

Private Maurice Victor Whittle®
Regimental number: 3708
4th Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment

born: 1897–died: 16 July 1916

Private Maurice Victor Whittle was born in Sculcoates, Yorkshire, in the third quarter of 1897,¹ the son of James Whittle (1861–1937)² and Sarah Ann, née Dresser (1863–1927).³

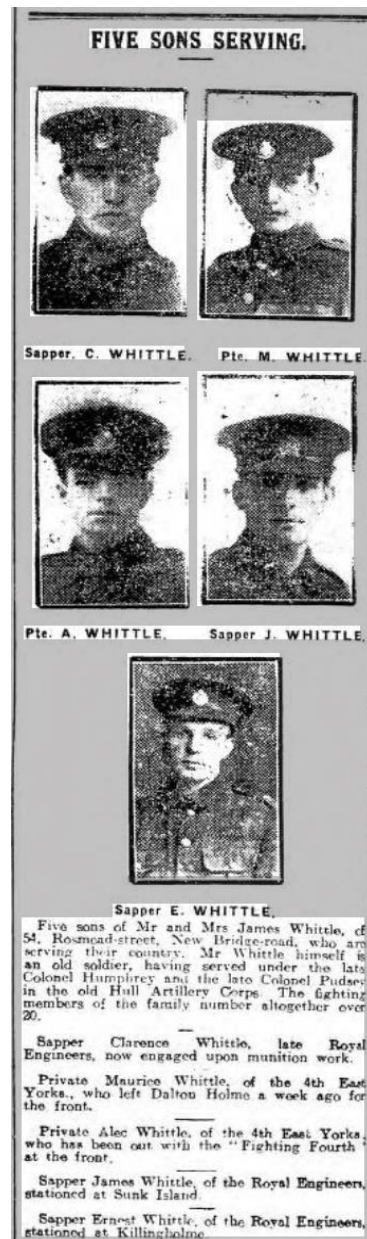
James Whittle was an interesting man. According to a lengthy article in the *Hull Daily Mail* of 3 January 1912,⁴ he was a mechanic who worked for many years in Earle’s Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd. However, he had a serious fall from a ship and injured his spine, so he became a shoemaker. He also worked at a local skating rink as a skate mechanic⁵ until it closed.

The reason for the article was James’ work on inventing and developing an optical illusion machine for fairgrounds, in which passengers in lifeboats would have the impression of sea and land scenery approaching them. The article doesn’t record the fate of this enterprise, but a literature search did not reveal any evidence of a successful outcome.

James and Sarah Ann had 13 children, of whom three sadly died young.⁶ The first three were girls: Margaret Ann, the oldest, was born in 1883,⁷ but died at age 6.⁸ Alice Maud was born in 1884,⁹ followed by Henrietta, who was born in 1888 but died the following year.¹⁰

The next three children were boys: James Simon (born in 1889),¹¹ Ernest (born in 1890),¹² and Clarence Charles (born in 1892).¹³ Then came a girl, Sarah Ann, who was born in 1893,¹⁴ followed by two more boys: Alexander (born in 1895)¹⁵ and Maurice Victor (born in 1897).¹⁶ After Maurice came Louisa (born in 1899),¹⁷ then three more boys: Louis Seymour, who was born in 1900 but died a year later,¹⁸ Leonard Norman (born in 1902),¹⁹ and Stanley Nicholson (born in 1904).²⁰

Their father was a former soldier, having served in the Hull Artillery Corps,²¹ and his sons continued that tradition in the First World War. By 1915, all five sons who were old enough to serve their country were involved in the war effort. This was recorded in the 13 September 1915 edition of the *Hull Daily Mail* under the heading “FIVE SONS SERVING.” The oldest two, James and Ernest, were both in the Royal Engineers, stationed at nearby Sunk Island and Killingholme, respectively.²² A two-gun installation was built on Sunk Island to defend the approach to the port of Hull and the Royal Navy fuel depot at Killingholme.²³



“Five Sons Serving,” *Hull Daily Mail*, 13 September 1915
 Source: *British Newspaper Archive*

Clarence Charles had also been in the Royal Engineers, enlisting even before the war on 27 April 1914, but he was discharged on 4 December 1914 as being medically unfit due to multiple exostoses (bone growths), which meant he was unable to march.²⁴ According to the newspaper article, he was engaged in munitions work in 1915.²⁵

Son-in-law Herbert Sharp also enlisted in the Royal Engineers and served on the Western Front.²⁶

Maurice and Alexander were in the 4th East Yorkshire Regiment.²⁷ Private Maurice Whittle would have just turned 18 when he disembarked in France on 1 September 1915.²⁸ This was strictly against regulations, as soldiers could not be sent to fight overseas until they were 19.²⁹ His older brother, known as Alec, was already there. The battalion was stationed in Armentières in Northern France.³⁰

Ten months later, Private Maurice Whittle was wounded and taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station at Bailleul,³¹ where he died of his wounds on 16 July 1916.³² He was buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, Reference II. E. 19.³³ The inscription on his headstone reads:

“HE THAT HATH SUFFERED IN THE FLESH HATH CEASED FROM SIN”

The cemetery lies in the east end of the town of Bailleul, in the Nord department of the Hauts-de-France region, and contains the remains of 4344 soldiers from the two world wars.

Private Whittle received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service.³⁴ He also received the 1914–15 Star (for service in any theatre of the Great War between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).³⁵

An obituary in the local paper revealed something of his character.³⁶ A comrade said: “He was one of the most brave, cool, and calm boys when on duty.” Another friend wrote: “I had always found him a loyal and trustworthy chum, and loved him with the love of a brother.”

Maurice’s four brothers in the army all survived the war.

The oldest, James, married Ethel Abson before the war in 1911,³⁷ and they celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in 1936.³⁸

Ernest married Nellie Viney in Sculcoates in 1912,³⁹ and they were living in nearby Kingston Upon Hull in 1939.⁴⁰ He was working as a watchman in a chemical warehouse, and was also a Special Constable, an unpaid part-time policeman.⁴¹

Clarence married Lucy Billany in 1913⁴² and in 1939 was living in Kingston upon Hull as a widower with two of his daughters.⁴³ He was working as an angle smith. He was also living with Alice Maud Hird, née Leighton, with whom he had three more children.⁴⁴⁴⁵⁴⁶ Tragically, the youngest of these, Colon, age 16 months, and daughter Hillary, age 12, were killed on 18 July 1941 “by enemy action,”⁴⁷ likely a bomb dropped on their home at 85A Rosmead Street.⁴⁸

Alec married Ethel Reed after the war in 1922,⁴⁹ and they also were living in Kingston upon Hull in 1939, with two daughters.⁵⁰ Alec was working as a ships’ cargo clerk.

Alice Maud married Herbert Sharp in 1912⁵¹ and they moved to Canada in 1923.⁵² By 1930, the family had moved to the United States.⁵³ Alice Maud lived to the age of 71, dying in New York State in 1955.⁵⁴

Sarah Ann married Herbert Cropper in 1919,⁵⁵ lived near her brother at 54 Rosmead Street, Hull, in 1939,⁵⁶ and died in Hull in 1976.⁵⁷

The two youngest children, Leonard and Stanley, were too young to serve in WW I, being just 12 and 10, respectively, when it began. Leonard married Mary Alicia Stephenson in 1921⁵⁸ and died in 1979 in Hull.⁵⁹ Stanley married Rhoda Moody in 1931⁶⁰ and died in 1978 in Hull.⁶¹

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- ¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Maurice Victor Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 190
- ² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for James Whittle, Registration district: Holderness, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 154
- ³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Sarah A Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9c, Page: 196
- ⁴ "Daily Letter from East Hull," *Hull Daily Mail*, 3 January, 1912, page 6, *British Newspaper Archive* (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk: accessed 30 March 2020), search for James Whittle
- ⁵ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Mr James Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Registration district number: 521, Sub-registration district: Drypool, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 2886
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Margaret Ann Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 169
- ⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Margaret Ann Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 120
- ⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Alice Maud Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 160
- ¹⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Henrietta Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 119
- ¹¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for James Simon Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 186
- ¹² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Ernest Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 174
- ¹³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Clarence Charles Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 163
- ¹⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Sarah Ann Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 177
- ¹⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Alexander Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 195
- ¹⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," entry for Maurice Victor Whittle
- ¹⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Louisa Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 199
- ¹⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Louis Seymour Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 117

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- ¹⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Leonard Norman Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 193
- ²⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Stanley Nicholson Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 204
- ²¹ "Five Sons Serving," *Hull Daily Mail*, 13 September 1915, page 3, *British Newspaper Archive* (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk: accessed 30 March 2020), search for James Whittle
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ "Sunk Island Battery and Stone Creek Anti-Aircraft Battery," *CastlesFortsBattles.co.uk* (http://www.castlesfortsbattles.co.uk/yorkshire/sunk_island_battery.html: accessed 1 November 2020)
- ²⁴ "British Army WW1 Pension Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 29 March 2020), entry for Charles Whittle
- ²⁵ "Five Sons Serving," *Hull Daily Mail*, *British Newspaper Archive*
- ²⁶ "British Army WW1 Service Records, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 29 March 2020), entry for Herbert Sharp
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Maurice Whittle
- ²⁹ "Enlisting into the Army," *The Long, Long Trail* (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/soldiers/a-soldiers-life-1914-1918/enlisting-into-the-army/>: accessed 24 Oct 2020)
- ³⁰ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 29 March 2020), entry for East Yorkshire Regiment, Sub-unit: 1/4th Battalion, Piece description: Piece 2834/1-4, page 68
- ³¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Pte E.M. Whittle [*sic*]
- ³² "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Maurice Whittle. Note that reference 31 above lists the date of death as 17 July 1916, but this and a number of other sources (including references 33 and 36 below) all give the date of death as 16 July 1916.
- ³³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 30 March 2020), entry for Whittle, Maurice Victor, Service No: 3708
- ³⁴ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Maurice Whittle
- ³⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Maurice Whittle
- ³⁶ "Roll of Honour," *Hull Daily Mail*, 7 September 1916, page 3, *British Newspaper Archive* (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk: accessed 30 March 2020), search for Whittle
- ³⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for James S Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 184
- ³⁸ "Marriages – Silver Weddings," *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 March 1936, page 3, *British Newspaper Archive* (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk: accessed 30 March 2020), search for James Whittle
- ³⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Ernest Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 430
- ⁴⁰ "1939 Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Ernest Whittle, Schedule number: 16, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: JAXN, Registration district: 522-5

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- ⁴¹ "The History of the Special Constabulary," *Old Police Cells Museum* (https://www.oldpolicecellsmuseum.org.uk/content/history/police_history/police_specials: accessed 12 April 2020)
- ⁴² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Clarence E Whittle [*sic*], Registration district: Patrington, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 639
- ⁴³ "1939 Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Clarence C Whittle, Schedule number: 178, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: JAXH, Registration district: 522-5
- ⁴⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Maureen H Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 234
- ⁴⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 12 April 2020), entry for Arleen Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 391
- ⁴⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 12 April 2020), entry for Colon J Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 711
- ⁴⁷ "Deaths," *Hull Daily Mail*, 22 July 1941, page 2, *British Newspaper Archive* (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk: accessed 30 March 2020), search for Whittle
- ⁴⁸ "UK, WWII Civilian Deaths, 1939–1945," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 12 April 2020), entries for Hillary Whittle and Colon James Whittle
- ⁴⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Alexander Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 316
- ⁵⁰ "1939 Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Alexander Whittle, Schedule number: 47, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: JAWC, Registration district: 522-5
- ⁵¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Alice M Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 301
- ⁵² "Canada, Ocean Arrivals (Form 30A), 1919–1924," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Alice Maud Sharp
- ⁵³ "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 November 2020), entry for Alice Sharpe [*sic*]
- ⁵⁴ "New York, Death Index, 1852–1956," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 4 April 2020), entry for Alice M Sharp
- ⁵⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Sarah A Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 347
- ⁵⁶ "1939 Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Sarah Ann Cropper, Schedule number: 270, Sub-schedule number: 2, Enumeration district: JAXI, Registration district: 522-5
- ⁵⁷ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 28 March 2020), entry for Sarah Ann Cropper, Registration district: Hull, Inferred county: Humberside, Volume: 7, Page: 1015
- ⁵⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 October 2020), entry for Leonard N Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 320
- ⁵⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 October 2020), entry for Leonard Norman Whittle, Registration district: Hull, Inferred county: Humberside, Volume: 7, Page: 1053

⁶⁰ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 October 2020), entry for Stanley N Whittle, Registration district: Sculcoates, Inferred county: Yorkshire East Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 368

⁶¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 October 2020), entry for Stanley Nicholson Whittle, Registration district: Hull, Inferred county: Humberside, Volume: 7, Page: 0654