

PRIVATE FRANCIS PRITCHARD

Service Number: 5254399

Enlisted: 14th Battalion Sherwood Foresters

Born: 8th March 1918

Died: 6th September 1944, Aged 26

Memorials: Coriano Ridge War Cemetery, Italy

Plot 5, Row D, Grave 1

St Catherine's Church Memorial

Burbage War Memorial



Francis Pritchard was born on 8th March 1918, the eldest son of Harry Frank Pritchard and Lillian Pritchard of Coventry. By 1939, Francis, his parents and elder sister Doris are living at 24 Colchester Street, Coventry. His father is a Tool Room Foreman and ARP Warden, and Francis is employed as a Bakers Roundsman.

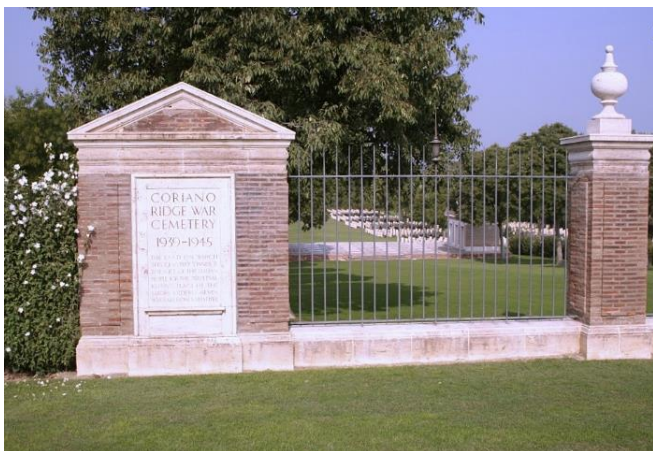
At some point after the 1939 Census the family move to "Wymering", Lutterworth Road, Burbage and are recorded in the electoral roll for 1948 and confirmed by his father's probate record of 1949.

PRITCHARD Harry Frank of Wymering Lutterworth-road Burbage **Leicestershire** died 8 August 1949 at 93 Bulwer-road Coventry Administration **London** 8 October to Lily Pritchard widow. Effects £329 4s. 3d.

Probate Record 1919

In the 1st quarter of 1944, Francis marries Doris Kimpton of Hertford. Francis joins the military and is attached to the 14th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters (Nottingham and Derbyshire Regiment) and is killed on the Allies initial attempt to take Coriano Ridge in Italy from the Germans on 6th September 1944.

Doris returns to her parents and in the 3rd quarter 1946 remarries in Hertford.



Coriano Ridge War Cemetery, Italy

PRITCHARD, Pte. FRANCIS, 5254399. 14th Bn. The Sherwood Foresters (Notts. and Derby Regt.). 6th September, 1944. Age 26. Son of Harry and Lilian Pritchard; husband of Doris Mary Pritchard, of Hertford. V, D, 1.

Grave Registration

History Information

On 3rd September 1943 the Allies invaded the Italian mainland, the invasion coinciding with an armistice made with the Italians who then re-entered the war on the Allied side.

Following the fall of Rome to the Allies in June 1944, the German retreat became ordered and successive stands were made on a series of defensive lines. In the northern Apennine mountains, the last of these, the Gothic Line, was breached by the Allies during the Autumn campaign and the front inched forward as far as Ravenna in the Adriatic sector, but with divisions transferred to support the new offensive in France, and the Germans dug in to a number of key defensive positions, the advance stalled as winter set in.

Coriano Ridge was the last important ridge in the way of the Allied advance in the Adriatic sector in the autumn of 1944. Its capture was the key to Rimini and eventually to the River Po. German parachute and panzer troops, aided by bad weather, resisted all attacks on their positions between 4th and 12th September 1944.

On the night of 12th September, the Eighth Army reopened its attack on the Ridge, with the 1st British and 5th Canadian Armoured Divisions. This attack was successful in taking the Ridge, but marked the beginning of a week of the heaviest fighting experienced since Cassino in May, with daily losses for the Eighth Army of some 150 killed.

The site for the cemetery was selected in April 1945 and was created from graves brought in from the surrounding battlefields. Coriano Ridge War Cemetery contains 1,939 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War.