John Brown





Rank: - Private

Number: - 4690585

Regiment: - Somerset Light Infantry 7th Bn. (Formerly KOYLI)

Died: - Killed in Action 17/02/1945 Age: 25 years

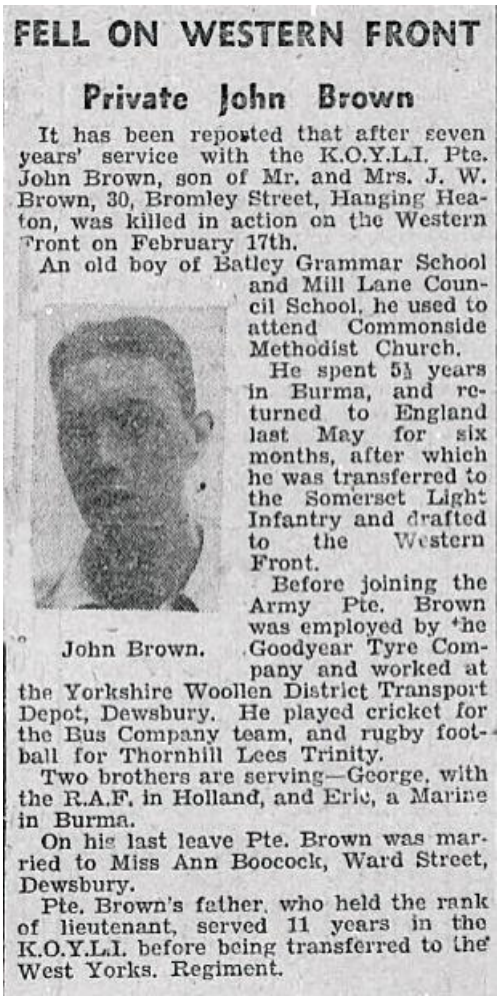
Cemetery: - Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany 56. B. 14.

Batley News, 10 Mar 1945 (photo)

John was born in 1919 the son of John William and Matilda Brown nee Wood, who had married on 26 March 1910 at St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton. Joseph was born in 1911-1911, Albert Edward 1912, Matilda 1914, John 1919, George 1921, Peggy 1921, Edward 1923 and Eric Kenneth 1925. In the 1940's the family lived at 30 Bromley Street, Hanging Heaton.

John attended Mill Lane School and Batley Grammar School. Before joining the Army, he was employed by the Goodyear Tyre Company and worked at the

Yorkshire Woollen District Transport Depot, Dewsbury. He played cricket for the Bus Company team and rugby football for Thornhill Lees Trinity. He attended Commonside Methodist Church.



FELL ON WESTERN FRONT

Private John Brown

It has been reported that after seven years' service with the K.O.Y.L.I. Pte. John Brown, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Brown, 30, Bromley Street, Hanging Heaton, was killed in action on the Western Front on February 17th.

An old boy of Batley Grammar School and Mill Lane Council School, he used to attend Commonside Methodist Church.

He spent 5½ years in Burma, and returned to England last May for six months, after which he was transferred to the Somerset Light Infantry and drafted to the Western Front.

Before joining the Army Pte. Brown was employed by the Goodyear Tyre Company and worked at the Yorkshire Woollen District Transport Depot, Dewsbury. He played cricket for the Bus Company team, and rugby football for Thornhill Lees Trinity.

John Brown.

Two brothers are serving—George, with the R.A.F. in Holland, and Eric, a Marine in Burma.

On his last leave Pte. Brown was married to Miss Ann Boocock, Ward Street, Dewsbury.

Pte. Brown's father, who held the rank of lieutenant, served 11 years in the K.O.Y.L.I. before being transferred to the West Yorks. Regiment.

Newspaper reports say that his father held the rank of Lieutenant in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in which he had been for 11 years. It was to this regiment John joined and went to Burma in 1938. The 2nd Battalion which was a regular army unit was in Burma when war broke out and remained there until the war with Japan in December 1941.Duringthe retreat from Moulmein to Rangoon the Battalion lost heavily in a number of engagements, particularly in the Battles of Bilin and Sittang.The Battalion was then withdrawn, but during the retreat northwards through Burma to India was fully engaged again, notably in the actions in the Yenangyaung oil-fields. After being re-formed the Battalion was stationed in Eastern India and on the Burma frontier until December 1943, when it was moved to Delhi.

In May 1944 he returned to England for six months and married Ann Boocock of Ward Street, Dewsbury. He was transferred to the Somerset Light Infantry and drafted to the Western Front. The Battalion took part in the Battle of the Bulge and then went into Germany, John was Killed in Action in Germany in February 1945.

Reichswald Forest War Cemetery was created after the Second World War when burials were brought in from all over western Germany and is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the country with 7594 graves from Commonwealth countries and 78 Polish. Some are of those members of the land forces buried there died in the advance through Reichswald Forest in February 1945.

He was awarded the 1939-45 Star; 1939-1945 War Medal

John is remembered with Honour at Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St Paul's); Batley Grammar School and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group