William Durkin





Rank: - Private

Number: - 4692981

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1st Bn.

Died: - Died of Wounds, 14/07/1943 Age: 23 years

Cemetery: - Syracuse War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy IV. G. 2.

Batley News, 14 Aug 1943; 21 Aug 1943 (photo)

William was born on 2 Sep 1919, Batley Carr the son of Joseph and Hilda Durkin nee Turton who had married in 1915. Ann was born in 1916. In 1943 the family lived at of Blackburn's Buildings, Trinity Street, Batley Carr. His sister Annie was a munitions worker and his father had served in the Great War and was a past secretary of Batley Carr Working Men's Club and was associated with the Batley Irish Democratic League Club.

William was educated at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School, Batley and attended St. Joseph's Church and was formerly caretaker at the Catholic Young Men's Club. He worked in the finishing department of Messrs. J.T.& J. Taylor's, Cheapside Mills, Batley.

The 1st Battalion, a Regular Army unit, was serving with the 15th Infantry Brigade, alongside the 1st Battalion, Green Howards and the 1st Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment, and was sent to France in 1939, as part of 5th Infantry Division. In April 1940, with the brigade, the battalion was sent to Aandelsnes, Norway where they saw service as part of "Sickleforce" in the Norwegian Campaign and earned its first battle honour "Kvam" before it was evacuated on 1 May / 2 May. A period of training followed, with the battalion spending time in Scotland, Lancashire and Northern Ireland. In January 1942, the battalion commenced training for tropical service and moved to Poona, India. It was then decided to train for desert warfare and so the battalion was moved to Iran and then the Canal Zone for further training. The battalion next saw action in July 1943 during the Allied invasion of Sicily, and later the Allied invasion of Italy.

Sicily was invaded on the 10 July 1943. On 13th July 1943, 3rd CLY lead 4th Armoured and 15th Infantry Brigade through Villasmundo, Carlentini, Lentini, capture the Primosole bridge spanning the River Simeto and on to Catania. This is where William was probably wounded and he died on 14 July of his wounds.

R.I.P.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity, Batley Carr, Lychgate Memorial and Batley War Memorial



Researched by members of
Batley History Group