

Corporal Leslie John Turner[©]
Regimental number: 99787
183rd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

born: 1896–died: 1 October 1918

Corporal Leslie John Turner was the eldest son of John and Ellen (also known as Nellie) Turner. He was born in 1896¹ and baptized on 19 July 1896 in Long Eaton, Derbyshire.² Both his parents were also born in Long Eaton—John on 20 June 1875,³ the son of Samuel and Ann Turner,⁴ and Ellen (née Jefferies) in about 1879, the daughter of Robert and Lydia Jefferies.⁵ John married Ellen in Shardlow, Derbyshire, in 1895⁶ and they would have a total of five children:

- Leslie
- William Harold (probably known as Harold) (born on 18 October 1901)⁷
- Fredrick Emmanuel (born in 1905)⁸
- Wilfred Albert (born on 2 November 1907)⁹
- Gertrude Ellen (born in 1910)¹⁰

In 1901, just before the birth of their second son William, John, Ellen and Leslie were living at 10 Cooperative Street in Long Eaton, where John was a lace maker. His mother-in-law Lydia Jefferies, a widow, and John's brother, Thomas Turner, were also living with the family. Ten years later, John was still a lace maker but was out of work. The family, with five children now, had moved to a five-room house at 35 Market Street in Draycott, which was about five miles closer to Derby than Long Eaton. Leslie, age 14, was no longer in school—he was threader in a lace factory.¹¹

Leslie was the only son old enough to serve in the Great War. He enlisted at the very beginning of the war—in about October 1914¹²—and joined the Royal Field Artillery as a driver.¹³ He went to France on 22 May 1915 and, at some point, was promoted to corporal.¹⁴ When he died, he was serving with the 183th Battalion in northern France.¹⁵ On 30 September 1918, he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCCS) with gunshot wounds that penetrated his abdomen. He died the following day.¹⁶

A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital.¹⁷

Leslie was buried on 2 October in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot 8, Row A, Grave 44) with the Canadian chaplain A. D. Reid presiding.¹⁸ Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Étrun, near Arras, France. The first burials in the cemetery took place in March 1917.¹⁹ No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.²⁰ As a result of the serious and urgent nature of the cases admitted to No. 1 CCCS, the death rate was considered to be high in October—a total of 83 deaths occurred during the month.²¹

A letter was sent to his mother, who was then living at 62 Derby Road in Draycott, to notify her of her son's death.²² The family had moved to Derby Road sometime before 1917.²³

Leslie was awarded the Military Medal,²⁴ which was given to Other Ranks (non-officers) for gallantry and devotion to duty when under fire in battle on land.²⁵ He was also awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory

Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).²⁶

After the war, his parents were living at 52 Sawley Road in Draycott and that is where his father John and brother Frederick (a farm labourer) were still living in 1939.²⁷ John was still a lace maker but he was now a widower—his wife Ellen probably died in 1934.²⁸ John himself probably died in 1942.²⁹

Sadly, Leslie's only sister **Gertrude** died when he was overseas. She was just 7 years old and was buried in Draycott Cemetery on 25 August 1917.³⁰ His three brothers continued to live in Derbyshire until their deaths.

Harold was baptized on 17 November 1901 in Mount Tabor United Methodist Free Church in Long Eaton. He would marry Lily Louise Fere in that same church in 1929.³¹ In 1939, he and Lily were living at 127 Granville Avenue in Long Eaton, where Harold was an artificial silk knitter. He died in Ilkeston, Derbyshire, in 1971.

Fredrick was living with his father in 1939. Four years later, after his father's death, he married Nancy Durose in 1942 at St. Chad's Church in Wilne, just a few miles from Long Eaton.³² Frederick was living at 27 Fowler Street in Draycott when he died on 20 October 1975.³³

Wilfred married Ellen Elizabeth Arden in 1932³⁴ and, in 1939, was living in the home that his parents had occupied nearly 30 years earlier. He was living at 35 Market Street and was an iron foundry labourer.³⁵ He was still at the same address when he died in the City Hospital in Derby on 22 March 1966.³⁶

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¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for Turner, Leslie John, Registration district: Shardlow, Volume 07B, Page 493

² "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530–1980," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for Leslie John Turner

³ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 May 2020), entry for John Turner, Schedule number: 54, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: RCXS, Registration district: 434/1

⁴ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 2 May 2020), entry for John Turner, Registration district: Shardlow, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 3389, Folio: 140, Page: 3

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⁶ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for John Turner, Registration district: Edmonton, Inferred county: Middlesex, Volume: 3a, Page: 820

⁷ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2020), entry for Harold W. Turner [*sic*], Schedule number: 243, Sub-schedule number: 1, Enumeration district: RBRV, Registration district: 434 B/1

⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for Turner, Frederick Emanuel, Registration district: Shardlow, Volume 07B, Page 559

⁹ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 2 May 2020), entry for Wilfred A. Turner, Reference: RG101/5977E/013/31, Letter code: RCXT

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- ¹² Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for Leslie J. Turner
- ¹³ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for Leslie J. Turner
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 April 2020), entry for Leslie Turner
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- ¹⁷ "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ¹⁸ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," entry for Turner, L.
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- ²⁰ "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)
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