# William Ernest Barnes



**Rank: -** Private

**Number: -** 1520621

**Regiment: -** Pioneer Corps.

**Died: -** 30th September 1945. Age: 26 years.

**Cemetery:** - Munster Heath War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany 2.D.9.

William Ernest was born on 12 February 1919 the son of William Edward and Alice Barnes nee Morton who had married on 4 July 1903 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall. William Ernest was the youngest of their four children, Gildford was born in 1904, May 1907 and Richard 1915.

In 1939 the family was living at 69, Hillside Terrace, Upper Batley Lane, Batley and his father was a stone mason whilst William Ernest was working as an assistant for a firelighter manufacturer.

In September 1939, Works Labour Companies were formed from Reservists. A month later, these were grouped together to form the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. In November 1940, the unit was renamed the Pioneer Corps. Heavier engineering work remained with the Royal Engineers, but the light engineering tasks of the Pioneer Corps included building anti-aircraft emplacements on the Home Front, working on the Mulberry harbours for D-Day, and serving during beach assaults in France and Italy. Pioneers also carried stretchers, built airfields, repaired railways, and moved stores and supplies. (AMPC).

Munster Heath was on the line of the Allied advance across northern Germany in 1945 but the majority of those buried in the cemetery died while serving with the Army of Occupation after the German surrender. Munster Heath Cemetery contains 589 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.

RESTING WHERE NO SHADOWS FALL, IN GOD'S KEEPING HE AWAITS US ALL

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial and was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group