

Lance Corporal Peter Johnson Robson©

Regimental number: 18/1047

18th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers

born: 27 March 1872–died: 7 April 1916

Lance Corporal Peter Johnson Robson, born on 27 March 1872, was the eldest surviving child of William Robson and Elizabeth Ann, née Binks.¹ William was born in the village of Frosterley, County Durham, in about 1845;² Elizabeth Ann was born in Barton, Yorkshire, in 1842.³ The couple had a Christmas wedding in Leeds, Yorkshire, on 27 December 1868; William was described as a blacksmith.⁴ A few years later, in 1871, the young couple was living in Bishop Auckland, County Durham, with their infant daughter, Edith Annie,⁵ who sadly died that same year.⁶ After Peter, William and Elizabeth Ann had six more children: Emily Maud (b. 1874), Esther Louise (b. 1876), William Arthur (b. 1877), Herbert (b. 1880), Ralph (b. 1882), and Lizzie Hannah (b. 1884).⁷ William apparently had some business acumen: the 1881 census described his occupation as a 'blacksmith employing 1 boy'.⁸ By 1891 he had retired;⁹ in 1901 he was 'living on means';¹⁰ and finally in 1911 he was described as a 'gentleman of means'.¹¹ Unfortunately, William Robson passed away early in 1912.¹²

By the time his father died, Peter was already well established, having married Mary Sarah Dewell in 1897.¹³ Like his parents, Peter and Mary had a large family. Based on the 1911 Census, they had five children while they were still living in Bishop Auckland: Olive (b. 1898), Doris (b. 1901), Constance (b. 1902), and twins Norman and Harold (b. 1905). Two more, Emily (b. 1907) and William (b. 1909), were born after they moved to Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne.¹⁴ A last child, Percival, was born in 1912¹⁵ but died in 1913.¹⁶ In 1911 Peter was a draper's assistant,¹⁷ meaning that he worked in the retail or wholesale fabric trade.¹⁸

Peter joined the 18th (Service) Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers, probably in January 1915.¹⁹ Known as the 1st Tyneside Pioneers, the battalion was one of several sponsored by the Newcastle and Gateshead Chamber of Trade and Commerce.²⁰ The battalion joined the 34th Division of the British Army in June 1915, and after training in Ripon, Yorkshire, and on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire, landed in at Le Havre, France, on 8 January 1916.²¹

No information was found about the circumstances surrounding Peter's last days. Lance Corporal Peter Johnson Robson died of head wounds, likely overnight between 7 and 8 April 1916, with letters to his wife in his pocket.²²

Peter is buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Plot II D 210, in the Pas-de-Calais region of northern France. His wife had his headstone inscribed with the words "Death divides, memory clings."²³ He was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theater).²⁴

Mary Robson lived in Newcastle until her death in June 1946.²⁵ All of Peter and Mary's children married and, between them, gave Peter and Mary 11 grandchildren.²⁶

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¹ "King family tree," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for Peter Johnson Robson

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- ² "1851 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Registration district: Weardale, Sub-registration district: St. John, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 2c, Household schedule number: 57, Piece: 2388, Folio: 304, Page: 13
- ³ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1578–1975," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for Elizabeth Ann Binks
- ⁴ "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson
- ⁵ "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Sub-registration district: Bishop Auckland, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Household schedule number: 36, Piece: 4923, Folio: 7, Page: 7
- ⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 17 March 2020), entry for Edith Annie Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 123
- ⁷ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Civil parish: Bishop Auckland and Pollards Land, Town: Bishop Auckland, County/Island: Durham. Note: The youngest child is identified as Lily; however, later records suggest her name was actually Lizzie Hannah.
- ⁸ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 7, Piece: 4914, Folio: 47, Page: 37
- ⁹ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry*, entry for William Robson
- ¹⁰ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Sub-registration district: Bishop Auckland, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 01, Piece: 4643, Folio: 15, Page: 21
- ¹¹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Registration district number: 547, Sub-registration district: Bishop Auckland, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 01, Piece: 29703
- ¹² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 18 February 2020), entry for William Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Inferred county: Durham, Volume: 10a, Page: 271
- ¹³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 20 February 2020), entry for Peter Johnson Robson, Registration district: Auckland, Volume: 10a, Page: 221
- ¹⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 20 February 2020), entry for Peter Johnson Robson, Registration district: Newcastle upon Tyne, Registration district number: 558, Sub-registration district: St. Andrew, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 30571
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 20 February 2020), entry for Percival Robson, Registration district: Newcastle upon Tyne, Inferred county: Northumberland, Volume: 10b, Page: 69
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([ancestry.ca](https://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 20 February 2020), entry for Percival Robson, Registration district: Newcastle upon Tyne, Inferred county: Northumberland, Volume: 10b, Page: 45
- ¹⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry*, entry for Peter Johnson Robson
- ¹⁸ "Obscure Old English Census Occupations," *World Through the Lens* (<http://www.worldthroughthelens.com>: accessed 27 March 2020), entry for Old Census Occupations in Genealogy Index and Family History Resources tab
- ¹⁹ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratiuity-calculator/>: accessed 27 March 2020); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," entry for Peter Johnson Robson
- ²⁰ "Newcastle Commercials and Tyneside Pioneers," *Newcastle Heroes of WWI* (<https://newcastleheroesofww1.org/>: accessed 27 March 2016)

²¹ "18th (1st Tyneside Pioneers) Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers," *The Wartime Memories Project* (<https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/>: accessed 27 March 2020)

²² "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 18 February 2020), entry for Robson, P.J. Note: The chaplain's written record indicates he died 8 April 1916, whereas all other sources, including the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, have his death as 7 April 1916.

²³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 27 March 2020), entry for Lance Corporal Peter Johnson Robson

²⁴ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 27 March 2020), entry for Peter Johnson Robson

²⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 30 March 2020), entry for Mary S. Robson, Registration district: Newcastle upon Tyne, Inferred county: Northumberland, Volume: 10b, Page: 178

²⁶ "King family tree," *Ancestry* (ancestry.ca: accessed 30 March 2020), entry for Peter Johnson Robson