

Corporal George Harold Armitage[©]

Regimental number: 925631

28th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 27 January 1896–died: 1 October 1918

Corporal George Harold Armitage (later known as Harold George)¹ was born in Detroit, Wayne, in Michigan on 27 January 1896, the son of George and Adrina Armitage.²

Harold's father George was born on 15 December 1867³ in Northumberland, England⁴ and immigrated to the United States in 1888.⁵ His mother Adriana was born Adriana Jacobi on 22 October 1875 in Velsen, Holland.⁶ Adriana, her parents Antonij Jacob Jacobi and Alida Justina van Heijst, and her siblings immigrated to the US in 1884, arriving in New York on 14 June⁷ and eventually settling in Detroit, Michigan.⁸ George Sr. and Adriana were married there on 12 December 1894.⁹

Their first three children—Alida Caroline Armitage (born on 9 October 1895),¹⁰ Harold George and Clarence Valnore (born on 12 December 1899)¹¹ were born in Detroit. After the turn of the century, the family moved to Canada and settled in Saskatchewan. They probably arrived just in time for the birth of the first of their next seven children in Wauchope, Saskatchewan:

- John Edward (born on 17 August 1902),¹²
- Robert James (born on 19 July 1904),¹³
- Donald Frederick (born on 10 August 1906),¹⁴
- George (born in 1912),¹⁵
- Irving (born on 4 June 1915),¹⁶
- Vera Marguerite (born on 3 July 1917)¹⁷ and
- Sydney (born on 9 August 1918, but died two days before his first birthday).¹⁸

When the family went to Saskatchewan, they were homesteading. In 1902, George Sr. filed an application, which was granted, for land in southeastern Saskatchewan, near Wauchope.¹⁹ Homesteaders in the Prairies could apply to receive a grant of land and it would be accorded if they could prove that they had made improvements to the value of the land, through the addition of buildings or cultivation.²⁰

Adriana's parents and siblings had also moved to Canada in 1903²¹ and her brother Frederick Jacobi had also been granted land in the same section as George.²² The two families always lived close to each other and the Dutch influence prevailed in the family. Even though they had lived all their lives in the US and Canada, Dutch was the mother-tongue of Harold and his siblings.²³

In 1906, the family was still living near Wauchope.²⁴ In 1910, they returned to the US and went to Bottineau, North Dakota, where George Sr. owned a house and three lots of land. The family, with its six children, intended to live there.²⁵ However, they did not stay long, because in 1911 they were back in Wauchope, where George Sr. was a merchant. In 1916, they were still on the same land and George Sr. was still a storekeeper.²⁶ Both Harold and his brother Clarence were already in the military, serving in the 20th Border Horse Regiment. The regiment was a cavalry regiment formed as part of the Canadian army militia—formed in 1908 and renamed the 20th Border Horse in 1910.²⁷

Harold enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 8 April 1916 in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.²⁸ He was a farmer, 5' 7" tall and had a fair complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair. He sailed from Halifax on 3 October 1916 and arrived in Liverpool 10 days later. He was posted to the 32nd Battalion in the CEF transit camp in East Sandling, Kent.

He joined the 28th Battalion and went overseas on 5 January 1917. Less than a month later, he was sick and was admitted to the 2nd General Hospital in Le Havre on 31 January with the mumps. Ten days later he was sent to No. 4 Convalescent Depot and was finally discharged at the end of the month. He went back to the field in mid-March and joined his unit on 16 April.

On 14 November 1917, he was appointed to lance corporal and then, the following April, to corporal.

At the end of December 1917, he had 14 days of leave to the UK and 2 weeks at the 3rd Army rest camp in September 1918. A few weeks later he was injured. He was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 1 October 1918 with gunshot wounds that penetrated his abdomen. He died the same day and was buried the next day in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot 8, Row A, Grave 39) with the Canadian chaplain A. D. Reid presiding.²⁹ A letter was sent to Harold's father to notify him of his son's death.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.³⁰ No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918. Harold was one of 961 Canadian soldiers admitted in October and 48 to die.³¹

Harold was awarded posthumously the Military Medal for acts of bravery.³² He, like other soldiers, was also awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre). The medals were sent to his mother.

In 1914, Harold had made an application for a homestead grant for land about 150 kilometres east of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and about 500 kilometres away from his family in Wauchope. Sadly, the grant was approved on 24 April 1919—seven months after his death.³³

Harold's younger brother **Clarence** also made an application for a homestead grant on the same day as his brother.³⁴ It is not clear which land he was requesting; nor is there evidence that the grant was approved. Like his brother, he also served in the CEF. He first enlisted in Brandon, Manitoba, on 26 July 1915 in the 79th Battalion (regimental number 152268).³⁵ Just a month later he was admitted to hospital in Brandon, where he had a toe removed. He was also suffering from an uncorrected fracture as a result of an accident in 1913, when he stepped into a hole and twisted his ankle. The fracture was not set and it led to him being deemed medically unfit to serve. He was discharged on 24 January 1916.

Clarence re-enlisted on the same day as his brother (regimental number #925632). He sailed with Harold from Halifax and went to the camp at East Sandling. The day of their arrival, Clarence was promoted to lance corporal. He went overseas on 15 March 1917 as a sapper with the 3rd Battalion, of the Canadian Railway Troops. On 24 November 1917 he was in Cambrai, France, when he received a gunshot wound to his face, leaving him with a compound fracture of his lower right jaw. He was initially treated in France and then shipped to England. He was eventually sent to No. 16 Canadian General Hospital in Orpington, Kent. (This state-of-the-art hospital was built by the

Ontario government in 1916 to provide care for soldiers and developed a speciality in surgery, including plastic surgery.³⁶⁾ Clarence's jaw was splinted for three months. In the end, he was "able to chew camp food by taking his time and cutting it up well." He was discharged from hospital at the end of May 1918 and returned to France on 30 August to join the 10th Company of the Canadian Forestry Corps. He was hospitalized again for a short time in December 1918 with dental cavities. He returned to England in early January 1919, when he secured army permission to marry, and on 25 January he married Ellen Cork at the Registrar's Office in Wandsworth, London. At the time, his wife was living at 38 Este Road in Clapham Junction, Battersea. Clarence sailed back to Canada in July and was discharged on 13 August 1919. Ellen arrived in Quebec City on 8 August 1919 and from there went on to Wauchope.³⁷

Clarence, his wife and young son Edward were living in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, in 1921.³⁸ Sometime afterwards he moved back to the US. Clarence petitioned for divorce for "desertion and extreme cruelty" and a divorce was granted on 19 June 1929 in Detroit.³⁹ Sometime later, Clarence may have married Laura Belle Smith, because they were living in Detroit with a son, Thomas, in 1930. Clarence was now a barber.⁴⁰ He continued to live in Detroit until at least 1940.⁴¹ He was living in Seattle, Washington, when his son married in 1949.⁴²

Some of Harold's other siblings remained in Saskatchewan; others moved to the US.

Alida married Archibald Hugh Sands and, in 1916 and 1921, they were living in Alameda, about 70 kilometers from Wauchope.⁴³ Alida died on 24 December 1925 and was buried in the Alameda Cemetery.⁴⁴

After the war, **John** went to the US looking for work. He crossed into the States at Niagara Falls in 1920⁴⁵ but in 1921 was back in Wauchope and working as a "servant" in the home of Christopher Jacobi. Christopher, who was his uncle—sister of his mother Adriana—was farming in Antler, Saskatchewan, just 30 kilometres from John's parents.⁴⁶ Daisy Belle Armitage was John's wife when he died in Redvers, Saskatchewan in 1986.⁴⁷

Robert moved to the US at some point. His last residence there was in Hamburg, Erie, New York.⁴⁸ He probably returned to Canada, because he died on 27 October 1973 and was buried in Lundy's Lane Cemetery in Niagara Falls, Ontario.⁴⁹

Donald, a machinist, moved back to Detroit, arriving on 13 May 1926.⁵⁰ On 17 November 1929, he married Rita LeSage⁵¹ and the following year was living with his brother-in-law Charles Davis and Charles' wife Ada, Rita's sister, in Detroit. He was then working as a barber.⁵² His wife died in June 1946⁵³ and Donald remarried, marrying Shirley Frances Doll (nee Willett) in January 1951.⁵⁴

George, a farm labourer aged 17, travelled to the US in 1929 to join his brother Donald in Detroit.⁵⁵ Where he went after that is not known.

Harold's youngest surviving brother, **Irving**, was a school teacher in Balgonie, Saskatchewan, before he enlisted in the Canadian army during the Second World War. He was a flying officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force when he was killed on 23 November 1943. He is remembered on the Runnymede Memorial in



Flying Officer Irving Armitage
Source: The Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Englefield Green, Runnymede, Surrey. He reportedly married a British woman by the name of Patty, but no evidence of the marriage could be found.⁵⁶

Vera, Harold's youngest sibling, married Cliff Hamilton on 29 October 1941 and was living in Wawota, Saskatchewan, just north of Wauchope, when she died on 22 December 1997.⁵⁷

After the First World War, Harold's parents were still farming near Wauchope.⁵⁸ His father George Sr. died on 18 January 1940⁵⁹ and his mother Adrina in 1948.⁶⁰ By then, his mother had lost two sons to war—one in the first and one in the second.

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¹ According to his birth certificate, he was named George H. Armitage. However, later in life, he was known as Harold George, or just Harold. In fact, he had a younger sibling named George, born in 1912.

² "Michigan, Births and Christenings Index, 1867–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for George H Armitage, FHL film number: 1377673

³ "Saskatchewan, Canada, Cemetery Transcripts, 1850–1994," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 January 2020), entry for George Armitage 18 January 2020

⁴ "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for Geo Harold Armitage, Record Type: Manifests, Line Number: 15

⁵ "1900 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for George Armitage

⁶ "Netherlands, Birth Index, 1784–1917," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 January 2020), entry for Adriana Jacobi

⁷ "Dutch Immigrants: New York Passenger Lists, 1881–1894," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Adriana Jacobie [*sic*]

⁸ "1900 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Anton Jacobi

⁹ Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 January 2020), entry for Adriana Jacobli [*sic*], Record number: 17446

¹⁰ "Michigan, Births and Christenings Index, 1867–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for Alida C. Armitage, FHL film number: 1377672

¹¹ "Michigan, Births and Christenings Index, 1867–1911," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for Clarence Armitage, FHL film number: 1377676. Clarence's middle name is found in other sources, spelled as Valnor, Valnore or Valmore. It is not known which is the correct name.

¹² "Genealogy Index Searches," *eHealth Saskatchewan* (<http://genealogy.ehealthsask.ca/>: accessed 17 January 2020), entry for John Edward Armitage

¹³ "Genealogy Index Searches," *eHealth Saskatchewan* (<http://genealogy.ehealthsask.ca/>: accessed 17 January 2020), entry for Robert James Armitage

¹⁴ "Genealogy Index Searches," *eHealth Saskatchewan* (<http://genealogy.ehealthsask.ca/>: accessed 17 January 2020), entry for Donald Frederick Armitage

¹⁵ "Saskatchewan, Canada, Residents Index (SRI), 1800–2012," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2020), entry for George Armitage Jr.

¹⁶ "Canada, WWII Service Files of War Dead, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2020), entry for Irving Armitage

¹⁷ "Newspapers.com Obituary Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2020), entry for Vera Margurite [*sic*] Hamilton

¹⁸ "Saskatchewan, Canada, Cemetery Transcripts, 1850–1994," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2020), entry for Sydney Armitage

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- ¹⁹ "Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872–1930," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Geo. Armitage, Homestead number: 251711
- ²⁰ "Land Grants of Western Canada, 1870–1930," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 22 January 2020)
- ²¹ "1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Anthony [sic] Jacobi, Province: Saskatchewan, District: Assiniboia East, Sub-district: Townships 6, 7, 8 in ranges 32, 33 and fractional Townships 7, 8 in range 34, all west of the 1st M
- ²² "Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872–1930," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Frederick Jacobi, Homestead number: 101498
- ²³ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 January 2020), for Harold Armitage, Sub-district: 22, Sub-district description: Townships 7 and 8, range 1, W. 2nd M., including the Village of Manor and Townships 7 and 8, ranges 33 and 34, W.P.M., including the Village of Wauchope
- ²⁴ "1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for Harold G. Armitage, Province: Saskatchewan, District: Assiniboia East, Sub-district: Townships 6, 7, 8 in ranges 32, 33 and fractional Townships 7, 8 in range 34, all west of the 1st M, Sub-district: 13
- ²⁵ "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for George Harold Armitage
- ²⁶ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 January 2020), entry for Harold Armitage, Province: Saskatchewan, District: Assiniboia, District number: 207, Sub-district: 19, Sub-district number: 19
- ²⁷ "20th Border Horse," *Canadiansoldiers.com* (<https://www.canadiansoldiers.com/>: accessed 20 January 2020)
- ²⁸ "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>: accessed 1 January 2020) entry for Armitage, Harold George, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 220-9, Item number: 12452, Digitized service file–PDF format: B0220-S009. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Harold's military service comes from this source.
- ²⁹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 16 January 2020), entry for Armitage, H. G.
- ³⁰ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ³¹ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/>: accessed 17 June 2015)
- ³² *The London Gazette* (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/awards-and-accreditation/www1>: accessed 24 January 2020), entry for Cpl Armitage, H. G., Issue 31142, published 21 January 1919
- ³³ "Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872–1930," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Harold Geo. Armitage
- ³⁴ "Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872–1930," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Clarence Valmore Armitage
- ³⁵ "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for Armitage, Clarence Valmore, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 219–32, Item number: 12433, Digitized service file–PDF format: B0219-S032. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Clarence's military service comes from this source.
- ³⁶ Barrie, Joshua, "The history of Orpington Hospital: A local facility remembers its beginnings as a vital part of the First World War," *News Shopper* (<https://www.newsshopper.co.uk/>: accessed 23 January 2020); "The Canadian Military Hospital, Orpington," *First World War* (<https://www.bromleyfirstworldwar.org.uk/>: accessed 23 January 2020)
- ³⁷ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 January 2020), entry for Ellen Armitage

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- ³⁸ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 January 2020), entry for Clarence Armitage, Province or territory: Saskatchewan, District: North Battleford, District number: 222, Sub-district number: 35, City, Town or Village: Canwood
- ³⁹ "Michigan, Divorce Records, 1897–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 January 2020), entry for Clarence Armitage
- ⁴⁰ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 January 2020), entry for Clarence Armitage
- ⁴¹ "1940 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 January 2020), entry for Clarence Armitage
- ⁴² "Virginia, Marriage Records, 1936–2014," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 January 2020), entry for Clarence V. Armitage
- ⁴³ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 January 2020), entry for Alida Caroline Sands, Sub-district: 09, Sub-district description: Townships 3 and 4, ranges 3 and 4, west 2nd M., including the Town of Alameda and the village of Frobisher; "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 January 2020), entry for Alida Sands, Province or territory: Saskatchewan, District: Assiniboia, District number: 214, Sub-district number: 21, City, town or village: Alameda Town
- ⁴⁴ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 January 2020), entry for Alida Caroline Sands
- ⁴⁵ "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1956," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for John Armitage, Record Type: Cards
- ⁴⁶ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry*, entry for Alida Sands
- ⁴⁷ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 January 2020), entry for John Edward [sic] Armitage
- ⁴⁸ "U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935–2014," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 January 2020), entry for Robert Armitage
- ⁴⁹ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 January 2020), entry for Robert James Armitage
- ⁵⁰ "Michigan, Federal Naturalization Records, 1887–1931," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for Donald Frederick Armitage
- ⁵¹ "Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for Mr. Donald Armitage, County file number: 375071, State file number: 82 66366
- ⁵² "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for Donald Armitage
- ⁵³ "Michigan, Death Records, 1867–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for M. Rita Armitage, File number: 013987
- ⁵⁴ "Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for Donald Fredric [sic] Armitage, County file number: 797579, State file number: 475716; "Michigan, Marriage Records, 1867–1952," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 January 2020), entry for Shirley Frances Willett, County file number: 643613, State file number: 323866
- ⁵⁵ "U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895–1956," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2020), entry for George Armitage, Record Type: Cards
- ⁵⁶ "The Canadian Virtual War Memorial," *Veterans Affairs Canada* (<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/>: accessed 24 January 2020), entry for Flying Officer Irving Armitage
- ⁵⁷ "Newspapers.com Obituary Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry*, entry for Vera Margurite [sic] Hamilton
- ⁵⁸ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for George Armitage, Province or territory: Saskatchewan, District: Assiniboia, District number: 214, Sub-district number: 32, City, town or village: Township 8-34 W1 Township 8-33 W1

⁵⁹ "Saskatchewan, Canada, Cemetery Transcripts, 1850–1994," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 January 2020), entry for George Armitage

⁶⁰ "Saskatchewan, Canada, Burial Index, 1802–2011," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 January 2020), entry for Adriana Armitage