Alfred Lockwood





Rank: - Sergeant

Number: - 4685738

Regiment: - York and Lancaster Regiment, The Hallamshire Bn.

Died: - Died of Wounds 26/06/1944 Age: 37 years.

Cemetery: - Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France XVIII. E. 24.

Alfred was born at 50, Cobden Street, Batley on 6 April 1907 the eldest son of Crossland and Elizabeth Lockwood nee Firth who had married on 15 Sep 1906 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall. Elizabeth was born in the United States. Percy was born in 1908 followed by Frank 1911 died aged 4 months, Janet Elizabeth 1912, Joseph James 1914, Evelyn 1919, Arthur 1920, Maud Sylvia 1923, Kenneth 1924, Jack 1926-1944, Norman 1928. In 1939 the family lived at 24, Beck Lane, Carlinghow, Batley. In 1939 Alfred married Iris Louisa Hemmins and according to newspaper reports she had two young sons at the time of his death.

Alfred joined the Regular Army in c 1929 and spent over half the time in India.

The Hallamshires first saw action in World War 2 as part of the ill-fated Norwegian campaign in 1940. The battalion arrived with the 146th Infantry Brigade. They were ashore for twelve days seeing limited action and losing their only casualties on the journey home when one of their transports was sunk.
The battalion spent the next two years "defending" Iceland before returning to Scotland for garrison duties and to prepare for the invasion of North West Europe. The Hallamshires landed in France on 9 June 1944 with the 49th Infantry Division and moved into the front line four days later. Twelve days after landing the Hallamshires were involved in the attack on Fontenay-le-Pesnel (Operation Martlet) against the 26th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The attack was successful but at the expense of 123 members of the battalion killed or wounded. To this day, former members of the battalion at that time still celebrate the victory as the Fontenay Club.



SO CLOSE TO NAZIS THAT SENTRY TROD ON LIEUT.

Batley Sergeant With Daring Trio In Normandy

Before the occupation of St. Pierre, just over a mile from Tilly in Normandy, one of the most successful patrols carried out by the Allies in this sector of the front comprised two officers, Captain J. A. H. Nicholson, of The Grand Hotel, Sheffield, Lieut. O. Watson Jones, of Filey, and an N.C.O., Sergt. A. Lockwood, 30, Beck Lane, Carlinghow, Batley.

They advanced 2,000 yards, mingled with the enemy under the cover of night, and at one point remained in hiding so close to the Germans that a sentry trod on one of Lieut. Watson Jones's hands.

The officer did not even murmur. It was one of those times when silence is more than golden. Valuable information about enemy strength was obtained.

Sgt. A. Lockwood.

The regiment from which this patrol was drawn was the one which was responsible for the occupation of the village of Cristot, its first action of the campaign.

Sergt. Alfred Lockwood, who has a wife and two young sons, has been in the Regular Army for 15 years, spending over half of that time in India.

The eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Lockwood, 24, Beck Lane, he is one of five serving brothers. The other four are Pte. Jack Lockwood, Cameron Highlanders; L.A.C. Arthur Lockwood, R.A.F., Middle East; and Pte. Joseph and Hubert Lockwood, in Burma.

Mrs. Lockwood's father, aged 61, is in the Army and her three brothers are also serving.

Batley News, 8 Jul 1944 (photo)

Operation Martlet: - At 0415 hours on the morning of 25 June, Operation Martlet commenced with a heavy artillery bombardment just ahead of the start line of the 49th Division. At 0500 this bombardment lifted and started to creep forward and the men began to follow it. By now, a thick ground mist had developed, severely hindering the visibility of the advancing troops. The battalions became lost. The Hallamshire Battalion of 146th Infantry Brigade found itself on the Fontenay-Tessel Bretteville road, from where it came under fire from elements of the Panzer-Lehr-Division. It eventually found its way back to Fontenay. Meanwhile, the 11th Royal Scot Fusiliers of 147th Infantry Brigade eventually pushed forward through the mist and began attacking Fontenay-le-Pesnel. The village was strongly defended by the 3rd/26th SS Regiment and heavy inconclusive fighting raged throughout the morning. The British were eventually forced to withdraw to the northern outskirts of the village and await reinforcements. Confused fighting raged along the Rauray spur. By the afternoon, the position was beginning to coagulate. The 146th Brigade had successfully reached its objective line at the woods near Vendes but when the 1st/4th Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry attempted to push beyond to the

Tessel-Bretteville wood, they came under withering machine gun fire and were forced to dig in. On the right, it was almost nightfall before reinforcements came to the 11th Royal Scots in Fontenay, in the shape of 7th Duke of Wellington's Regiment. This battalion managed to clear most of the village by midnight.
As fighting drew to a close at 0000 hours, 26 June, the 49th Division established a line roughly south of Fontenay-le-Pesnel. Rauray and around half of the spur remained in enemy hands. Despite not securing the flank of VIII Corps in time for Epsom, the division prepared to continue its offensive on the following day.

Alfred died of his wounds on 26 June 1944. Bayeux is the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery and burials were brought in from the surrounding districts.

The Batley News reported on 8 July 1944 that before the occupation of St. Pierre, just over a mile from Tilly in Normandy, one of the most successful patrols carried out in this sector of the front comprised of two officers. Captain J.A. H. Nicholson of the Grand Hotel, Sheffield, Lieut O. Watson Jones of Filey and Sgt. A. Lockwood of 20, Beck Lane, Batley advanced 2,000 yards and mingled with the enemy under the cover of night and at one point remained in hiding so close that a sentry stood on the hands of Lieut. Watson Jones's hands. The officer did not even murmur. It was one of those times when silence is more than golden. Valuable information about enemy strength was obtained.

TOO DEARLY LOVED TO BE FORGOTTEN BY THE THREE THAT LOVED HIM

Alfred is remembered with Honour at The British Normandy Memorial, column 98 and Batley War Memorial. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group