

Harold Hood**Rank: Shoeing Smith****Regiment/Service: Royal Field Artillery****Unit Text: 48th Army Bde.****Age: 19****Date of Death: 29/07/1918. Died of Wounds****Service No: 98316**

Harold Hood was born on 3 Aug 1898 in Ashford Bowdler, Ludlow, Shropshire, and baptised there on 22 August. He was the youngest son of Edwin Hood (1851-1918) and Fanny Hood (née Beaton 1856-1903). Harold was from a large family of nine children which included five boys and four girls. At that time Edwin, his father was described as a domestic coachman.

According to the 1901 census the family comprising Edwin 49, Fanny A. 44, Fanny L. 13, Clara M. 11, William 8, Milly M. 7, Gertrude 5 and Harold 2 were living in the parish of St. Mary, Burghfield. What prompted their move to Berkshire is unclear but looking at the birthplaces of the children, the family had moved around considerably. Edwin was still described as a domestic coachman.

10 years later at the time of the 1911 census, they had moved to Beenham where Edwin was the manager of the Hare and Hounds a public house which once stood on the A4. Kelly's directory suggests Edwin had moved there by 1907 and the pub was subsequently managed by his son William through to the late 1920's. In 1911 the family comprised Edwin 59, Emma Elizabeth 49, Edwin Phillip 30, William 19, Gertrude 15 and Harold 12. Interestingly Emma is described as being Edwin's wife and thus he has probably re-married after his wife died on 23 September 1903, the death being registered in Bradfield. It is believed that Edwin's second marriage was registered in Chelmsford in the last quarter of 1904. Emma's maiden name was Lester and his son William, was in the Royal Navy at the time.

It is not clear when or into which regiment Harold enlisted, but it is known to have been in Basingstoke. At the time of his death he was just 19 years old and therefore unlikely to have been in the army for long. That said there is some evidence that he may have enlisted as early as 1915. When he was killed his role was that of a shoeing smith with the 48th Brigade Royal Field Artillery, army number 98316.

Without horses, the British Army could not have functioned during the First World War. They were vital for the cavalry, but also needed for moving supplies, equipment, guns and ammunition, and for transporting the wounded to hospital. There seems to be some debate about the differences between farriers and shoeing smiths. Shoeing smiths were expected to have knowledge of the following subjects; "Theoretical Principals of Shoeing", "Knowledge of the Structure and Preservation of the Horse's Foot", Diseases of the Foot", and then take a practical examination on "Bandaging, Blistering and Minor Operations".

Harold is buried in Villers Station Cemetery, Villers-Au-Bois plot XI. C. 15 and is reported to have "died of wounds". His memorial reads "Son of Edwin Hood of Hare and Hounds Inn Beenham Berks and the late Fanny Hood". He was awarded the Victory and British War medals.



His father Edwin Hood, died a month later on 30 August 1918. At the age of 29 Harold's brother William was a Petty Officer attached to HMS Queen Elizabeth when he married Winnifred Marion Partheton 19, at St. Andrews Earlsfield, Parish of Wandsworth. He died in 1961 in Kingsclere. Emma Elizabeth died 9 December 1952 in Newbury and Harold's sister Gertrude, died 1970. In 1939 Harold's brother, Edwin Phillip, was living in Hall Place Cottage, Beenham, described as a house painter.