

**Driver ALFRED JOHN BISHOP**

T/280942, 142 Gen. Transport Coy., Royal Army Service Corps

who died age 23 on 17 August 1944

Remembered with honour at the ANCONA WAR CEMETERY

**Alfred John Bishop** was born 27 May 1921 as a twin and uncle to Miss. Paula Bishop to whom we are indebted for so much information. He was the son of **Alfred Robert Bishop**, a worker on the railways and **Cecilia née Hewitt**. After attending the *Council School* in Chance Street, he worked for *George Mann*, grocers, of the Cross from 1935 until he joined the army in August 1941. He was a regular worshipper at the Baptist Chapel in Barton Street.<sup>1</sup>



The twins, following older brother Bill (centre), were called up in May 1941 - Paula's father "Bob" (right) to the RAF and "Alf" (left) to the RASC for which he trained in Yorkshire before being sent abroad with 142 *General Transport Company*. At the end of July 1944, he wrote to a boyhood friend telling him how unbearable was the heat in Rome, where he had enjoyed leave. Rome had only been liberated in early

June 1944. He even remembered to send a birthday card for his mother's birthday, which arrived in time for 10 August. Alf had a girlfriend, Clarice Spalding whom he met whilst training in Yorkshire. She helped add details to his biography, confirming that he was present at the Battle of El Alamein.

She clarifies the newspaper account by stating that, five days later, he was a passenger, and not driving, a lorry along a mountain road when it crashed down the mountain side, bursting into flames. "Alf" suffered 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns and died in the field hospital two days later. However, Clarice believes a colleague was awarded the George medal for rescuing him from the flames. The dreaded telegram arrived at 22 Foresters Road in early September on the day eldest son Bill arrived home on leave and on the day when "Bob" was admitted after succumbing to T.B. at Standish Hospital. The news spread fast around the then small town.<sup>2</sup> Later the family received a letter from the field hospital where someone spoke to Alfred as he was dying: he had spoken of his family and Tewkesbury. A memorial service was held for him at the Baptist Church and his name is inscribed on the gravestone of his parents. Clarice kept in touch with Alf's twin brother until he died.

<sup>1</sup> In 2005, Chapel Court flats.

<sup>2</sup> Register, 02/09/1944 p1/4: *Soldier Dies In Italy In Accident*: Driver A J Bishop son of A R Bishop of 22 Foresters Road aged 23.

