

Sidney Charles LUCAS

Born Dawlish 1892
Lance Corporal, 3/6029

Died 30th August 1916, aged 24
Devonshire Regiment, 1st Battalion.

Sidney Charles Lucas was from a local family. His grandfather, Cephas Lucas, was born in Mamhead and married Eliza, born in Exeter. He was an under-gardener and they were living in a cottage at Ashcombe in 1861 where their children had been born; Edward (1849-1915), William Henry (1852-1933), Rebecca Sarah (1854-1932), James Frederick (1857-1908), Eliza Ann (1860-1941) and Harriet Ann (1863-1940).

Sidney's father was William Henry Lucas who had married Emily Brown (1857-1895) in 1879 and they had six children, all born in Dawlish;

Henry James (Harry)(1879-1947),
Emily Daisy (1881-1960),
Maud Louisa (1884-1909),
William (1886-),
Edith Beatrice (1889-1960)

Sidney Charles (1892-1916).

Their father was variously shown as an agricultural labourer and a domestic gardener. The family were living in Manor Row, Dawlish in 1881 but moved to Chapel Street (No 14 in 1891).

Their mother died in 1895 at the age of 38, when **Sidney** was three years old.

*- Henry James Lucas married Elizabeth Pearce of Dawlish in Q3, 1907 and they lived at 3 Chapel Street, Dawlish while he was a mason's labourer. In the 1911 census **Sidney Charles Lucas** is living with them and working as a general labourer.*

*- Emily Daisy Lucas married John Tibbs in Q2, 1904 and was living at 1 Clifford Street, Chudleigh when she died in 1960. She was paid **Sidney Lucas'** Death Grant of £12. 0s. 0d by the War Office in 1917. A son, Cyril John Tibbs (1913-) became a master butcher and was named in her will.*

*- Edith Beatrice Lucas moved to work as a domestic servant in Pontypridd, Rhondda (in 1911 census) and later that year married Henry W Fletcher. Mrs Edith B Fletcher received the residual **Sidney Lucas'** War Gratuity of £16.11s. 7d in 1919. She died in Pontypridd district in 1960.*

In 1901 William Henry Lucas, a widower, was living at No 13 Chapel Street with all of his children. The older daughters were shown as "laundress", Harry was a "general labourer", William "shop porter" and **Sidney** still at school.

It is not known when **Sidney** enlisted at Exeter with the First Devons. This was one of the permanent battalions of the Devonshire Regiment that left its posting in Jersey, the Channel Islands, and was sent to France on 21st August 1914. On arrival they were reinforced by around 500 reservists from Exeter. The "Medal Rolls Index" card shows that he arrived in France on 20 September 1914, and so may have been among those reservists.

Dawlish World War One Project

In September 1914, during their first spell in the line, they suffered 100 casualties from shelling. In October, on the La Basse Canal, they supported the badly mauled 1st Dorsets and helped capture Givenchy Ridge. The Devons performed well during a bitter three-week battle but lost two thirds of their officers and a third of their men. From November they occupied Messines Ridge in rain and sleet, often knee- or waist-deep in mud and icy water.

On 21st April 1915 they occupied Hill 60, which had been captured on 17th April. Counter-attacks and heavy shelling cost them more than 200 casualties.

On 31st July 1915 they moved to the Somme.

When the Somme offensive began on 1st July 1916 the Devons were at Arras but returned to the Somme, to consolidate the line around Longueval. Shellfire and German counter-attacks cost them 265 casualties. In September they made two very successful advances near Guillemont at a cost of 376 casualties. (keepmilitarymuseum.org)

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack on the Somme front was a failure.

In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. In this period **Lance Corporal Sidney Charles Lucas** was killed in action on the 30th August, 1916.

The German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: Lucas, Sidney Charles Lance Corporal 3/6029
30/08/1916 Devonshire Regiment, 1st Bn. Panel Ref: Pier and Face 1 C. [Thiepval Memorial](#)

The Dawlish War memorial inscription is LUCAS S CPL DEVON REGT
He is listed on the Devon Roll of Honour and on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

The Devon Heritage site shows him as 3/6029 Corporal Sidney Charles Lucas of the 1st Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Son of William Lucas of 3 Chapel Street, Dawlish. Born in Dawlish in 1892. Died 30 August 1916, aged 24.

The "Medal Rolls Index" cards shows him awarded the 1914 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal while his rank is shown as Private. However, the index "UK, Soldiers died in the Great War" indicates that he was an Acting Corporal at his death.

References:

Free Birth Marriage Death records
Subscription website for

Dawlish World War One Project

census records

Military records

bunkerfamilytree (ancestry.co.uk)

LUCAS S C text 160202 rbv/sr