

The family of Private Harold Roberts

Great grandparents, grandparents and parents

In 1868, William Roberts was born in Buckinghamshire, England. His father Benjamin Roberts, was 27 and his mother Mary Ann Roberts (née Masters), was 32.

William was one of six children and the second youngest of his siblings. His eldest brother was Joseph Roberts, born in 1859 and followed by Eliza Roberts, born 1861. The following year in 1862, Benjamin Roberts was born and followed by James Roberts in 1865. William Roberts came along in 1868 and his younger sister Annie Roberts completed the family in 1870. All the children were born in Buckinghamshire, England.

Sometime between 1870-1871, the family had moved from Buckinghamshire and were now listed as living at 110 Railway Terrace, Copley, Halifax, England. To the right is a picture of this address today (taken from Google Street view) that gives you an idea of the type of house they lived in. The house only had two bedrooms so the family of eight would've lived in cramped conditions.



Over the years the family household had become smaller as the children started to fly the nest. In 1881, the family were now living on Lower Street in Ossett, Wakefield, England.

Shortly after 1881, Benjamin Roberts and Mary Ann Roberts divorced. In 1891, Mary Ann Roberts, aged 55 was living at 19 York Street, Halifax, England. Benjamin Roberts, aged 50, was living at 24 Miall Street in Halifax, England. William Roberts, aged 23 and Annie Roberts, age 21, still lived with Benjamin who had listed himself as 'Married'. There was a lady called Eliza Scape, aged 35 of Brighthouse and was listed as the 'Housekeeper'. Young children were also listed in the household - Hannah Scape, aged 9, Ellen Roberts, aged 5 and James Willie Roberts, aged 2. There was also a 22-year-old lodger named Abraham Greenwood.

On 13th August 1892, William Roberts of York Street, Halifax, aged 24 married a lady named Elizabeth Ward Simpson of Wakefield Road, Skircoat, aged 20 at St John the Baptist in Halifax, West Yorkshire, England. At the time of the marriage William worked as a 'Carrier' and his father Benjamin was listed with the same occupation.

Harold Roberts and family

On 19th October 1894, Harold Roberts was born in Liversedge/Dewsbury, West Riding of Yorkshire.

On 27th May 1895, Mary Ann Roberts, aged 59 and listed as a 'Widow', married a gentleman named Akroyd Hepworth, aged 44 of Skircoat Green, Halifax. They had married at St John the Baptist, Halifax, Yorkshire, England.

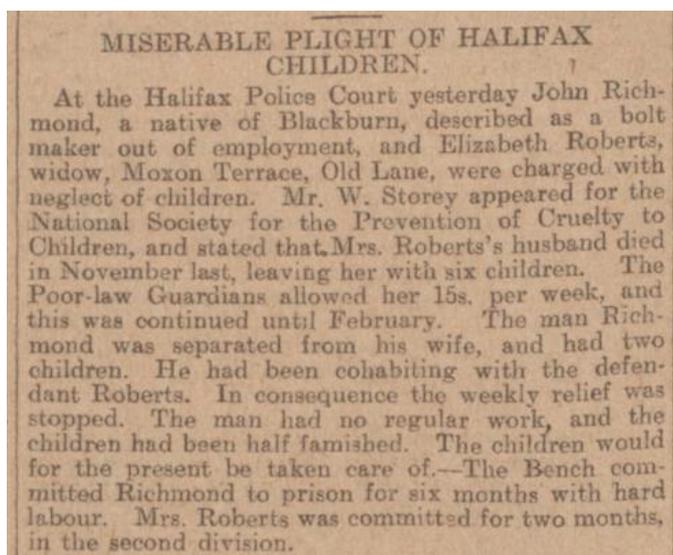
In 1897, Mary Ann Hepworth (née Roberts, Nee Masters) was pronounced deceased in Halifax, Yorkshire, England.

Sadly in 1900 and after 8 years of marriage, William Roberts of 26 Moxon Terrace, Halifax, was pronounced deceased at the age of 33 and was buried on 5th December 1900 in the parish of Haley Hills, All Souls in Halifax, West Yorkshire, England. He left behind his wife Elizabeth, aged 27 along with his children - Nellie (8), James Willie (6), Harold (5), Annie (3) Lilly (1) and Arthur Edward (8 months).

On 31st March 1901, Elizabeth Roberts, aged 28 and a widow, had remained living at 26 Moxon Terrace, Halifax, with her children but also now had a boarder named John Richmond, aged 33 and also a widow from Blackburn, Lancashire. John had two children with him - Emily Richmond (12) and John Henry Richmond (8). Both children had been born in Halifax, Yorkshire.

On Tuesday 7th May 1901, the Halifax Evening Courier had written an article named 'SHOCKING NEGLECT OF CHILDREN. TWO BEDS FOR TEN PERSONS.' Elizabeth Roberts and John Richmond had been charged at Halifax Borough Court with neglect of their children. The NSPCC was also involved. They had pleaded not guilty, but John Richmond was sentenced to six months hard labour and Elizabeth Roberts, two months. Second Division.

Bradford Observer
8 May 1901



Sadly, the children were separated from their mother and each other. Arthur Edward Roberts, the youngest at only 8 months old had also been separated and later died, aged 1 in March 1902. There was no information for Lilly Roberts. Annie Roberts was listed as living with a lady named Sarah S Robert, a 73-year-old widow from Ireland, living in Rastrick, Brighouse. The other siblings also did not have traceable information.



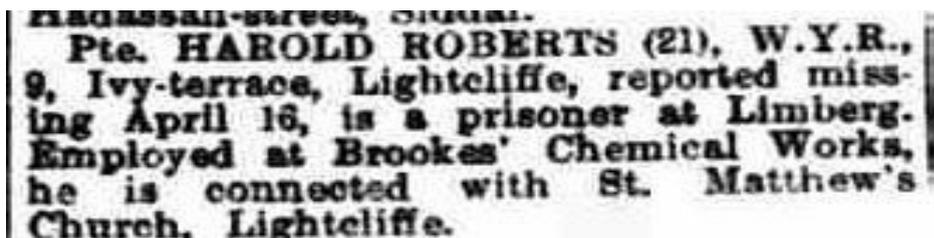
During the First World War, both Harold Roberts and James Willie Roberts enlisted to serve the country. Harold was attested into the British Army in 1914 and was appointed into the 7th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment. He was given the rank of Private (Pte.) and the service number 55007. Above is a photo of Harold Roberts in uniform (taken from Ancestry).

The 1st/7th Battalion, (Leeds Rifles) West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own), a territorial battalion, was at Carlton Barracks, Leeds in August 1914 when war broke out. In March 1915 they moved to Gainsborough before proceeding to France, sailing from Folkestone on the 15th of April 1915, landing at Boulogne with the 146th Brigade, 49th (West Riding) Division. They served on the Western Front throughout the conflict, seeing action at Aubers Ridge, on the Somme, the Flanders Coast, the Third Battle of Ypres, the Battle of the Lys and the final advance in Picardy.

Harold took leave from the Army on 8th April 1917, Harold Roberts, aged 22 of 103 Racecommon Road, Barnsley, married a lady named Grace Annie Sanderson Bebbington, aged 20, also of the same address. They married at St Edward the Confessor at Barnsley, Yorkshire, England.

On 16th April 1918, whilst still serving for the British Army, Harold Roberts, aged 21 of 9 Ivy Terrace, Lightcliffe, Halifax, was reported missing. He had been captured in Mount Kemmel, Kemmelberg in Flanders, Belgium and held in Bad kreuznach - Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany where he was a Prisoner of War. The article listing missing Pte. Harold Roberts, was published in the *Halifax Evening Courier* on Friday 28th June 1918 and Harold Roberts was returned back to the United Kingdom and was later discharged, ending his service on 20th December 1918. He received the Victory Medal and British War Medal for his efforts. He was awarded a military pension which commenced immediately from the day after his discharge.

From the *Halifax Evening Courier* the **'In German Hands'** section.

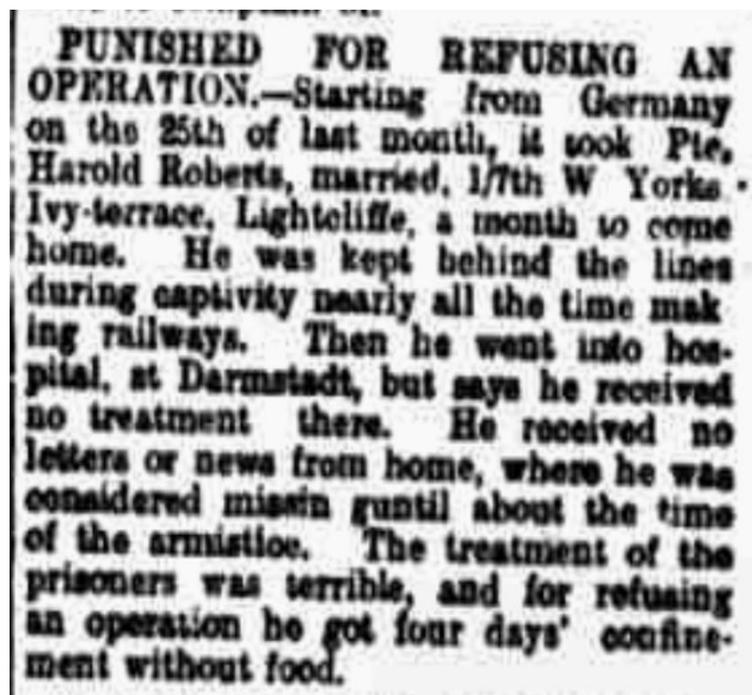


Pte. HAROLD ROBERTS (21), W.Y.R., 9, Ivy-terrace, Lightcliffe, reported missing April 16, is a prisoner at Limberg. Employed at Brookes' Chemical Works, he is connected with St. Matthew's Church, Lightcliffe.

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On Tuesday 31st December 1918, the *Halifax Evening Courier* published an article from Pte. Harold Roberts describing his time as a Prisoner of War in Germany.

PUNISHED FOR REFUSING AN OPERATION.



PUNISHED FOR REFUSING AN OPERATION.—Starting from Germany on the 25th of last month, it took Pte. Harold Roberts, married, 1/7th W Yorks. Ivy-terrace, Lightcliffe, a month to come home. He was kept behind the lines during captivity nearly all the time making railways. Then he went into hospital, at Darmstadt, but says he received no treatment there. He received no letters or news from home, where he was considered missing until about the time of the armistice. The treatment of the prisoners was terrible, and for refusing an operation he got four days' confinement without food.

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In my research I haven't been able to find a date that states when he was freed from captivity.

Family Life

On 27th April 1921, Charles William Roberts was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, England. His parents are listed as Harold Roberts and Grace A.S Roberts (Née Bebbington).

In Jul-Aug-Sep of 1924, Majorie Roberts, Charles William's younger sister, was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, England. Her parents are listed as Harold Roberts and Grace A.S Roberts (Née Bebbington).

Below is a picture of Harold Roberts but the time of the photograph is unknown (taken from Ancestry).



In 1939, Harold Roberts was listed as living at 4 Waverley Crescent, Hipperholme, Halifax, with his wife Grace and their children - Charles William Roberts and Majorie Roberts. There is also somebody else listed at this address but due to confidentiality their details are closed on the census record.

Family weddings

In Oct-Nov-Dec of 1942, Charles William Roberts married a lady named Amy Middleton in Halifax, West Riding of Yorkshire, England.

Also, in Oct-Nov-Dec of 1942, Majorie Roberts married a gentleman named Robert Byron Wanklyn in Halifax, West Riding of Yorkshire, England. Below is a picture of Majorie with her husband Robert. As Robert appears to be in a military uniform, the time of this photograph would have been taken during the Second World War, close to the time of their marriage. Majorie would have only been between 18-21 years old whilst Robert was around 22-25 years old.



This image and the two of Harold Roberts are taken from Robert Botwood's public family tree on Ancestry

Family deaths

On 19th March 1952, Harold Roberts, aged 57, was pronounced deceased. He was buried on 22nd March 1952 at St Matthew Church, Lightcliffe Cemetery in Halifax, West Riding of Yorkshire, England. On 23rd April 1952, Harold's military pension records had been updated and Grace A.S Roberts continued to receive this.

MINISTRY OF PENSIONS	
CLAIMANT	11/W MPR 51
Surname <i>ROBERTS</i> <small>(Block Letters)</small>	Registered No. 102132 <i>4/MR/1116.</i>
Christian Name <i>Grace A. S.</i>	
Man's Name <i>ROBERTS. Harold</i> <small>(Surname first : in block letters)</small>	
Regiment } <i>West Yorks.</i>	Rank } <i>O/C</i>
Ship }	Rating }
Regimental } No. <i>5507</i>	Relationship } <i>Widow</i>
Official }	to man }
<small>M36213/7235 9/51 1500 cww.LTD. 57/5</small>	

On 28th February 1980, Grace Annie Sanderson Roberts, aged 83, was pronounced deceased in Halifax, West Yorkshire. She was also buried at St Matthew Church, Lightcliffe Cemetery in Halifax, West Yorkshire, England

In Apr-May-Jun of 1981, Charles William Roberts was pronounced deceased in Bradford, West Yorkshire, England.

Paul Wormwell

Modified by D.M.Barker
February 2024

Additional material has now been found and is recorded in

Private Harold Roberts (1894 - 1952)

