

## Charles William Roberson

Charles William Roberson, (Robertson on the Isleworth Memorial) was the first child of Charles Alfred Roberson (1865-1941) and his wife Rosa Pank (1868-1936). Charles Alfred was a hairdresser from London, Rosa from Norwich.



They married in Norwich in July 1894. Charles William was born in the same month. Two more children followed but sadly died in infancy. By 1901 Charles Alfred, Rosa and six year old Charles William had moved to Crook in Durham, where Charles Alfred continued to work from home as a self employed hairdresser. In Durham in 1901, Rosa gave birth to a daughter, Rosa Sophia (1901-1993)

By 1911 they had moved to London, first to Peckham, where their son Harry Edward (1907-1966) was born, and then to Colliers Wood. By this time, Charles Alfred was unemployed. Sixteen year old Charles William was working as an errand boy for a chemist's shop. By the outbreak of war, and Charles William's enlistment, they had moved to 19 Linkfield Road in Isleworth (*see below for a 2018 photo of the house*) and Charles William was working as a labourer. Britain declared war on Germany on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and Charles William was keen to join the army; he enlisted in Hounslow on 19<sup>th</sup> August. His service record describes him as 5 feet 5 inches tall, weighing just 7 stone 9 pounds, with dark brown hair and a fresh complexion. He had a scar on his right fore arm. His vision was 6/6 in the left eye and 6/9 in the right. He was declared to be fit for the army and was posted to the Royal Fusiliers as a Private (1032) on 20<sup>th</sup> August.

Then something happened that is not fully explained. On 18<sup>th</sup> November 1914 whilst at Shorncliffe Camp, under the Kings Regulations para 392 (iii) (c), he was discharged from the army as "not being likely to become an efficient soldier". However, by 1915, and aged 20, he had found employment as a cleaner in West Ealing, and as such was a member of the National Union of Railwaymen.

At some point he either volunteered again or was conscripted and he must have persuaded the army that he was capable of becoming a soldier, as he enlisted in Hounslow. Private Roberson (202066) was then posted to the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment. At home, the Isleworth area was required to abide by the enforced blackouts at night time, which must have been very difficult. The Middlesex Chronicle on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1916,



records that Charles Alfred was fined 10s for failing to do this and allowing light to be shed from his house across the road. A PC

had drawn his attention to this on October 19<sup>th</sup>. His father, Rosa and Harry were still living at 19, Linkfield Road, Isleworth at the time of the 1939 Register. Harry had continued in his father's footsteps as a hairdresser and his sister, Rosa, was working as a cardboard box manufacturer.



On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1917, Charles William was killed in action in France in the heavy fighting at Croisilles, 13 kilometres south-east of Arras, which lasted from March 1917 to March 1918. He is buried in the Croisilles British Cemetery. Charles is also commemorated on the Memorial in St John's Church, Isleworth; the church is photographed above.