

## Leonard Morton Brooks

7<sup>th</sup> May 1892 – 20<sup>th</sup> July 1918

Leonard Morton Brooks was the fourth of eight children born to William and Julia Brooks.

His siblings were Harry, born 1883, Mary Elizabeth, born 1885, Lilian, born 1886, William James, born 1891, Samuel Maurice, born 1894, Elsie L'Oste, born 1897 and Ivy Bella, born 1899. They were all born in Upper Broughton. Sadly Leonard was the second of the children to be killed in the war, William James Brooks died in 1917.

All the children attended the Upper Broughton Board School situated on the main road between Upper and Nether Broughton. Like his brothers, Leonard was engaged in farm work and helping out with the family business. Leonard's father did not own Corner house Farm where they had been living for many years, so before the war started he bought South View on Bottom Green.



The Military Service Act came into force on January 1916 bringing in conscription due to the loss of men on the front line. It required all unmarried men aged 18-41 to enlist. The first brother to enlist on the war was Samuel Maurice who went to Strensall near York and joined the Sixth Northumberland Fusiliers in March 1916. One month later Leonard who was 25 years old and working in his father's coal, coke and cake business was called up too and he went to Halifax to join the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment). After completing his army training he was sent to France on active service.

Farms saw a loss of 170,000 men aged 18 and over between 1914 and 1918, around 17.5% of the total workforce enlisted. This lack of manpower on the farms caused huge problems and they began to send experienced ploughmen back from the front line as this was a vital and skilled job. Leonard's army form describes him as a 'skilled ploughman' and in the winter of 1917/18 both Samuel Maurice and Leonard managed to obtain leave of absence, to help with the ploughing in England. Leonard was sent to Mr Nixon's farm in Willoughby –on-the-Wolds. Samuel went to his Uncle Harry Brook's farm the 'The New Inn' in Widmerpool.

Report		Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc. during active service, as reported on Army Form 278, Army Form A 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks* Taken from Army Form 278, Army Form A 36, or other official documents
	3 E 7	Patria Sept 10/18 for Special Agric Work under Lt. Colonel's Order 250 A.S.O. 25/11/18			
		Admitted from England			
30/1/18	J. Dep.	Admitted from England	England	30.1.18	
5/4/18	"	Admitted to the 7 West Riding	France	5/4/18	
6/4/18	J. Dep.	Admitted to the 7 West Riding	France	6/4/18	
2/9/18	do.	Missing	T. 20/9/18	20/9/18	

Leonard returned to the front on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1918.

Julia Brooks had failing health and in May 1918 her son Samuel Maurice was reported missing presumed killed. But he had been lucky. In the big German push of that month all his company were either killed or taken prisoner, with the exception of Samuel Maurice and five of his comrades who managed to escape and reach Paris, where they spent two weeks in hospital suffering from mustard gas burns. When he finally reached Etaples he was able to send a postcard to his mother to say that he was still alive.

A few weeks later Julia was to receive another shock which hastened her death.

On July 20<sup>th</sup> Leonard was listed as missing believed killed. He has no known grave and his name is on the Soissons Memorial which commemorates almost 4,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom forces who died during the Battles of the Aisne and the Marne in 1918 and who have no known grave.

Form 278 - Report of Casualty

Name: Leonard, George, Corp. 7 West Riding Regt.

Serial: 37118

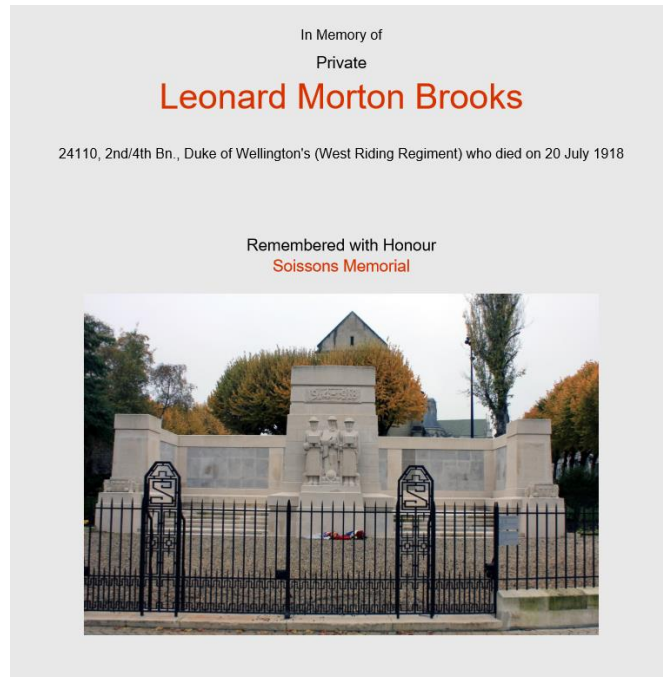
Signature of Recruit: Leonard, George

Signature of Witness: J. J. Perry

Classification: General Service

Date: 28 MAR 1918

Place: DERBY



On 8<sup>th</sup> August his mother received the following letter:

*Dear Mrs Brooks,*

*It is with very great regret that I am writing to give you the sorrowful news of the death in action of your son, Pte Leonard Brooks. Your son was killed by a machine-gun bullet during an attack in which this Battalion took part on July 20<sup>th</sup>. I am very sorry that this letter should reach you so long after your son's death. It is due to the fact that the officer commanding the Company at the time was wounded. I only joined the Battalion two days ago, and I am seizing the first opportunity to write to you. Your son was buried the same day and a cross has been erected on his grave. May I say how very sorry I am to be the sender of such bad news? I sympathise most sincerely with you in your great loss.*

*Sincerely yours,*

*B R Lupton, Captain Commanding B Company*

In May 1919 cricket resumed in Upper Broughton after a long interval owing to the war, with a game between Upper Broughton and Old Dalby. Before the match Mr J M Walker welcomed the visitors and referred to the losses the cricket world had sustained throughout the country, but especially called to mind the local players who had laid down their lives and would be sadly missed on the field of sport – Enoch Miller, William and Leonard Brooks and Frank Ecob. In August of that year a flagstaff was erected in their memory at the cricket club and a flag unfurled.