Michael Forde





Rank: - Private

Number: - 4691117

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

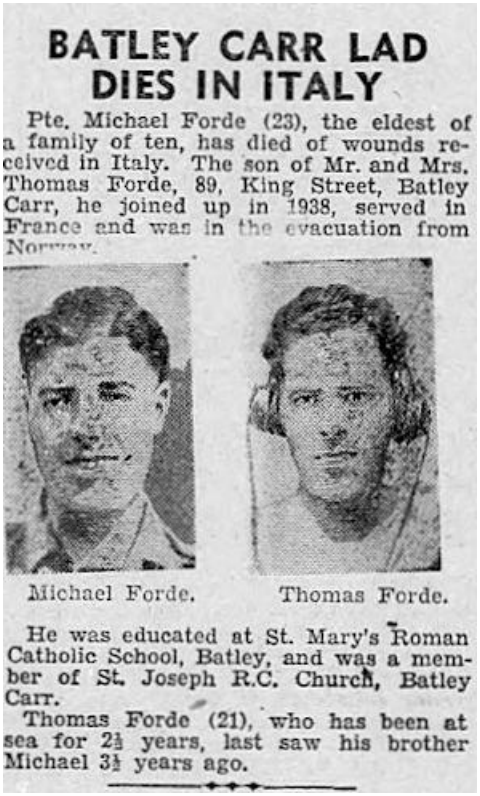
Died: - Died of Wounds, Italy. 22/01/1944 Age: 23 years

Cemetery: - Minturno War Cemetery, Italy I, K, 3.

Batley News, 12 Feb 1944 (Acknowledgements, photo)

Michael was born in 1920 the eldest son of Thomas and Agnes Forde nee Buckley who had married in 1919. Thomas was born in 1921 followed by Annie 1924, Bernard 1926, Helen 1929, John1934, Mary Sheila 1936, Patricia Ann 1939, Bernadette 1942 and Terence 1943. In 1939 the family was living at 87/89, King Street, Batley Carr. Thomas was working as a builders' skilled labourer.

Michael was educated at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Batley and was a member of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Batley Carr. Michael joined the Army in 1938.



BATLEY CARR LAD DIES IN ITALY

Pte. Michael Forde (23), the eldest of a family of ten, has died of wounds received in Italy. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Forde, 89, King Street, Batley Carr, he joined up in 1938, served in France and was in the evacuation from Norway.

Michael Forde. Thomas Forde.

He was educated at St. Mary's Roman Catholic School, Batley, and was a member of St. Joseph R.C. Church, Batley Carr.

Thomas Forde (21), who has been at sea for 2½ years, last saw his brother Michael 3½ years ago.

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. Progress in southern Italy was rapid despite stiff resistance, but by the end of October the Allies were facing the German winter defensive position known as the Gustav Line, which stretched from the river Garigliano in the west to the Sangro in the east. Initial attempts to breach the western end of the line were unsuccessful and it was not until the 17 January 1944 that the Garigliano was crossed and the Minturno was taken two days later. The site for the cemetery was chosen in January 1944 but the Allies then lost some ground and the site came under German small-arms fire and could not be used again until May 1944.The burials are mainly those of the heavy casualties incurred in crossing the Gariliango in January. The cemetery contains 2,049 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.

"GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY GHOST"

Michael was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group