

“Cousin Connie”-The Mysterious Life of Constance Mary Greenwood

by William J. Anhorn Q.C. ICD.D

***ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



William J. Anhorn was born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree (Political Science) from the University of Calgary and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Alberta. He returned to his hometown of Medicine Hat in 1976 and practiced law for over 35 years as a Senior partner with the Law firm of Pritchard and Company. He retired in 2012 and he and his wife Joan Elaine Anhorn (Medlicott), a retired teacher, continue to reside there. Always having a keen interest in writing and more recently genealogy, this is one of a series of articles he has researched and written in relation to his family and his extended family (Anhorn/Medlicott/Williams/McIvor) and their family histories.

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*For other genealogical articles and others which you may find of interest go to his Personal Homepage by searching **William J Anhorn QC** or go to <http://wjanhorn.ca>*

Introduction

Constance Mary Greenwood was born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada on the 16th day of April 1920 and was the only daughter of Robert and Hannah Greenwood. “Aunt Hannahs’ ” maiden name was Williams. “Connie” was

the cousin of my wife's father, Norman Medlicott of Medicine Hat, Alberta and throughout our marriage she was an integral part of our family. Having never married, she was a regular guest at our home at the many family celebrations we had, whether it was Christmas or Thanksgiving or any other family get together. My fondest memories, with all the excitement surrounding Christmas, was to arrange to meet the Greyhound bus in Medicine Hat and to pick up "Cousin Connie" as she travelled from Calgary to Medicine Hat and either take her to our home or to my wife's parents home for the Christmas holidays. This was a ritual, which occurred for many, many years.



Constance Mary
Greenwood

She was very well read and extremely bright and everyone wanted her on his or her team for the annual after Christmas dinner "Trivial Pursuit" tournament.

Connie was a member of the Canadian Women's Army Corp during WWII [CWAC] and we often joked about her role during the war as a "resistance fighter" having parachuted into France behind enemy lines in the months before D-Day and working with the French Resistance fighting the Nazis prior to the invasion. Her role during the war was always a mystery to us, as she seldom talked about her "wartime" experience but when pressed she would say that she simply had "worked" in the laundry in England!

This was met with much amusement and some skepticism!

We were her only "real" family and we had many happy times together. As a lawyer, I arranged for her will to be executed by a partner of mine and was privileged to be appointed not only her executor but also her attorney in her Enduring Power of Attorney and my wife her Health Care Agent in her declining years. She died on the 17th day of November 2012 at Calgary, Alberta.

Most recently, following my retirement, I became interested in genealogy and began researching among other things my wife's family tree-Medlicott. I also endeavored to document the Williams side of the

family.¹ As noted earlier, Connie's mother was a Williams and her sister Helen was my wife's grandmother, having married Thomas Medlicott (my wife's grandfather and father of Norman). In documenting the Medlicott and Williams's family tree on Ancestry.ca, I came across an interesting and odd detail, which attracted my attention and as a result I decided to further explore the life and times of Constance Mary Greenwood.

I felt that there was a story here that had to be told.

Constance Mary Greenwood (1920-2012)

Constance Mary Greenwood apart from her service overseas in World War II (1941-1945) lived all of her life in Calgary, Alberta. She never married and following the war lived with her mother Hannah until her mother died in 1979. She was employed by The Unemployment Insurance Commission (Canada) as a Canadian civil servant. But there was not much information she shared with us about her early life in Calgary and her overseas activity during the war.

In researching the name Constance Mary Greenwood and using her year of birth (1920), a strange set of facts were revealed which only heightened the mysterious life of "Cousin Connie".

A Passenger Manifest indicated that in August 1942, Constance Mary Greenwood aged 22, travelled from Swansea, Wales to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada during the height of the Second World War. A male child aged 1 year named "Barrie" accompanied her.

A further Passenger manifest dated April 27th, 1944 indicated that both Constance Mary Greenwood and her child "Barrie" now aged 3 travelled by ship from New York City to Liverpool, England. This was only 37 days or so before the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

What would possess a young mother and infant child to cross the treacherous seas of the North Atlantic during the height of WWII with

¹ I have written various articles relating to my genealogical research which can be found on my personal homepage at <http://wjanhorn.ca>

the destination being Canada and then return only weeks before D-Day, one of the great turning points of the Second World War?

Rumors had persisted for years that while in England during the war that “Cousin Connie” had a relationship with either a British or Canadian soldier. Was it possible that Constance Mary Greenwood, who by all accounts, had never married, had a child out of wedlock? And what became of the child after the war? Who was this Canadian or British Soldier? Who was the father of “Barrie”?

As an amateur genealogist, the matter required further investigation!

UK, Outward Bound Passenger List for Constance Mary Greenwood-August 1942

In accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act of 1906, a passenger manifest was required to be maintained for all passengers on ships leaving the United Kingdom for destinations out of Europe, and not within the Mediterranean Sea. Cunard White Star Limited was a well-known passenger ship company and among its many ships was the “Cavina”.

According to a passenger manifest dated August, 1942, the Cavina departed the port of Swansea, Wales on August 9th, 1942 bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Among its many passengers was Constance Mary Greenwood, aged 22, who gave as her last address in the U.K. as “4, The Castle, Cross Stone, Todmorden, Yorkshire”. Her profession, occupation or calling as noted on the manifest was “H’ wife”. The country of future permanent residence was identified “Canada”. (see, Figure 3)

Aboard the ship and in the company of the young wife (?) and mother was a child noted as being aged 1 year of age and named ‘Barrie’ and identified in the manifest as “female”, although this latter detail may have been an error.

As a historical note, there is ample evidence that in the early years of the war with the risk of a German invasion of England imminent, that many civilians particularly children were evacuated to Canada. The

Transatlantic crossing was a treacherous one with most passenger ships travelling as part of a large convoy with British naval ships providing escort. It was not uncommon for these convoys to be attacked by German U-boats, which at the time had free reign of the seas. Was this perhaps the reason for this treacherous journey? But what about the declaration indicating an intention to take up permanent residence in Canada.

The Return to England²

In April 1944, another Cunard White Star passenger ship named “Rangitiki”³ left the port of New York, USA bound for Liverpool, England. Among its passengers were “Constance Mary Greenwood” aged 24 years and in her charge was a male child identified in the manifest by the first name “Barrie”. Her occupation was identified as “H.D.” and both identified their future permanent place of residence as “England” with the proposed address as “4, The Castle, Cross Stone, Todmorden, Yorkshire”.

Clearly, this was the same Constance Mary Greenwood who had only two years earlier travelled to Canada aboard the “Cavina”, with the stated purpose of taking up residence in Canada. Why the change of heart?

What had been the purpose and destination of the original trip to Canada? What were the circumstances of the return trip and the apparent desire now to take up permanent residence in England? Was she the same person we came to know as “Cousin Connie” or someone else who by an amazing coincidence had the same birth year and name? Who was the father of young “Barrie” and what, if any, was his connection to Canada? The plot thickens.

The Genealogical Investigation

² See the Ship Manifest Figure 4

³ The “Rangitiki” served as a troopship in World War II. It was withdrawn from service in 1947 to be reconditioned and re-engined. The ship resumed service in September 1948. It had accommodation for 430 passengers. Sister ships: Rangitane and Rangitata.

Drawing upon the resources of ancestry.ca and familysearch.org and other search engines available on the Internet, I was bound and determined to investigate and hopefully shed some light on this mystery.

Any investigation begins with determining or ascertaining the indisputable facts, preferably supported by documentary evidence. Then one must determine whether or not there is any rational connection between the facts. Then, we may make some reasonable assumptions or suggest or offer some plausible explanations and finally draw or establish a reasonable conclusion.

The indisputable facts:

- Constance Mary Greenwood (“Cousin Connie”) was born April 16th, 1920 and was Canadian by birth.
- Apart from her years overseas during WWII, she lived all of her life in Calgary, Alberta.
- She never married.
- Constance Mary Greenwood declared her age on the “Cavina” Manifest as aged 22, which based on the departure date (1942) would put her year of birth as 1920 or thereabouts.
- She gave her last known address as “#4, The Castle, Cross Stone, Todmorden, Yorkshire and she presumably was married as she gave her occupation as “housewife”.
- She proposed that her intended destination- Canada- was to be her permanent place of residence.
- The child accompanying her named “Barrie” was presumably her child as no other surname other than Greenwood was identified in the “Cavina” and “Rangitiki” manifests.
- The outbound port in 1942 was Wales and the destination port was Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- “Barrie” was identified on the “Cavina” manifest as being 1 year old which would have put his birth year 1941. He was identified in the “Rangitiki” manifest (1944) as being 3 years of age, which is also consistent with that birth year
- The address given in the “Rangitiki” manifest, as her British destination, was the same address given in 1942.

Based upon the foregoing, one can draw the following conclusions, without much fear of contradiction:

- a) The person identified as a passenger by the name of “Constance Mary Greenwood” was one and the same person in both the outward-bound trip to Canada in 1942 and the return trip to England in 1944 and that she was a British subject.
- b) There appears no logical connection between the Canadian born Constance Mary Greenwood and the Constance Mary Greenwood identified on the two ship manifests in 1942 and 1944, despite that during the same time period, “Cousin Connie” was in England as a member of the Canadian Army Women’s Corp. and that both were born in 1920 or thereabouts.
- c) “Barrie” was the child of the British Constance Mary Greenwood.

Who was this Constance Mary Greenwood? What were the circumstances surrounding her trip to Canada, ostensibly to take up permanent residence and the reason for the subsequent return to England two years later? What became of “Barrie Greenwood”? Who was his father and was there any Canadian connection?

Further research indicated that “Barrie” Greenwood was born on September 4th, 1941 in Todmorden, Yorkshire, England as evidenced by a birth record found on Ancestry.ca. This is consistent with the facts as identified earlier.

Further research indicated that the maiden name of his birth mother was “Grimshaw”.

A 1939 Census identified Constance Mary Grimshaw as being born on October 16th, 1919 and that the address in the 1939 Census was “#4, Castle, Todmorden, Yorkshire”. She was the daughter of Fred Grimshaw (b. 1892) and Lily Grimshaw [b.1892]. Lily’s maiden name was Cowie. They were married on July 16th, 1916 at Christ Church, Todmorden, Yorkshire. Constance Mary Grimshaw in 1939 was “single” and her occupation was that of “Printer’s Assistant”.

Constance Mary Grimshaw is later identified as being a registered nurse in 1940 having graduated from St Mary’s Hospital in Paddington, England although given the date of registration of her certification

(1937), this information appears to be erroneous and an unlikely clue, but nonetheless another remarkable coincidence.

A “Barrie Greenwood” married Vera Wraith and according to Voter registrations, they resided in Yorkshire in 1960 at 203 Rochdale Road and in 1962 at 139 Knowlwood Road , West Yorkshire. He appears to have passed away in July 1993.

Another “Barrie Greenwood” married Julia Berry in 1958.

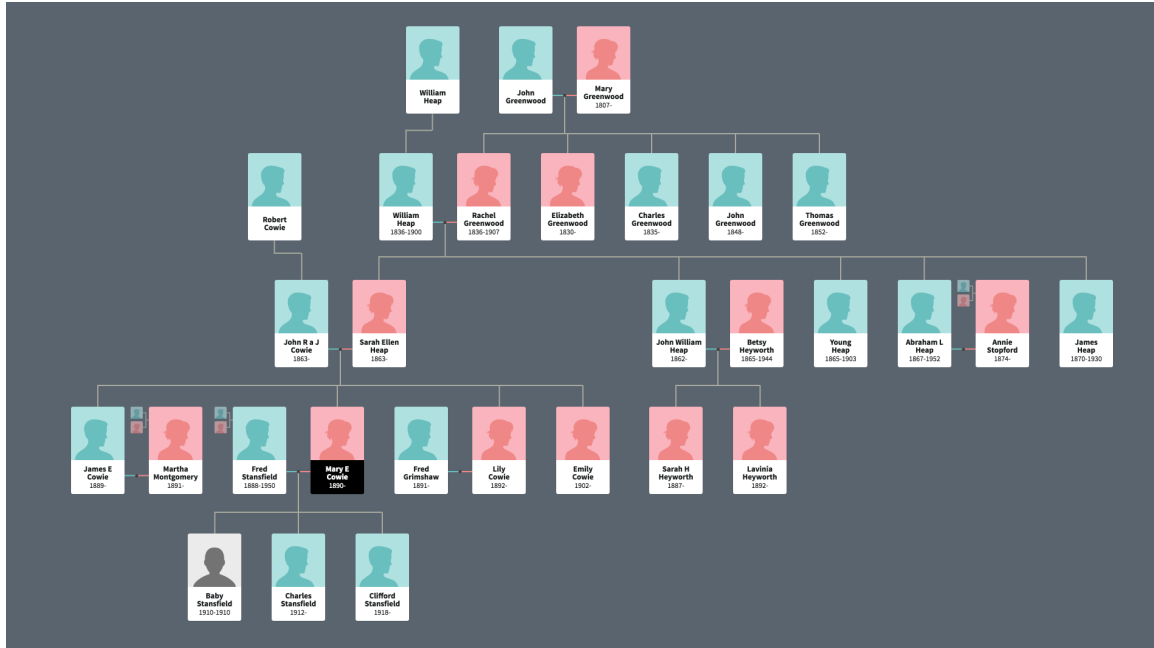
No other information is available regarding their status or family connections of either of these two Greenwoods nor have I been able to establish any connection to Constance Mary Greenwood.

Another Strange Coincidence

In researching the family history of Fred and Lily Grimshaw, I came across a family tree posted on ancestry.ca, which identified the antecedents of the Grimshaw family

John and Mary Greenwood had a child named Rachel (1836-1907) who married William Heap. They in turn had a child named Sarah Ellen, who married John Cowie. John and Sarah Cowie had a child named Lily who married Fred Grimshaw.

Although the family tree doesn't mention “Constance Mary Grimshaw” as being a child of Fred and Lily, it is somewhat of a strange coincidence that among the Grimshaw distant family members, there was a clear “Greenwood” connection. Below is a screenshot from Ancestry.ca of the Grimshaw family tree.



Further investigation of the Grimshaw family identified a 1939 handwritten census, which identified the family members. Note that the initial description of Constance Mary as “Grimshaw” but which later was crossed out and the surname “Greenwood” inserted. (Figure 1)

E.D. Letter Code **KOXO** Borough, U.D. or R.D. *Todmorden Municipal* Registration District and Sub-district *493-2*

ADDRESS.	SCHEDULE.		SURNAME AND OTHER NAMES.	O, V, S, P. or L.	M. or F.	BIRTH.		S, M, W. or D.	PERSONAL OCCUPATION.
	No.	Sub. No.				Day.	Year.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>4 Castle</i>	<i>285</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Grimshaw Fred</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>2 Dec</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Motor Driver. Heavy Work</i>
			<i>2 Grimshaw Lily</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>29 Sep</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid Domestic Duties</i>
			<i>GREENWOOD,</i> <i>3 Grimshaw's bankman M</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>16 Oct</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Printer's Assistant. Filler Press</i>
			<i>4 Khuswah Hamah M</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>30 Dec</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Bottom Weaver. Retired</i>
			<i>5 Clark Alexander</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>2 Dec</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sheet Metal Worker Ships Camp Maker. Retired</i>
			<i>6 Clark Amy</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>5 Nov</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Unpaid Domestic Duties</i>

Figure 1 -1939 Handwritten Census Form

Subsequent information from Susan Lord of the Calderdale Family and Historical Society indicates that "the 1939 registry was only made public in 2015 and any living person's name was blacked out and where people had married, the maiden name was crossed out and the married name entered". (Source: email 03/09/2018)

Clearly, Constance Mary Grimshaw had married sometime after the 1939 Census and before the journey to Canada in 1942 and that "Barrie" was, in all probability, a child of that marriage.

But to whom?

Wedding Bells in Todmorden

Further research revealed that Constance Mary Grimshaw married Eric Greenwood in Todmorden, Yorkshire in December 1939, which solved this part of the puzzle.



The screenshot shows a search result for a marriage record. At the top left, there is a blue arrow pointing left and the text "All Results". The main title is "Eric Greenwood" in large black font, followed by "in the England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage I" in a smaller black font. Below this is a thumbnail image of a document with a green "View" button overlaid on it. To the right of the thumbnail is a list of details:

Name:	Eric Greenwood
Date of Registration:	Oct-Nov-Dec 1939
Registration district:	Todmorden
Inferred County:	Yorkshire West Riding
Spouse:	Constance M Grimshaw

Figure 2 -Screenshot from Ancestry.ca Showing Marriage Record

But despite some diligent research, I have been unable to establish or document any other life events of either Constance Mary Greenwood or her spouse, Eric Greenwood.

As strictly a matter for conjecture, is it possible that young Eric was a casualty of WWII and that Constance Mary Greenwood thereafter lived a life of relative obscurity. An intriguing footnote to this hypothesis is that there are only two men identified as “Eric Greenwood” who were British casualties of the Second World War. (See Figure 6)

Furthermore, there were no Canadian war casualties by that name.

Perhaps there is another chapter to this story.

A Conclusion without a Complete Ending

Despite my best efforts in answering some of these interesting questions, there is a limit to such inquiries based upon the tools that are available on the Internet to the amateur genealogical enquirer.

I am pleased however with the amount of information which I was able to uncover and I am proud that I was able to shed some light on the mysterious “lives” of Constance Mary Greenwood. Perhaps there is still more information available somewhere out there and that someone reading this article will be able to establish that “Cousin Connie” did indeed parachute behind enemy lines in WWII and join the French resistance and fight the Nazis or that she otherwise made a valuable contribution to the war effort, even if it was just in the “laundry”.

Or that Constance Mary Greenwood and her husband Eric have their own unique love story, which has as yet not been told.

There is always hope that there is still a fascinating ending to this story, one that has yet to be written about the mysterious life of Constance Mary Greenwood!

As time goes on, my wife and I think about her often and continue to share the memory of our favourite relative- “Cousin Connie” Greenwood. Why was she our favourite relative? Simply put, we were happy to make a difference in her life and she made a difference in ours!

William J Anhorn Q.C. ICD.D

Screen Shot 2018-09-01 at 10:36:10 AM

M.V. " RANGITIKI " Port of Arrival LIVERPOOL Date of Arrival
 Line CUNARD WHITE STAR LIMITED. Whence Arrived NEW YORK.

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF **BRITISH** PASSENGERS.

(2) Port at which Passengers have been landed.	(3) NAMES OF PASSENGERS.	(4) CLASS. (Whether 1st, 2nd, Tourist or 3rd).	(5) AGES OF PASSENGERS.						(6) Proposed Address in the United Kingdom.	(7) Profession, Occupation or Calling of Passengers.	(8) General or Last Permanent Residence LIVERPOOL England	
			Adults 12 years and upwards.		Children between 1 and 12.		Infants					
			Accom- panied by husband or wife.	Not Accom- panied by husband or wife.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.				
VERPOOL	283. GILLESPIE Diana	Cabin			17				Browns Hotel, Dover St, London.W.I.	Student	U.S.A.	1
	284. GRANT Irene Maddison	"			29				6, Sutherland Ave, Orpington, Kent.	H. D.	"	1
	285. GREEN Edna	"				11			3, Moorburn Ave, Giffnock, Scotland.	Scholar	"	
	286. GARDNER Natasha Joan	"			13				Mount Hse Cott, Boston Spa, Yorks.	Scholar	"	1
	287. GOULT Jean Marion	"			18				21, Park Road, Ipswich, Suffolk.	H. D.	"	1
	288. GIBSON Margaret Allen	"			38				12, Harmony St, Belfast, N. Ireland.	H. D.	"	
	289. " Patricia	"			14				- do -	Scholar	"	
	290. GAFFIN Jessie L.	"			41				9b, Highgate Ave, Fulwood, Preston.	H. D.	"	1
1.	300. GREEN Rose	"			52				83, Further Green Rd, Catford, London, SE6	H. D.	"	1
1.	301. " Joan	"				10			- do -	Scholar	"	1
1.	302. GRIEVE Maureen	"			15				10, Burden Lane, Okeham, Surrey.	Scholar	"	1
2.	303. GUNN Marion Reid	"			27				242, Marfield St, Carntyne, Glasgow.	H. D.	"	
7.	304. GREENWOOD Constance Mary	"			24				4, The Castle, Cross Stons, Todorden, Yorks.	H. D.	"	1
7.	305. " Barrie	"			2				- do -	Nil	"	1
1.	306. GRAYSON Emily Olive	"			27				45, Leicester Road, Lewes, Sussex.	H. D.	"	1
1.	307. " Michael	"			5				- do -	Nil	"	1
3.	308. HEPBURN Patricia	"			27				Catterick, Yorks.,	H. D.	"	1

Figure 4 - 1944 Ship Manifest for the "Rangitiki" (edited)

1876. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Todmorden in the County of Lancaster

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
449	16 th July	Fred Grimshaw	25	Bachelor	Lawyer	2 Mark Lane	George Grimshaw (deceased)	Masterman
	18 th 1876	Lily Cowie	23	Spinster	—	22 Bar Street	John Robert Cowie	Blacksmith

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by license or after by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { Fred Grimshaw } in the Presence of us, { Fred Stansfield }
 { Lily Cowie } { Mary Elizabeth Stansfield }
 A. Hopson Vicar

1876. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Todmorden in the County of Lancaster

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
500	18 th September	Edward George Coleman	Fall	Bachelor	His Schoolmaster	Lancos Kettlewell School, Keighley	Thomas Coleman (deceased)	Head Schoolmaster
	18 th 1876	Florence May Thompson	Fall	Spinster	—	Nation House Todmorden	Charles Norman Thompson	Station Master

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by license or after by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { Edward George Coleman } in the Presence of us, { Edward David Cookerill }
 { Florence May Thompson } { Bertha Alice Crossley }
 A. Hopson Vicar

Figure 5- Marriage Certificate for Fred and Lily Grimshaw

Grimsdell, Benjamin W.	Lunn	Amersham	3 a	1717
Grimshaw, Audrey G.	Courtney	Malton	9 d	746
— Bertha	Yarwood	Bolton	8 c	880
— Charles E.C.	Grimshaw	Ormskirk	8 b	1800
— Charles S.	Oakley	Wolstanton	6 b	166
— Clifford	Ormerod	Blackburn	8 e	685
— Clifford	Harding	Burnley	8 a	444
— Constance M.	Cowie	Todmorden	9 a	342
— Dorothy M.	Hargreaves	N. Bierley	9 b	113
— Elizabeth	Mayhew	Warrington	8 c	354

Figure 6 -Birth Record of Constance Mary Grimshaw

GREENWOOD, Flying Offr. ASHTON LESLIE, 153831. R.A.F. (V.R.). 224 Sqdn. 14th November, 1944. Panel 206.

GREENWOOD, Sgt. ERIC, 987862. R.A.F. (V.R.). 236 Sqdn. 15th May, 1942. Age 27. Son of Hilda Greenwood, of Baildon, Yorkshire. Panel 84.

GREENWOOD, Sgt. ERIC GRENVILLE, 754268. R.A.F. (V.R.). 245 Sqdn. 21st October, 1940. Age 22. Son of Frank Percy and Florence Hilda Greenwood, of Leeds, Yorkshire. Panel 14.

GREENWOOD, Flying Offr. 978007

Figure 7 -WWII British War Casualties with the name Eric Greenwood

