

ERIC WILLIAM BRODRICK



23rd July 1916

1881-1916 Age 35

Second Lieutenant, 5th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards) (Territorial Force).

Eric Brodrick was born on 24th April 1881 in Farnley, between Leeds and Pudsey, where his father was rector. He was the only son and youngest child of the Reverend Francis Brodrick, from Macclesfield, Cheshire, and his wife Jane Wood, from Warwickshire. Eric's early education was as a boarding pupil at the Chevin Dell School at Otley, and St. George's School, in Roundhay, Leeds. He attended Bradford Grammar School from the ages of fourteen to sixteen, in the years 1895-97. In the 1901 census he was aged nineteen, living with his parents and two sisters at Farnley Rectory and with no occupation stated. However, the next year he went to the Far East, to the Philippine Islands as a Province Agent in the employ of Messrs. Smith, Bell Co. This company, which is still trading today, specialized in the import-export trade and insurance in the Philippines.

In August 1914 when war broke out, Eric was on home leave, apparently in London. He at once enlisted as a private in the Royal Fusiliers' Public Schools Battalion, before he transferred to the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps in September. In the Spring of 1915 Eric was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and he was posted to the 5th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment, raised around Scarborough. Shortly after, on 17th April he married Margaret Lucy Moon whose father was a grocer in East Keswick, near Leeds. Since his parents had moved to Lancashire several years earlier, and his widowed mother now lived in Birkenhead, it is unclear how they met. In November, he was promoted to Lieutenant, and in March 1916 he joined his battalion on the Western Front. He was wounded and returned home to recuperate, before he rejoined his battalion.



In July 1916, the 5th Green Howards were in the Ypres Salient, near Kemmel. They took part in an attack on an enemy mine crater on 10th July, following which on the night of the 22nd Lieutenant Brodrick led a patrol into no man's land to reconnoitre the German lines. The patrol came under heavy fire and Brodrick fell into the hands of the Germans, either mortally wounded or killed outright. Initially he was reported missing. The Germans buried his body and his possessions were later returned to his wife through the Red Cross. Following the war, his body was re-buried in the British military cemetery at Larch Wood (Railway Cutting). His Battalion commander wrote to Brodrick's mother:- *'The whole Battalion, officers and men, sorrow with you. We all loved your son, and his men would have done anything for him.'* A fellow officer added:- *'He was very much liked by everybody, officers and men, and set a splendid example by his coolness and courage under the most trying circumstances.'* A few weeks after his death, his wife Margaret gave birth to their child who she named Erica after her father. His name is on the East Keswick village war memorial and on a plaque in the parish church.



Acknowledgements:

The main photo is from the O.B.A. Roll of Honour. The School records for the 1890s have not yet emerged from storage. This biography is largely based on the work of others. There is a 1924 biography of Brodrick in De Ruigny's Roll of Honour (used through Ancestry.com), and modern accounts can be found at <http://www.ww1-yorkshires.org.uk/pdf-files/bob%20coulson/officers-died-ww1.pdf> ('A Memorial Roll of the Officers of Alexandra Princess of Wales Own Yorkshire Regiment Who Died 1914–1919. Compiled by Robert Coulson (1952–2008)') and <http://www.ww1-yorkshires.org.uk/pdf-files/2nd%20Lt%20Brodrick%20Eric%20William.pdf>. An unattributed newspaper cutting also adds information (see below). Two contributors to Ancestry have posted several items, including a photo of his wife which was in his wallet and was returned by the Germans. I have reproduced some of them below. His sister Mrs. Mary Blaclin, of Hartlepool, notified the Northern Daily Mail (7th August 1916) he was missing (<http://www.newmp.org.uk/article.php?categoryid=100&articleid=111&displayorder=12>). For St. George's School, Roundhay, see: <http://www.oakwoodchurch.info/Oak%20Leaves%20Part%2011%20-%20St%20George's%20School%20Roundhay%20circa%201880-1917%20by%20Neville%20Hurworth.pdf>. For his employers in the Philippines, see <http://www.smithbell.com.ph/pages/about-us/>.



Lieut. ERIC WILLIAM BRODRICK,
5th Battalion
YORKSHIRE REGIMENT.

ONE of the first hundred thousand to answer Lord Kitchener's call for men in September, 1914, was Lieutenant Eric William Brodrick, of the 5th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment, who fell near Kemmel, Belgium, whilst in charge of a patrol which was examining the enemy's lines on the night of July 22nd, 1916. The party was heavily fired upon and bombed, Lieut. Brodrick being either killed outright or mortally wounded when taken prisoner, for in the German lists he was reported as having died in their hands on July 23rd.

He was the youngest son of the late Rev. Francis Edward Brodrick, Rector of Farnley, near Leeds, and Mrs. Brodrick, of 101, Mount Road, Birkenhead, was 35 years of age at the time of his death, and married in 1915 Miss Margaret Lucy Moon, of East Keswick, near Leeds, who is left with a daughter born in September, 1916.

Educated at St. George's School, Roundhay, Leeds, and Bradford Grammar School, in 1902 Lieutenant



Brodrick joined the firm of Messrs. Smith, Bell & Co., of the Philippine Islands, attaining later the position of a Branch Manager. He was at home on leave when war broke out, and enlisted in September in the Public Schools Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, was transferred a few weeks later to the Inns of Court O.T.C., received his commission in the 5th Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment in January, 1915, with which he went to the Western Front in April, 1916. He was very popular with both officers and men, a fact to which Lieut-Col. J. Mortimer, the Commander of the Battalion, bore witness in a letter to Lieut. Brodrick's mother, in which he wrote:—"The whole Battalion, officers and men, sorrow with you. We all loved your son, and his men would have done anything for him." A fellow-officer also wrote:—"He was very much liked by everybody, officers and men, and set a splendid example by his coolness and courage under the most trying circumstances."



Items posted on Ancestry.com by family members (clockwise from top left): Eric Brodrick wearing the insignia of a full Lieutenant on his cuff; report from an unidentified newspaper; the 'Death Penny' sent to his widow; his grave in Larch Wood Railway Cutting Cemetery; his British War and Victory medals; photo of Margaret Lucie carried in his wallet and returned by the Red Cross.

