

## Alfred Charles Harry Phillips Bombardier 947762 Royal Artillery



Alfred was born in Camberwell, London in April 1919. He was the eldest child of Alfred Roland and Irene Elizabeth Olga Phillips and brother to Thomas, Irene Elizabeth, John Alfred Frederick, William, Rosemary and Robert. His youngest brother Bob still lives in Shipley today.

It was the onset of the Second World War that brought the Phillips family to Shipley. Alfred's father had served in The Royal Horse Artillery during the Great War and was discharged in 1918 with serious lung damage sustained during gas attacks. He passed away in 1937 during a London smog, urging Irene to take their children out of London as even then he sensed war was coming. Irene was unable to fulfil his wish until September 1939 when she and her younger children were evacuated to Shipley. By this time Alfred was a 20 year old man working as a warehouseman in London where he remained. In 1941 he married Edith Alice Matthews and in 1943 their only child, Brenda Irene, was born. Sadly, Alfred didn't live to meet his daughter.

Alfred joined the Army shortly after the onset of hostilities and attained the rank of Bombardier in the Royal Artillery. He was attached to the Armoured Corps where he served as a driver in B Corps Delivery Squadron. He served with the "Desert Rats" under General Montgomery in Egypt and then in 1944 his squadron formed part of the Allied Italian Campaign which began in January. By June of that year Allied forces had captured Rome against strong German opposition.

The initial landings were unopposed by the Axis troops but the Allied forces failed to take strategic advantage and the element of surprise was lost. Alfred, as a driver, would have been involved with moving armaments and logistical support equipment towards areas of conflict. It was during the movement of troops and equipment to support the battle of Anzio that he met his death on 28<sup>th</sup> April 1944. He was involved in an accident which took his vehicle off the road and killed him, just days before the capture of Rome.

Alfred was 25 years old and left behind a wife and daughter as well as his distraught mother, brothers and sister. He is buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery Caserta, Italy. His headstone is a cross inscribed "MY DEAREST HUSBAND, GONE TO REST BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN. R.I.P". He was awarded the War Medal 1939 – 1945 and 1939 – 1945 Star.

Irene discovered that Alfred's former family parish church in London refused to include him on their war memorial. Happily, the Reverend Sumner agreed to include him on the Shipley Memorial, which explains why his name appears here out of alphabetical order. Irene had worked during the war to support the parish, and being a professional pianist, she played the piano at many morale and fund raising concerts. The family had become permanent Shipley residents and continue to this day to be active members of the community.



In Memory of  
Bombardier

## Alfred Charles Harry Phillips

947762, Royal Artillery who died on 28 April 1944 Age 25

Son of Rene Phillips, of Peckham, London; husband of Edith Alice Phillips, of Peckham.

Remembered with Honour  
Caserta War Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission