Trooper 7956793

Noel White

5th Royal Tank Regiment R.A.C.

1923-1944

Noel's father, Reginald Harry Dennis White, was born in Newton Abbot, Devon in 1884 and in April 1911 he was living in Bristol. His occupation was 2nd Class Clerk, Lower Section, H.M. Customs. He lived half a mile away from Winifred Gladys Kerslake, Noel's mother, whom he married on 5thJune 1911. It is assumed that his father's work brought him to Langstone working at the docks in Newport.

Noel was born in Bristol in February 1923 and enlisted into the army in 1941 aged 18. In 1944 his parents were living at "Dunromin", Langstone.

The Allied offensive in north-western Europe began with the Normandy landings. By initiating D-Day on 6th June 1944 amid poor weather, the Allies surprised the German forces, whose slow reactions then let slip their best chance to drive the invaders back into the sea. During 5th June, 6,939 vessels from eight different navies and many merchant fleets assembled off the coast of southern England. From 2100 hours, the Western Task Force –Assault Forces "Omaha" and "Utah", plus their respective naval bombardment groups –assembled south of Hayling Island; they were soon joined by the Eastern Task Force, with Assault Forces "Sword", "Juno" and "Gold", plus their bombardment groups.

As the armada headed south toward Normandy, the first Allied bombers passed overhead en route to strike the German defences. Next, from 2330 hours, 1,100 Allied transport planes travelled south across the Channel, transporting 17,000 airborne troops to Normandy.
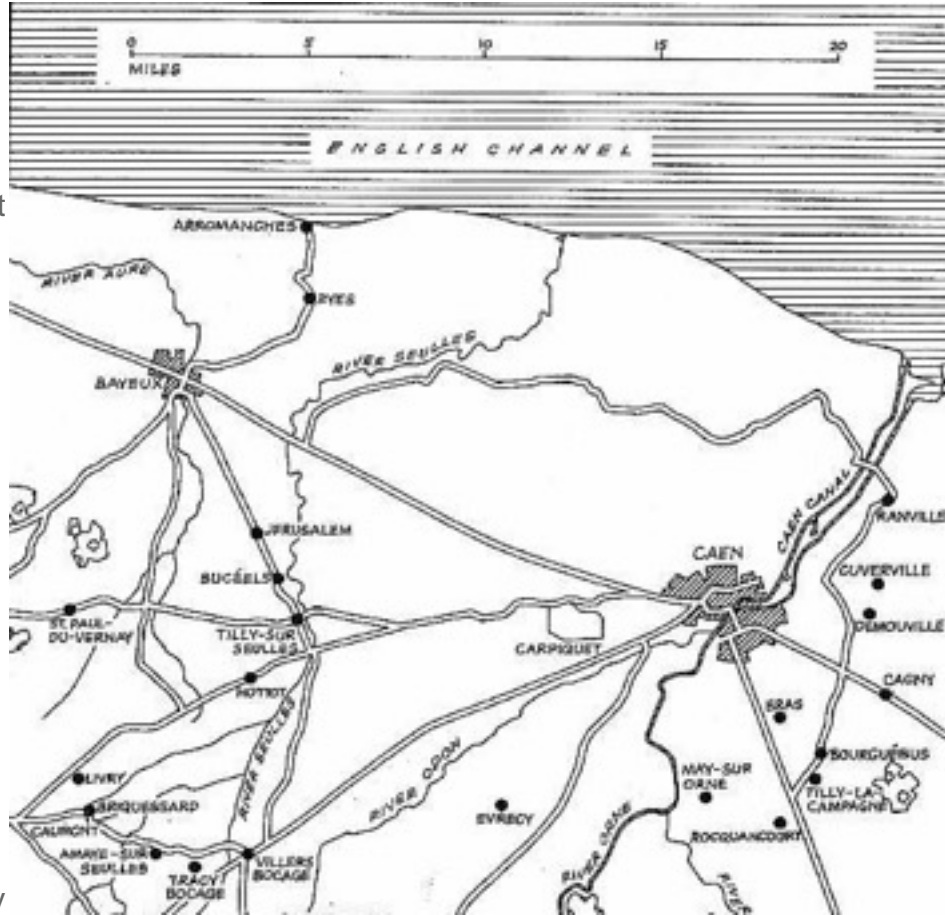

The area of Normandy the Armoured Division was to start fighting in was the Calvados region, south of the Bay of the Seine. It could be divided into two parts. The open campagne area south and south east of Caen, with rolling fairly open country side and the close bocage area to the south and south west of Bayeux. In 1944 this bocage was a maze of small, high-banked fields, thick copses and woods, narrow lanes and steep sided valleys. Visibi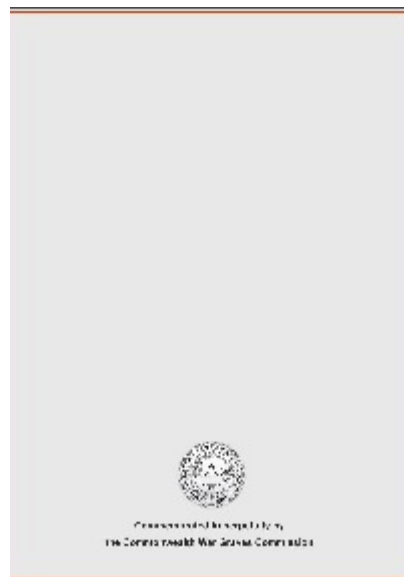lity was usually no more than 50 yards. This was not ideal tank country as the Germans could easily lay in wait and ambush the armour with

their Panzerfaust infantry anti-tank weapons. There was little actual fighting in Bayeux although it was the first French town of importance to be liberated.

On 10th June the 22nd Armoured Brigade, along with 8th Hussars and some Queen's infantry were ordered to advance on Tilly-Sur-Seulles. The enemy was first encountered at a small hamlet called Jerusalem, where a Panzer IV was knocked out by 4th CLY, before advancing onto Buceels, but the infantry sustained a number of casualties and the advance stopped there for a while.

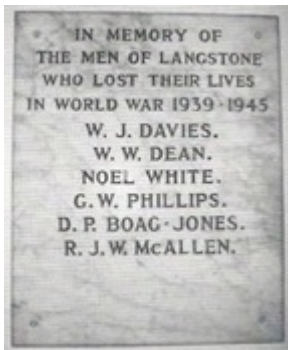Trooper 7956793 Noel White died on the 10th June 1944, aged 21.

He is buried at Bayeux War Cemetery which is the largest Commonwealth cemetery of the Second World War in France and contains burials brought in from the surrounding districts and from hospitals that were located nearby. The Cemetery was

completed in 1952, contains 4,144 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 338 of them unidentified. There are also over 500 war graves of other nationalities, the majority German.

The Bayeux Memorial stands opposite the cemetery and bears the names of more than 1,800 men of the Commonwealth land forces who died in the early stages of the campaign and have no known grave. They died during the landings in Normandy, during the intense fighting in Normandy itself, and during the advance to the River Seine in August.The Latin epitaph along the frieze of the memorial is reference to William the Conqueror and the Invasion of England in 1066.

The translation reads: "We, once conquered by William, have now set free the Conqueror's native land."

IN MEMORY OF
THE MEN OF LANGSTONE
WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
IN WORLD WAR 1939-1945
W. J. DAVIES.
W. W. DEAN.
NOEL WHITE.
G. W. PHILLIPS.
D. P. BOAG-JONES.
R. J. W. McALLEN.

Noel is also remembered on plaque in Langstone Village Hall.

The Newport cenotaph was unveiled by Lord Tredegar in June 1923, to commemorate the local people who died in active service in the First World War. It now also commemorates people who died in subsequent wars. There are no names on the memorial but Trooper 7956793 Noel White's name appears on the listing.