William Nowell



Rank: - Sergeant

Number: - 4619302

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own), 1st Bn.

Died: - Killed in Action, Burma 12th July 1944, age 27

Cemetery: - Imphal War Cemetery, India, Joint grave 7. M. 13-14.

William was born in Dewsbury on 12 March 1917 the son of Clement and Louisa Ann Nowell nee Jubb who had married on 26 November 1904 at St. Marks Church, Dewsbury. Fred Anthony was born in 1909, Clement 1914 and there was another child who had died in infancy. His mother died in the summer of 1934 and in 1935 Clement married Annie Briggs who came from Brighouse. The family in 1939 lived at Cawley Farm Cottages, Heckmondwike and both William and his father were employed as dyers labourers.

William attended Granville Street Methodist Church, Dewsbury and was employed by Messrs. L. & M. Firth Ltd. Flush Mills, Heckmondwike.

He married Alice Loader of 1, West Park Grove, Healey, Batley in 1941 and a daughter, who he never saw, was born in 1942. William joined the Army in 1940 and went to India a year later.

The 1st Battalion of the West Yorks served in the Far East throughout the Burma Campaign, fighting in the British Fourteenth Army. India and Burma were until 1947 part of British India.

In early 1944, the Allies began tentative advances into Burma. The Japanese responded with all-out offensives, intending to destroy the Allies in their base areas.



SAD NEWS FOR WIFE AT BATLEY

Sergeant Killed In Burma

Mrs. W. Nowell, formerly Miss Alice Loader, of 1, West Park Grove, Healey, Batley, has received news that her husband, Sergt. William Nowell (26), was killed in action in Burma on July 12th. He had been in the Army four years and went to India three years ago.

Sergt. Nowell worked for Messrs. L. and M. Firth, Ltd., Flush Mills, Heckmondwike, and attended Granville Street Methodist Church, Dewsbury.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clement Nowell, live at Cowley Farm, Heckmondwike, and have two other sons, Sergt.-Major Fred Nowell and Corpl. Clement Nowell, R.A.F., M.E.F.

Sergt. Nowell had never seen his two-years-old daughter, Andrea.

Batley News, 12 Aug 1944

The first Japanese move was a subsidiary attack in Arakan where XV Corps was advancing slowly south. After initial Allied setbacks, in which an Indian divisional HQ was overrun, the surrounded units defeated the Japanese at the Battle of the Admin Box (5-23 February). A vital factor was the resupply of cut-off units by aircraft.

The main Japanese offensive was launched on the central front in Assam. While a division advanced to Kohima (4 April - 22 June) to isolate IV Corps, the main body attempted to surround and destroy IV Corps at Imphal (March-July). The Japanese invaded Imphal to capture British Colonies. However, they were defeated and had to retreat. This attack made the British realise the militarily strategic position of Imphal.

William was killed in this battle.

He 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