

Francis George LARCOMBE

Born Williton, Somerset 1884
Lance Corporal, No 26094

Died France, 30th March 1917, aged 33
Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion

Francis George Larcombe was one of four children of John Clarke and Georgiana Mary Larcombe. John C Larcombe (1858-1909) was a Gamekeeper, born in Nettlecombe, Somerset, and Georgiana (nee Wood) (1859-1941) was a Certificated Schoolmistress born in Chepstow, Monmouthshire. They had married in 1881 (GRO ref Williton district, 1881, July-Sept, Vol 5c, p 413).

In 1891 John and Georgiana Larcombe were living at a cottage in Lowton, Pitminster, Somerset with two children, Annie C (1882-) and **Francis G** (1884-1917). In the following year Henry John Larcombe was born and in 1895 they had another daughter, Laura Mary Larcombe. In 1901 (Francis) **George** was 17 and a cowherd on Slade Farm, Dulverton.

Francis George Larcombe married Ellen Susan Millman (1884-) in 1909 at St Thomas the Martyr, Exeter (GRO Ref St Thomas district, July- Sept 1909, Vol 5b, p116). Ellen came from a large Exeter family living in St Thomas and was the daughter of Frederick J and Ellen M Millman.

Francis George Larcombe was a Freemason and member of the Salem Lodge in Barton Terrace, Dawlish. He is remembered there on their Roll of Honour.

Francis became Head Gamekeeper of the Luscombe Estate, Dawlish and in 1911 they were recorded as living at Beech Grove Lodge, Dawlish with their first child, Ellen (1910-). They had a second child, John (Birth record 1912, July- Sept, Newton Abbot district, vol 5b, p 158). John later married Madeline Sumner (1913-1974) in Frome, Somerset in 1940 and died in that district in 1990, aged 78. He was a highway engineer, as recorded in the Probate record of 25 May 1954 from the Will of Francis George Larcombe.

Francis' mother Georgiana Larcombe was now, in 1911, a widow and living at Marsh Green, Rockbeare, with her second son, Henry John Larcombe, a farmer and her youngest daughter Laura Mary Larcombe (1895-). Georgiana died in 1941 (GRO ref Death record - Middleton, Lancs, Dec 1941, Vol 8d, p 750).

It is not known when **Francis** enlisted nor where, neither do Medal Rolls Index Cards give the date of his entry into France. It might be supposed that he joined when conscription took effect early in 1916, since the Death Grant paid to his widow was £1.17s.2d, a modest sum.

In March 1917 the Germans were falling back to the newer and deeply defended Hindenburg Line. General Haig gave orders for a general advance all along the line to start on March 17th. This was conducted with caution as the retreating Germans had left booby traps and hidden machine gun nests to delay the pursuing troops. After a long period of trench warfare the open battlefield was a new experience. The 2nd Devons had another new experience encountering German cavalry, which was eventually driven back. On the 25th there was a night attack on the village of Lieramont which was defended by thick wire and infantry. Two days later cavalry patrols found Lieramont evacuated and the 2nd Devons moved up to occupy it.

The enemy was beginning to stiffen resistance and an attack on Heudicourt on the 29th-30th March failed. A fresh assault was ordered on the 30th and the 2nd Devons followed a barrage that lifted at 4.15pm to attack from the south. There was sharp fighting with rifle and machine-gun resistance, but by 6.45pm all objectives had been secured.

Francis George Larcombe is shown to have been killed in action on the 30th March.

Dawlish World War One Project

Commonwealth War Graves entry: LARCOMBE, F G Lance Corporal 26094 30/03/1917
Age: 33 Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Bn. Grave Ref: 1. [Heudicourt Communal Cemetery](#),
Somme, France

Son of Mrs. Larcombe, of Marsh Green, Exeter, and the late John Larcombe; husband of Ellen Susan Larcombe, of Beech Grove Lodge, Luscombe, Dawlish.

Devon Roll of Honour: YES, but no date or place of death shown (30/3/1917, Somme)

Dawlish War memorial inscription: LARCOMBE F.G. L/CORPL. DEVON REGT.

Devon Heritage site info: F.LARCOMBE

26094 Lance Corporal F G Larcombe of the 2nd Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Son of Mrs Larcombe, of Marsh Green, Exeter, and the late John Larcombe; husband of Ellen Susan Larcombe of Beech Grove Lodge, Luscombe, Dawlish. Died 30 March 1917 aged 33.

Last known address: Beech Grove Lodge, Luscombe, Dawlish

Next of kin: Ellen Susan Larcombe, widow

References:

Free Birth Marriage Death records

The Devonshire Regiment, pages 237-240 (Dawlish Library reference collection)

Records from Ancestry.com subscription website:

- Census data for 1891,1901 and 1911

- Porter-Popham File 2015 family tree

- UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects

- Probate records for Francis George Larcombe 1917 and John Larcombe 1954