

HAVERHILL CASUALTIES NORMANDY

JUNE 1944

Albert Robert Barber

Private, 6146152

2nd Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry

Place of Birth: Haverhill

Killed in Action: 18th July 1944

Cemetery: Ranville War Cemetery, Normandy, France



Albert Robert Barber, known as Bob, was born in Haverhill on 8th September, 1915, the son of agricultural labourer Albert Barber and his wife Alice nee Pask. He had two sisters, Dulcie born in 1911 and Muriel born in 1917. Alice died in 1918 leaving Albert with three young children to bring up.

Photo right Alice with Bob as a baby and Dulcie.



In 1919 Albert married Eliza Kimmence who lived at 50 High Street. Eliza's first husband, William had been killed in action near Passchendaele, leaving her with four young children. In 1920 a baby, Kitty, was born and Albert and Eliza were now responsible for eight children. 50 High Street became Bob's new family home.



As a child growing up in Haverhill, Bob would have attended the Council School and we can see from the photo that he was member of the Scouts.

Bob left Haverhill, moving to London where he met and married dressmaker Olive Alice Piper from 44 Carlisle Avenue, Acton in January 1940.

1939: joined the East Surrey Regiment TA

13th June 1940: Infantry Training Centre

9th Oct 1940: posted 2/6th Battalion ESR

21st June 1943: transferred to 8th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry

5th Sept 1943: transferred to 2nd Battalion, Kings Shropshire Light Infantry.

Bob's military records tell us:

Height: 5ft 7ins tall

Hair colour: brown

Eye colour: brown

Religion: Congregationalist.



2nd KSLI sailed for Normandy from Newhaven on 5th June. They landed on Sword beach shortly after 10am on 6th June.

14th – 18th July: the battalion moved out of Caen towards Ranville. Initially carried forward on the tanks of Staffs Yeomanry, they were to carry out an attack on the 18th, the objective being the capture of four villages. Now dismounted from tanks, they were met by strong enemy resistance. Casualties were high. At least 17 Other Ranks (and several officers) were killed. Bob was one of those who lost his life.



Private Albert Robert Barber was buried in Ranville War Cemetery.

Olive gave birth to a daughter, Sandra, six months after his death. Bob was probably unaware that he was to be a father when he lost his life.

(photos right, Olive with daughter Sandra as a child; Sandra in later years.)



With grateful thanks to Sandra's son Daniel Evans and other family members for information and cherished family photos.

Olive had an inscription added to Bob's Commonwealth Grave headstone that reads:

'TO THE WORLD HE WAS ONE;

TO US HE WAS THE WORLD.

WIFE OLIVE AND DAUGHTER SANDRA'

Following Sandra's death in November 2017, her ashes were scattered over the final resting place of the father she never knew.

Together at last!