

## Private Kenneth William MILLINGTON

Service number 5675986

Somerset Light Infantry

7<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Killed in action on 27 August 1944, aged 24

Kenneth was from Launcherley, but by the start of the war he was living in Wells and working for Sheldon's and was in the St John Ambulance Brigade. He joined the army in 1940 and by D-Day was serving in the Somerset Light Infantry. Kenneth landed in France on 22 June and took part in the fighting around Caen. He died in the fighting to establish a bridgehead over the Seine at Vernon.



Kenneth, taken from a Sheldon's Sports Club team photo, 1937-38

Photograph courtesy of Sue Macdonald and Michael Scammell

Kenneth was born on 5 October 1919 to John Millington and Lilian Maud née Haden. He had two sisters, Olive and Muriel, and two brothers, John and Douglas. In the early 1930s, the family were living in Launcherley. Kenneth and some friends took part in the 1938 Wells Carnival as "Ye Olde Village Keep Fit Class".

In September 1939, Kenneth was living with his parents at 3, Town Hall Buildings. He was a cake food operator at Sheldon's, and a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade. Kenneth joined the army at the start of 1940, and by D-Day was in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry, which was part of the 214<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 43<sup>rd</sup> (Wessex) Infantry Division.

For the seven weeks before D-Day, the 7<sup>th</sup> battalion was camped near Battle in Sussex as part of the subterfuge to persuade the Germans that the invasion would be at Calais. On 16 June they moved to Newhaven and boarded the SS Biarritz, and after a certain amount of hanging around, at 0700 on 22 June, they were on the beach at Courseulles-sur-Mer.

The battalion's first actions were at Hill 112 near Caen and then at Mount Pincon. Once the breakout phase of the invasion was complete, the British drove flat out for the River Seine, with the 43<sup>rd</sup> (Wessex) Division sent ahead to make an assault crossing at the French town of Vernon. The 7<sup>th</sup> battalion arrived at Vernon on 25 August and started to cross the Seine at 7pm on the 26<sup>th</sup> using the remains of a broken road bridge. By nightfall they were established on the other side of the Seine. On

the 27<sup>th</sup> their task was to enlarge the bridgehead along with the rest of 214<sup>th</sup> Brigade, and it was during the resultant fighting that Kenneth was killed.

Kenneth is buried in France at the St Desir War Cemetery, in grave VI.C.11. His is also remembered on the rolls of honour at Wells Town Hall and Wells Cemetery. One of his brothers was in the forces too.