

## Pte John Joseph O'Brien

**3-D-14**



John was born on May 25, 1912 in Bracebridge, Ontario to John Joseph and Katherine O'Brien of Walkerton Ontario. John's parents were married on January 15, 1895 in Formosa Ontario. His brother Spr Wilfred P. O'Brien of the Royal Canadian Engineers Regiment died on July 29, 1942 at the age of 24 following a traffic accident in England. John had four married sisters in Canada. He was a laborer and a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

John enlisted in Windsor Ontario on April 25, 1940, after brief military training he then went overseas to the United Kingdom on July 17, 1940, arriving in Gourrock, Scotland on August 2. There his training continued and he was assigned to the Essex Scottish Regiment. During his stay in the United Kingdom he also met his great love Natalie. On August 27, 1941, he married her in Hackney, London England, where Natalie was from. Their son Richard Wilfred O'Brien was born on April 8, 1944. Six months later, in early November 1944, he was sent to the front in the south of the Netherlands. After fierce battles in February and March to push the Nazis back behind the Rhine in the so-called Rhineland offensive, the Essex Scottish Regiment entered the Netherlands again to drive out the last Germans from the eastern and northern Netherlands.

John was killed on Monday April 9, 1945 at the age of 32 during the battle for Haarle. He was temporarily buried in Haarle before being reburied in Holten on February 5, 1946. The other member of his regiment killed that day was Pte Everett E. Hartling. On April 9, 1945, eight other Canadian soldiers were killed by enemy fire during the liberation of Haarle. All are mentioned on the monument in Haarle.

On his gravestone: LOVINGLY REMEMBERED BY WIFE AND DEAR SON  
PARENTS, SISTERS AND RELATIVES

His medals were: 1939-45 Star; France Germany Star; Defense Medal;  
War Medal 1939-45; CVSM & Clasp.

His mother and widow were awarded the Memorial Cross on May 18, 1945.

