

THE BLEASDALE FALLEN OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

PRIVATE/LANCE CORPORAL

LUCIEN FARRAR

1896 - 1918

1ST BATTALION LATER 1ST/4TH BATTALION

LOYAL NORTH LANCASHIRE REGIMENT

REGIMENTAL NUMBER: 19005



DIED OF WOUNDS ON 13TH JANUARY 1918

AT A GERMAN PRISONER OF WAR CAMP



REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

PRIVATE/LANCE CORPORAL LUCIEN FARRAR 1896 - 1918
1st Battalion later 1st /4th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment
REGIMENTAL NUMBER: 19005

Lucien Farrar was a farm labourer working in the Bleasdale area in 1914. When War broke out, he and three 'pals' soon went to Garstang to enlist in the Army, in the 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. Only one of them returned home. He was wounded twice, first in the Battle of Loos in September 1915 and then in the Battle of the Somme which started on 1st July 1916. After Lucien had recovered he was transferred to the 1st/4th Battalion. He was taken prisoner during an action in November 1917 and died of wounds in a German Prisoner of War Camp on 13th January 1918. He was 21 years old.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Lucien Farrar was the youngest of 5 children of William and Eleanor Farrar of Silverdale, born in 1896.

His father was from Yorkshire. He was born at Redmire in Wensleydale in 1864. In 1881 he and his family were living in nearby West Witton where he and his father worked as lead miners.



A lead mine near West Witton, Wensleydale

William married Eleanor, and in about 1890 the couple moved to Silverdale where William took a job as a farm labourer. In 1891 William and Eleanor were living in Milnthorpe Road, Silverdale (near Eaves Wood) with their eldest son, John William and daughter Annie. George followed in c.1893 and Sarah in c. 1895. Lucien was born the following year. All the children were still alive in 1911.

He and his family had moved to West View Cottages, Silverdale, by 1901. His father was then described as a stockman on a farm. Ten years later William and Eleanor were still in the village, but all the boys had left home. In around 1900 they were living at Challan Hall Cottages.

SCHOOL AND WORK

It is likely that the Farrar children attended Silverdale School. The School Logbook will provide background information on their schooldays. In 1911, Lucien's older brother John was working as a horseman at Borwick Hall Farm. George emigrated to Australia, according to a report in the Lancaster Guardian of 22nd December 1916 which said he had joined the Australian forces in July 1917.

In 1911, aged 14, Lucien had also left home and was working as a farm labourer on Stephen Willan's farm at Green Foot, Low Bentham. Did he obtain this job through a private arrangement or by standing at a Hiring Fair? By 1914 he had moved to the Bleasdale area.

ENLISTMENT, THE FRONT AND RETURNING HOME TO HOSPITAL - TWICE

Lucien enlisted in Garstang in late 1914 at the same time as John Cragg, Thomas George Parker and John Shaw. Only Thomas George Parker returned. John Cragg and John Shaw were like himself, living away from home, working as farm labourers in the Bleasdale area. Thomas George Parker was a local farmer's son. Their decision to join the Army gives us an insight into the social lives of these young men who must have met together and planned to go on what in August 1914 might have seemed to them an adventure. They must have queued together to enlist at Bowgreave Recruiting Office as they received consecutive Army numbers. Lucien was the last of the four to sign on.

They were all posted to the 1st Battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. This was one of the Regiment's regular battalions which had been in action in France since August, and owing to the large number of casualties it had suffered in the first few months was in need of replacements.

After training, the four went out to France together, arriving on 3rd June 1915. Lucien and John Cragg, and presumably the other two, took part in the Battle of Loos, which started on 25th September 1915. Lucien was wounded in the arm on the first day. He was sent back to England to convalesce at Whalley Military Hospital, near Clitheroe (later, Calderstones Hospital). Hopefully his family was able to visit him there. The injury could not have been too serious as he returned to his regiment on 15th November 1915 and then to France the following month.



Whalley Military Hospital near Clitheroe

Lucien appears to have been promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal, as mentioned in the article in the Lancaster Guardian of 29th July 1916. His friend, John Cragg was also promoted to that rank. However Lucien was described as a Private on both the Medal and the Commonwealth War Graves certificates as well as in the Lancaster Guardian report of 22nd December 1917.

Lucien, John Cragg, John Shaw and perhaps Thomas George Parker all took part in the Battle of the Somme, which started on 1st July 1916. Lucien was wounded in the mouth on 14th July. Yet again he was sent home to England where he recuperated at Lord Derby's Hospital Warrington (Winwick Hospital). He remained in England until the New Year, 1917. He would have heard that John Cragg had been killed the day after he, Lucien, was wounded, and John Shaw was reported missing, presumed killed, in August.

In February 1917 he was transferred to the 1st/4th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment who took part in the Battle of Passchendaele in the following summer and autumn. Presumably Lucien was involved and survived unscathed. In November the battalion was moved to the Somme area.

THE ACTION AT GUILLEMONT ON 18th NOVEMBER 1917

Karen Macaulay writes:

‘On 17th November the battalion was in the Guillemont Sector, about 6½ miles east of Albert on the Somme, ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies in the front line, whilst ‘B’ and ‘A’ were in support and reserve. At 5.30 a.m. on the morning of the 18th the enemy opened a hurricane bombardment of the Guillemont Farm Sector. Out of some 80 officers and men occupying the 12 advanced posts only two sergeants and half a dozen men remained alive, all the rest being killed and buried under flying debris. About 200 of the enemy entered the battalion line and began to move along the trench, but were held up until ‘A’ Company came in to reinforce the position, forcing the Germans back. The battalion suffered about 80 casualties during this action and Lucien Farrar was one of them.’

LUCIEN’S DEATH AS A PRISONER OF WAR IN GERMANY

In late December his family were informed officially that he was missing in action following the action on 18th November. They would not have known until later that he had in fact been wounded, captured and taken to the Prisoner of War camp at Wahn, Germany, south east of Cologne. He died of his wounds there on 13th January, 1918 at the age of 21, and he was subsequently buried in Cologne Southern Cemetery, Grave XV1.A.30

AFTERMATH

Lucien is commemorated on both Bleasdale and Silverdale’s War Memorials and on the Loyal North Lancashire’s Regimental Roll of Honour.

His mother, as his sole representative, received a total of £33 13s 8d. from the War Office which was owed to Lucien. However on his Prisoner of War papers, he named Miss Annie Fishwick as his representative. In 1911 she was in service at Broad Oak, Accrington, the home of Sir George Macalpine, a colliery proprietor, director of the Accrington Brick and Tile Company and a leading Baptist. Annie had been born in Cartmel and her widowed mother had moved to Yealand Conyers before the War, where presumably, Lucien had met her. In his soldier’s will, however, he named his mother, not Annie, as his legatee.

Lucien was awarded the Victory and British Medals and the 15 Star.



The Victory and British Medals and the 15 Star.

References:

The Preston Guardian 13th February 1915 (microfilm, Community History Library, Harris Library Preston).

The Lancaster Guardian

29th July 1916 and 22nd December 1917 (microfilm, Community History Library, Lancaster).

For other references etc., see the Acknowledgement Page.