

Lance Corporal ARTHUR WILLIAM HAWKER

5186723, 1st Bn., Royal Welch Fusiliers

who died age 24 on 5 May 1944

Son of Charles A. and Louisa Hawker, of Lower Apperley, Gloucestershire.

Remembered with honour in the IMPHAL WAR CEMETERY

Unfortunately the *Register* of 3 June 1944 did not provide a photograph:

DEATH OF APPERLEY SOLDIER.

Mr and Mrs C. Hawker of Lower Apperley, have received news that their son, Arthur, has died of wounds in Burma, L/Cpl Arthur William Hawker, was in his 25th year, and at the outbreak of war, was working for the Gloucestershire County Council. He joined up in 1939, in the Gloucestershire Regiment, and came through Dunkirk. Later he was transferred to another unit, with which he was serving at the time of his death. L/Cpl Hawker was educated at Deerhurst C. E. School.

We can presume that, in view of his service at Dunkirk, Arthur Hawker was a member of the T.A.. It often happened in this war that men were posted to units without regard to family ties. It is highly likely that he was killed trying to stop the Japanese attack on India in battles which took place near **Imphal** and **Kohima** from April to June 1944. There is a monument at **Kohima** to the Welch Fusiliers and it is claimed that the battles represented the "turning point" in the land war against Japan: the eventual failure of a siege marked the end of their planned invasion of India. The battle was fought to a standstill by Anglo-Indian troops, who decimated the sick, hungry, and overextended Japanese troops, deprived of sufficient logistical support because of the overconfidence of their high command. The distraction of this offensive allowed the *Chindits*¹ — landed and supplied from the air — operated in strength behind enemy lines, cutting supply lines and cooperating with US and Chinese troops during operations in northern Burma and attacks on *Myitkina*. This caused the Japanese army to begin its retreat.² L/Cpl/Hawker's death, therefore, contributed to that eventual defeat.



¹ See **Major Shephard**, Tewkesbury.

² Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2002. © &
http://www.veteransagency.mod.uk/pdfolder/60th_anniversary/kohima_book.pdf