

Marine Philip Gordon STILES

Service number PLY/X 104166
Royal Marines
Died on 8 August 1942, aged 20

In May 1941, Philip joined the Royal Marines in Plymouth. He finished his training on 25 July 1942, and came back to Wells to spend his embarkation leave with his family. While at home, he contracted peritonitis caused by a ruptured appendix and was taken to the Military Hospital at Combe Down, Bath. He died there on 8 August 1942, three days before his 21st birthday.



Philip in uniform

Photograph courtesy of Sue Macdonald and Michael Scammell, Philip's niece and nephew

Philip was born on 11 August 1921, to Edwin Russell Stiles and Elizabeth Emma née Hale. Edwin was a grocer and draper, and they then lived at 10, Town Hall Buildings, Wells.

In 1939 Philip was living with his widowed mother and his sister Betty at 18, Chamberlain Street.

On 14 August 1942, the *Wells Journal* reported his death:

The death occurred on Saturday, after a week's illness, at the Military Hospital, Bath, of Philip Gordon Stiles, aged 20, the younger son of Mrs. E. Stiles and the late Mr. Russell Stiles of Wells.

Philip was educated at the Wells Blue School where he proved himself a gifted scholar and a keen member of the Scout Troop. He gained his School Certificate and Matriculation and upon leaving school took up employment with Messrs Chalmers, Wade & Co., Chartered Accountants of Wells. He volunteered for the Royal Marines 15 months ago and had just successfully completed his training, being home on leave when suddenly taken ill. ... The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon at Wells Cemetery after a service at the United Church, Wells.

Philip is buried in Wells Cemetery, in Section B. Row T. Grave 20, with his father. He is also remembered on the rolls of honour at the Blue School and Wells Cemetery.

In addition to the details given by the paper, we know that he was a member of the United Church Sunday School, and of the swimming club. In 1938 he was Honorary Secretary of the newly created Minor Football Club and played for them alongside Maurice Whiting and Alfred Mallows, who also died in the war.



Philip in 1939

Photograph courtesy of Sue Macdonald and Michael Scammell, Philip's niece and nephew

His name was originally left off the Wells War Memorial and was not added to it until 2001, after the family had campaigned. Sadly, even then he was added to the Great War names by mistake.

His brother, Russell Stiles, was Mayor of Wells in 1971. Russell was a widower, and so his sister Betty was the Mayoress. Russell later remarried, and his wife, Christine, was Mayor of Wells in 1977.

We would like to thank Sue Macdonald and Michael Scammell, Philip's niece and nephew, for their help with this article. Gordon Scammell, Philip's brother-in-law, first told us Philip's story.