

SIDNEY J. TEMPLE, Sergeant 7560229, Royal Tank Regiment, 21st May 1940, Age 30

Sidney James Temple was the son of Sidney George Temple and Anne Christine Milion and was born on 7th Jan 1910 in St Helier on the island of Jersey. He had three brothers; George Frederick born 1907; William Robert born 1912 and Albert Edward born 1914. They appear to have lived in Nelson Cottages, Kensington Place, St Helier.

His father served with the Channel Islands Militia and in the First World War and went to France in 1916.

Sidney was married in 1938 to Olive Sawyer in the Richmond area and Olive lived in Brompton-on-Swale.

Sidney served with the 7th Royal Tank Regiment (RTR) and was almost certainly killed during fighting around Arras. There is an excellent and detailed description available on the 4th and 7th Royal Tank Regiment web site (see below). A small extract is given here relating to a counterattack made by these units, code name "Frank Force" against the onslaught of the German blitzkrieg into France led by a certain Erwin Rommel, on 21st May 1940, the date of Sid's death,.

"7 RTR were late on the Start Line but had better communications, and made good progress Eastwards. Major King and Sergeant Boyle, (later awarded a DCM) in their Matilda Mk IIs, found and destroyed a battery of A Tk (anti-tank) guns and stalked and destroyed an 88 mm gun. Casualties were heavy and by 1600 hrs the COs of both Regiments and the Adjutant 7 RTR (Kauter) were among the dead. The Durham Light Infantry arrived at 1630; despite their fatigue both battalions fought bravely and effectively. Maj Gen Rommel, General Officer Commanding 7 Panzer Division, was appalled at the poor showing of the SS. His Panzer Regiment and its artillery were well ahead in Wailly and were being attacked by tanks of 7 RTR. Lt Tom Craig (a future CO of 4 RTR) had actually entered Wailly in his Matilda Mk II and was creating havoc including destroying a command armoured car. But eventually he, too, was "brewed up". Gen Rommel and his ADC, Lt Most, gripped the battery of anti-tank guns and, indicating targets personally, they brought the 7 RTR threat to a smoking halt. It had been a very close thing and Lt Most was killed in the process. He was buried with the Seventh crews in the Wailly Cemetery. At dusk "Frank Force" withdrew to rally at Achicourt with the now very depleted infantry battalions. They were subjected to dive bombing and attack by tanks from 5 Panzer Div which they successfully drove off. The Seventh War Diary records that by this stage they had four officers killed, four wounded and three missing, and twenty five other ranks killed, ten wounded and sixteen missing. "Frank Force" had achieved the aim but at a heavy cost."

It seems that Sidney paid part of that heavy cost.



A knocked out Matilda MkII Tank of 7th RTR - 1940



A Matilda MkII Tank as used by 7th RTR - 1940

Sidney was 30 when he was killed and is buried in Row A, Grave 1 of the Beaurains Communal Cemetery near Arras in France.



Beaurains Cemetery, Arras, France

Sources

- (1) 4th & 7th RTR History <http://4and7royaltankregiment.com/1940-1941.html>
 - (2) Battle of Arras 1940 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arras_\(1940\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arras_(1940))
- CWGC <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2278775/>