

SETTANTA VITE IMMORTALI



Olgiate Olona - 26 giugno

Percy Charles Nicholls and Irene Amelia Nicholls reunited

**The unpublished historical truth:
British victims Albert John Palmer and Percy Charles Nicholls were not identified**

Olgiate Olona, June 2010

MESSAGE OF PERCY CHARLES NICHOLLS' RELATIVES

On June 9, 2010 this message written by Sophie Marchand from Switzerland was received in Olgiate Olona with great surprise: *"Hi, my name is Sophie and I live in Geneva (Switzerland). My grandfather died in the crash of TWA 891 on the 26 June 1959, Percy Charles Nicholls (Nick). In February this year, Nick's wife, my grandmother, Irene Nicholls passed away. As a mark of remembrance of the lives of my grandparents, our family (including Nick's son and daughter) will be travelling to Olgiate Olona on the 19th-20th June as my grandmother final wishes was to be reunited with her husband Percy: we will carry her ashes with us. Unfortunately my grandmother nor her children never had an exact address of the crash site nor his grave site, and had no knowledge of the 1964 memorial or the recent service of remembrance. After viewing your facebook group, we would like first to thank you for this act of remembrance for the lives lost in the crash and would be interested in any further information you may have of my grandfather. (...) Thank you again. I don't know how can I and my family thank enough all the involved persons have done to remember the victims of this plane crash. I just told my mum Jennifer Ann Marchand what you found out about Percy, I can tell you that we are all in tears here! But good one! We are so happy. We would be very happy to come to your town to meet you. (...) I have to admit that we are really experiencing an intense emotion, because fifty years have passed and I personally have never known my grandfather, but these researches have opened up a hole in my heart and in the hearts of my mother and my uncles: it is difficult to interpret in writing!"*.

RECONNAISSANCE OF VICTIMS' BURIAL NICHE

After having received the message, in the second decade of June 2010 Alberto Colombo kept in touch with the relatives of Percy Charles Nicholls, in order to organize their welcome to Olgiate Olona and to check the feasibility of their wish. Thanks to the precious and friendly collaboration of Gaetano Carbonara and his funeral service company *Caccia*

Services, Alberto Colombo contacted the managers of Cemetery Services of Municipality of Busto Arsizio who confirmed the impossibility of placing Irene Amelia Nicholls' ashes in the same tomb containing the remains of Percy Charles Nicholls; as an alternative they proposed the possibility of placing the ashes of Irene Amelia Nicholls and the remains of Percy Charles Nicholls together in a new cell. For this purpose, the Cemetery Services of Busto Arsizio planned to perform the reconnaissance of the burial niche located in the E7 archway. The reconnaissance was performed on June 17, 2010 afternoon in the presence of the necrophore of Municipality of Busto Arsizio Emilio Lualdi and his staff, the owner and employees of *Caccia Services*, and Alberto Colombo that was delegated by Percy Charles Nicholls' family. And this operation led to an unexpected discovery which revealed a historical novelty.

In fact after opening the burial niche of E7 archway containing the remains of four victims of plane crash of June 26, 1959, the following content was detected: two small boxes made of zinc - supposedly manufactured in the Nineties - marked with the only indication "TWA", and a big zinc coffin manufactured in the Fifties carrying a metal plate with the inscription "*Nicholls Percy Palmer Albert*".

The contents of the small zinc boxes were proved to be the remains of U.S. spouses Michael Martino and Corinne Martino who were moved into the niche on July 3, 1997. The contents of the big zinc coffin - opened with difficulty - baffled everyone present, aware of the impossibility of finding in that casket the remains of two dead cited by the metal plate. Without going into details, the zinc coffin object of the reconnaissance turned out to be the casket marked with number "67" in 1959 and defined "*casket with human remains*" by the judicial Authority, that one containing body parts belonged to several victims of the plane crash of June 26, 1959 and not related to anyone of them in particular.

THE UNPUBLISHED HISTORICAL TRUTH: BRITISH VICTIMS ALBERT JOHN PALMER AND PERCY CHARLES NICHOLLS WERE NOT IDENTIFIED

So, the reconnaissance of burial niche of E7 archway of cemetery of Busto Arsizio performed on June 17, 2010 unveiled an unpublished historical truth about the plane crash of June 26, 1959; a historical truth known by very few people who never revealed it; a historical truth that only the reconnaissance of the burial niche located in the cemetery of Busto Arsizio could reveal: two British colleagues perished in the plane crash of Olgiate Olona, Albert John Palmer and Percy Charles Nicholls were never identified.

Rather there's more: when the casket numbered "67" was moved to a new location in the cemetery of Busto Arsizio, the zinc coffin inside was not opened - somebody was well aware of its content obviously, although this was unknown to all the people - then it was placed in the burial niche of E7 archway in the identical condition it was in 1959; on June 17, 2010 the content of this coffin was the same of 1959 and it re-proposed dramatically to the people present at the reconnaissance a "snapshot" of the horrifying hell where the coffin was prepared more than five decades before.

REARRANGEMENT OF THE BURIAL NICHE AND SEPULTURE OF IRENE AMELIA NICHOLLS

On June 17, 2010 the discovery of such historical truth caused two immediate consequences: the impossibility to reunite the mortal remains of Percy Charles Nicholls and his wife Irene Amelia Nicholls whose relatives were reaching Olgiate Olona; properly replace the content of the zinc coffin in the same burial niche.

Animated by competence and deep sense of humanity, the responsible of Cemetery Services of Municipality of Busto Arsizio provided to keep the content of the reconnaissance of the niche in the mortuary of the cemetery available for a visual check by the family of Percy Charles Nicholls.

Percy Charles Nicholls' relatives reached Olgiate Olona in the evening of June 18, 2010. Percy's daughter - Jennifer Ann Marchand, Sophie's mother, living in Switzerland - and son - Jeremy Nicholls, living in Canada - were leading the group.

On June 19, 2010 morning Alberto Colombo explained the situation, the outcome of the reconnaissance and the historical truth emerged to the relatives of Percy Charles Nicholls.

In the meantime Gaetano Carbonara of *Caccia Services* on behalf of Nicholls family was taking care to complete the bureaucratic procedures to place the ashes of Irene Amelia Nicholls in a cell of the cemetery of Busto Arsizio on that same day, and municipal necrophore had arranged to relocate the content of the zinc casket in a new coffin.

Having decided not to perform a visual check of the content of the burial niche, on June 19, 2010 the relatives of Percy Charles Nicholls together with Alberto Colombo attended the repositioning of the mortal remains of four victims of the plane crash in the niche of E7 archway and the subsequent sealing of the tomb; then they attended the burial of Irene Amelia Nicholls' ashes. The tombstone over the cell says: "*Irene Amelia Nicholls (1920-2010) wife of Percy Charles dead in the plane crash of Olgiate Olona 1959*".

After the stop at the cemetery of Busto Arsizio, on June 19, 2010 Percy Charles Nicholls' relatives still accompanied by Alberto Colombo were welcomed by mayor Giorgio Volpi at the town hall of Olgiate Olona; they visited the memorial in "via 26 Giugno" street and then they had lunch all together.

The day after the visit to Olgiate Olona and Busto Arsizio, Sophie Marchand sent this message: "*I wish to thank you sincerely for your welcome on June 19, 2010. Thank you once more for all your help and efforts to reunite Irene Amelia and Percy Charles together. I'm happy to know that they both rest in the same place now. I spent a wonderful day, your telling about the tragedy of the air crash filled me with emotions. I never knew my grandfather, but thanks to your research, your book, he is part of my life for the future. I hope to meet you very soon and thank you again for everything*".