Ralph Fleming





Rank: - Warrant Officer Class II (S.S.M.)

Number: - 7894009

Regiment: - Royal Armoured Corps, 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars.

Died: - Killed in Action 02/09/1944 Age: 28 years

Cemetery: - London Cemetery and Extension, Longueval, Somme, France Plot 13. Row G. Grave 46.

Batley News, 16 Sep 1944 (photo)

Ralph was born on 13 Aug 1916 in Hanging Heaton, Batley the son of Albert and Ellen Fleming nee Beaumont who had married in 1913. Morris was born in 1913 followed by Ralph, May 1919 and Frank 1923-1938. The family lived at 58, Bromley Street, Hanging Heaton. Ralph attended Ebenezer Methodist Church, Hanging Heaton and was a keen sportsman. He was

educated at Batley Grammar School and later worked as a clerk in the Batley Borough Treasurer's Office before joining the Forces around 1940. Ralph married Dorothy Bentham of 32, Little Fountain Street, Morley in 1940.



KILLED IN FRANCE

Member of Batley Borough Treasurer's Staff

Squadron Sergt.-Major Ralph Fleming (28), 8th Hussars, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Fleming, 58, Bromley Street, Hanging Heaton, and whose wife lives at 32, Little Fountain Street, Morley, was killed in France on September 2nd.

Born in Hanging Heaton and educated at Batley Grammar School, he was a clerk in Batley Borough Treasurer's Department before joining the Forces nearly five years ago. He fought with the Eighth Army from Alamein to Tunisia and returned home in November last year.

He attended Ebenezer Methodist Church and was a keen sportsman. A brother and sister serving are Gunner Morris Fleming, R.A., and Lance-Corpl. Mary Fleming, A.T.S.

Ralph Fleming.

Ralph fought with 8th Army from Alamein to Tunisia. On its return from North Africa, the regiment was re-equipped with Cromwell tanks and retrained at West Tofts Camp near Thetford in Norfolk. In November 1943, the regiment became the Armoured Reconnaissance regiment of the 7th Armoured Division. On 9 June 1944, they were aboard a convoy leaving Bumper Quay in Gosport at 11am, bound for the Normandy beaches. Having been delayed several days by bad weather, they landed at Le Hamel on Gold Beach and leaguered up at Sommervieu near Bayeux. Going into action almost immediately they began taking casualties at Granville Crossroads, Livry in the fighting around Villers-Bocage. From 11–30 June, the 8th was involved in the advance through the Bocage with the 22nd Armoured Brigade. They were involved in action against the 2nd Panzer Division, with the 8th leading their division out of the bridgehead. On 30 June, they handed over their positions to tanks from the US 2nd Armoured Division and withdrew for a rest and a refit of the tanks. They also fought heavily around Briquessard and took a full part in Operation Goodwood and a number of other smaller engagements. The 8th pushed German forces further and further back, taking part in the actions to close the Falaise pocket (12-21 August) suffering more casualties of men and tanks. Reinforced by a squadron from the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, they pushed back through France.

Ralph was killed in action on 2nd September 1944.

Ralph is remembered with Honour at Batley Grammar School, Batley War Memorial and was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group