

## Reginald Shaw



Cassino War Cemetery

Reginald (Reggie) was born in Batley in 1906 the eldest child of Raymond and Bertha Shaw nee Watkins who had married on 3 March 1906. Mary Elizabeth was born in 1908. In 1911 the family was living at 12, Ripley Terrace, Mount Pleasant, Batley. Jack was born in 1922.

Raymond attended Purlwell Council School and worked for Messrs. R. Dewhurst & Co., Ltd., Birstall before emigrating to Canada in 1930 leaving Liverpool and arriving at St. John, New Brunswick on 2 March saying he was going to live with his aunt, Mrs Watkins, and was going to become a farmer in Vanreiva, Alberta. His father died in June 1936 when they lived at 199, Upper Taylor Street, Batley. In 1939 his mother and brother lived at 88, King Street, Batley.

When war broke out, he enlisted in the Canadian Army and came to England in 1942 for 12 months where he took part in training on the south coast before moving in May 1943, for amphibious training, to Scotland. On 10 July 1943 the battalion landed in southern Sicily without any opposition. The only source to receive supplies was by mules and on 8 August the Canadians moved out of the fighting and into reserve. The fighting in Sicily, which lasted less than a month, had provided a severe test for the well-trained but unbloodied battalion. In spite of the intense heat, constant choking dust, loss of vehicles, and malaria and dysentery, the unit had more than held its own against battle-hardened German troops. They moved up "the boot" of Italy from Reggio di Calabria to Colle d'Anchise between July and August 1943. In November they had a month of a well-earned rest and recovery. Between 20-27 December they fought

for Ortona where the Germans had blocked all the streets and there was hand to hand fighting. In January, the battalion spent a few weeks recovering and then began a long winter of training with the recently arrived 5th Canadian Armoured Division and static warfare with the Germans across the valley of the Arielli River. In early April, preparations were beginning to move the entire 1st Canadian Corps across the mountains to spearhead the breakout past Monte Cassino into the Liri Valley, which would open the way to Rome. The 'Hitler Line' that the Germans had constructed across the Liri Valley was extremely strong. Early on 23 May, the attacking forces went in, but it quickly became apparent that the preliminary bombardment had not greatly bothered the defenders. Tank support foundered on minefields and the soldiers were pinned down. The day had been a bad one for 2nd Brigade which suffered the heaviest single day casualties in the entire Italian campaign. By the time they were pulled out of the line in the evening of the 23rd, 50 of the LER were dead and 125 wounded. The effective strength of the battalion was down to 160 men.

His mother, Bertha, who by now lived at 9, Oldroyd's Yard, Town Street, Batley Carr was informed that he was killed in action on the 24 May 1944.

He was buried at Cassino War Cemetery, Italy IX. G. 3.



Reggie was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal and is remembered with Honour at the Lychgate, Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr.



For more information regarding his service in the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, please visit their museum site: <https://www.lermuseum.org/>

With thanks to WO Brendan Yuill, CD