

Lance Corporal Gordon Charles Tucker[©]

Regimental number: 57577

20th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 24 June 1896—died: 30 March 1916

Gordon Charles Tucker was born on 24 June 1896 in Owen Sound, Ontario, the son of Henry George Tucker and his wife, the former Georgie McKay Buchan.¹ It is not known when Henry and Georgie married but, on 13 May 1892, they had a stillborn male child.² Gordon was born four years later and then a brother, named after his father, was born on 4 April 1898.³

Gordon's father was a barrister, born in Owen Sound in 1862.⁴ His mother, Georgie, was born in Hamilton in about 1865, the daughter of George Buchan. Sadly, Georgie died suddenly at home on 11 March 1900.⁵ Gordon was just 3½ years old and his brother, 16 months.

In 1901, Gordon and his father and brother were living in Owen Sound. Also in their home were Annie Montgomery (governess), Mary Rosborough (domestic servant) and Elizabeth M. Follis (nurse).⁶ A year later, Gordon's father married the governess. Henry and the former Marie Emily Annie Montgomery, from Quebec City, married on 10 September 1902 at 275 Terrace Street in Owen Sound.⁷ They do not appear to have had any children of their own but, in 1911, Henry and his wife, who was now called Marie, were living at 661 2nd Avenue in Owen Sound with Henry's two boys.⁸



Gordon was educated in Owen Sound—except two terms at Trinity College School in Port Hope—with the goal of becoming an electrical engineer. He was a student at the Collegiate Institute when he left Owen Sound on 7 November 1914, at the age of 18, to sign up to fight early in the war. As a student he had been a cadet with the 31st Regiment; now he enlisted in the 20th Battalion in Toronto on 8 November 1914.⁹ When he enlisted he was 5' 8½" tall and had a fair complexion, blue eyes and dark brown hair.¹⁰

Gordon left Canada and arrived in England in May 1915. He embarked for France on 14 September of the same year. It was only just over six months later that he was wounded in action.

At the end of March, Gordon's battalion saw a lot of enemy activity. Shelling on 29 March resulted in the deaths of three soldiers and the wounding of three. Gordon may have been one of the three wounded.¹¹ He died of shrapnel wounds to his abdomen at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 30 March 1916.

Lance Corporal Gordon Charles Tucker

Source: Lance Corporal Gordon Tucker Receives Serious Wound and Dies," *Owen Sound Sun*, 11 September 1902

Gordon was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot 11, Row B, Grave 47).¹² Bailleul is in France, but near the Belgian border, about 15 kilometres southwest of Ypres. It was occupied in October 1914 and became an important

hospital centre for not just No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station but also for No. 1 Australian and five British Army casualty clearing stations.¹³

The chaplain wrote to Gordon's stepmother to notify her of his death.

Gordon was awarded posthumously 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).

An article in the local newspaper noted that

[Gordon] realized fully the seriousness of the step he took in enlisting and its possible consequences and he took it because he felt it was a duty which lay upon him. Referring to this in a recent letter. He remarked that army life had many difficulties and added, "I know that many times during the period of my enlistment, I've groaned under the weight of my duties, and I am big and strong. I am not sorry that I enlisted because I see I am needed out here." This was in reference to the wish of his younger brother, Harry, to enlist, a step which Lc-Corp. Tucker strongly advised against, for the above reason.

However, his brother was not dissuaded. Within days of Gordon's death, his younger brother, Henry Jr. (known as Harry), enlisted in Owen Sound. He was a student when he enlisted as a private (regimental number 839010) on 4 April 1916—his 18th birthday. In an apparent keenness to enlist, he took his medical examination before his birthday.¹⁴

Henry Jr. sailed to England, arriving in November 1916, and was eventually posted to the 147th (Grey) Battalion as a private. He left the 147th and joined the 1st Labour Battalion in October 1917 and went to France. Henry had a number of illnesses during his year on the front line—pyrexia of unknown origin (fever), scabies, bronchitis and diarrhea—and returned to England in November 1918. For two days in June 1918, he was a patient at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where his brother had died just over two years earlier. Henry sailed back to Canada in February 1919 and was discharged as medically unfit for further service on 7 May 1919.

He returned to Owen Sound, where his family was living at 763 2nd Avenue West. He later moved to Toronto and, on 24 September 1919, he married Bertha Christine Dunlop in Toronto.¹⁵ He and Bertha divorced at some point and Henry remarried in 1939.¹⁶ He lived at 96 Barton Avenue for at least 20 years before 1939.

Henry was a printers' broker when he enlisted to serve in the Second World War soon after the declaration of war. He enlisted as a private (service number B67324) in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment of Canada on 20 September 1939. He participated in the fateful Dieppe raid in August 1941 and was declared missing on 19 August. "This soldier was last seen in A.L.C. [Assault Landing Craft] leaving the beach by B-670454 Agnew R. R. The A.L.C. later sank and Private Agnew did not see Tucker again."¹⁷ It was not until 20 October 1944, when all searches of prisoners of war made by the International Red Cross were completed, that Henry was declared dead. He left behind his second wife, Audrie.

Gordon's father was a well-respected barrister in Owen Sound. "He was well, versed in matters of law, and during his career, had conducted many notable, cases and met with a full measure of success."¹⁸ So it was with "sincere regret" that the magistrate had to sentence his long-time friend, George, to jail time when he was convicted of drug possession. George was arrested in October 1928 for the illegal possession of narcotic drugs—used to feed an addiction that he had reportedly

had for 20 years. He was fined and sentenced in October 1929 to six months in the Ontario Reformatory in Guelph, but did not remain there.¹⁹ He was transferred to Burwash Industrial Farm just days before he died²⁰ in Burwash on 3 June 1929 of morphine addiction and cardiac failure.²¹

After the death of her husband, Marie moved to Toronto, when she lived until her death on 7 February 1941.²² She had lost her husband to drug addiction, one stepson in the Great War and a second, although it had not been confirmed, in the Second World War. Sadly, her death, like that of her husband and stepsons, was violent. Marie was struck by an automobile near her home on 6 February and died a day later as a result of multiple fractures.²³

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¹ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1832–1916," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 March 2023), entry for Charles Gordon Lucker [sic]

² "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1832–1916," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 March 2023), entry for Tucker

³ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 March 2023), entry for Harry [sic] George Tucker

⁴ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 March 2023), entry for Georgia W Ray [sic] Tucker

⁵ "A Sad Bereavement," *Times*, 13 March 1900, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 16 March 2023)

⁶ "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 1 April 2023), entry for Paul B. Garan C. Lucker [sic], Province: Ontario, District: Grey (North/Nord), District number: 65, Sub-district: Owen Sound (Town/Ville), Sub-district number: 6

⁷ "Married," *Times*, 11 September 1902, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 16 March 2023)

⁸ "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 March 2023), entry for Gordon C Tucker, Province: Ontario, District: Grey North, District number: 73, Sub-district: 54 - Owen Sound, Sub-district number: 54

⁹ "Lance Corporal Gordon Tucker Receives Serious Wound and Dies," *Owen Sound Sun*, 11 September 1902, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 16 March 2023)

¹⁰ "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 13 March 2023), entry for Tucker, G. C., Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 9809-19, Item number: 281309, Digitized service file - PDF format: B9809-S019. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Gordon's military service comes from this file.

¹¹ "War diary," *Canadian Great War Project* (format OK?) (<https://canadiangreatwarproject.com/diaries/>: accessed 17 March 2023), 20th Canadian Infantry Battalion

¹² *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 6 June 2022), entry for Tucker, Gordon Charles

¹³ "Bailleul Community Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 17 January 2017)

¹⁴ "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 13 March 2023), entry for Tucker, Harry [sic] George, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 9809-28, Item number: 281318, Digitized service file - PDF format: B9809-S028. Unless otherwise noted, all information about Henry's military service comes from this file.

¹⁵ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 April 2023), entry for Harry [sic] George Tucker

¹⁶ "Second World War Service Files – War Dead, 1939 to 1947," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 18 March 2023), entry for Tucker, Harry George, Reference: RG 24, Volume 27229

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Mr. H.G. Tucker Passes Away; on Thursday," *Owen Sound Daily Sun-Times*, 4 January 1929, *Newspapers.com* (www.newspapers.com: accessed on 16 March 2023)

¹⁹ "Guilty of Having Drugs, Sentenced to Six Months Jail,": *Owen Sound Daily Sun-Times*, 25 October 1928, *Newspapers.com* (www.newspapers.com: accessed 16 March 2023)

²⁰ "Mr. H.G. Tucker Passes Away; on Thursday," *Owen Sound Daily Sun-Times*

²¹ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 March 2023), entry for Harry George Tucker

²² "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 March 2023), entry for Marie Tucker [Marie Montgomery]

²³ "Mrs H. Tucker Died in Toronto Result Accident," *Owen Sound Daily Sun-Times*, 10 February 1941, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 16 March 2023)