

Name, Rank & Regiment of Soldier:

Blow, Harry

Private The Royal Scots 2nd Batt. (Lothian Division)

Service no: 325721 'formerly 35303 of the Notts & Derby'



LATE PTE. HARRY BLOW.

Date of birth	Date died of wounds (gassed)	Age
c. Feb 1891	29 th May 1918	27

Background: Harry Blow

Harry was the youngest son of John Thomas (1864-1933) and Mary Ann Blow, of Ramper Rd., Swinderby, Newark, Notts. Native of Harmston.

Census returns show Harry's father, Thomas (or John Thomas) was married to **Mary Ann née Brown in 1886**, both originally from Harmston, Lincolnshire. In the 1891 census, Thomas is given as being 27 and **Mary Ann** as 29. Harry is aged about 'six weeks.' They have an older son, **John William Blow** born around 1888.

In 1901, the Blows are still in Harmston with father John being 'a farmer' of 37 and his wife now two years younger (rather than older previously) than him at 35. John William is 13 and Harry 10.

There is no record of Harry in the 1911 Census, when his parents lived on a dairy farm on Potter Hill, Collingham. However, we know he was single and a miller's drayman in Farnsfield when he enlisted in 1915. The address was 'Mill House' occupied by W. Scoley, Farnsfield.

Military History: **Private Harry Blow**

Harry enlisted in Derby on the 9th Dec 1915 when he was 24 yrs and 10 months old. He was described as 5' 2 ½ " in height with a 37" chest. He appeared to have medical problems but the details are impossible to decipher as the attestation paper is in poor condition. Legible details include an astigmatism and 'his teeth could do with attention.' Harry was posted to France in February 1916 with the 3rd Battalion Sherwood Foresters and was transferred to the Royal Scots Battalion on 14th April 1916.

Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment)

The Royal Scots (since disbanded) were the oldest and most senior line infantry regiment of the British Army, founded in 1633. They were often referred to as "Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard" (the name arising from an ongoing argument with rivals the Coldstream Guards about who had the longest pedigree. The Guards boasted they'd been Charles II's bodyguard to which the Scots retaliated they'd been Pontius Pilate's!).

They were part of the 8th Brigade/3rd Division during World War One. Harry Blow would have been engaged in some of the heaviest fighting, including the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Battle of the Lys April 1918

It is not known which battle Harry sustained wounds from an exploding gas shell that eventually led to his death. The 2nd Battalion Royal Scots took part in most of the battles of the 'Battle of the Lys' in April 1918, the last one being at Bethune on April 18th. Harry was by then a stretcher-bearer, one of the most difficult roles non-combatant soldiers had, entailing carrying wounded and dying men from No Man's Land to the Medical Officer waiting at the Regimental Aid Post to the rear of the line a mile or two away. With another stretcher-bearer, he would have had to negotiate uneven terrain, mud, dead bodies, exploding shells, snipers and gas. This journey would be made over and over again.

However, the newspaper tribute below suggests Harry sustained his injuries on May 27th. This was a day of intense fighting on the Aisne but the Royal Scots were not engaged in this offensive. As Harry died in Hospital No 4 which was in Dunkirk, we must presume he sustained his injuries somewhere on the Somme rather than the Aisne.

Newspaper Tribute to Pte Blow (reproduced in full by kind permission of Trevor Frecknall:

Friday 31 May 1918: The Blow family of Potter Hill, Collingham, learned that their second son Harry, 27, had died in France. They had been receiving daily bulletins since Tuesday, when they were informed he had been gassed. Now they discovered his death was caused by “wounds caused by a gas shell”. Harry, a miller¹ at Farnsfield pre-War, joined the Army in February 1916, went to France at Whitsun 1917 and had most recently been working as a **stretcher bearer** with the Royal Scots Regiment. Now his mum Mary Ann and dad John, a waggoner on a farm, received a moving letter from the Reverend W J Moulton, Wesleyan Chaplain at No.4 General Hospital:

“In spite of every effort, your son passed away last night, shortly after 9pm. When he first came here and was able to speak, he spoke to me with great affection of his home and told me no one ever had better parents. When I prayed with him he responded gratefully and there was no doubt he had learnt to put his trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. When I saw him last, a little while before his death, he was practically unconscious and did not rally afterwards. He will have a soldier’s funeral...”

H.S.—This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions.

If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than 1d. being reckoned as 1d.; and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

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Handed in at 34 7/11 Received here at H 45/11

TO Messrs Hamilton

London F121938 of 4 gen

Stock Lamiers telegraphs May 29

died May 29 325721 HTE

Blow 2 Ryl Secto

passed shell wd Prochias auly

HAMILTON
30 MAY
18

Above: Telegram informing the regimental HQ that Pte Blow had died of a gas shell wound.

Burial and Memorials

Private H Blow is buried in Etaples Communal Cemetery, France about 27 kilometres south of Boulogne. His headstone reads: ‘He died that we might live.’

Grave location in Cemetery: L LXVI E 45

¹ Blow’s Attestation Paper shows him as a miller’s drayman

**Private H Blow is also remembered on the North Collingham War
Memorials and Roll of Honour**

Sources

Ancestry.co.uk

The Long, Long Trail

The Royal Scots Website <http://www.theroyalscots.co.uk/>

Trevor Frecknall 'Collingham and District in The Great War' (published 2015)

