

Private Harry Morris[©]

Regimental number: 53736

21st Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own)

born: 27 September 1899–died: 21 April 1918

Private Harry Morris was the only child of Charles Arthur Morris (born on 9 March 1876¹) and his wife Alice Stanley (born on 31 May 1876²). He was born on 27 September 1899 in Thornhill-Lees, a district of Dewsbury, Yorkshire, and baptized on 25 October at Holy Innocents Church in Thornhill.³

Charles was a forgerman when he and Alice married on 20 May 1899 at Holy Innocents Church.⁴ He continued in that line of work and, in 1901, the family was living at 19 Dale Street in Thornhill.⁵ Alice was a wool blanket weaver. Ten years later, Arthur and Alice were each in the same jobs, but the family had moved down the street to 49 Dale Street.⁶

Harry enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force, joining the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own), about a year or less before his death.⁷

In mid-April 1918, Harry's battalion was stationed at Le Cornet Bourdois—about 50 kilometres from Lens in northern France—and was working on the trenches at night. On 16 April, the battalion moved to Bushettes, where all three battalion companies were digging new trenches, before moving to Chateau de Werppe. Each day, men from the battalion were wounded and killed. On 18 April there was a strong enemy attack. Although it was beaten off, three men were killed and eight wounded in one company, from one shell on their way to work. The following day the work continued, but six men were wounded. On 20 April, three soldiers were killed and eight wounded—one of them might have been Harry.⁸

Harry was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station⁹ on 20 April with shrapnel wounds to his right thigh and face and a fractured forearm. He died the following day and was buried in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 1, Row D, Grave 3), with the Canadian chaplain Robert K. Lambert presiding.¹⁰

The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCS came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.¹¹ On 20 April, 96 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS, bringing the total number of patients to 286. In the whole month of April, there were 46 deaths at this CCCS.¹²

Harry's father asked to have the following inscription included on his son's gravestone:

TOO DEARLY LOVED
TO BE FORGOTTEN
BY LOVING PARENTS

Harry was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹³

Harry's parents had lost their only child, aged just 18 years, and then both lived to see another world war devastate families. In 1939, Charles was retired and he and Alice were still living at 49 Dale Street.¹⁴ Both of Harry's parents died during the Second World War—his mother Alice in 1942¹⁵ and his father in 1945.¹⁶

¹ “1939 England and Wales Register,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 July 2022), entry for Charles A Morris, Schedule number: 56, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: Kcnd, Registration district: 503-2

² Ibid.

³ “West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1910,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 July 2022), entry for Harry Morris

⁴ “West Yorkshire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 July 2022), entry for Charles Arthur Morris

⁵ “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 July 2022), entry for Arthur Morris, Registration district: Dewsbury, Sub-registration district: Thornhill, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 07, Piece: 4274, Folio: 134, Page: 34, Household schedule number: 200

⁶ “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 July 2022), entry for Charles Arthur Morris, Registration district number: Thornhill, Sub-registration district: Thornhill, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 03, Piece: 27344

⁷ 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 6 July 2022), entry for Harry Morris

⁸ “21 Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (PIONEERS),” *The National Archives*, Kew (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk: accessed 9 July 2022), war diaries, Date: 1916 June–1919 Feb

⁹ 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). A very comprehensive description of the casualty clearing stations is presented in the blog “Casualty Clearing Stations During WW1” *Chiddicks Family Tree* (<https://chiddicksfamilytree.com/2021/05/09/casualty-clearing-stations-during-ww1/>: accessed 13 May 2021)

¹⁰ “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 4 July 2022), entry for Morris, H.

¹¹ “Pernes British Military Cemetery” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

¹² “War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 15 December 2014)

¹³ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2022), entry for Harry Morris

¹⁴ “1939 England and Wales Register,” entry for Charles A Morris

¹⁵ “West Yorkshire, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813–1985,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 July 2022), entry for Alice Morris

¹⁶ “West Yorkshire, England, Deaths and Burials, 1813–1985,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 July 2022), entry for Charles Arthur Morris