Francis Munns





Rank: - Driver

Number: - 2130014

Regiment: - Royal Engineers 239 Field Park Coy

Died: - Died of Wounds 19July 1943 aged 23 years

Cemetery: - Syracuse War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy V1.A.11.

Batley News, 5 Sep 1942 (photo); 28 Aug 1943 (photo)

Francis was born on 28 Jun 1920 the son of James Patrick and Mary Munns nee Connell who had married in 1907. William was born in1908 but died aged 9 weeks, James born 1909 died in January 1910 aged 6 months, Thomas 1910 died April 1911 aged 7 months, Mary 1911, Annie 1913 died February 1919 aged 5 years, John 1914 died aged 11 weeks in December 1914, Michael 1916, Joseph died aged 4 months in July 1917, Edward 1918, Sarah born 1919 died aged 2 in August 1921, Joseph 1922, William 1922 died aged 21 days, Ellen 1924 died aged 7 months. His father died in November 1933 aged 50 years when the family lived at New Street, Batley. Life was hard for the Munns family in Batley.

Francis was educated at St. Marys School and attended St. Marys Roman Catholic Church. He took a prominent part in the affairs of Batley C.Y.M.S. and was attached to St. Marys football club, for some time as captain.



CASUALTIES.

BATLEY CATHOLIC KILLED.

Pte. Francis Munns (23), husband of Mrs. Winifred Munns, Cobden Street, Batley, has been killed in action in the Middle East. Pte. Munns took part in the Eighth Army's victory in Africa. Before he joined the Forces he was a cutter in the finishing department at New Ing Mills, Field Lane, Batley. He was educated at St. Mary's School and attended St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. He took a prominent part in the affairs of Batley C.Y.M.S. and was attached to St. Mary's football club, for some time as captain.

Francis Munns.

Two brothers, Sapper Edward Munns and Gunner Michael Munns, are in the Royal Engineers. Pte. Munns was son of Mrs. Mary Munns, New Street, Batley, and the late Mr. J. P. Munns.

In 1942 he married Winifred McManus and the couple went to live in Cobden Street, Batley. Before he joined the Forces, he was a cutter in the finishing department at New Ing Mills, Field Lane, Batley.

Francis took part in the Eighth Army victory in Africa. From Africa they crossed to Sicily

Operation Ladbroke is one of the most remarkable stories of the war. It was the opening move of Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943. It saw the first mass use of glider troops by the Allied forces. Mistakes were made, losses were terrible, but the heroism of the airborne forces shone through. The seizing and holding of the Ponte Grande bridge, in particular, is the stuff of airborne legend.

The Red Devils (as their German opponents had christened them) were supported by raids on Italian heavy gun batteries by both the SAS and the Commandos. Meanwhile the main seaborne forces of General Montgomery's Eighth Army raced to relieve the beleaguered glider men and capture the port of Syracuse. In the following days further, airborne assaults were intended to hold open a corridor for the Eighth Army, as it advanced up the coast of Sicily seizing port after port.



Edward Michael Francis

His brothers Michael and Edward also served with the Royal Engineers and had worked at Messrs. John Blackburn s, New Ing Mills, Batley.

Francis was injured and died of his wounds on 19 July 1943 and was buried in Syracuse.

Francis was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group