

## Trooper Alfred Austin

Alfred Austin was born the third son of Arthur Austin and Lucy Webster. He was born in Alstonefield in 1917 and was the third of their 5 children.

Arthur and Lucy were married in 1907 and in 1911 they were living in Hope, Alstonefield where Arthur was a farmer. Arthur died in 1959 and Lucy in 1925. Alfred's siblings were Arthur (born 1909), Frank T (born 1917), Ester (born 1921) and Hubert (born 1923).

Little is known about Alfred's life or that of his family, although his father's brother Frank operated a cobblers shop in Narrowdale, Alstonefield.



Alfred was a trooper in 1<sup>st</sup> Derbyshire Yeomanry, Royal Armoured Corp and was a member of the Ashbourne contingent when war broke out.

Alfred was killed 8 December 1942 in Tunisia. An eyewitness account, as reported in the Ashbourne News, states that an armoured car, in which Alfred was acting as gunner, met three German armoured cars. Alfred immediately opened fire, killing three Germans and seriously wounding a fourth. The Germans retaliated, with a burst of fire which killed Alfred and another person in his vehicle.

Trooper Austin was buried at Pons de Fahs but subsequently moved to Enfidaville War cemetery in Tunisia.

He was awarded the 1939-45 War medal and 1939-45 Star, both for campaign service.



## ILAM SOLDIER KILLED

We regret to record that Mrs. Austin, Stanshope Grange, Ilam, has received notification that her son, Trooper Alfred Austin, of the Derbyshire Yeomanry has been killed in North Africa. He was a member of the Ashbourne contingent when the war broke out, and had a great admiration for his regiment, and the

News of his death was report in the Ashbourne News dated July 9 1946. This is some three and a half years after his death. It is reported that the notification was received by his mother, however, in researching Alfred Austin, record has been found of his mother, Lucy Austin, dying in 1925.



last time he was home on leave he said "Our chaps are a grand lot, officers and men alike." He died as he probably would have chosen to die, serving with the regiment he loved, with guns blazing, and fighting for the right. He was 25 years of age, and single.

Col. Sir Ian Walker, Bart., his commanding officer has written to Mrs. Austin, enclosing Trooper Austin's identity disc and a pocket compass he always carried with him. Sir Ian Walker found their graves and has had small wooden crosses fixed on them.

An eye witness's account states that an armoured car was being driven by Trooper Peter Wardle (son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Wardle, Market Place, Ashbourne), with Lieut. Taylor, and Trooper Austin acting as gunner. They met three German armoured cars, and Trooper Austin immediately opened fire, killing three Germans and seriously wounding a fourth. The Germans retaliated with a burst of fire which killed Lieut. Taylor and Trooper Austin and slightly wounding Trooper Peter Wardle. The Germans, after unloading their own dead, took Trooper Wardle away, and dragged Lieut Taylor and Trooper Austin out of their car which burnt out. They then went away. A French priest had Lieut. Taylor and Trooper Austin taken to Pont de Fahs where he buried them.

Much sympathy is felt with Mr. and Mrs. Austin and members of the family in their bereavement.

### Sources of Information

1. Photograph © [www.twgpp.org](http://www.twgpp.org)
2. Newspaper Extract © Ashbourne News 9 July 1946

