

Private Harold Martin[©]
Regimental number: 277279
2nd/7th Battalion, Manchester Regiment

born: 1888–died: 31 July 1917

Private Harold Martin was the eldest child of Thomas Robinson Martin and Elizabeth (née Doherty) Martin. Thomas and Elizabeth were married in 1886 in Kendal, Westmorland¹ and had 10 children—nine of whom were still alive in 1911:²

- Harold (born in 1888)³
- Esther (born in 1891 but died at the age of 20)⁴
- Mary Inman (born in 1892 and died later the same year)⁵
- William (born on 11 July 1895)⁶
- Charles George (born on 27 September 1897)⁷
- Laura (born on 7 September 1899)⁸
- Ivy (born on 17 September 1901)⁹
- Christina (born on 25 December 1902)¹⁰
- Isaac (born on 8 April 1909)¹¹
- Barbara (born on 29 April 1910)¹²

In 1891, the family was living at 47 Church Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn, in Lancashire, where Thomas was a general labourer. Ten years later, Thomas was an engine minder at a coal pit and the family had moved to 20 Lower Barnes Street, Clayton-le-Moors, in Blackburn. Harold was working half-time in a cotton factory.

In 1908, Harold married Lavinia Hocking in Blackburn¹³ and they had two sons before Harold enlisted:

- Charles (born on 14 July 1909)
- Clarence (born on 16 December 1911)¹⁴

(A third son, Wilfred Martin, was born to Lavinia Hocking on 14 September 1918. Although his birth was registered under the name of Martin, no father's name was identified and, given the date of birth, Harold could not have been Wilfred's father.¹⁵)

In 1911, Harold and his young family were living with Lavinia's parents, James Henry and Amy Hocking, at 40 Railway Terrace in Great Harwood, where Harold was a cotton cloth weaver.¹⁶

Harold enlisted in the Manchester Regiment in Blackburn, possibly less than a year before his death.¹⁷

At the end of July 1917, Harold's battalion was stationed in Belgium and, on 26 and 27 July, were in Nieuwpoort, where they were subject to heavy shelling all day. The war diary records that one Other Rank (non-officer) was killed (a previous notation said "wounded") on 26 July and one killed on 27 July.¹⁸ Perhaps the notation for 26 July was Harold—he was wounded and admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station¹⁹ on 27 July with gunshot wounds to his ankle and knees and burns to his head. He died at 3:30 p.m. on 31 July.²⁰ He was one of 255 soldiers admitted to No. 1 CCCS on 27 July, when it was stationed in Adinkerke, about 15 kilometres from Nieuwpoort.²¹ He was buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery on 1 August.

Harold was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²²

Two of Harold's brothers also served in the Great War. Harold's eldest brother, **William**, served with the Border Regiment of the Machine Gun Corps (regimental numbers 46576, 18787). He was discharged in June 1918 after serving in France and Mesopotamia.²³ He was a miner when he married Violet Buller, a weaver, on 26 April 1919 in the parish church of Clayton-le-Moors.²⁴ In 1921, he was living at 56 Lower Barnes Street—a few houses from his parents and brother. He was a haulage hand at Altham Colliery Co Ltd but was out of work at the time. Violet was also an out-of-work cotton weaver at Victoria Manufacturing Co.²⁵ In 1939, he and Violet were living at 86 Dill Hall Lane in Church, Lancashire, with four children: Elsie, Ivy May, Harold and Elizabeth. William was an overhead electric crane driver and probably an air raid warden. William died on 28 March 1957 and Violet five years later. They are both buried in Church and Clayton-le-Moors Cemetery in Accrington, Lancashire.

Charles served in the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment (regimental number 18364).²⁶ Before the war, he was a baker working for the Clayton-le-Moors Cooperative Society. He enlisted in April 1915 when he was only 17½ years old and survived heavy fighting. He was awarded the Military Medal

For fine leadership and conspicuous gallantry near Gavrelle during the army attacks on Arras on the morning of the 28th March, 1918, and during the enemy raid on the same sector about 6-0 am on the 2nd April, 1918, he proved himself the finest N.C.O. in his company, absolutely fearless and tireless in his efforts and cheerful in every situation, by his very example he kept the men in hand on the 2nd April, during the enemy raid he vied with the C.S.M. in his energy and dash, turning back the enemy and pursuing them for 100 yards beyond our own sap-heads, and rendering valuable assistance in restoring the line. His bravery on this occasion was most noticeable.²⁷

Charles was a lance corporal when he was recommended for a commission and was on leave at home in the summer of 1918, before entering officers' training college. On 24 August 1918, he married Ann Fearnley in the parish church of Clayton-le-Moors.²⁸ In 1921, he and Ann, with two children, were living at 32 Lower Barnes Street, near his parents. Charles was an out-of-work core maker moulder. Ann was also out of work as a cotton weaver. The couple's two children were Esther (born on 23 June 1920)²⁹ and Thomas Charles (born on 2 June 1921).³⁰ In 1939, the couple was living at 98 Sparth Road in Clayton-Le-Moors when, sadly, their son Thomas died at sea on 9 June 1940 as a result of his service in the Royal Navy in World War II. Ann died in 1975³¹ and Charles in 1980 in Hyndburn and Rossendale, Lancashire.³²

After the war, Harold's parents were still living at 20 Lower Barnes Street with five of their children—Laura, Ivy, Christina, Isaac and Barbara. His father was an out-of-work coal miner and the three eldest children were cotton weavers, but two were out of work.³³ Thomas and Elizabeth were still at 20 Lower Barnes Street at the outset of World War II.³⁴ Thomas died ten years later, on 12 January 1949.³⁵ No information was found on the death of his wife, Elizabeth.

Harold's pension files show his wife Lavinia living at 40 St Hubert's Road in Great Harwood.³⁶ At the time of the census in 1921, her three sons were at living with Lavinia's mother at the same address.³⁷ Curiously, the census return indicates that both parents of the children were alive, when Harold had died six years earlier. Lavinia was not with the children and was probably a visitor at the home of Robert Martin at Denn House in Todmorden, Yorkshire.³⁸ Lavinia remarried two years

later, wedding James Hargreave in Blackburn.³⁹ They had at least one child—a daughter, Mariam, born in 1924.^{40 41}

Just before the Second World War, Lavinia and James, two of her sons, Charles and Wilfred, and their daughter, Marian, were living at 1 High Street, Rishton, in Lancashire. Lavinia was a shop assistant and James was a fire beater and also possibly working with an ambulance auxiliary. Charles was the district manager for wireless relay overhead linemen; Wilfred was a shop assistant in a gentlemen's outfitter.⁴²

Five of Harold's siblings were still living with their parents in 1921. After that, they all married but stayed in Lancashire:

- **Laura** was a weaver when she married John Barnes, a labourer, on 30 July 1934.⁴³ They married at All Saints Church in Clayton-le-Moors.
- **Ivy** married Moses H. Metcalf in 1924 in Burnley, Lancashire.⁴⁴ In 1939, they were living at 114 Sparth Road—on the same street as Ivy's brother, Charles.⁴⁵
- **Christina** married Percy Seed at Mount Zion Methodist Chapel in Great Harwood on 29 May 1925.⁴⁶ They were living in Hyde, Cheshire, in 1939.⁴⁷ Percy died in 1964⁴⁸ and Christina remarried, wedding Cornelius Thompson in 1966.⁴⁹ She died in Blackburn, Lancashire, 13 years later.⁵⁰
- **Isaac** married May Howarth in 1936.⁵¹ Isaac was a coke grading plant attendant when he and May were living in Clayton-Le-Moors in 1939.⁵² He died there in 1981.⁵³
- **Barbara** married her sister's brother-in-law,⁵⁴ Thomas E. Metcalfe, in 1931⁵⁵ and, in 1939, they were living in St Clayton-Le-Moors, where Thomas was a stone keeper in a colliery.⁵⁶ Barbara died in 1975 in Blackburn, Lancashire.⁵⁷

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¹ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Thomas Robinson Martin, District: Kendal, County: Westmorland, Volume: 10B, Page: 1025

² "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Thomas Robinson Martin, Registration district: Blackburn, Registration district number: 474, Sub-district: Harwood, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district: 2, Household schedule number: 236, Piece: 1433

³ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 8 August 2024), entry for Martin, Harold, Registration district: Kendal, Volume: 10B, Page: 739

⁴ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 18 August 2024), entry for Martin, Esther, Registration district: Kendal, Volume 8E, Page 442; "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 18 August 2024), entry for James Leach, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 326; "Search newspapers," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 18 August 2024), entry for Esther Martin, *Haslingden Gazette*, 16 September 1911

⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for Mary Inman Martin, Death registration place: Blackburn, Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 225

⁶ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 August 2024), entry for William Martin, Schedule number: 147, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: Ntvc, Borough: Church, Registration district: 474 A/3

⁷ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 8 August 2024), entry for Martin, Charles George, Registration district: Blackburn, Volume: 8E, Page: 328

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- ⁸ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2025), entry for Laura Barnes, Enumeration district letter code: NTCJ, Schedule number: 33, Sub-schedule number: 1, Piece number: 4685B, Item number: 4, Line number: 12
- ⁹ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Ivy Metcalf, Registration district: 474 A/2, Line number: 9, Schedule number: 166, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district letter code: Ntxb 24, entry for Martin, Ivy, Registration district: Blackburn, Volume: 8E, Page: 310
- ¹⁰ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2025), entry for Christina Thompson (Seed), Enumeration district letter code: LFCX, Schedule number: 212, Sub-schedule number: 2, Piece number: 4029E, Item number: 17, Line number: 9
- ¹¹ "Lancashire Baptisms," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 8 August 2024), entry for Isaac Martin, Archive reference, PR 2983/5/6, Register year range: 1908–1914, Page: 14
- ¹² "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2025), entry for Barbara Metcalf, Line item: 35, Schedule number: 173, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration District: Ntxc
- ¹³ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Harold Martin, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 1046
- ¹⁴ UK, WWI, Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914–1923," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 February 2024), entry for Martin, Harold
- ¹⁵ "Certified copy of an entry of a birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 12 May 2024), entry for Martin, Wilfred, Registration district: Blackburn, Volume: 8E, Page: 366
- ¹⁶ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Harold Martin, Registration district: Bakewell, Registration district number: 474, Sub-district: Harwood, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district: 14, Piece: 25012
- ¹⁷ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2024), entry for Harold Martin
- ¹⁸ "2/7 Battalion Manchester Regiment War Diaries," *The National Archives* (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/: accessed 8 August 2024), Date: 1917 Mar. - 1918 July, Reference: WO 95/3145/2
- ¹⁹ A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not soon die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital. (Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ²⁰ "Name Index," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Martin, H., No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station
- ²¹ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/>: accessed 28 March 2018)
- ²² "Britain, Campaign, Gallantry & Long Service Medals & Awards," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Harold Martin
- ²³ "Search newspapers," *Findmypast*, entry for C.G. Martin, *Accrington Observer and Times*, 20 July 1918
- ²⁴ "Lancashire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754–1936," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for William Martin, Register type: Marriages
- ²⁵ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 13 September 2024), entry for William Martin, Registration district: Blackburn, Registration district number: 474, Sub-district: Harwood, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 2, Piece number: 20339, Schedule number: 307
- ²⁶ "UK, British Army Recipients of the Military Medal, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for Charles G Martin
- ²⁷ "Search newspapers," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 8 August 2024), entry for C.G. Martin, *Accrington Observer and Times*, 20 July 1918
- ²⁸ "Lancashire, England, Church of England, Marriages and Banns, 1754–1936," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2024), entry for Charles G Martin, Register type: Parish register

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- ²⁹ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for Charles George Martin, Enumeration district letter code: Ntxb, Schedule number: 174, Sub-schedule number: 1, Registration district: 474 A/2, Piece number: 4029E, Line number: 8
- ³⁰ "UK, British Army and Navy Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1730–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for Thomas Martin
- ³¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for Ann Martin, Registration district: Hyndburn and Rossendale, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 40, Page: 1420
- ³² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2025), entry for Charles George Martin, Registration district: Hyndburn and Rossendale, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 40, Page: 1455
- ³³ "1921 Census of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Thomas Robinson Martin, Registration district: Blackburn, Registration district number: 474, Sub-district: Harwood, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 2, Piece number: 20339, Schedule number: 288
- ³⁴ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Thomas Robinson Martin, Enumeration district letter code: Ntxb, Schedule number: 365, Sub-schedule number: 1, Registration district: 474 A/2
- ³⁵ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Thomas Robinson Martin
- ³⁶ UK, WWI, Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914–1923," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 November 2023), entry for Martin, Harold
- ³⁷ "1921 Census Of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Charles Martin, Registration district: Blackburn, Registration district number: 474, Sub-district: Harwood, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 12, Piece number: 20349, Schedule number: 167
- ³⁸ "1921 Census Of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 9 August 2024), entry for Lavinia Martin, Registration district: Todmorden, Registration district number: 493, Sub-district: Todmorden, Sub-district number: 2, Enumeration district number: 7, Piece number: 21253, Schedule number: 199. No evidence was found of a relationship between Robert Martin and Harold's family.
- ³⁹ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Lavinia Martin, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 732
- ⁴⁰ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 August 2024), entry for Lavinia Hargreaves, Enumeration district letter code: NWZE, Schedule number: 63, Piece number: 4874J, Item number: 6, Line number: 38
- ⁴¹ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 30 April 2025) entry for Hargreaves, Marian, Registration district: Blackburn, Volume 08E, Page 434
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ "Lancashire, England, Church of England, Marriages and Banns, 1754–1936," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2025), entry for Laura Martin, Register type: Parish register
- ⁴⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 August 2024), entry for Ivy Martin, Registration district: Burnley, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 297
- ⁴⁵ "1939 Register," *Findmypast*, entry for Ivy Metcalf
- ⁴⁶ "Lancashire, England, Non-Conformist Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1762–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2024), entry for Christina Martin
- ⁴⁷ "1939 Register," *Findmypast*, entry for Christina Thompson (Seed)
- ⁴⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2024), entry for Percy Seed, District: Darwen, County: Lancashire, Volume: 10c, Page: 127
- ⁴⁹ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Lavinia Martin, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 732

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- ⁵⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2024), entry for Christina Thompson, District: Darwen, County: Lancashire, Volume: 10c, Page: 127
- ⁵¹ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2024), entry for Isaac Martin, District: Blackburn, County: Lancashire, Volume: 8E, Page: 1638
- ⁵² "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 11 August 2024), entry for Isaac Martin, Enumeration district letter code: NTXC, Schedule number: 69, Sub-schedule number: 1, Piece number: 4720E, Item number: 9, Line number: 9. There is a slight discrepancy in the date of birth between the baptismal record and the 1939 Register, but the two records are still thought to be for the same person.
- ⁵³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2024), entry for Isaac Martin, District: Hyndburn & Rossendale, County: Lancashire, Volume: 40, Page: 1358
- ⁵⁴ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2025), entry for Thomas Edward Metcalf, Registration district number: 472, Sub-district: Padiham, Sub-district number: 3, Enumeration district, institution or vessel: 19, Piece: 24879
- ⁵⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2025), entry for Barbara Martin, Registration district: Burnley, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 351
- ⁵⁶ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 January 2025), entry for Barbara Metcalf, Line item: 35, Schedule number: 173, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: Ntxc, Registration district: 474 A/2
- ⁵⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Findmypast*, entry for Barbara Metcalf