

WILLIAM (BILLY) BARLOW



William (Billy) Barlow
14th May 1925 - 21st September 1944 (19 Years)

Billy was the eldest son of William and Margaret Barlow (nee Boyle), of Ainsworth, Lancashire. He was killed in Action whilst serving in North West Europe.

MILITARY SERVICE HISTORY

Particulars of the military service of 14629333 Fusilier William Barlow Royal Welch Fusiliers where supplied to me by the Ministry of Defence:

Deemed to have been enlisted into the General Service Corps embodied	
Territorial Army & posted to 55th Primary Training wing	17.06.43
Transferred to Lancashire Fusiliers & posted to 6th Infantry Training Centre	29.07.43
Posted to 2/5 Battalion	19.10.43
Embarked North West Europe	26.06.44
Posted to 1St Battalion East Lancashire Regiment	26.08.44
Transferred to Royal Welch Fusiliers & posted to 7th Battalion	05.09.44
Killed in Action North West Europe	21.09.44

Service with the Colours: 17.06.43 - 21.09.44
Overseas Service: 26.06.44 - 21.09.44

DEBT OF HONOUR REGISTER

This Register provides personal and service details and places of commemoration for the 1.7 million members of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First or Second World Wars. (A record some 60,000 civilian casualties of the Second World War is provided without details of burial location.)

The cemeteries and memorials where these names are commemorated, in perpetuity, are located in around 150 countries This database makes it possible to identify the exact location, by cemetery plot or memorial panel, where any given name is commemorated.

These places of commemoration are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

MEDALS



After waiting many months, writing several letters to the Ministry of Defence, the written authorisation given to me by my Aunt, Helen Greenhalgh and the payment of a few pounds, I was pleased to receive 3 medals which were awarded to him for service to his country. I have now had the medals framed and also added cap badges for the three regiments he served with. For a full description and larger image of the medals please [click here](#) or click on the above image.

The inscription below the medals reads:

Fusilier William (Billy) Barlow, 7th Bn. Royal Welch Fusiliers, Also served with the Lancashire Fusiliers and the East Lancashire Regiment. Who died aged 19 on Thursday, 21st September 1944. Fusilier Barlow was the son of William and Margaret Barlow, of Ainsworth, Lancashire. Remembered with Honour, Vessel Roman Catholic Cemetery, Noor-Brabant, Netherlands, Fusilier 14629333

ORIGINAL WAR DIARY

Original War Diary - September 1944 (Transcribed by Mark Anthony Barlow March 2002, updated September 2002)

Text from copies of the original pages taken from the war diaries, transcribed with the help of a few friends, thank you Janice and Gill and also thank you to David Dalzell, who helped fill in some of the missing words and misinterpreted text. [To see original pages click here.](#)

Battalion O Group for day's advance. Revisited the Command of 158 Brigade our former role having been taken over by 1st Oxford and Buckinghamshire. B Company was Advance guard with a section of Mortars, A/tk (anti-tank) Guns and Carriers under command and at 0930 we went via VELDHOVEN and KNEGSEL 3313 towards the Battalion objective - the village of VESSEM. Then about mid-day B Company commenced an Advance Guard battle. The opposition appeared to come from Sections and isolated men in houses and trenches; it was ascertained from P.W. (Prisoners of War), statements after the battle that there were actually 150 men from the 5th and 7th Company of the 937 Infantry Regiment were holding the village. B Company assisted by a Tk (tank) from 53 Division Reconnaissance Regiment infiltrated very satisfactorily towards the centre of the village and D Corps was brought up by the C.O. (Commanding Officer) to deal with the enemy withdrawing N.W. (North West) towards DONK 2817. The enemy was driven out of the village and it was in our hands by 1730 hrs; the round up of prisoners continued for some while afterwards, the Carrier Pool visited DONK and again used a PIAT (small anti-tank weapon) to great effect on a house harbouring a sniper. In all the Battalion took 32 P.W. (Prisoners of War). C Company given the task of clearing a portion of the woods on Northern side of the WINTERLE (River) and added to the Battalions transport by the capture of an enemy saloon car complete with driver and mate. The Battalion soon became firmly established for the night and dug in. **Two Fusiliers were killed by mortar fire.**

Battalion O Group for the days advance. Ready to move at 0800 when our task was changed. D Company had already cleared DONK moving shortly after first light, 22 prisoners were taken. The Battalion was then ordered to capture WESTEL BIEERS 2418. D Company as advance Guard duly proceeded across country from DONK (there being no tracks as shown on the map). This advance commenced at 1100 hrs By 1400 hrs the leading section of the

The above is only my interpretation and if you read it differently to me and you think I may have made an error please let me know.

MISCELLANEOUS

The following are some snippets provided to me by my cousin, Raymond Barlow, in September 2001. They are three different small stories of how Billy was killed, told to him by different sources:

By Irma in 1973 (Irma lived in Vessem at the time of the war)

Billy and Fred must have been at the front of the platoon and another British soldier mis-threw a grenade and it exploded near Billy and Fred.

By Bill Marsden in 1989, Billy's best friend in the army, who was with him when he was killed.

They were advancing down a road into Vessem when seven mortar bombs came down on them, four were duds and didn't explode, three did and one fell between Billy and Fred. Bill Marsden told me "Billy was killed outright"

By Jack Barlow circa 1990's, a mix of what he had been told by different people.

"An American rocket firing Typhoon "Tank Buster" flew over mistaking Billy's platoon for Germans and fired its rockets on them. At this point, according to a soldier called Lofthouse,

I think, who told my Dad he buried Billy, said Bill Marsden went berserk and it took three or four men to control by sitting on him. They were best mates the two Bills.”

By Raymond Barlow September 2001, “make of these versions what you will. I and my Dad are still not satisfied and I don't think we will be until we find some official version, of which there must be somewhere”