

## LT. PIERS RICHARD EDGCUMBE (1914-1940)

March 2021

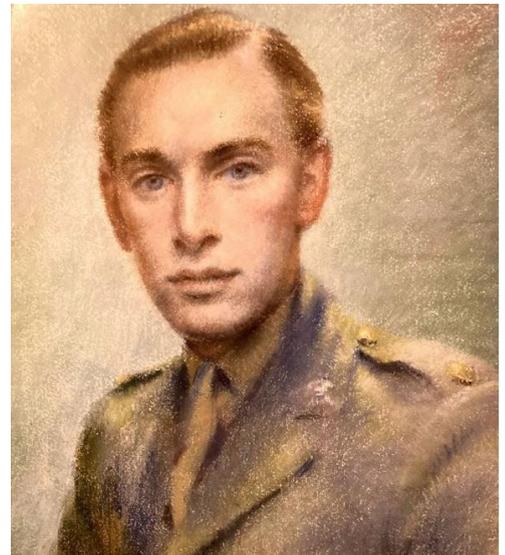
**Lieutenant Piers Edgcumbe #2378** on the web family tree served with the 12th Royal Lancers in the British Expeditionary Force in France in 1940. In May that year he and **Lance Corporal Webber** were tasked with reporting the Nazis' position so as to protect our retreating troops. Both were killed when their armoured car was blown up by a German 88mm shell in Esquelbecq, northern France a few miles from Dunkirk. Lance Corporal Webber was identified and given a marked grave but Piers' body was hastily buried in a roadside grave before being exhumed and reburied beside his compatriot in the town's cemetery some 18 months later, under a headstone which simply said A SOLDIER OF THE 1939-1945 WAR AN OFFICER and recorded his date of death as 27th May 1940

Recently, following 17 years of investigation by **Andrew Newson** and others it has been established to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that the occupant of that grave is indeed Lt. Piers Edgcumbe so he is now to be given a headstone which accurately marks his final resting place.

Piers was the only son and heir of **Kenelm William Edward Edgcumbe the 6th Earl of Mount Edgcumbe (1873-1965) #793** and **Lady Mount Edgcumbe, Lilian Arkwright (1875-1964), #794**, great great granddaughter of **Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-1792) #14476** the famous textile innovator and industrialist. The family home was Mount Edgcumbe on the Rame peninsular but Cotehele, built between 1385 and 1565 and largely unaltered since, also in Cornwall, belonged to the family and was given to the National Trust through the National Heritage Memorial Fund in 1947 by Kenelm and Lilian as a war memorial to their son. Piers' sword and a memorial plaque are on the wall in the chapel at Cotehele.

FOOTNOTE Piers' older sister, **Lady Hilaria Gibbs (1908-2009) #792** was my second mother-in-law, and a very fine person she was too.

Anthony Cobbold



*Lt. Piers Edgcumbe*



*Piers' headstone for 80 years*