

IN MEMORY OF
8389S - STOKER
ARCHIBALD ROBERT CASKIE
& HIS SON

6350396 PRIVATE
ARCHIBALD ROBERT NATAL CASKIE
KILLED IN WWI & WW2 RESPECTIVELY

**(Great Uncle & 2nd Cousin of Sheila Stewart -
formerly of London & Coleorton)**

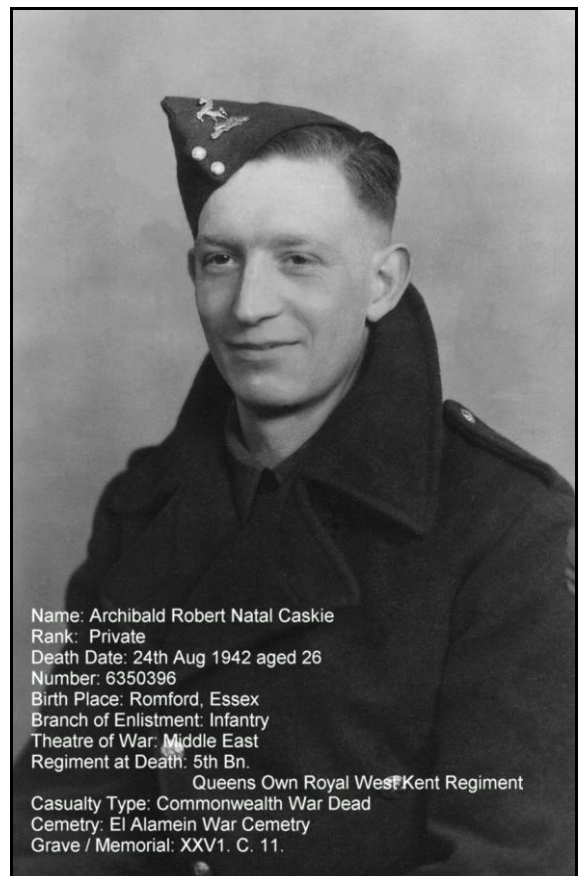


1914-18 British Victory Medal

1914-18 War Medal

1914-15 Star Medal

Archibald Robert Caskie 1st World War Medals (1914-18)
(Posthumously Awarded)



Name: Archibald Robert Natal Caskie

Rank: Private

Death Date: 24th Aug 1942 aged 26

Number: 6350396

Birth Place: Romford, Essex

Branch of Enlistment: Infantry

Theatre of War: Middle East

Regiment at Death: 5th Bn.

Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Cemetery: El Alamein War Cemetery

Grave / Memorial: XXV1. C. 11.

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - MAY 2025

PART 1

8389S STOKER - ARCHIBALD ROBERT CASKIE

In Memory Of

Stoker

ARCHIBALD ROBERT CASKIE

Service Number: 8389S

H.M.S. "Natal.", Royal Naval Reserve who died on 30 December 1915 Age 30

Husband of Minnie Seaman (formerly Caskie), of 25, Albert Rd., Romford, Essex

Remembered with Honour

CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL

14.



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

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Certificate
(Panel 14, Column 2)

Archibald Robert Caskie Snr, (GG uncle of Sheila Stewart) married Frances Whybrow in 1884, the marriage being registered in Croydon. In 1891, they were living in Forest Gate, West Ham. Archibald Snr is aged 29 and his wife Frances (aka Fanny) is aged 26 and Archibald is working as a 'cellerman'. He was born in Rostand, Glasgow and Fanny in Stratford, Essex.

Their son, and first born, Archibald Robert Caskie Jnr, was born on the 27th February 1885. A daughter Catherine Alice was born in 1887 but died the following year. By 1891 they have a son Francis (aka Frank) Joseph aged 2 who was born in Stratford, Essex. Archibald Robert Caskie Jnr is not living with his parents when the 1891 census was taken as he was thought to be living with his grandparents Francis and Catherine Whybrow in Marylabone.

Further siblings were Herbert Monteith Caskie, b.1892 in Stratford, Essex and Evelyn (aka Eve) May Caskie, b.1893 in Marylebone. She was the grandma of Sheila Stewart.

The 1901 census records that Archibald Snr is now back working as a plumber in the Paddington area and living with his wife Fanny (nee. Whybrow) and his son Archibald Robert, aged 16 (a lift assistant), their son Herbert Monteith, aged 9 and their daughter Evelyn May, aged 7. Their second son Francis (aka Frank) Joseph is not living with them at this time as he was living with his grandparents Francis and Catharine Whybrow in Marylabone

In 1911, Archibald Robert Caskie Snr and his wife Fanny's son Archibald Robert Caskie Jnr is still single and living with his parents at *87 Sheringham Avenue, Manor Park, East Ham, Essex*, and he was recorded as being a house painter.

Archibald Robert Caskie Jnr who had joined the Naval Reserve was sadly killed on the H.M.S. Natal on December 27th 1915. The CWGC records show that he was '*the husband of Minnie Seaman (formerly Caskie) of 25 Albert road, Essex at the time* (see extract from the following document). However, there is some confusion here as we know that he is recorded as marrying Minnie Groves in Hartlepool in 1913 where they lived on Brenda Street for a time. Exactly why they were married at Hartlepool is not apparent, as Minnie was from Ford End, Essex. No other references to Hartlepool are made apart from one on a Navy document of an address in Brenda St, Hartlepool. In fact, he is commemorated on the Hartlepool Memorial for those killed in WW's I & 2 (see following photograph of the memorial). The only plausible explanation for this confusion is that the CWGC record was entered after Minnie Caskie (Nee. Groves) had remarried after Archibald had been killed on H.M.S. Natal to a man with the surname Seaman.

Minnie Caskie (nee. Groves) was pregnant with their son Archibald Robert "Natal" Caskie (see PART.2) when his father was killed on the H.M.S. Natal. Their son was born 2 months later on February 27th 1915, so his father never saw him. However, in memory of his father, his mother named him Archibald Robert **Natal** Caskie (see PART 2).

CARTER, Ldg. Smn. James Christopher, 200906 (RFR/CH/B/9401). R.N. S.S. "Clan McFarlane." Killed in action with submarine in Mediterranean 30th Dec., 1915. Age 36. Son of Ethelbert Edward and Annie Carter, of 3, Hospital Lane, Canterbury, Kent. 9.

CASKIE, Sto. Archibald Robert, 8389.S. R.N.R. H.M.S. "Natal." Killed by internal explosion of vessel in Cromarty Firth 30th Dec., 1915. Age 30. Husband of Minnie Seaman (formerly Caskie), of 25, Albert Rd., Romford, Essex. 14.

CAST, P.O. 1st Cl. James, 127103. R.N. H.M.S. "Pembroke." Killed in destruction of H.M.S. "Princess Irene" off Sheerness 27th May, 1915. 9.

CASTLE, Smn. Joseph, 2765.A. R.N.R. H.M.S. "Clan McNaughton." Drowned in loss of vessel in North Atlantic 3rd Feb., 1915. 14.

H.M.S. "Gothic." Killed in action with Turkish destroyer in Dardanelles 13th May, 1915. 11.

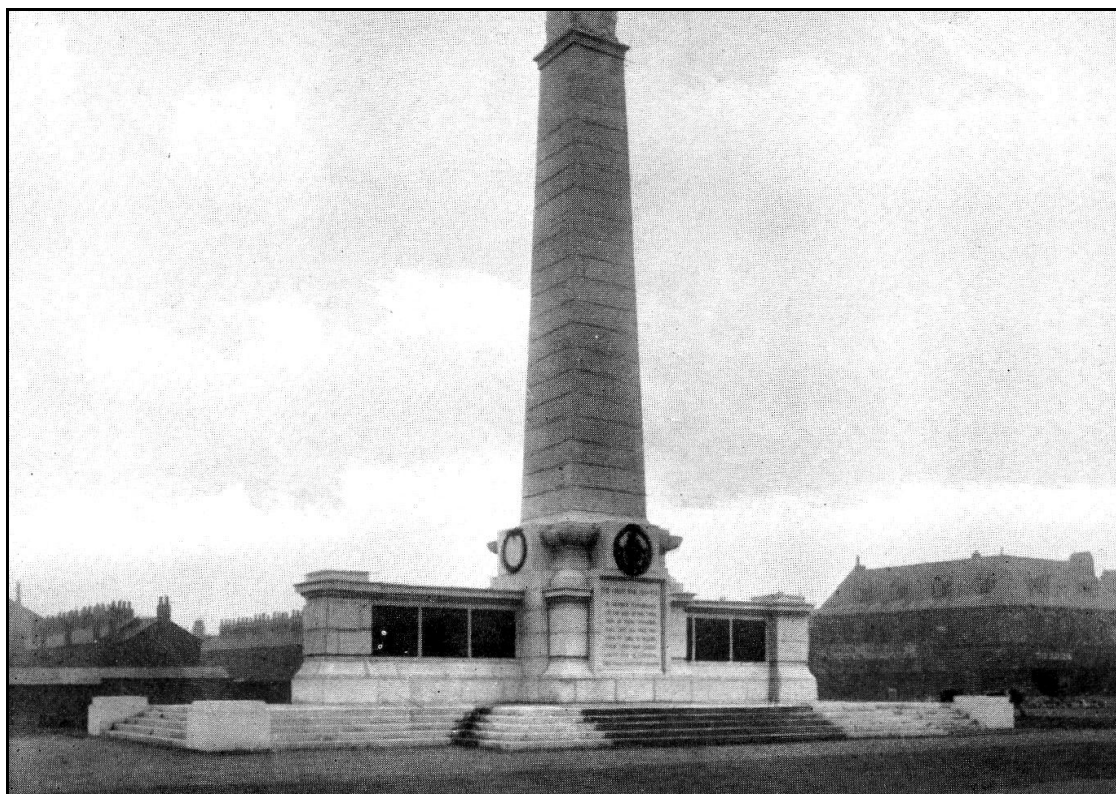
CHANDLER, A.B. Clifford Reginald, J/12167. R.N. H.M.S. "Natal." Killed by internal explosion of vessel in Cromarty Firth 30th Dec., 1915. Age 20. Son of Edwin and Helen Chandler, of 12, Queen's Rd., Gillingham, Kent. 9.

CHANDLER, Sto. P.O. Robert Bethel, 302284. R.N. H.M.S. "Formidable." Killed in action with submarine in English Channel 1st Jan., 1915. 11.

CHANDLER, Ldg. Smn. William Richard, London/10/2698. R.N.V.R. H.M.S. "India." Killed in action with submarine off Norwegian Coast 8th Aug., 1915. Age 26. Son of Mrs. K. Chandler, of 16, Cumberland Rd., Woodside, South Norwood, London. 15.

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Extract from CWGC casualty list document



**Hartlepool Memorial which commemorates the death of
Archibald Robert Caskie**

Inscription

Caskie, A.R. - Brenda Street, West Hartlepool,
H.M.S. 'Natal'; Dec. 30 1915



1914-18 British Victory Medal

1914-18 War Medal

1914-15 Star Medal

Archibald Robert Caskie 1st World War Medals (1914-18)
(Posthumously Awarded)

THE TRAGIC EVENT



H.M.S. NATAL

The sun had almost set on the Cromarty Firth on the penultimate day of 1915.

The natural harbour proved a key anchorage for the Grand Fleet in its bitter struggle with its foe across the North Sea, an important base between the Navy's wartime home in Scapa Flow and Rosyth, from where the fast battle-cruisers of Admiral Beatty patrolled.

This festive period, the second of the Great War, the firth was filled with ships at anchor, ships such as the finest battleships, like HMS Benbow, through to armoured cruisers H.M.S. Achilles and H.M.S. Natal and destroyers H.M.S. Oak and H.M.S. Mindful.

Crews of the anchored ships had, for a few days, put the war to the back of their minds. Aboard H.M.S Natal, some of the officers were enjoying a film show; the cruiser's commanding officer, Captain Eric Back, had invited wives and children aboard for the occasion. Meanwhile, more than 100 of the crew were ashore at a football match in Cromarty. Most of the rest of the crew were either tending to harbour duties or resting in messes.

The ten-year-old warship, H.M.S. Natal, had led a mostly uneventful life so far, save for escorting George V to India so he could attend the Delhi Durbar and be crowned Emperor. Her wartime service with the 2nd Cruiser Squadron had helped to throttle Germany's supply lines, but it was monotonous work.

But shortly before 3.30pm this Thursday, the ship flashed a terse signal, out of the blue: ***Ship on fire.***

The response around the Firth was almost immediate: *Send fire engines to Natal immediately.*

They never had a chance. Just one minute later, the cruiser Shannon reported: *Natal has turned over and has bilge keel showing.*

The fire had detonated either her main or secondary aft magazines – the ship's rear section was torn apart in an instant and the cruiser heeled to port and sank within five minutes.

A B Michael Fogarty was next to a ventilator by the funnels. "The next I heard was a rumbling noise and I saw a flame coming up the after hatchway which caught me, threw me in the air and I rolled along the upper deck," he recalled.

A jet of flame shot up – higher than Natal's masthead – before successive explosions doomed the cruiser.

Amazingly, given the cataclysmic explosion, Fogarty was one of more than 300 men who survived, almost all of them ratings, who were rapidly plucked out of the water by crews of tugs and warships which gathered around the wreck.

On the afternoon of the 30th December 1915, a party was taking place on board. This included Captain Eric Back, his wife, along with other officers and

wives, three nurses from the hospital ship '*Drina*' and civilians from the surrounding area, including the factor of Novar Estate and his family.

Capt Back and his guests were all killed; among the victims were the entire Dods family, including patriarch John Henry, a former Scottish rugby international. They were just about to depart Natal by launch when disaster struck.

The death toll is now estimated between 390 and 421, including more than 60 Royal Marines plus the ship's cat Rudolph, with the recovered bodies interred in the churchyard at Rosskeen.

After initial fears of a U-boat attack were ruled out, the Admiralty concluded that Natal was probably the victim of a cordite fire which spread to the magazine. A near identical explosion had ripped apart HMS Bulwark at Sheerness in 1914 and would vaporise battleship HMS Vanguard at Scapa Flow in 1917.

Natal's upturned hull was left for the remainder of the war before half a century of salvage and recovery attempts were made until the late 1970s. Today the wreck site is marked by a buoy.

Many years later, an eyewitness account appeared in the Dundee Courier which indicated that a huge yellow flame shot up over the masthead of the Natal. Two explosions followed, the ship listed to starboard, then gradually heeled to port and then sank.

The ship was salvaged in the late 1930's and then blown up as the wreckage was a danger to ships in the area. A buoy in the Firth marks the site of the sinking of the Natal. A memorial to HMS Natal was erected in 2015 on the shores of the Cromarty Firth (image below).





Above: The upturned hull of Natal in Cromarty Firth

Below: The Buoy marking the site of the wreck today.





The graves of the bodies that were recovered in Cromarty Cemetery which overlooks the site of the tragedy.

The body of 8389S Stoker Archibald Robert Caskie was not recovered and his death is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial - Panel 14 Column 2 (see photograph on page 2)

and the Hartlepool War Memorial (see photograph on page 4)

PART 2

6350396

PRIVATE ARCHIBALD ROBERT NATAL CASKIE



Name: Archibald Robert Natal Caskie

Rank: Private

Death Date: 24th Aug 1942 aged 26

Number: 6350396

Birth Place: Romford, Essex

Branch of Enlistment: Infantry

Theatre of War: Middle East

Regiment at Death: 5th Bn.

Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Cemetery: El Alamein War Cemetery

Grave / Memorial: XXV1. C. 11.

Private Archibald (aka Archie) Robert Natal Caskie was the son of 8389S - Stoker Archibald Robert Caskie referred to in PART 1 of this publication who was killed on the H.M.S. Natal on December 27th 1915, aged 30. When his father was killed, his mother Minnie was 7 months pregnant with him, so he never saw his son who was born exactly 2 months after his death. In memory of his father, she named him Archibald Robert **Natal** Caskie

It has not been possible to locate any records about how Private Caskie died or exactly where, but we know from the CWCG records that he died on the 24th August 1942, aged 26, and his grave is located in the El Alamein War Cemetery which is shown in the following pages. Grave reference is **XXVI. C. 11.**

At some point Archibald was assigned to the "Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. 5th Battalion.

In July 1942 the 5th battalion moved to Egypt with the 4th battalion where they were part of the 8th Army and took part in the Battle of Alam Halfa and the Battle of El Alamein.

There were two **battles of El Alamein** in World War II, both fought in 1942. The Battles occurred in North Africa in Egypt in and around an area named after a railway stop called El Alamein.

- First Battle of El Alamein: 1–27 July 1942
- Second Battle of El Alamein: 23 October – 4 November 1942

In addition, the Battle of Alam el Halfa (30 August – 5 September 1942), was fought between both battles and in the same location.

As Archibald was killed on the 24th of August 1942, one can only assume that it was during the above fighting that was taking place in the area when it happened.



Cap badge of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment worn by Archie in the photograph on the previous page.

In Memory Of

Private

ARCHIBALD ROBERT NATAL CASKIE

Service Number: 6350396

5th Bn., Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment who died on 24 August 1942 Age 26

Remembered with Honour

EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY

XXI. C. 11.



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

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Certificate



Grave reference for Archibald Robert Natal Caskie is **XXVI. C. 11.**

July, 1992. Age 21. XXV. H. 15.

CASHMAN, Cpl. JOHN H., 6287667. 'A' Sqn., 44th (7th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt.) Regt., Reconnaissance Corps. 24th October, 1942. Age 21. Son of John Henry and Elizabeth Cashman; husband of Beatrice Nellie Cashman, of Whitstable, Kent. XXIX. B. 20.

CASKIE, Pte. ARCHIBALD ROBERT NATAL, 6350396. 5th Bn. The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regt. 24th August, 1942. Age 26. XXVI. C. 11.

CASSERLY, Pte. BERNARD JOSEPH, 2888941. 1st Bn. The Gordon Highlanders. 23rd October, 1942. Age 32. Son of Bernard Casserly, and of Annie E. Casserly (*née* Daly), of Southgate, Middlesex. XXVI. H. 7.

Victoria, Australia. XVI. B. 23.

CATRAN, Lt. BERTIE BENTLEY SHAW, 23718. 21st Bn. N.Z. Infantry. 24th October, 1942. Age 26. Son of James George and Edith Muriel Catran, of Auckland City, New Zealand; husband of Aroha Edna Catran, of Auckland City. II. F. 19.

CAUSBY, Pte. WILLIAM HENRY, SX.14398. A.I.F. 2/43 Bn. Australian Infantry. 5th November, 1942. Age 22. Son of William Thomas Causby and Edith Florence Causby, of Gawler South, South Australia. A I. C. 25.

CAVANAGH, Dvr. STEPHEN, T/280492. R.A.S.C. 21st September, 1942. Age 31. Son of Cpl. John Scott Cavanagh, Saskatchewan Regt., killed in action in Belgium 6th June 1916 and

Extract from CWGC casualty list document

ORIGINAL

GRAVES CONCENTRATION REPORT FORM

Report No. 10/GCU/2/63 Schedule No. _____
Place of Burial EL ALAMEIN Map. Reference 8860 2946.
The following are buried here MILITARY CEMETERY

Apt. Lang. Expt.
20.4.43

REGIMENT	ARMY NO.	NAME AND INITIALS	RANK	DATE OF DEATH	PREVIOUSLY BURIED AT	RE-BURIED AT	DATE OF RE-BURIAL	PLOT	ROW	GRAVE
P.F.F., B.M.V. 2.B.F.	616	GARANDY	Sgt.	3.11.42.	10 GCU/2/101	Alamein	20.4.43	158	C	7. ✓
5/R.W.K.	6354313	BYHURST L.H.	Pte.	24.8.42.	NZGRU/400	"	"	26	C	1. ✓
6/Cheshire	4123060	PENNINGTON R.A.	L/Sgt.	4.9.42	" /397	"	"	26	C	2. ✓
65 Fd. REGT.	4698046	MATHER A.	Gnr.	10.9.42	" /397	"	"	26	C	3. ✓
Greys	409400	McNEIL J.	Tpr.	22.7.42	" /331	"	"	26	C	4. ✓
9.6.0.	317681	GIBBONS A.C.	S.S.M.	19.7.42	" /331	"	"	26	C	5. ✓
57 A.F. REGT.	1132470	MARGISON F.W.	Gnr.	5.9.42	" /401	"	"	26	C	6. ✓
R. A.	1100589	BECKS W.	Gnr.	5.9.42	" /399	"	"	26	C	7. ✓
		UNKNOWN	G/Off.	10.8.42	" /398	"	"	26	C	8. ✓
R. A.	1134027	CRANHAM E.C.	Gnr.	10.9.42	" /398	"	"	26	C	9. ✓
R. A.	951338	LIPMAN V.	Gnr.	10.9.42	" /402	"	"	26	C	10. ✓
5/R.W.K.	6350396	CASKIE A.R.N.	Pte.	24.8.42	" /400	"	"	26	C	11. ✓
R. E.	1880469	HACKETT A.H.	Spr.	21.8.42	" /399	"	"	26	C	12. ✓
R. E.	2120252	LUKINS G.	Spr.	21.8.42	" /399	"	"	26	C	13. ✓
D.L.I.	4457249	COILS C.	L/Cpl.	13.10.42	10 GCU/2/101	"	"	26	C	14. ✓
4/R.W.K.	6346466	RIDLEY C.A.	Pte.	17.9.42	NZGRU/402	"	"	26	C	15. ✓
R. A.	110698	PRENTIS J.R.	Gnr.	11.9.42	" /402	"	"	26	C	16. ✓

Interred with British Cem. Reg. 28.7.43 **✓ DENOTES CROSS REQUIRED.**

17393-WC25187/3063-10m-10/55-RE/BLd.-999/151

LY.

Graves Registration Report Form.

COUNTRY: EGYPT. REPORT NO. : _____ SCHEDULE No. : 438.
COMMUNE : _____
PLACE OF BURIAL : EL ALAMEIN WAR CEMETERY
Land belongs to _____
The following are buried here :— _____
Signature _____ Date _____

Certified complete and correct.

P.R.G.	No. and Rank	Initials, Name & Honours	Unit	Date of Death	For works use
<u>Gr.No.</u>		<u>PLOT XXVI ROW C (Continued)</u>			
7.	1100589 Gnr.	W.A. BECKS	107/Regt. Royal Horse Artillery, Royal Artillery	5. 9.42.	✓
8.	F/O.	UNKNOWN	R.A.F.	10. 8.42.	✓
9.	1134027 Gnr.	C.E. CRANHAM	65 Fld.Regt. R.A.	10. 9.42.	✓
10.	951338 Gnr.	V. LIPMAN	58 Fld.Regt. R.A.	10. 9.42.	✓
11.	6350396 Pte.	A.R.N. CASKIE	5/Royal West Kent Regt.	24. 8.42.	✓