GRAYSON Walter,



L/Sgt, 406982
2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays)
Royal Armoured Corps
Place of Birth: Sculcoates, Hull
Date of Death: Saturday 24 April 1943
Killed in Action
Cemetery: Medjez-El-Bab War Cemetery
Aged 27 years

Walter Grayson, born in 1915, was the eldest of five children born to John Thomas Grayson and Alice Maud formerly Townend in Sculcoates, Hull, Yorkshire. His father was an electrical engineer (armature winder) in the dye works when he married Alice Maud in 1914. Alice Maud worked as a sweet packer in a confectioner's works.



Walter joined the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) - the same regiment as Lt Roger Bunn MM who is also commemorated in the Haverhill WW2 Roll of Honour. In October 1939 a parachute scare had brought orders to the Bays to move to East Anglia. The regiment moved on 3rd October and was garrisoned in Haverhill as a part of 2nd Light Armoured Brigade of the 1st Armoured Division.

They trained during a very cold and hard winter, the Bays having received the new Mark VIC light tank, which arrived without its armament of a 7.92 mm and a 15mm Besa, so a sheet of 3-ply wood covered the mounting where the guns should have been. But these winter months of 1939-40 were the period of the 'Phoney War', when the sense of urgency that was to come later was sadly lacking. The Bays were to stay in Haverhill until early 1941 garrisoned at Place Farm (now Place Court) parking their Bren Gun carrying tanks on the Recreation Ground.

They also provided a 12 piece dance band for the Saturday dance nights at the Town Hall (now the Arts Centre). Perhaps it was at one of these dances that Walter met his future wife, Olga Lilian Gee.

Olga was born on 25th October 1918 in North Walsham, the daughter of Ernest John Gee, a fish hawker, and Lilian May nee Thurling. Olga had three brothers, Mervyn born 1913 in Smallburgh, Norfolk, Eric born 1914 at Swaffham, Norfolk and Percival

born in Smallburgh in 1922. Their mother, Lilian died aged 35 years in 1927. Ernest John was remarried the following year to Marjorie Jessop. They had a son Cecil born in Smallburgh in 1933 and it must have been shortly after this that they decided to move to Haverhill for by 1935, the family had moved to 42 Queen's Street, where they established a retail fish merchants business.

In 1940, Olga and Walter were married.





Bays tanks going through the Gabes Gap

The Bays arrived in the Middle East in November 1941 and were heavily involved in actions in the Western Desert. The Queen's Bays moved through the Gabes Gap on 7th April, 'A' Squadron, under Major Harmon, fanning out to the South in a sweep which netted twenty prisoners, while 'C' Squadron knocked out a Panzer Mark IV Special and a Mark III Special with only two

shots. The crews were taken prisoner. On the 8th the regiment closed up to Mezzouna, which on the 9th was found to be clear, and so the advance continued for twenty miles until a force of twenty to thirty enemy tanks, including Tigers, was encountered. The German tanks steadily withdrew and the Bays followed up carefully, moving from one hull down position to another. On the 10th the Bays withdrew to Bouthada, near Sfax, resting for five days. On 14th April 1943 the Queen's Bays joined the First Army and their sand coloured tanks changed to dark green.

On 23rd April they moved out of Goubellat with the 9th Lancers but they made slow progress, delayed by mines which had been laid in standing corn so making detection difficult. The following day, 24th April, the advance continued, crossing another minefield with the help of the Royal Engineers. The Bays reached the Goubellat plain, which turned out to be crossed by a succession of deep wadis (a watercourse that is dry except during periods of rainfall). The final wadi was passable at only one place and as 'A' Squadron emerged in single file, the tanks came under anti-tank fire from a wood at 100 yards' range. Lieutenant Cottier's, Sergeant C. W Smith's and Sergeant Grayson's Crusaders were knocked out, the two Sergeants being killed, together with Corporals Hunt and Garforth, and Troopers Newbold and Terry.

Graves Registration Report Form.

~~COUNTRY~~ ~~COMMUNE~~: TUNISIA REPORT No.: SCHEDULE No.: 22

PLACE OF BURIAL: MEDJEZ-EL-BAB WAR CEMETERY

Land belongs to

Certified complete and correct.

The following are buried here:— Signature Date

P.R.G.	No. and Rank		Initials, Name & Honours		Unit	Date of Death
			PLOT II ROW E (CONTD)			
6	406982	L/Sjt.	W.	GRAYSON	The Queen's Bays R.A.C.	24. 4.43
7	321004	L/Cpl.	P.H.	HUNT	The Queen's Bays R.A.C.	24. 4.43
8	7901216	Cpl.	J.R.	GARFORTH	The Queen's Bays R.A.C.	24. 4.43

Walter Grayson was 27 years old when he lost his life. He was buried alongside the other men who lost their lives in this action in Medjez El Bab War Cemetery in Tunisia.



There are 2,903 Commonwealth servicemen of the Second World War buried or commemorated in Medjez El Bab War Cemetery.
385 of the burials are unidentified.



