

Private Douglas Lovitt[©]

Regimental number: 41121

8th Battalion, King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment)

born: 1899 - died: 1 June 1918

Private Douglas Lovitt was born in 1899 in East Retford, Nottinghamshire,¹ the eldest son of John William and Mary Jane Lovitt.² His father was born on 12 January 1870³ in Glanford Brigg, Lincolnshire,⁴ and his mother, the former Mary Jane Fletcher, in 1879⁵ in Morton Grange, Babworth, near Retford.⁶ They married on 8 February 1899 at St Giles Church in Elkesley, near Retford⁷ and had seven children: Douglas, Lilian (born in 1901),⁸ Ernest Rawson (born 13 June 1904),⁹ Sydney Arthur (born in 1906),¹⁰ John Henry (born in 1909),¹¹ Wilfred (born 1 February 1912)¹² and Leonard (born in 1913).¹³



Private Douglas Lovitt

Source: *Retford Times*, posted in "Roll of Honour," Nottinghamshire County Council (with permission)

In 1901, the family was living at 3 Mattersea Road in Sutton, East Retford, where Douglas' father was a blacksmith, working on his own account at home.¹⁴ By 1911, John was working as a general smith but was listed as "disengaged" and the family was living on Hallcroft Road in Retford.¹⁵ Sadly, Mary Jane died about a year after the birth of their last child. She died on 29 September 1914 at Morton Grange, Babworth,¹⁶ leaving John with seven children under the age of 15.

Prior to the Great War, Douglas was working on the Morton Grange Farm.¹⁷ He enlisted in Retford¹⁸ in the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters) on 26 September 1917 and went to France on 10 May 1918.¹⁹ He later transferred to the 8th Battalion of the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment). Less than a month after arriving in France he was fatally injured. He was only 18 when he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 1 June 1918 with shrapnel wounds to his chest, leg, arms and hip.²⁰ He died the same day and was buried the following day in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row E, Grave 28) with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding.

John Lovitt, who was still living at Morton Grange, was Douglas' next of kin, was notified of his death²¹ and received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.²² John had the following inscription engraved on Douglas' headstone:

AGE 18
MORTON GRANGE, RETFORD²³

In June 1918, over 4,000 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS.²⁴ There were 82 deaths that month. The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCS came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.²⁵

Douglas' death was also reported in the *Retford Times* on 21 June 1918. The announcement noted that Douglas "was well known and highly respected and much sympathy is felt with the bereaved family."²⁶



Private Douglas Lovitt

Source: Memorial in All Saints Church, Babworth, Nottinghamshire County Council (with permission)

discharged from the Royal Air Force.³² Douglas' brother Sydney was a gardener³³ and married Dorothy Marriott in 1932.³⁴ His brother John married Edna M Morgan in 1928.³⁵ No information was found about what became of his youngest brother Leonard.

Douglas is remembered in the memorial in All Saint's Church in Babworth.²⁷

In 1939, Douglas' father was in Trinity Hospital, on Trinity Road in Retford.²⁸ He died at Trinity Hospital on 7 March 1952. By the time he died, he had lost his wife and probably at least three of his children: Douglas, Lilian and Wilfred. Douglas died in the Great War, Lilian probably died in 1929²⁹ and Wilfred in 1946.³⁰

Douglas' brother Ernest married Ivy E Ellis in 1928³¹ and, in 1939, they were living in Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. Ernest's brother Wilfred was living with them. Ernest was a farm foreman and Wilfred was unemployed, having been

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¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, Douglas, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 3

² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt, Registration district: East Retford, Sub-registration district: Claborough, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 3118, Folio: 5, Page: 2, Household schedule number: 7

³ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for John William Lovitt

⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for John William Lovitt, Registration district: Glanford Brigg, Inferred county: Lincolnshire, Volume: 7a, Page: 663

⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Mary Jane Fletcher, Registration district: East Retford, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 22

⁶ "Roll of Honour," *Nottinghamshire County Council*, (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/People/Details/12072>: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt

⁷ "Nottinghamshire marriages index 1528–1929," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for John William Lovitt

⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, Lilian, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 5

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- ⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, Ernest Rawson, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 3; "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2017), entry for Ernest R Lovitt, Ref: RG101/6074E/002/35 Letter Code: —
- ¹⁰ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, Sydney Arthur, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 15
- ¹¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, John Henry, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 4
- ¹² "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, Wilfred, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 27; "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2017), entry for Ernest R Lovitt, Ref: RG101/6074E/002/35 Letter Code: — See endnote 9?
- ¹³ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 23 September 2017) entry for Lovitt, Leonard, Registration district: East Retford, Volume 07B, Page 20
- ¹⁴ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt, Registration district: East Retford, Sub-registration district: Clarbrough, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 3118, Folio: 5, Page: 2, Household schedule number: 7
- ¹⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt, Registration district: East Retford, Registration district number: 426, Sub-registration district: East Retford, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 20200
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 23 September 2017), entry for Mary Jane Lovitt
- ¹⁷ "Roll of Honour," Nottinghamshire County Council, (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/People/Details/12072>: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt See endnote 6?
- ¹⁸ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt
- ¹⁹ "Roll of Honour," Nottinghamshire County Council, (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/People/Details/12072>: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt See endnote 6?
- ²⁰ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 30 August 2017), entry for Lovitt, D.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt
- ²³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2017), entry for Lovitt, D., Service No : 41121
- ²⁴ "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/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 15 December 2014)
- ²⁵ "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- ²⁶ *Retford Times*, quoted in "Roll of Honour," Nottinghamshire County Council, (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/People/Details/12072>: accessed 24 September 2017), entry for Douglas Lovitt
- ²⁷ Memorial in All Saints Church, Babworth, *Nottinghamshire County Council* (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/WarMemorials/Details/382>: accessed 24 September 2017)
- ²⁸ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2017), entry for John W Lovitt, Ref: RG101/6213B/012/25 Letter Code: —

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- ²⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 September 2017), entry for Lilian Lovitt, Registration district: East Retford, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 25
- ³⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 September 2017), entry for Lilian Lovitt, Registration district: Market Bosworth, Inferred county: Leicestershire, Volume: 7a, Page: 65
- ³¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2017), entry for Ernest Lovitt, Registration district: Worksop, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 125
- ³² "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 February 2017), entry for Ernest R Lovitt, Ref: RG101/6074E/002/35 Letter Code: — See endnote 9?
- ³³ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 September 2017), entry for John William Lovitt
- ³⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2017), entry for Sydney A Lovitt, Registration district: Worksop, Inferred county: Nottinghamshire, Volume: 7b, Page: 145
- ³⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2017), entry for John H Lovitt, Registration district: Doncaster, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9c, Page: 1674