

War Memorial – The Green, Castle Bromwich

World War II 1939-1945

Captain Frederick John Neilson Forbes (1918-1942) 100260 Royal Engineers attached to 21st Field Company died aged 23



Frederick was born on 11th June 1918 at Smallburgh, Norfolk the second of four sons and a daughter to parents Rev. Henry Nicholl MA and Phyllis Jenie Barrington Forbes (née Neilson). He was a scholar and exhibitioner of Jesus College, Cambridge.

His father Henry was rector at St Mary & St Margaret's Church, Castle Bromwich between 1921 and 1959 and also chaplain to 605 Squadron, which formed at RAF Castle Bromwich as a day bomber unit of the Auxiliary Air Force on 5th October 1926 and remained there until 27th August 1939.

By 1940 Frederick is recorded as 2nd Lieutenant of the Regular Army Emergency Commission, and the following year as 2nd Lieutenant of the Royal Engineers – Territorial Army. By the time of his death he was a Captain of the Royal Engineers attached to the 21st Field Company – Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners in Libya, North Africa.

Frederick was killed in action on war service on 3rd January 1942 during the Battle of Bardia in North East Libya. The Battle was fought between 3rd and 5th January as part of Operation Compass, the first military operation of the Western Desert Campaign. The victory at Bardia enabled the Allied forces to continue the advance into Libya and capture almost all of Cyrenaica.

Frederick is remembered with honour at the Benghazi War Cemetery, Benghazi, Libya, the cross reads "*In manus tuas, domine*" (*Into your hands O Lord*). Probate dated 2nd October 1942 at Winchester to Ida Barrington (widow) and Hugh Harry Valentine Forbes (Frederick's elder brother) captain of HM Army. He is also commemorated at the war memorial at The Green, Castle Bromwich.



Battle of Bardia

Two of Frederick's brothers also served during the war, Hugh Harry Valentine served with the Gordon Highlanders and Patrick George Cran Barrington served with the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

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