

PHILIP THOMAS HAYHOW (Parachute Regiment)



In undertaking research as part of the 75th anniversary of VE day, the following entry was discovered in the Wood Norton School Logbook, written by the Head Teacher, Miss Miriam J. Hunt, on the 21st April 1943:¹

News that Sergt. Philip Hayhow, a scholar of this school, has won the Croix de Guerre for “much courage and fearless action”. He is a parachutist.

Philip Thomas Hayhow was born in 1918, most probably in Stibbard,² the youngest of three sons born to William and Edith Hayhow.

William Hayhow and Edith Mary Symonds married on the 29th September 1914, in Stibbard parish church.³ William was aged 30, and from Blackburn; Edith was aged 24 and from Stibbard. William’s occupation given on the marriage certificate was ‘fireman and motor instructor’. Their eldest son, James Symonds Hayhow was born in 1914,⁴ and their second son, William E Hayhow was born in 1917;⁵ both were born in the Blackburn district. In 1939, William and Edith Hayhow and their son James were at Old Grove Farm, Guist Bottom, Stibbard, with Edith’s widowed mother.⁶ Their other son, William Hayhow, was employed as an Assistant Engineer at St. Michael’s Buildings, Public Assistance Institution, Cawston Road, Aylsham (formerly the Aylsham Workhouse).⁷

Philip Thomas Hayhow was a parachutist with the 2nd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, service number 5774445. A letter received by the Under Secretary of State at The War Office, dated 11th April 1943, enclosed a citation from Colonel Schmeltz for the award of Croix de Guerre with bronze star (see Figure 1).⁸ The Croix de Guerre, a French military decoration, could be awarded to honour those who fought with the Allies in WW2. The bronze star is awarded to those who were mentioned at the Regiment or Brigade level.⁹

¹ Wood Norton School Logbook 1916-1952, Norfolk Record Office (C/ED 2/84).

² FreeBMD, Quarter to June 1918, Walsingham, Vol. 4b, p. 350 (www.freebmd.org.uk).

³ Marriage Register 1914, Stibbard (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁴ FreeBMD, Quarter to September 1915, Blackburn, Vol. 8e, p. 561 (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁵ FreeBMD, Quarter to March 1917, Blackburn, Vol. 8e, p. 465 (www.freebmd.org.uk).

⁶ 1939 England and Wales Register, Walsingham RDC, Enumeration District TSBN, Schedule 56 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁷ 1939 England and Wales Register, St. Faith’s and Aylsham RDC, Enumeration District TRUW, Schedule 1 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

⁸ The National Archives, WO 373185/27.

⁹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croix_de_Guerre_1939%E2%80%931945 and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croix_de_Guerre.

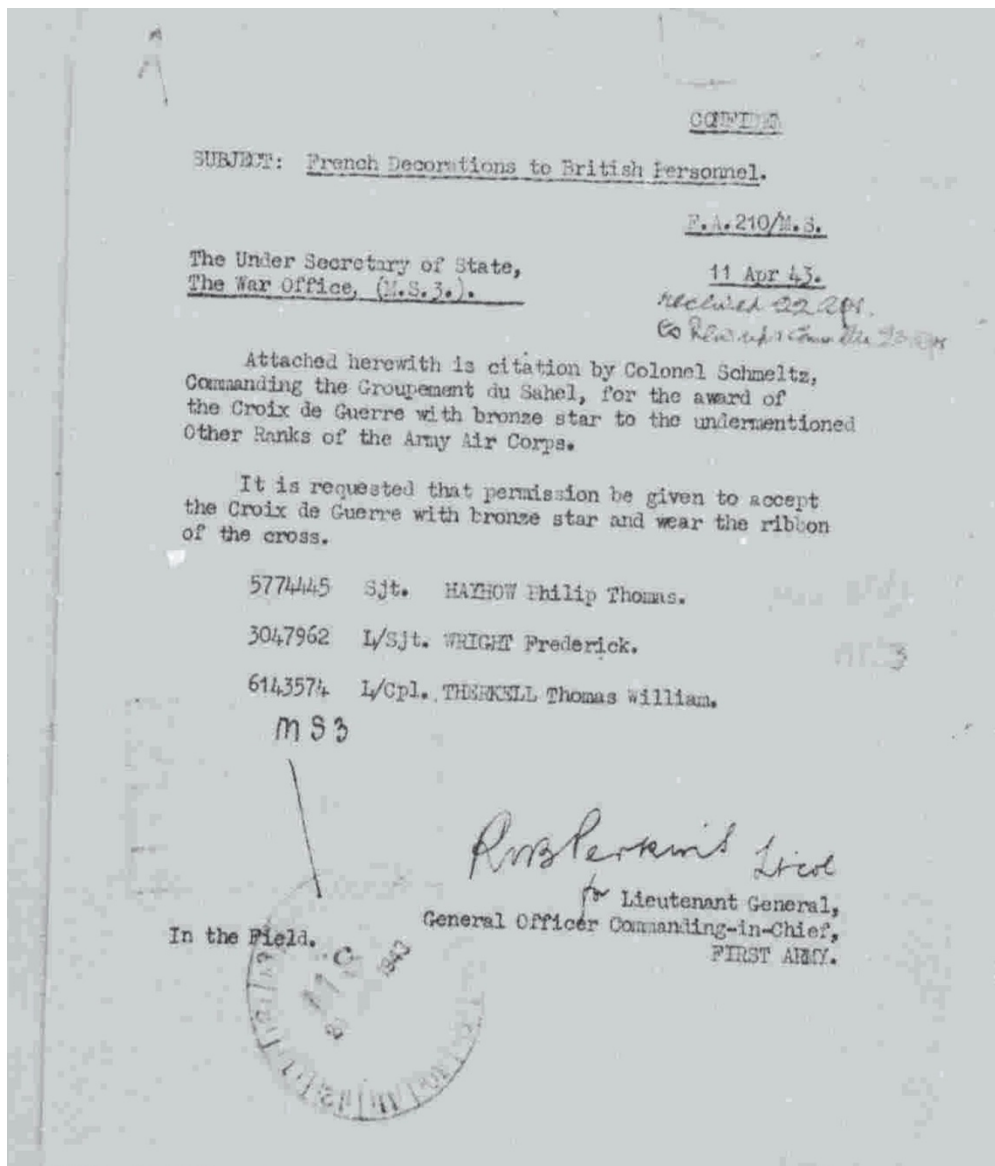


Figure 1: French Decorations to British Personnel – Philip Thomas Hayhow

The accompanying citation gives the date that Sergeant Philip Hayhow was awarded the Croix de Guerre – the 11th February 1943:

“A ris part avec beaucoup de courage et de sang froid au coup de main du 11 fevrier 1943, dans le Secteur de KSAR BOU KRISS, au cours duquel furent fait prisonniers trente-quatre italiens.”

Cette citation comporte l'attribution de la Croix de Guerre avec étoile de bronze.

Philip was most probably involved in the campaign in North Africa, when he and two other men from the 2nd Battalion Parachute regiment – Corporal J. Wright and Lance Corporal T.W. Therkell – were awarded the French honour for their courage involved in the capture of thirty-four Italians.

In 1943 he is recorded as bearing the rank of Acting Sergeant when he was wounded on the 14th July 1943 whilst taking part in the Allied invasion of Sicily,¹⁰ codenamed *Operation Husky*. The invasion began on the night of 9th-10th July 1943 with an amphibious and airborne operation, followed by a six-week land campaign, ending on the 17th August 1943. It initiated the Italian Campaign, which saw the Italian leader, Benito Mussolini, toppled from power and the way opened for the Allied invasion of Italy.¹¹

On the 9th September 1944, Philip received an Emergency Commission (valid only for the duration of the war) as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, Parachute Regiment.¹²

Philip appears to have married twice: firstly Freda M. Carr in 1939,¹³ and secondly Olive May Smith in 1945¹⁴. In 1950, Philip is recorded as living with his wife, Olive, at 5 Park Crescent, Sunningdale, Berkshire.¹⁵ Philip died in November 1957, aged 39.¹⁶

¹⁰ British Army Casualty Lists 1939-1945 (www.findmypast.co.uk).

¹¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allied_invasion_of_Sicily.

¹² UK, British Army Lists, 1882-1962 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹³ FreeBMD, *Quarter to September 1939, Norwich Outer, Vol.4b, p.467* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁴ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1945, Spalding, Vol.7a, p.1161* (www.freebmd.org.uk).

¹⁵ Berkshire, England, Electoral Registers, 1840-1965 (www.ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁶ FreeBMD, *Quarter to December 1957, Aldershot, Vol.6b, p.13*; England and Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995 (www.ancestry.co.uk).