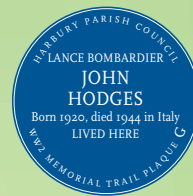




# IN MEMORY OF LANCE-BOMBARDIER JOHN HENRY HODGES

85th Mountain Regiment, Royal Artillery  
Killed in action on 8th September 1944

## BLUE PLAQUE G



John Hodges was born in Harbury in 1920, the oldest of three sons of George and Susan Hodges. George served in the First World War in the Royal Field Artillery and then worked as a labourer in the cement works. All three of his sons served in the Second World War.

Before the war John had enlisted in the 271st Leamington Battery of the Royal Field Artillery which was part of the Territorial Army. He was called up on the 2nd of September 1939 and his unit was soon in Belgium. In May 1940 John was one of those evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk. He was transferred to the 85th Regiment and stationed in Bovey Tracey in Devon. In September 1941 he married Florence Wilton in Swindon.

A year later, in September 1942, John sailed from Liverpool with his regiment leaving behind his now pregnant wife. She gave birth to a son, Graham John in December 1942 but he was never



*John Hodges*



*John and Florence on their wedding day*

to see his father. By then John was with his regiment in Egypt. After service in Iraq where they trained and battled with the intense heat they went to Persia (now Iran) but within a week of arrival were sent to Lebanon.

A decision had been made to convert the 85th to a Mountain Regiment equipped with screw-guns. These were artillery weapons which could be quickly broken down and carried through mountainous terrain by mules. After training in Lebanon's mountains, they returned to Egypt and in March 1944 sailed for Italy on HMS Derbyshire. They arrived in Naples on March 7th and began months of fighting their way through Italy often in very difficult terrain. John was killed in action on September 8th. He is buried in Gradara War Cemetery which contains the graves of 1191 men killed in the advance from Ancona to Rimini.

