James Marshall





Rank: - Signalman

Number: - 2347536

Regiment: - Royal Corps of Signals 2 A.A. Bde. Sigs.

Died: - Killed in Action 26/07/1943 Age: 27 years

Cemetery: - Cassino Memorial, Italy Panel 3

James was born on 27 February 1916 the son of Ernest and Maria Marshall nee Collinson who had married in 1915. His parents lived at 41a North King Street, Batley in the 1940's.

James was educated at Park Road School, Batley and was employed by Messrs. William Holton and Sons', College Mills, Birstall before he joined up in 1940.

James married Mary E. Colbeck in. 1937 and twins Patricia Mary and Pamela May were born in 1938 followed by Annette in 1940. The family lived at 73, Taylor Street, Batley.

The Eighth Army first went into action as part of Operation Crusader, the Allied operation to relieve the besieged city of Tobruk, on 17 November 1941, when it crossed the Egyptian frontier into Libya to attack Erwin Rommel's Panzer Army Africa.

The Eighth Army outflanked the Mareth defences in March 1943 and after further fighting alongside the British First Army, the other 18th Army Group component which had been campaigning in Tunisia since November 1942, the Axis forces in North Africa surrendered in May 1943.

The Eighth Army then participated in the Italian Campaign which began with the Allied invasion of the Island of Sicily, code-named Operation Husky. When the Allies subsequently invaded mainland Italy, elements of the Eighth Army landed in the 'toe' of Italy in Operation Baytown and at Taranto in Operation Slapstick. After linking its left flank with the U.S. Fifth Army landed at Salerno on the west coast of Italy south of Naples, the Eighth Army continued fighting its way up Italy on the eastern flank of the Allied forces. Together these two armies made up the Allied Armies in Italy (later redesigned 15th Army Groups, under General Sir Harold Alexander.

BATLEY MAN WITH EIGHTH ARMY KILLED.

Mrs. Mary Marshall, 73, Taylor Street, Batley, has received news from the War Office that her husband, Signalman James Marshall (27), serving with the Eighth Army, was killed in action on July 25th. When he wrote home at the beginning of June he said he was going on a big campaign.

Signalman Marshall was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Marshall, 41a, North King Street, Batley. He was educated at Park Road School, Batley, and was employed by Messrs. Wm. Holton and Sons' College Mills, Birstall, before he joined up three years ago.

He leaves his wife and three children, Patricia Mary and Pamela May (twins) and Annette.

Batley News, 14 Aug 1943

BETTER NEWS ABOUT BATLEY SIGNALMAN.

May Be a Prisoner.

Encouraging news has been received by Mrs. Mary Marshall, 73, Taylor Street, Batley, about her husband, Signalman James Marshall (27), who was serving with the Eighth Army. She had been officially informed that he was killed in action, and the new message classes him as "missing, believed killed or prisoner-of-war."



James Marshall

Signalman Marshall is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Marshall, 41a, North King Street, Batley, and worked for Messrs. Wm. Holton and Sons, College Mills, Birstall. He was educated at Park Road School, Batley.

Batley News 11 Sep 1943

For the following Allied invasion of Sicily (Operation Husky), AA batteries were included in the assault waves to defend the landing points. Although the plan was successful in getting guns ashore, coordination and communication was poor, there being no overall AA commander on the spot. Brigadier McIntyre landed with 2 AA Brigade's Tactical HQ at Syracuse on 13 July, three days after the initial landings, together with RHQ and one battery of 73rd HAA Rgt (the other two batteries having been among the beach groups) and 66th LAA Rgt.. Together with the lightly-equipped assault batteries, the brigade took up defence of Syracuse harbour and the captured airfields at Pachino and Cassibile, which suffered numerous dive-bombing and strafing attacks, and high level bombing by night and day. After the landings, Eighth Army made rapid progress up the east coast of Sicily and the follow-up AA forces began to land. 62AA Bde HQ arrived in Syracuse on 17 July, taking over responsibility for the harbour and airfield defence while 2 AA Bde moved on to Augusta, which was also heavily attacked. By early August, 2 AA Bde had moved up with Eighth Army to Catania with 51st (London) HAA Rgt. and 40th and 74th LAA Rgts. under command.

James who was serving with the Eight Army wrote home at the beginning of June saying he was going on a big campaign.

James 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