



BRITISH LEGION-BAHAMAS



*Bahamian Contributions
to The World War I
&
World War II*



BAHAMIAN WORLD WAR I CONTRIBUTORS

*The Late Sir Etienne Dupuch, K.T., O.B.E.,
K.M., K.C.S.G., (Hon)LLD., D. Litt*

The Late Mary Moseley, M.B.E.

The Gallant Thirty



THE LATE SIR ETIENNE DUPUCH, KT., O.B.E., K.M., K.C.S.G., (Hon)LLD., D. Litt
ONE OF THE BAHAMAS' WORLD WAR I HEROES
RECOGNIZED WORLD WAR I HERO
BY
THE CARIBBEAN WEST INDIA COMMITTEE (LONDON)

Alfred Etienne Jerome Dupuch was born in Nassau to Leon and Harriet (nee Saunders) Dupuch on 16th February, 1899. He was a war hero, a political activist, and successful international journalist who upon leaving this world left his mark on the lives of many.

Born to be both a leader and a war hero, the British Legion-Bahamas Branch gives its highest Military Salute to The Late Sir Etienne Dupuch, who was its past Honorary Founder and President, for his military contributions in both World Wars I and II.

Sir Etienne Dupuch answered the military call of King George V in 1915 when all young men between the ages of 18-21 living in the British West Indies were given an opportunity to volunteer themselves to fight for the Crown. At the time of this military call, Sir Etienne applied for the 1st Bahamian War Contingent at the age of 16. On his first attempt to join the Army, he was rejected on the basis of being too young in age and too small in physical stature. However, he was determined to succeed in his war-joining efforts. One year later in 1916, at the age of 17, although still too young, his persistence won out and he was accepted into the 5th Bahamas War Contingent to serve in the British West India Regiment. He was assigned to Europe on the eastern and western fronts of France and served on the Sahara Desert where he almost died of pneumonia due to blistering hot temperature during the day and freezing cold at night.

Sir Etienne served his time well in World War I leaving with the rank of Private. His commanding officer wanted him to remain a little longer so that he could leave with a higher rank. However, as anxious to return home as he went to war, he decided to reject the flattering offer and returned home as Private Dupuch with his Victory Medal for his military service.

Upon his return from the War on 1st April, 1919, Sir Etienne was given the awesome responsibility by his eldest brother of taking on yet another challenge – the editorial position at "The Tribune," which was founded by his late father Leon in 1903.

Sir Etienne was an exemplary War Hero, the hard work in his war efforts did not go unnoticed and he was greatly rewarded for the contributions he made in both World Wars. He had the rare distinction of having been honoured by the Governments of Britain, the Vatican, and Haiti. His honours included three (3) Knighthoods – Knight Bachelor by Queen Elizabeth for his social work, Knight of the British Association of the Knights of Malta for public service in The Bahamas, and Knight Commander of the Ancient Order of St. Gregory the Great by Pope Pius XII for his work in the field of Education and charities. He was made an Officer of the Order of Toussaint L'Ouverture of Haiti for services performed as that country's Honorary Consul during World War II.

THE BRITISH LEGION-BAHAMAS BRANCH SALUTES
THE LATE SIR ETIENNE DUPUCH, WWI VETERAN

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM*WE MUST REMEMBER HIM 
(Above Information was taken from the Bahamas Handbook, 2003
and interviews with members of the Dupuch Family.)



THE LATE MISS MARY MOSELEY, M.B.E. (1878 – 1960)

Mary Moseley was the daughter of Alfred Edwin Moseley and was also the granddaughter of Edwin Charles Moseley, who founded the Nassau Guardian. She became Editor and Manager of the Nassau Guardian following the death of her father in 1904. In 1907, she became owner of the business. Mary was not only a businesswoman during an "era" when most women her age were mandated to become housewives and home makers, she was determined to make a difference not only in The Bahamas but also in the World through her War Relief Efforts during the Great War. (*Information taken from Archives Exhibition -The Bahamas during the World Wars 1914-1918 & 1939-1945 Booklet issued February, 1985.*)

It was during 1914 that Miss Moseley left The Bahamas for England to offer her assistance to the Great War Relief Efforts. During her time in London, she was asked to form the Ladies' Committee of The West Indies, Bahamas Chapter. The West Indian Ladies' Committee was established in 1915 in London as the women's wing of the war sub-committee. HRH Princess Marie Louise, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, was Royal Patron of the Ladies' Committee. (*Information taken from the West India Committee Website on The Great War.*)

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BELGIAN RELIEF FUND DURING WWI

The British Legion-Bahamas Branch salutes Miss Mary Moseley for her War Relief Fundraising Efforts towards WWI. Miss Moseley was Chairperson of the Belgian Relief Fund in Nassau. The Fund was used to assist the unfortunate Belgian people who had been overrun, tortured, and killed by Germans during the War. Members of the Bahamian community at that time had many fundraising events such as concerts and other activities to send funds to aid Belgians. It was through her work with this Fund that she raised thousands of Pounds for the Belgian War Relief Effort. (*Information taken from Archives Exhibition -The Bahamas during the World Wars 1914-1918 & 1939-1945 Booklet issued February, 1985.*)

It was after the War in 1918 that King George V instituted the "Honour System" in London and Miss Moseley was presented the M.B.E. (Member of The British Empire) Award for her outstanding work on behalf of the men who served in the arm forces from the West Indies.

After the War, Miss Moseley returned home to The Bahamas and became a charter member of the I.O.D.E. (Imperial Order of the Daughters of The Empire-Bahamas Chapter), which was established in The Bahamas in 1901. Life Membership was bestowed upon her for the outstanding work she did within that Organization. Her contribution to journalism and documentation of Bahamian History was immense through both War and Peace. (*Information taken from Archives Exhibition The Bahamas during the World Wars 1914-1918 & 1939-1945 Booklet issued February, 1985.*)

The British Legion-Bahamas Branch salutes Miss Mary Moseley during this 100th Anniversary of the Ending of WWI for her tireless charitable work between 1914-1918 known as the years of the Great War.

WE WILL REMEMBER HER...WE MUST REMEMBER HER WORK





(Photograph provided by Captain Paul C. Aranha-Bahamian Historian/relative of Private George Aranha in photo taken in 1915.)

During 1915, King George V had granted permission for volunteers to be drafted from the British colonies. The establishment of the British West Indies Regiment was introduced during that year and recruitment of volunteers began. The call was made to The Bahamas and other Caribbean colonies to join the War. The very first group of volunteers, thirty in number, underwent preliminary military training before they were dispatched for more extensive training in Jamaica. On 9th September, 1915, the first Bahamian Contingent left Nassau in a sloop called "VARUNA" for Jamaica.

The March Song entitled: "Our Bahamian Boys" was written in 1915 by Austin Destoup for the first Bahamian Contingent. It was played for the first time by the Police Band and sung for the first time by the "Gallant Thirty" as they marched along East Street to Rawson Square prior to their departure from Nassau to Jamaica. (Information under above photograph taken from the Department of Archives -The Bahamas during The World Wars 1914-1918 & 1939-1945 Exhibition Booklet issued February, 1985.)



First Bahamian contingent leaving to join the British West India Regiment in 1915. (The schooner TELLER was lent by the Honourable House of Assembly to take the contingent to Jamaica. He later received the A.B.E. and was presented by the Bahamas Legislature with a piece of plate).



(Photographs provided by Captain Paul C. Aranha-Bahamian Historian.)

The "Gallant Thirty", The First Bahamian Military Contingent, paraded before a large crowd gathered on East Street through Rawson Square prior to their Departure on a sloop called "VARUNA" on 9th September, 1915, for further military training in Jamaica. (Information under above photographs taken from the Department of Archives -The Bahamas during The World Wars 1914-1918 & 1939-1945 Exhibition Booklet issued February, 1985.)



The First Contingent Known as 'The Galant Thirty' **(1915-1918)**

Included:

1. William Fletcher Albury
2. William Thompson
3. George Aranha
4. George Maurice Cole, Jr.
5. Irwin Simon Bain
6. Holbreton William Brown
7. Origen Hermas Mason
8. John Demeritte
9. Frederick Clement Cornelius Lightbourn
10. Sydney Cuthbert Farrington
11. James Roderick Taylor
12. Hersal Stanley Hall
13. Robert Livingston Atwell
14. Charles Bain
15. Matthew Armbrister
16. Charles Percival Bethel
17. Artie Kemp
18. Reginald Walters Wood
19. Harold Darent Bascome
20. Frederick Flowers
21. Awstin Vincent Roberts
22. Arthur Henry Fountain
23. James Bain
24. George Hubert Johnson
25. Charles Bethel
26. Alfred Dean
27. Henry Archibald Roach
28. John Williams
29. Bruce Marshall Maura
30. James Henry Knowles





WWI
CONTRIBUTOR
WITH BAHAMIAN
CONNECTION

*Tribute to The Late Captain Lionel Rees,
Wing Commander, VC, OBE, MC, AFC,
RAF Helwan, Egypt. (1942)*





Wing Commander Lionel Ree

Wing Commander Lionel Ree, VC was born in a small town called Caernarfon, Wales in 1884. (*Rees VC...The first of the original Few: By Alister Williams (Author)*)

Considered to be the most decorated British Military man of his era, Captain Lionel Ree, VC, flew aircrafts when the Great War (WWI), which began in 1915. He was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps where he bravely fought enemy aircrafts. It was on 1st July, 1916, at the height of battle, during WWI, he was shot in the thigh and saved many of his own military company, civilian men, women, and children on the ground. Due to his bravery, he was awarded the Victoria Cross Medal, the highest military medal at that time. He also served as the Military Advisor to King George. (*The Tribune Article by Diane Phillips dated Tuesday, 2nd July, 2019*).

Bahamian Connection: After his service in WWII, he sailed to the Bahamas and fell in love with a young Bahamian woman of colour from Mangrove Cay, Andros. Her name being Sylvia Williams, the daughter of Alexander and Mary Williams of Pinders, a small settlement near Mangrove Cay, Bahamas. It was on 12th August, 1947, they married. Within the next five years, they reproduced three children (Ailean Lionel, Aline, and Olvin). During the early 1950s, Captain Rees became ill with leukemia and on the 28th September, 1955, at the age of 71, he passed away. (*pages No.294-297, "Rees VC...The first of the original Few:" By Alister Williams (Author)*).

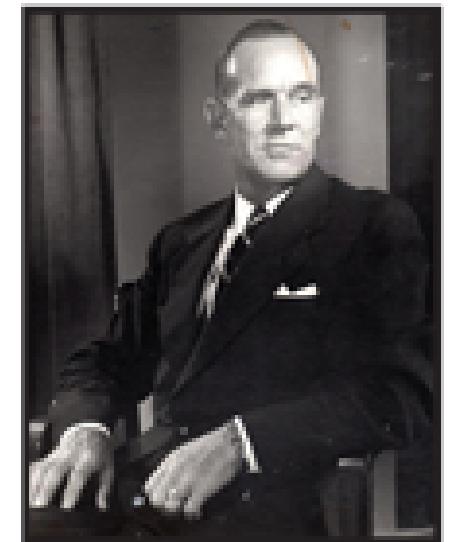




WWII
CONTRIBUTOR
WITH BAHAMIAN
CONNECTION

*Tribute to The Late Air Mechanic John
Croft Bates*





The Late John Croft Bates - Royal Air Force Air Mechanic

The British Legion-Bahamas Branch salutes the Late John Croft Bates – Born in London, England and served with Royal Air Force as an Air Mechanic. He was stationed on the island of New Providence at the Royal Air Force Base in Oakes Field during the conflict.

John met a lovely Bahamian young lady named Alice Patricia Maura, daughter of WHH Maura and Kathleen Butler. They had three children – Peter, Richard, and Wendi.

(Ref.: Information provided by son: Peter Bates)





TRIBUTES TO BAHAMIAN WWII ROYAL AIR FORCE

The Late Squadron Leader David Lester Brown, D.F.C.

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant George Moseley

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Fane Solomon

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Roy Solomon, FLEET/AIR/ARM

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant John Maura

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Warren Lightboum

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Phillip Farrington

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Geoffrey Paget, D.F.C.

The Late Air Flight Sergeant Peter Stratton

The Late Air Flight Sergeant Wilbur H. Jordan

The Late Sergeant Hartis Thompson

The Late Warrant Officer Basil Lawrence Ivan Johnson, C.B.E., D.F.M.

The Late Warrant Officer Ivor Thompson

The Late Warrant Officer Norman Aranha

The Late Warrant Officer John Maillis

The Late Radar Officer Edwin Brownrigg

(Ref: Names taken from Wall of Remembrance-Bahamas Veterans Cemetery, Infant View Road-Bahamas)





The Late Aircrew Flight Lieutenant Warren Maurice Lightbourn

Service No: 119573 - Service: Royal Air Force Volunteer

Aircrew Flight Lieutenant 119573, Royal Air Force Pilot, Warren Maurice Lightbourn, was born in September of 1919 to Maurice and Ida Lightbourn of Nassau, Bahamas. Maurice, before World War II, had owned a photography studio on Frederick Street in Nassau, Bahamas. ([Out Island Boy Website posted on 18th April, 2014](#)).

It was in 1945 on Valentine's Day, Warren was killed when his airplane was shot down. What is known is recorded in a WWII Pilot website known as Caribbean Aircrew in the RAF during WW2, where his Military profile could be found and where he is laid to rest. A small excerpt from the website details as follows...

"Aircrew Flt Lt Warren Maurice, LIGHTBOURN

Service No: 119573 Service: Royal Air Force Volunteer

Trade/Branch: Pilot Squadron(s): 610 Sqn

Station/Unit/Ship: B.78 Eindhoven

Group: 127 Wing Command: 2TAF

Nationality: Bahamas / Disposal: KIA / Age 25 years / Date Died: 14 Feb 1945

Aircraft 1: Spitfire XIV"



Buried At: Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Germany

Grave/Memorial: 1.A.15

May His Soul Rest In Peace.



The Late Warrant Officer Norman F. Aranha



605705 ARANHA, Norman F.
Dorothy Aranha
William N. Aranha
Crown Lands Officer



(Above Photographs were provided by Mr. Paul Aranha, Brother)

Let it be known that **605705 WARRANT OFFICER, NORMAN F. ARANHA**, served in the Royal Air Force, during World War II, as an Air Gunner on B-24 Liberators, in Burma, Malaya, and Siam. He was a part of the Liberator crew of the first plane to land in Singapore after the war ended. (*Information provided by Paul Aranha*).





The Late Flight Lieutenant John Maura

Royal Air Force Volunteer

The British Legion-Bahamas Branch salutes the Late Flight Lieutenant John Maura of the Royal Air Force, who was born in the Bahamas on 29th May, 1915. He was initially stationed in the South of Britain where he trained as a Flight Training Officer, among his other military duties. In the latter part of the War, he flew bombers, specifically the "Spitfires".

He was stationed in Gibraltar, North Africa, and Italy before returning to the United Kingdom and then finally home to Nassau.

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM.

Ref: Information was provided by the Maura Family)





The Late Warrant Officer John Maillis

Royal Air Force 1915-1987

John Chrysostom Pericles Maillis was born on the island of New Providence in the City of Nassau on 10th May, 1915. He was the first-born son of Pericles John Maillis and Kalliope P. Maillis.

When the call for duty to defend Crown and Country was made in the Bahamas 1939, John was one of "The Gallant Five" the first five (5) Bahamian young men to volunteer for the Royal Air Force (R.A.F.) in October, 1940. He served as a Royal Air Force Fighter Pilot in England and was posted to the South East Asia Command in India where he served for a period of three (3) years. He also saw serious air combat action on the India, Burma front against the Japanese.

He survived three (3) airplane crashes during the War and returned home to his native Bahamas thereafter. He was honoured and heavily decorated by the British Empire for his bravery.

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM.

(Ref.: Information provided by his Daughter, Mrs. Mary Moreel)





The Late Air Flight Lieutenant George Winthrop Sargent Moseley

Service No: 114927 Service: RAF Pilot, 305 (Polish) Squad.

The British Legion-Bahamas Branch salutes the Late Flight Lieutenant, George Winthrop Sargent Moseley, Royal Air Force Pilot who served during World War II. Born in Nassau, Bahamas, on 15th March, 1919, George was the son of the Late Daniel Sargent Darling Moseley and the Late Myrtle Howard Moseley. . [\(Ref.: An Article provided by George's niece, Elizabeth Lou Moseley\).](#)

George was born to be a War Hero and served in the Royal Air Force as an Aircrew Flight Pilot until his airplane was shot down by anti-aircraft fire near Wesel, Germany on Sunday, 26th November, 1944. Sadly, George was only 25 years old and was buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Germany next to his navigator, Flight Sergeant Kingsley Osborn George Nugent of Antigua, aged 22. [\(Ref.: An Article provided by George's niece, Elizabeth Lou Moseley\).](#)



Grave of The Late Air Flight Lieutenant George Winthrop Sargent Moseley
Buried At: Reichswald Forest War Cemetery- Germany

May His Soul Rest In Peace.





The Late Radar Officer Edwin Brownrigg - Royal Air Force

The British Legion-Bahamas Branch salutes the Late Radar Officer Edwin Brownrigg, RAF, who served as a wireless operator in Gander, Newfoundland, during WWII. His task was to guide allied bombers across the Atlantic. (Ref.: Information provided by son, Robin Brownrigg).

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM.





The Late Squadron Leader David Lester Brown

Royal Air Force Tour of Service 1940-1944 – Service No. 1089885

Born on 2nd December, 1915 to Captain and Mrs. Willard Brown of Nassau, Bahamas, David Lester Brown was born to become the most decorated World War II Bahamian of his era.

When the call was made to defend Country and King, Lester, as he was affectionately called by his family and friends, was one of the first five (5) Bahamian young men to volunteer. This group of courageous young men were known as the "Gallant Five." The others in this group were Fane Solomon, John Maura, John Maillis, and Ivor Thompson.

War Training and Military Career: He trained at Sywell on "Tiger Moths" and took his advance training at Oxford and did operational flying on "Blenheims" at Biscester. He first saw military action when he bombed enemy ships off the East Coast of England. He was then sent to Egypt and North Africa and further flew from West Africa to the Sudan and then up the Nile to Cairo, Egypt.

After his military African flying Operations, Lester returned to the United Kingdom and rejoined his Flying Unit, Group 2 flying the B.25 Mitchell Bombers and he was able to take part in the invasion of France and Germany, which is known as the **Battle of Normandy** in June, 1944. Due to his military distinguished efforts in this Battle, he was recommended by his Wing Commander to be awarded the **Distinguished Flying Cross (D.F.C.)**. It was during this Flying Operation, Lester led Wings of 54 aircrafts over France and Germany.

Upon completion of his three (3) Military Operational tours of duty, Lester returned to the Bahamas and was posted in Nassau as a Flight Commander and instructed experienced pilots to fly "Mitchell Bombers." In late 1944, the Duke of Windsor, Governor-General of the Bahamas at that time, appointed Lester as his Aide-de-Camp (A.D.C.), a position Lester held for twenty-three (23) years.

Military Decorations include: Distinguished Flying Cross; Air Crew Europe Star (France and Germany clasp); North Africa Star with 8th Army Rosette; Burma Star; Defence Medal; and Victory Medal.





Basil Lawrence Ivan Johnson, C.B.E., D.F.M.

Service No. 1396487
Royal Air Force Flight Engineer/Pilot
RAF Service Tour: 1941-1947

Basil Lawrence Ivan Johnson was born into humble beginnings in Hay Street (West), Grants Town, on the island of New Providence on the 1st February, 1920. He was the fifth child and fifth son of the Late Robert Bruce Johnson and Florence Ethel Johnson (nee Weech). ([Ref.:156squadron.com Website](#)).

Basil Lawrence Ivan Johnson, C.B.E., D.F.M., left Nassau, New Providence on the 31st August, 1941 to travel to England to join the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserves (R.A.F.V.R.). He had volunteered and been selected by the Committee for the War Effort who were answering the call from the RAF for volunteers from the colonies on the heels of the Battle of Britain.

Training, drilling and studying followed his arrival in England and he initially passed out as an aircraft-man First Class on ground crew and was then promoted to a skill fitter for engines again on ground crew. Johnson's ambition was to become a member of the aircrews and he continued to study to achieve his dream. In February, 1943 he re-mustered as a flight engineer in a seven-man aircrew. Also, on 23rd February he qualified as an air gunner and a bomb aimer in the aircraft and was promoted to Flight Sergeant.

Johnson's first assignment was a short one with 115 Squadron between April – May 1943 before he and the others in his aircrew volunteered and were selected to be members of the elite Pathfinder Force of 156 Squadron, 8th Group of Bomber Command.

Johnson's 156 Squadron was based at Warboys Air Force Base in Cambridgeshire. His aircrew was headed by the legendary Royal Australian pilot Frank Slade. The Pathfinder Force aircraft were the first aircraft to bomb targets putting themselves in danger and highlighting the bombing targets for the bombers behind. Johnson's aircrew flew in a Lancaster and at a time when aircrew casualties were extremely high, his crew survived.

In April, 1944 Flight Sergeant Johnson was awarded the *Distinguished Flying Medal* (D.F.M.) for his resourcefulness and unfailing efficiency, one of only two (2) Bahamians in World War II to be decorated. He had completed thirty-six (36) bombing operational flights against the most heavily defended targets in Germany.

In June, 1944, shortly after the "D" Day invasions in Normandy, Johnson completed his fifty (50) operations. He was awarded his Pathfinder badge and was the lone representative of the Bahama Islands and carried the colony's flag in what was the world's largest Victory Parade in London in June, 1945. He was promoted to Warrant Officer and flew as a flight engineer with Transport Command No.45 Group until 1947 when he demobilized from the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserves.

After further studies, Johnson returned home in November, 1949.

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM.

(Reference: Information provided by his Daughter, Ms. Felicity Johnson)





TRIBUTES TO WWII BAHAMIAN ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Leonard Thompson

The Late Air Flight Lieutenant Gordon Mather

The Late Petty Officer William H. Claridge

The Late LAC Maurice Kelly

The Late CPL Harold Adderley

The Late AC Henry Saunders

The Late AC Creighton Albury

Ref: Names taken from Wall of Remembrance-Bahamas Veterans Cemetery, Infant View Road-Bahamas



The Late Flight Lieutenant Leonard Maurice Thompson



Royal Canadian Legion
(Bahamian WWII Hero)

Leonard Maurice Thompson was born in Hope Town, Abaco, on 17th June, 1917, and in his memoirs, he observed that one day as a young boy everyone was given a holiday to watch the first seaplane land in Hope Town Harbour. It was on that day, young Leonard decided to become a future pilot. [\(Ref: 2013 Article in The Abaconian\)](#).

When war broke out in Britain in 1939, Leonard Thompson felt it his duty to offer his services in the war effort. He travelled to Canada where he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Volunteer to protect King and Country. [\(Ref: 2013 Article in The Abaconian\)](#).

After a while, he was posted to Elementary Flying Training School. In 1942, he finally earned his wings. He was then posted overseas along with thirteen (13) of his classmates of whom, sadly, only three (3) returned at the end of the war. While flying as a bomber pilot for the Royal Canadian Air Force, Flight Lieutenant Thompson was shot down over Germany and detained in a prisoner of war camp for eighteen (18) months. Fortunately, he survived the ordeal and was happily returned to Abaco to join his new wife and young son. [\(Ref: 2013 Article in The Abaconian\)](#).

The Government of The Bahamas on 7th July 7, 2016, formally named the Marsh Harbour International Airport in his honour.



LEST WE FORGET

BRITISH LEGION-BAHAMAS

