

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GLASS SELLERS.

NOTES OF INTEREST ON MEMBERS.

Lieut.General Sir John Brown KCB.CBE.DSO.TD.JP.DL.FRIBA.FRICS.

John Brown was born on February 10th 1880 in Bailiff Street, Northampton. His father, also John Brown, owned and ran the Garibaldi Hotel, and later became an Alderman of Northampton. John, himself, was educated at Magdalen College School in Brackley. He went on to qualify as an architect and a surveyor and ran a firm starting in Bridge Street, Northampton.

In 1901 he joined the 1st Volunteer's Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment as a Private and rose through the ranks. He was a keen Territorial and by 1904 had reached the rank of Lieutenant in command of the Battalion Machine Gun Section. That same year he married Annie Maria, the third daughter of the late Alderman Francis Tonsley JP and Kate Davis Allen of Northampton. They went on to have two sons. Ken & David.

When WW1 broke out in August 1914, he was promoted to Captain in the 4th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment and all the troops went for War training in Essex, Suffolk and then Norfolk. The Battalion was reorganised at New Year 1915 and Captain Brown was promoted to Major and became Adjutant to the Regiment. Having completed a year's training, on 30th July the Regiment embarked on the "Royal George" at Devonport heading, with stops at Malta and Alexandria for re-coaling, to Gallipoli to fight the Turks, arriving on August 14th at Suvla Bay.

Little progress was made and, when the Gallipoli campaign was finally abandoned, the troops left on 15th December 1915 for Egypt, where they set up Mena Camp at Sidi Bishr near the Pyramids. The troops were now to guard the Suez Canal and so moved to a new base at Shallufa and then on to Kubri. On 14th May 1916, the Commanding Officer was injured and had to be repatriated to the UK and so it was then that Major Brown was promoted to replace him as Lieutenant Colonel.

In January 1917, the Battalion started moving across the Sinai Desert and they were then involved in the battle for Gaza on April 19th. In that battle Lt.Col. Brown suffered a shrapnel wound to his left arm but continued his command. Later he collapsed, as the wound was more serious than first thought, and he was persuaded to go home on sick leave. However, his ship was caught in a storm and foundered on rocks off the coast of Sicily. Everyone was rescued and, after a few days, he continued his journey home.

After recuperation, he returned to his command. The Regiment advanced to Wilhelma in Palestine where HQ was set up in the town hotel. On 27th October 1917 a Turkish shell hit the wall of the HQ just above his head but failed to explode and, uninjured, he managed to escape through the rear window. The slow advance through Palestine continued but, in April 1918, when the Northampton's were occupying the front line, Lt. Col. Brown collapsed. He was evacuated to the Field Hospital at El Arish, where he was diagnosed with Double Pneumonia.

He was not expected to live but did improve and, when he could travel, was shipped home via Alexandria to a London hospital. As a result of this, he suffered ill health for the rest of his life but that was the end of his war. He was awarded the DSO. In 1919, when the 4th Northampton's finally returned home, he joined them as they were greeted by the Mayor.

Then, in 1920, he led the procession, in full uniform and medals, to collect the Regimental Colours from safe keeping in St Sepulchre's Church. He continued his support for the Regiment and the Territorials and was awarded a CBE in 1923. During the following year 1924 he was appointed the Colonel commanding the 162nd Infantry Brigade (East Midlands TA), a position he held for the next

4 years. He also became President of the Northampton Branch of the British Legion, and in 1936 was awarded a CB.

His architectural business continued as Brown & Henson Ltd at 83, St Giles Street in Northampton, but later moved to 30, Billing Road. Not only was he a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects but he also became a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers of France.

One of his designs was for the Remembrance Gardens on Abington Square, Northampton, which was backed by a long wall carved with the names of all those who had given their lives in WW1. In front of this wall, and central to the gardens, was the statue and memorial to Edgar Mobbs, the local hero who had captained Northampton Saints Rugby Club, the Barbarians and England, as well as raising a Company of Sportsmen in WW1 known as The Mobbs Own. This Statue had originally been on the Market Square since 1921 but was now moved to the centre of this new site. Col. Brown unveiled the whole Memorial area on 1st January 1937.

Locally, he had been on the Council of the Northants Record Society, and was a servant of all good causes – for example the Northampton Hospitals, the Church Lads Brigade, the YMCA, Toc H, the Ladies Club, and the Repertory Theatre. He also became a mason, a JP and a Deputy Lieutenant of the County, and was made an Honorary Freeman of the County Borough of Northampton.

He had been knighted in 1934 with a KCB. Nationally, he served as Chairman of the British Legion for four years from 1930. He also served as Vice President of the Army Historical Association. He was Deputy Director General of the TA from 1937 to 1939 and Deputy Adjutant-General (T) at The War Office from 1939 to 1940.

He was then appointed Director General of the TA and Inspector General of Welfare and Education at The War Office from 1940 to 1941, and for the same years he was Chairman of the British Empire Services League. He had already been promoted to Major General ahead of joining the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers on 21st June 1939, when he was presented with Honorary Livery status, having been sponsored by the then Master Lt.Col. Bill Dove.

Sir John went on to be Master of the Pattenmakers' Company twice being 1942/44 and 1950/1. His homes were at 3, The Drive in Northampton and later at The Grange at Ecton. His London office was at 117, Sloane Street SW1. His clubs were the RAC in London and the Northampton & County in Northampton.

Sir John retired in 1941 with the rank of Lieutenant General and resigned from the Glass Sellers on 24th March 1954. He died on 4th April 1958.