Ernest Wilfred Brothwell



Rank: - Private

Number: - 4541397

Regiment: - Green Howards (Yorkshire Regiment) 6th Bn.

Died: - Killed in Action 28/07/1943 Age: 25 years.

Memorial: - Cassino Memorial, Italy Panel 6.

Ernest Wilfred was born on 31 January 1918 the son of Isaac and Ruth Emily Brothwell nee Jackson who had married on 23 July 1910 at St. Thomas's Church, Batley. Jack was born in 1912 and Wilfred in 1918. In 1939 the family lived at 105, Taylor Street, Batley with his maternal grandmother Annie Jackson who died that year.

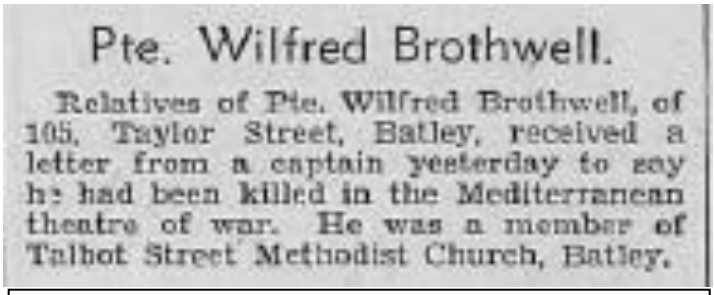
Ernest Wilfred attended Talbot Street Methodist Church.

It is not known when Ernest Wilfred joined the 6th Battalion Green Howards but they were sent to France with the 7th Battalion in April 1940. These soldiers are very inexperienced and were only sent to France to help construct aerodromes.

They are not equipped for fighting and it was expected that they would return to England in June to complete their training. The Germans invaded Holland and Belgium in the early hours of 10 May 1940 and as they advanced the Battalions were drawn into the battle. On the 17 May they are ordered to take up positions South of Arras, on the Canal du Nord. At 5 pm, with the enemy approaching, they are instructed to blow up the bridges over the canal. On the 19 May both Battalions withdraw from the Canal du Nord. Just over a month ago the 6th Battalion were a group of inexperienced soldiers but now they are in the thick of the fighting knocking out enemy tanks and driving off a concentrated attack at Gravelines. They are then called on to help defend Dunkirk. Between the 29 and the 31 May they are engaged in continuous attacks. They were evacuated on the 31 May at 6pm.

The 6th Battalion was then placed in the 50th Northumberland Division and took part in Western Desert Campaign, Tunisian Campaign, Sicily Campaign

On July 10, 1943, the 50th Northumbrian landed in Sicily in Avola, under the command of the XIII British Corps. On the 16th of July, the 151st Infantry Brigade seized the strategically important bridge of Primosolo on the Simeto River.



Pte. Wilfred Brothwell.

Relatives of Pte. Wilfred Brothwell, of 105, Taylor Street, Batley, received a letter from a captain yesterday to say he had been killed in the Mediterranean theatre of war. He was a member of Talbot Street Methodist Church, Batley.

Batley News, 14 Aug 1943

The Allies invaded the Italian Mainland on 3 September 1943. It is not known exactly where Ernest was killed but the Cassino Memorial commemorates over 3,100 Commonwealth servicemen who took part in the Italian campaign and whose graves are not known.

Ernest 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