

# William Temperley ATHERTON



Born: 20 March 1925

Died: 2 July 1944

*ROYAL MARINE COMMANDO*  
*Died NORMANDY*



## William Temperley ATHERTON



This small stone has been placed upon the grave site (g879) of **George Thomas Temperley** and **Alice Isabel** in memory of **William Temperley Atherton**, who died in Normandy in World War 2. The stone to the right stands in the Cemetery at Ranville, in the Département du Calvados, Basse-Normandie.

The stone, which stands in a Commonwealth Graves Commission site in plot IIIA.G.7, reads:

*PLY/X 111533 MARINE  
W. T. ATHERTON  
ROYAL MARINES  
No. 46 R. M. Commando  
30th June 1944 Aged 19  
Dearly Loved and Treasured  
'In Heavenly Love Abiding'  
Until we meet again*



The small stone stands in front of this pink granite stone, marked in memory of **HANNAH GERTRUDE** the dearly loved daughter of **George Thomas & Alice Isabel Temperley** who died October 13<sup>th</sup> **1902** aged 1 year & 11 months, of Radcliffe.

On each side of the plinth are the names of both parents. **George Thomas** was buried on 12 November **1928**, aged 64. His abode was 3 St. Vincent Villas, Whitefield. **Alice Isabel** was buried on 17 November **1943**, aged 77. Her abode was 4 Edenhurst Road, Stockport.

So what is the connection? And why would the memorial stone be placed here? To this day, flowers are often placed at the site.

## William Temperley ATHERTON

According to the C.W.G.C., **William Temperley ATHERTON** was the son of *Samuel* and *Lydia Dorothy Atherton*, of Radcliffe, Lancashire. The birth indexes show that he was born Radcliffe, Bury, in **1925**. We know from these records that his mother's maiden name was also Temperley, hence it appearing as a second Christian name. *Samuel* and *Lydia* were married at All Saints, Stand, on 31 October **1923**.

To go back one generation, **George Thomas Temperley** was baptised at St. Mark's on 21 August **1864**. George Thomas Temperley, son of George Temperley (engineer), married **Alice Isabel Temperley**, daughter of John Temperley (school master), at St. Peter, Bury, on 24 September **1891**. They had a daughter *Lydia* who was born on 13 February **1894** in Bury and was baptised on 4 April **1894** at St. Peter, Bury.

**1901** census: 28 Hallam St., Radcliffe.

<b>G. T. Temperley</b>	Head	M	36	Paper Mill Manager
Alice Jane	Wife	M	34	
<b>L. D.</b>	Daur.		6	
incl. Hannah Gertrude			4 mo.	

**1911** census: 28 Hallam St., Radcliffe. (8 rooms)

George Thomas <b>Temperley</b>	Head	M	46	Paper Mill Manager	b. Worsley
Alice Isabel	Wife	M	44	(married 19 years; 9 children, 2 died)	b. Staffs.
<b>Lydia Dorothy</b>	Daur.	S	17		b. Bury

+ 4 brothers and 2 sisters  
+ 1 servant

In the **1939** Register, *Lydia* was at 32 Bury & Bolton Road, Radcliffe, with her husband *Samuel*. He was an A. R. P. He was born on 27 January **1894** and was a Retail Chemist and *she* had Unpaid Domestic Duties. They were living next door to Alice Isabel Temperley, now aged 66. *Lydia Dorothy Atherton* died in the 2nd quarter **1971** at Bury. At her death, she was living at 46 Bury & Bolton Road, Radcliffe.

In a genealogical tree, this would be .. :

**George Thomas Temperley** m. **Alice Isabel Temperley**

|

Samuel Atherton m. Lydia Dorothy Temperley

|

William Temperley Atherton

**William Temperley Atherton** was therefore the grandson of **George Thomas** and **Alice Isabel Temperley** who were buried in that plot. He was therefore the nephew of the young **Hannah Gertrude Temperley**, mentioned above.

So what do we know about this young man whose name and memory are recorded on the small stone?

The Commonwealth Graves Commission website confirms the simple details outlined on the first page. However, it will be noted that their records state that he died on the 30<sup>th</sup> June, whereas the stone on the grave states July.



The Commando Veteran Archive gives the same broad details, but it does add that he was born on Friday 20 March **1925** and was '*killed in action or died of wounds*'. It then states that '*Marine William Atherton, 'B' troop, died during operations at Sallenelles, Normandy*'. Sallenelles is at the estuary of the Orne river, north-east of Caen. The website also gives this brief history of the Brigade's formation and operations.

*On 1 August 1943 whilst based at 'A' camp, Piddlehinton, Dorset, the 9th RM Bn., was redesignated No. 46 Royal Marine Commando, Royal Marines. Their Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Campbell Richard Hardy, remained as C.O. of the Commando.*

*Within a week the unit had moved to Poundbury West Camp in Dorchester, quickly changing to its new smaller Commando establishment. Those not required for any reason for Commando training were gradually moved to Training centres for landing craft and/or other vessel duties.*

*In September, advance parties led by Major Lee and Lt. Nunn (both later killed in action) were sent to Troon with the rest of the Commando joining them there on the 15th September. The Commando had already been issued with their Green berets at this stage, parading in Dorchester wearing them on the 11th September before their departure.*

*The Commando moved to the Commando Depot, Achnacarry on the 23rd October 1943. On completion of their Commando training course at Achnacarry on the 9th November, the Unit moved back to Troon briefly, before being sent to CTC Dorlin in December for further training, and were re-assigned briefly to the 1st Special Service Bde under Lord Lovat. On completion of this additional training, the Unit moved to Worthing to link up with the rest of the Bde. arriving there on the 19th December. At the end of the month the Commando was ordered to move to Folkestone and rejoin 4th Special Service Bde. This took place on the 3rd January 1944. Two troops were sent at this time to the CMWTC at St. Ives for a 3 week course in cliff climbing and rock assault. [Source : War Diary]*

*All this training was focused on one thing - the allied invasion of North West Europe.*

*At 0900 on the 7th June 1944, the Unit was landed on Nan White Beach at Bernières. There would follow actions in the next few days at Petit Enfer, Douvres, La Deliverande and Rots and Le Hamel. On the 17th June, the Unit was reassigned to 4th SS Bde whilst dug in at the area of Sallenelles - Hauger. No. 46 Royal Marine Commando continued operations in the area moving forward to Dozule and Breville-sur-Mer in August.*

*At the end of September, and after suffering heavy casualties, No. 46 Royal Marine Commando and the rest of the Brigade was withdrawn to the U.K. and stationed on the Isle of Wight.*

The Prayer for Generosity by St. Ignatius of Loyola was one of the Prayers used by the Special Service Group as an Act of Dedication, and published in the form of a small folded document which was then provided to Commandos.

### The Commando Prayer

*Teach us, Good Lord,  
To serve Thee as Thou deservest,  
To give and not to count the cost,  
To fight and not to heed the wounds,  
To toil and not to seek for rest,  
To labour and not to ask for any reward.  
Save that of knowing that we do Thy Holy will  
Through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen.*

**ATHERTON** William Timperley of 32 Bury and Bolton-road Radcliffe **Lancashire** died 22 July 1944 on war service Probate **Manchester** 30 March to Lydia Dorothy Atherton married woman. Effects £574 2s. 9d.

The Wills and Probate Index states that he died on 22 July **1944**, but other sources suggest that his death was most likely to have occurred on 2 July.

*"Billy (as he was known) was the only son of Great War veteran Samuel Atherton from Radcliffe. He attended Bury Grammar School from 1934 to 1942 and was a member of the school cadet force, then called the Junior Training Corps, still going strong today as the CCF. He applied to join the Royal Marines through the Y Scheme, which I think was designed to recruit potential officers. He joined the marines on his 18th birthday. Billy was certainly training at Lympstone in mid-1943".*

[Courtesy of ww2talk.com]



*"William Temperley Atherton, 46 Royal Marine Commando. Billy Atherton was the son of the Chairman of the Radcliffe branch of the Royal British Legion and chief warden of Radcliffe. 46 Royal Marine Commando landed at 'Juno' beach on D-Day. They suffered heavy casualties in fighting on the eastern end of the allied beachhead, particularly when they liberated the villages of Rots and Le Hamel from SS troops on 11 June 1944. Billy Atherton was sent to France in late June as one of the replacements for these losses. On his first patrol near the village of Sallanelles on 2nd July, the Germans spotted the commandos and opened*

*fire with mortars. Billy was killed and three other marines were wounded. He was 19 years old".*

[Bury Grammar School]

[This black marble stone stands on Plot N.P. 908]

