

Private Robert Doyle
Regimental number: 4962
9th Battalion, Durham Light Infantry

born: probably about 1895 - died: 11 April 1916

Private Robert Doyle enlisted in the Durham Light Infantry in Gateshead-on-Tyne.¹ He was serving with the 9th Battalion² when he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with wounds to his abdomen.³ He died on 11 April 1916 and was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Extension Nord (Plot II, Row D, Grave 201).⁴

Bailleul is located close to the Belgian border.⁵ It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several Casualty Clearing Stations, including the 1st Canadian, were quartered there for considerable periods. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918, and occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.

His mother, Mrs. G. A. Doyle,⁶ who was living at 7 Annis (or Annie) Terrace, Dunston-on-Tyne, Durham was notified of his death.⁷ His mother, Elizabeth, received the monies owing to him from the army after this death.⁸ Robert was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).⁹

Robert was probably born in about 1895, the son of Robert and Elizabeth Doyle, of Dunston, in the county of Durham.¹⁰ His father, Robert, was born in about 1875 in Dunston and his mother, the former Elizabeth Lewis, was born in 1879, also in Dunston. Robert and Elizabeth married on 1 January 1890 at St. Michael and All Angels Church in South Westoe, South Shields, Durham. They had at least five children: John (born in about 1892), Robert, Elizabeth Ann (born in about 1897), Margaret (born in about 1900) and William Lewis (born in about 1904).¹¹

In 1901, Robert's father was a corporate cartman.¹² In 1911, Robert was living at 41 Victoria Street in Dunston-on-Tyne with his mother, who was a washerwoman, and his four siblings. Robert was a waterman, working as a foy boatman on the Tyne.¹³ A foy was a small boat used to guide larger vessels to their mooring – a term used primarily on the rivers of north-east England.¹⁴

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¹ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2015), entry for Robert Doyle

² The records of the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station suggest that he served in the 3rd Battalion, but all other army records indicate the 9th.

³ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 54

⁴ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 15 June 2015), entry for Doyle, R.

⁵ "Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Nord," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2000047/Bailleul%20Communal%20Cemetery.%20Nord>; accessed 17 June 2015)

⁶ Other records suggest that his mother was Elizabeth and his father Robert. The identification of Mrs. G. A. Doyle as his mother may be an error in the chaplains' journal.

⁷ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 54

⁸ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2015), entry for Robert Doyle

⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2015), entry for Robert Doyle

¹⁰ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2015), entry for Robert Doyle, Registration district: Gateshead, Registration District Number: 557, Sub-registration district: Whickham, ED, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 30500

¹¹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2015), entry for Robert Doyle, Registration district: Gateshead, Sub-registration district: Whickham, ED, institution, or vessel: 08, Piece: 4762, Folio: 32, Page Number: 14, Household schedule number: 85; "1911 England Census," entry for Robert Doyle

¹² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 17 June 2015), entry for Robert Doyle

¹³ "1911 England Census," entry for Robert Doyle

¹⁴ "Foyboat," *Wikipedia* (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foyboat>; accessed 17 June 2015)