



Walter Edward Roberts

1890 – 1916

Walter was born in Dewsbury on 7th November 1890. His father was John George Roberts, a Joiner born in West Ardsley in 1857 and died in 1919. His mother was Sarah Ann (née Pearson), born in Leamington, Warwickshire in 1861 and died in 1932. They were married at St. Mary's Church, Woodkirk on 26th September 1883.

Their other children who can be traced were; John William, born in 1884 and served in World War 1, Joe, born in 1889 and died in 1890, Albert, born in 1893 and served in World War 1 and Amelia, born in 1898. On the 1911 Census they declare six children born to the marriage of which two had died.

Walter was educated at Carlton Road Council School and attended Springfield Sunday School. By 1911 he was working as a tier-on in the woollen industry and before enlistment he worked as a Warper for Messrs Mark Oldroyd and Sons Limited at Spinkwell Mills.

He enlisted in the Royal Navy on 26th November 1914. After training on HMS *Victory*, he transferred to the battlecruiser HMS *Queen Mary*, as a Stoker 1st Class. He was killed in action on 31st May 1916 during the Battle of Jutland. He has no known grave and so he is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Hampshire. Walter was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

When his last home leave ended in March 1916, he left for the station with two friends and fellow stokers on board the *Queen Mary*, Thornton Parker and John Herman Howe. The three men were in high spirits, and when Thornton asked what they should sing, Walter replied *"We shall have to sing; 'Put (sic) all your troubles in your old kit-bag"*.

His family, living at 47, Brooke Street, Flatts, Dewsbury received the following official correspondence: *"I regret to inform you that H.M.S. "Queen Mary" was sunk on 31st May, 1916, and that the name of Walter Edward Roberts, rating Stoker 1st class, official number K23579, who is believed to have been on board does not appear in the lists of survivors received in this department. In these circumstances it is feared that in the absence of any evidence to the contrary he must be regarded as having lost his life."* He was one of over 1,200 men killed when the *Queen Mary* went down after a catastrophic explosion of her magazines, following a shell hit from the German ship *Derfflinger*. His pals Thornton Parker and John Herman Howe were also amongst the dead, along with another Dewsbury man, James Kelly.

Standing on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade in Portsmouth, Hampshire, is the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. It commemorates 9,706 naval personnel of the First World War who were lost or buried at sea.

Walter is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the Springfield Congregational Church Memorial Plaque now relocated to Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury.

In Memory of
Stoker 1st Class

Walter Edward Roberts

K/23579, H.M.S. "Queen Mary.", Royal Navy who died on 31 May 1916 Age 25

Son of Sarah Ann Roberts, of 26, South Elmwood St., Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour
Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

