



Corporal William Ernest Hodge

5436436, 1st Bn, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Son of William and Jessie Hodge

Born 1914

Died 14 November 1942

William was born in St. Germans, and was the Son of William and Jessie Hodge (nee Hawke) and they lived at Cardinham where William's father worked as a farm labourer, and a stone mason, the family then moved to Ringford, St. Tudy.

It looks like William enlisted in February 1934 at Bodmin, together with Reverend Schuster's son, Harold.

At the outbreak of war, he was assigned to the 1st Battalion, which was located at Napier Barracks in Lahore. It remained in Lahore during the whole of 1939, 1940 and 1941. The Battalion left Lahore on the 9th of November 1941 for Karachi. They then left Karachi on the 11th of November 1941 and sailed to Basra, Iraq, and moved to As Zubai and Shubaiba, coming under the command of the 10th Indian Infantry Division's 21st Indian Infantry Brigade. They moved to the Western Desert on the 2nd of June 1942 and arrived at Tabruk on the 5th of June.

William would have taken place in the Battle of Gazala between 26th of May to the 21st of June when the fall of Tabruk took place on the 20th of June and Italian troops along with others overtook Tabruk. Although William was reported missing on the 29th of June, along with seven of other soldiers from the DCLI, I think that he was captured on the 20th of June along with 33,000 other British Soldiers.

He was first reported as a casualty, and then as a POW. The Italians had started to ship POW's out of Tabruk to Italy in July of 1942, and we have found evidence that William died whilst at sea on the 14th of November 1942 on the "Scillin" when it was sunk by the HMS

Sahib, with only one of the 788 POW's surviving. The hatches had been closed to prevent the escape of the prisoners.

The details of Scillin's loss and the circumstances of the death of the Allied POWs were kept secret for more than 50 years, until persistent enquiries by relations and historians brought a more open response. The reasons for such official reticence for such a long period are not clear, but there are claims that it was deemed necessary to protect intelligence sources.

William is remembered at Alamain Memorial, Panel 61.



English Prisoners, some of the 33,000 taken prisoner on the 20th of June 1942.