# John Peter Gallagher



**Rank: -** Lance Corporal

**Number: -** 3393864

**Regiment: -** East Lancashire Regiment 1st Bn.

**Died: -** Killed 11/09/1944 Age: 22 years.

**Cemetery: -** Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerpen, Belgium II. D. 2.

John Peter was born in 1922 the son of James and Margaret Gallagher (nee Gavaghan, m. 1910) of Batley. Mary was born in 1910, Frank 1913, Theresa 1916, Annie 1919, John, Nephew of Miss Annie Gallagher, of Batley.

In April 1940 the 1st and 4th East Lancashires, both of 42nd Division was sent to France. On 10th May 1940 the "Phoney War" came to an abrupt end when Germany invaded Belgium and Holland. The BEF advanced into Belgium but the Allied front rapidly collapsed before the German 'blitzkrieg' and the British force,

were obliged to make a number of withdrawals. Ordered back from ne defensive line to the next, amid scenes of growing chaos, the four Lancashire battalions fought a number of delaying tactics at Tournai, on the Escaut, at Lannoy and at Rousbrugge before reaching Dunkirk. Here they took up defensive positions to cover the evacuation of the BEF.

At the end of June 1944, the 1st and 5th East Lancashires were in Normandy, with the 53rd and 59th Divisions respectively. Both East Lancashire battalions were deployed into the close bocage country west of Caen, with the 1st Battalion holding a succession of defensive positions in an exposed salient at Cheux, Grainville and Bougy. On the 11 August the 1st East Lancashires advanced south from the Orne against the neck of the pocket, capturing the little town of Bois Halbout on the 12th August then exploited to just west of Falaise. On 19th August when encirclement of German forces in the Falaise pocket was completed the battle for Normandy was over. The 1st East Lancashires joined in the pursuit across France, fighting several actions against enemy rearguards north of St. Pol 4-6 September, before taking part in the clearance of the vital Antwerp docks, 9th-13th September. John was killed on the 11th September 1944.

ON WHOSE SOUL, SWEET JESUS, HAVE MERCY. R.I.P.

John 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