

Mersham

Second World War 1939 – 1945

APPS, WALTER EDWARD. Trooper, 14284837.
Royal Armoured Corps. Attached HQ Squadron, 29th Armoured Brigade.
Died Tuesday 27 June 1944. Aged 30.
Born and resided Kent.
Son of Harry and Kate Apps of Mersham, Ashford, Kent.
Buried Bayeux War Cemetery, Calvados, France. Grave Ref: XXVII. F. 18.
Originally enlisted in the General Service Corps.

GRIGGS, GEORGE DOUGLAS, Sergeant, 6283770.
2nd Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).
Died at Petegem, Belgium 21/22 May 1940.
Born and resided Kent.
Third son of Mr and Mrs C. Griggs of The Street, Mersham, Ashford, Kent.
Husband of Violet Griggs (née Watson).
Buried Esquelmes War Cemetery, Peco, Hainaut, Belgium. Grave Ref: VI. B. 4.
Pre war member of. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).
Prior to enlistment George had been employed by the East Kent Road Car Company, he is commemorated on the company war memorial, that was originally erected in the Employees' Social Club, Dover, Kent, Depot of the East Kent Road Car Co Ltd. It is now in the safe keeping of the Dover, Kent Transport Museum, Whitfield, Dover, Kent. George and Violet were married on Christmas Day at Mersham parish church. George went with the battalion, which was one of the first to go to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force; The 2nd Battalion arrived at the port of Cherbourg on 17 September 1939. In April 1940 it joined the 44th (Home Counties) Division and as part of same moved forward into Belgium to help to attempt stem the rapid German 'Blitzkrieg' offensive. George's battalion was heavily engaged on the river Escaut, losing 13 officers and 170 other ranks, one of whom was George. A week after George died, on 28/29 May, the battalion was at or around Meteren, at which time the orders to withdraw failed to reach battalion headquarters, and resultant of same, the remnants of the battalion were involved in various rearguard actions during which time a large number of officers and other ranks were taken prisoner. The survivors were withdrawn to Dunkirk, and on arrival in England the 2nd Battalion was re-equipped and re-organised. Several of the fallen of the 2nd Battalion, The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment), who fell during the 'Defence of the Escaut,' (for which the regiments first Battle of Honour of the Second World War was awarded), are at rest in Esquelmes War Cemetery. Casualties buried in various places in the neighbourhood were brought to Esquelmes by the Belgian authorities in

September 1940. When entering the cemetery gates, George is buried immediately in front of them on the opposite side, in the back row.

KNATCHBULL, Norton Cecil Michael. Lieutenant, 207642.

Lord Brabourne, 6th Baron Brabourne.

6th Battalion, Grenadier Guards.

Died Wednesday 15 September 1943. Aged 21.

Born London 11 February 1942. Resided North London.

Son of Michael Herbert Rudolph Knatchbull, 5th Baron Brabourne G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., M.C., and of Lady Brabourne (née Browne) C.I., Dame of St John of Jerusalem, of Westminster, London.

Buried Padua War Cemetery, Italy. Grave Ref: I. A. 1.

Formerly The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment).

Also commemorated on Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, civic war memorial.

Educated at Eton College, and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Taken prisoner during the fighting in Italy, Lord Brabourne despite being wounded attempted to escape from a prison train but was recaptured by the Germans and executed. Although it had been known by his family that Lord Brabourne had escaped from a prison camp in Italy, but it was not officially revealed until June 1945 that he had been recaptured and shot on the same day. Former Coldstream Guards Captain, John Ulick Knatchbull, 7th Baron Brabourne, then succeeded his late brothers title.

