Marie Hemingway



Photo courtesy Bill Berry

Aircraftwoman 2nd Class 486532 Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Died 19/12/1943 Aged 20. Dewsbury Cemetery Cons. Sec. E. Grave 305.

Marie was born on 31 July 1923 the daughter of Robert Bowling and Jeanette Hemingway nee Stothard who had married at St. John's Church, Balby in September 1912. Edward was born in 1913 followed by Norah 1915, Dennis 1918-1919, Robert S (Bob) 1921 and Marie. The family lived at Inglenook, Wilson Wood Street, Batley Carr. Her father, Robert died in 1931.

Marie attended Warwick Road Council School and Batley Carr Parish Church and before she joined up in June 1943 was a member of the Civil Defence Ambulance Service. She worked at Joshua Ellis and Co., Batley Carr Mills.

Marie was stationed at RAF Rufforth and went into York to a dance at York Railway Institute on Saturday 19 December 1943. She left the dance hall at about 9.30pm to catch a bus to Rufforth. It was a dark and rainy night, and it thought she fell down a flight of stairs where she was found at about 10pm.by two dancers. At first it was thought she had fainted and was carried back into the hall. Her sister pointed out at the inquest that 2 hours had elapsed before she was taken to hospital and 40 minutes for a military ambulance to arrive. The pathologist said the fracture was so severe that there was no chance of saving her life and she died shortly after she was admitted to hospital. Those who had

tried to revive her would not have noticed the fracture because of the thickness of her hair.

Her brother, Bob, at this time was a prisoner of war on the Indonesian island of Ambon and knew nothing about her death until after the war. His own written account of the terrible conditions' is now in the Imperial War Museum, London, and can be seen on application to the Department of Documents.

Marie was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal. She is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity, Batley Carr, Lych Gate Memorial; Royal Air Forces Association Club, Batley; York Minster WAAF Book of Remembrance (contains 18,000 names).



Thanks to Bill Berry