

Sapper William Calvert, Royal Engineers

Died 29 April 1941, Greece, aged 26

18. 294. 102.
YESTERDAY'S WEDDING.—Miss Marjorie Kathleen Mansell, of 13, Cross Bank, Church Stretton, and Mr. William Calvert, Gas Works, Stanhope, Durham, were married by special licence yesterday. The bride, who was given away by Mr. Thomas Mansell, was dressed in brown with a brown coat and hat and hose and shoes to tone. She carried a prayer book. The bridesmaid, Miss Dorothy Paul, wore a navy costume with hat to match, and carried a prayer book. The best man was Mr. Alfred Coles. The officiating clergy was the Ven. H. T. Dixon, Archdeacon of Ludlow.

Newspaper account of the wedding of William Calvert and Marjorie Mansell, 7 January 1937

William Calvert was born on 8 April 1915 in Manchester. He was the third child of Walter Calvert, a Gas Maker, and Charlotte Elizabeth nee Troad who were married in Harrogate in 1906.

William was born in Ripon in Yorkshire, the son of an Accountant. After his marriage the family moved around the north of England as he worked for various gas companies. Charlotte was born in Harrogate where her father worked as a Porter.

In 1921 the family were living in Middleton St George, near Darlington in the Northeast. At that time, there were four children, three sons and a daughter. Another son was born in 1923. We do not know anything of William's education, but he seems to have followed his father into working in the gas industry.

In January 1937 William married Marjorie Kathleen Mansell at St Laurence's Church in Church Stretton. He is described as of the Gas Works, Stanhope, Durham where his family were then living. Marjorie was part of a Church Stretton family, though she was born in Worcestershire. In 1921 she was living with her grandparents in Sandford Avenue, Church Stretton, where her grandfather worked as a jobbing gardener, her name is given as Molly. At the time of her wedding Marjorie was living at 13 Cross Bank, Church Stretton.

William and Marjorie had two children born in 1938 in Norfolk and 1940 in Yorkshire. In the 1939 register the family are living in Denby Dale in Derbyshire and William is described as a Gas Stoker.

We don't know when William joined the Royal Engineers, but his technical skills would have been very valuable in that regiment. He was part of the 580 Army Troops Company which arrived in Greece in March 1941. The allied forces were sent to Greece to counter the threat of an expected German invasion as the Italian campaign in the country was faltering. Royal

Engineers were responsible for establishing camps for the allied troops, building roads and assisting Greek forces, including in the use of explosives.

The Germans invaded Greece on 5 April 1941 before the Allied troops were properly prepared and they were soon in retreat. The evacuation of troops was chaotic, and many were lost in the process. The Germans reached Athens on 27 April and by June the whole country was under Axis control. William died on the 29 April.

William is buried in the cemetery at Phaleron near Athens in Greece which also commemorates 45 other members of 580 company. The cemetery includes 596 known graves of those who were brought together from all over Greece after the end of the war. In total over 2,000 World War Two casualties are commemorated at the cemetery. William is also commemorated on the Church Stretton War Memorial.

Marjorie remarried in 1943 in Cheshire and remained in that area until her death. William's parents stayed in Darlington until their deaths. Charlotte died in 1945 and Walter in 1947.



Phaleron War Cemetery, near Athens