

Derek James BROWN



Memorial at St Peter's Church, Neatishead

Born: June 1893 in Thompson, Norfolk

Baptised: 2nd July 1893 in Thompson

Parents: Father: Robert Brown (born c.1861)

Mother: Annie Elizabeth Saunders (born c.1856)
married 1890

Siblings: Reginald Robert Brown (1892-1969)

Basil (Bard) Victor Brown (1897-1964)

Marriage: None

1901 census: Aged 8, living at Lodge Farm, Hevingham, Norfolk. Father's occupation listed as Farm Bailiff

1911 census: Aged 17 and single, living at Back Lane, Banham, Attleborough with Grandmother Sarah Saunders, aged 81.

His occupation listed as Assistant Baker

Death: 16th September 1916, aged 23

Burial: Remembered with honour at Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France

Military & War service: TF/201922, Private Derek James Brown, 1st/7th Battalion, Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) Regiment, who was killed in action on the Somme battlefield.

Medals: Victory, British



On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918.

(Source: Find A Grave: Thiepval)