

Private Stephen Charles Lewis

Regimental number: 8563

13th Battalion, Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) Regiment

born: 20 February 1891- died: 7 July 1916

Private Stephen Charles Lewis was born on 20 February 1891¹ in Mile End Old Town, London,² the son of Thomas and Mary Ann Lewis. He was baptized on 29 March of the same year at the Roman Catholic church of St Mary & St Michael in Tower Hamlets.³ His parents, Thomas Frederick Lewis and the former Mary Ann Quinlan, were both born about 1868—his father in Marylebone and his mother in Stepney.⁴

Thomas, a barman, and Mary Ann, a confectioner, married on 5 August 1888 in the parish church in St Matthew, Stepney Limehouse Fields, Tower Hamlets.⁵ They went on to have six children: Thomas Frederick (born in 1889),⁶ Stephen, William Edward (born in 1894),⁷ Arthur James (born in 1896, but sadly died a year later),⁸ Ethel May (born in 1898)⁹ and George Joseph (born in 1901).¹⁰

When he was just a few months old, Stephen was living at 128 Old Church Road in Mile End Old Town with his mother and grandmother and his older brother.¹¹ His father was not at home at the time of the census.

In 1901, the family was together, living at 70 Maplin Street in Mile End, where Stephen's father was a potman, working in a bar.¹² Sadly, his father died just three years later, on 29 August 1904 at the age of 35. He died at St George's workhouse in Southwark.

In 1911, Stephen, his mother and his three younger siblings were living at 22 Chapel Court, probably in Southwark.¹³ Stephen was working as a machine ruler for a manufacturing stationer and his younger brother William was a waterside labourer.

Stephen married Annie E. Smith in Southwark in early 1912.¹⁴ They may have had two children before Stephen died: Charles Stephen (born in 1913)¹⁵ and Sidney George (born in 1916—possibly just months before Stephen died).¹⁶

Stephen enlisted in Southwark, Surrey, as a private early in the Great War.¹⁷ He enlisted in the 13th Battalion of the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) Regiment and joined the Front in France on 1 September 1915.¹⁸ Less than a year later, the 13th Battalion was in the trenches near Dranoutre in Belgium.¹⁹ On 6 July 1916, the battalion's position was heavily strafed by "minnies"²⁰ and shells. One shell landed on a traverse trench and wounded seven men in the bays on each side. In total, the strafing killed three Other Ranks (non-officers) and 29 were wounded. It is not known when Stephen was wounded, but he died at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 7 July, at the age of 25.²¹ In July 1916, No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station received 2,810 admissions, of whom 70 died.²²

Stephen was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Grave Reference: Plot II, Row E, Grave 74).²³ Bailleul is in France, but near the Belgian border, about 15 kilometres southwest of Ypres.²⁴ It was occupied in October 1914 and became an important hospital centre not just for No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station but also for No. 1 Australian and five British Army casualty clearing stations. The cemetery contains 4,403 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 17 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War and 154 German burials from both wars.

The monies owing to him from the army were sent to his wife who, in the summer of 1919, married John Jeffries.²⁵

Stephen was awarded 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

It is not known if any of his brothers served in the Great War.

© 2017 BIFHSGO

¹ "England Roman Catholic Parish Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephanus Carolus Lewis, Document type: Baptisms, Page: 220

² "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, Stephen Charles, Mile End Old Town, Volume 01C, Page 461

³ "England Roman Catholic Parish Baptisms," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephanus Carolus Lewis

⁴ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 March 2017), entry for Stephen C Lewis, Registration district: Mile End, Old Town, Sub-registration district: Mile End, Old Town, Eastern, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 23, Piece: 336, Folio: 58, Page: 58, Household schedule number: 389

⁵ "London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1921," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Thomas Frederick Lewis

⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, Thomas Frederick, Stepney, Volume 01C, Page 461

⁷ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, William Edward, Holborn, Volume 01B, Page 728

⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, Arthur James, Islington, Volume 01B, Page 324, "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 March 2017), entry for Arthur James Lewis, Registration district: Islington, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1b, Page: 177

⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, Ethel May, Islington, Volume 01B, Page 252

¹⁰ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, George Joseph, Mile End Old Town, Volume 01C, Page 515

¹¹ "1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephen C Lewis, Registration district: Mile End Old Town, Archive reference: RG12; Piece number: 304, Folio: 10, Page: 15

¹² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 20 March 2017), entry for Stephen C Lewis

¹³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2017), entry for Bruno Whittle, Registration district: Southward, Registration district number: 23, Sub-registration district: Kent Road Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 1763

¹⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2017), entry for Stephen C Lewis, Registration district: Southwark, Inferred county: London, Volume: 1d, Page: 175

¹⁵ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, Charles Stephen, Southwark, Volume 01D, Page 115

-
- ¹⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 20 March 2017) entry for Lewis, Sidney George, Southwark, Volume 01D, Page 59
- ¹⁷ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephen Charles Lewis
- ¹⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephen C Lewis
- ¹⁹ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 March 2017), Regiment or unit: Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex) Regiment, Sub-unit: 13th Battalion, Division: 24th Division, Diary dates: 1915 Aug - 1919 Nov, Piece description: Piece 2219/1: 13 Battalion Middlesex Regiment (1915 Aug - 1919 Nov), Piece number: 2219
- ²⁰ This probably referred to "Moaning Minnies"—German trench mortar or Minenwerfer. ("World War One: Slang terms at the Front," *British Library* (<https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/slang-terms-at-the-front>; accessed 20 March 2017))
- ²¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 July 2017), entry for Lewis, S. C.
- ²² "War Diaries–1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *Library and Archives Canada* (collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=2005082: accessed 18 March 2016)
- ²³ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 July 2017), entry for Lewis, S. C.
- ²⁴ "Bailleul Community Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 17 January 2017)
- ²⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephen Charles Lewis
- ²⁶ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 18 March 2017), entry for Stephen C Lewis