William Chamberlain



Batley News, 10 Mar 1945 (photo)

Number: - 2884710

Rank: - Private

Regiment: - Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion

Killed in Action: - 20 February 1945 aged 28 years

Cemetery: - Rheinberg War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany 12.D.22

William (Bill) was born in Thornhill Lees on 3 February 1917 the son of Thomas and Lucy nee Wood who had married on 6 July 1912 at Dewsbury Parish Church. His siblings were Millicent 1919, Pryce 1921, Richard Musgrave 1922, Mary 1924 and Gordon 1929. In 1939 when the census was taken, he was working as a glass sorter but before he enlisted in 1940, he was working as a conductor on the

Heavy Woollen District buses. He was a member of Thornhill Lees Working Men's Club. Bill married Muriel Hartley in early 1940 who was a shop assistant living at 2, Smithies Lane, Birstall.

In 1940 he joined the Forces and was sent to France and was in the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940. In August 1940 the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders were reformed and they were sent to North Africa and Sicily. Bill was twice wounded and had malaria. They returned to Britain and landed in Normandy on D- Day 6th June 1944 and fought alongside the 2nd Battalion through France, Belgium, the Netherlands and then Germany.

An officer wrote to his wife: -

"Your husband was a member of a party laying lines to one of our companies which was attacking an enemy position just outside Goch. He went off with the two other chaps in his party and I saw them off at about 5.30 in the morning. They all knew it was vitally important to get through, since by so doing many lives would be saved. The Company was surprised and when we took the position later your husband was found just out-side the building where the enemy were. They had so very nearly finished the job. For nearly a week before your husband was killed".

Bill was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal

We cannot find any memorial where he is remembered.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group