

Harold Ashworth	
Rank	Lance Sergeant
Service No.	3857529
Date of Death	20/6/1944
Age	27
Regiment/Service	Reconnaissance Corps, R.A.C. 2 nd (6 th Battalion) The Loyal Regt. (North Lancashire) Regt.
Grave Reference	7. J. 3>
Cemetery	IMPHAL WAR CEMETERY

-Additional Information

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ashworth; husband of Nora Ashworth, of Bradley Fold.

Imphal is the capital of Manipur State in north east India and borders on upper Burma.

Early in 1942 as the Japanese approached Rangoon, a very large proportion of its Indian population fled from the city to India. In May of that year Commonwealth forces followed the same route on their retreat to India. In their wake came still more civilian refugees, many of whom died on the arduous journey under ceaseless heavy rain, without transport and food. Of the 400,000 civilians who fled to India about 140,000 passed through Imphal into Assam.

The defence of India and the retention of a position from which Burma could be re-entered now became of primary importance. The 23rd Indian Division was formed in Manipur State, new airfields were constructed, and army and air force reinforcements arrived. From November 1944 onwards, No 38 General Hospital was posted there.

Strategically well placed for attacks on the lines of communication by railway, road and river which were vital for the maintenance of all Allied operations in Burma, Imphal with its airfields was a main objective when the Japanese made their thrust towards India in the spring of 1944.

P.T.O.

There was severe fighting in the surrounding hills and on the outskirts of the plain and the Japanese succeeded in cutting a long section of the road and holding it for three months. The fourteenth Army held on grimly, inflicting heavy punishment on the Japanese. Of all the battles on this frontier of India the siege of Imphal and its relief in the summer of 1944 rank next in importance to the Battle of Kohima. The cemetery at Imphal contains 1,600 Commonwealth burials.