 83-year-old was living in Mortlake Road, Ilford, when the Germans launched their rockets on the town.

The grandfather-of-four said: "I think because I was quite young, it probably helped me to deal with what was going on."

He added: "It was strange because you had no warning of an attack, it just happened.

"The V2s caused a lot of devastation. Ilford was badly hit."

Mr Beacham was living with his mother in their two-bedroom home when the V2s were launched.

They followed the V1s, known as doodlebugs.

Thirty-four V1s fell on Ilford and its surrounding areas from June 16, 1944 to August 16, 1944.

That bombing campaign killed 60 people and seriously injured 242.

Speaking of the V2 attacks, Mr Beacham, now of Guildford, said: "I remember seeing faces of people who had lost loved ones.

"People tried desperately to find survivors in some of the attacks, but you knew just by looking around that people had been needlessly killed.

"They were silent but that did not mask how deadly they were."

PTO

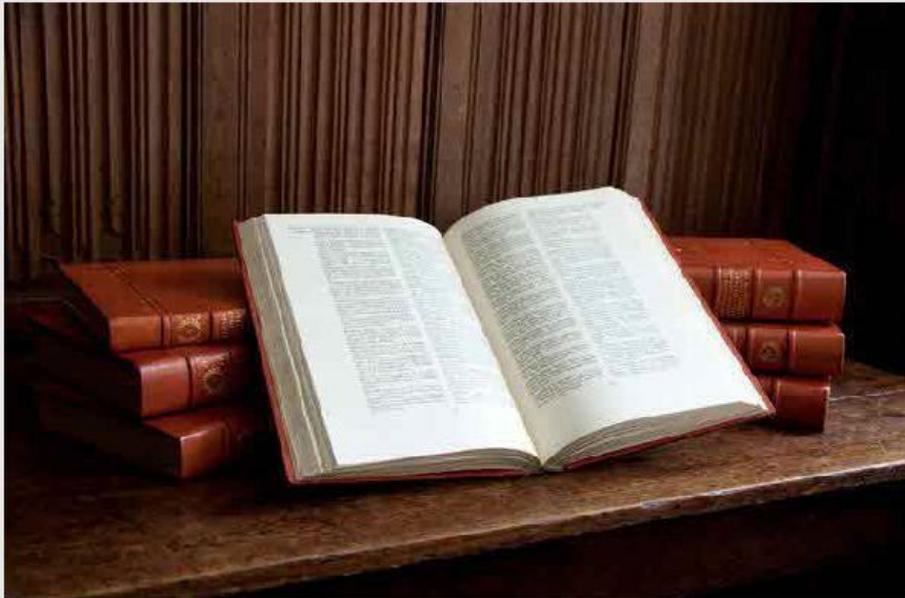
In Memory of
Civilian

Florence Gertrude Davis

Civilian War Dead who died on 29 July 1944 Age 49

Wife of William Charles Frederick Davis. Died at 5 Hampton Road.

Remembered with Honour
Ilford, Municipal Borough



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

