

Lance Corporal Sydney Joseph Gilman MM



(1)

Sydney Joseph Gilman was born at the end of 1895 in Wetton, Staffordshire. He was the second son and fifth child of John and Harriet (nee Buckley) Gilman.

Sydney's siblings were also born in Wetton and were Jane Ann (born 1887), John (born 1889), Ellen Elizabeth (born 1892), Lydia Alice (born 1894), Edith Elsie (born 1898), Ada Mary (born 1899), Victor Charles (born 1901), Fred George (born 1903), Albert Leslie (born 1906) and Harold (born 1911).

At the time of the census in 1901, the family are living in Wetton and Sydney's father was described as a General Labourer.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------|---|----|---|------------------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| John T. Gilman | Head | M | 39 | 1 | General Labourer | Wetton | do. | Wetton |
| Harriet | Wife | M | 36 | 1 | | | | do. Marchington |
| James | Son | S | 14 | 1 | | | | do. Wetton |
| John W. | Son | S | 12 | 1 | | | | do. do |
| Ellen Elizabeth | Daughter | F | 9 | 1 | | | | do. do |
| Lydian | Daughter | F | 7 | 1 | | | | do. do |
| Sydney J. | Son | S | 5 | 1 | | | | do. do |
| Edith E. | Daughter | F | 3 | 1 | | | | do. do |
| Ada M. | Daughter | F | 1 | 1 | | | | do. do |

(2)

Moving forward 10 years to 1911, and the census describes Sydney, now aged 15, as 'Boy working on farm'. He was working for Thomas White at Castern Hall Farm, near Ilam, Staffordshire.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule 22
(To be filled up by the Enumerator and returned.)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

| NAME AND SURNAME | RELATIONSHIP to Family | AGE (in Years and Sex) | PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE | | | | PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION | | | | BIRTHPLACE of every person. | NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country. | INFIRMITY. |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|--|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|------------|
| | | | State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the status of — | Children born alive in present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.) | Personal Occupation | Industry or Service with which worker is connected. | Whether Employer, or Worker, or both. | Whether Working in Home. | | | | | |
| 1. Thomas White | Head | 54 | Married | 26 | 7 | Farmer | 100 | Employer | 2 | Staffs. Castlem | | | |
| 2. Hannah White | Wife | 54 | Married | 26 | 7 | | | | | Staffs. Castlem | | | |
| 3. Thomas White | Son | 23 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | 10 | Worker | 0 | Staffs. Wetton | | 2.10 | |
| 4. William Henry White | Son | 23 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | | Worker | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 5. James John White | Son | 22 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | | Worker | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 6. George Frederick White | Son | 20 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | | Worker | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 7. Edith Hannah White | Daughter | 19 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | | Worker | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 8. Edith Mary White | Daughter | 17 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | | Worker | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 9. Eliza Elizabeth Gilman | Servant | 19 | Single | | | General servant | 070 | 100 | 0 | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 10. John White | Brother | 8 1/2 | Single | | | Farmer working on farm | 0 | | 0 | Staffs. Castlem | | | |
| 11. Richard Patterson | Servant | 30 | Single | | | Workman on farm | 120 | | | Staffs. Wetton | | 2.10 | |
| 12. John Radson | Servant | 26 | Single | | | Wagoner on farm | 130 | | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |
| 13. Sydney Gilman | Servant | 15 | Single | | | Boy working on farm | 140 | | | Staffs. Wetton | | | |

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

| | | |
|-------|---------|---------|
| Total | | |
| Males | Females | Persons |
| 9 | 4 | 13 |

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Parlours, or Apartments). Count the W.C. as a room but do not count sanitary, lavatory, cloak, lockers, or workrooms, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Thomas White
Postal Address Castern Hall, Ilam, Staffordshire

(3)

Sydney enlisted into the 2nd/6th Battalion Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment). Although the date of his enlistment is unknown, in line with the brief history of the Battalion below, it was probably between November 1914 and February 1915

This Battalion was formed at Chesterfield on 14 September 1914. On 2 November 1914 they moved to Buxton, Derbyshire where they took over the Empire Hotel. On 3 February 1915 they moved to Luton and joined the 178th brigade of the 59th division. In June 1915 they moved to Dunstable and on 9 August 1915 to Watford. In April 1916 they moved to Dublin taking part in the suppression of the Irish Rebellion. In July 1916 they were at the Curragh and in January 1917 returned to Fovant on Salisbury Plain. They landed at Boulogne, France, on 26 February 1917. They were reduced to cadre strength on Lines of Communication on 7 May 1918 and finally disbanded on 31 July 1918.

Sydney was awarded the Military Medal on 31 March 1917. His citation reads;

For gallantry and devotion to duty during operations at Jeancourt on 31st March 1917, when the battalion successfully attacked and captured both the villages of Vendelles and Jeancourt.

In addition he was awarded the British War medal and the Victory medal, for campaign services.

| Name. | Corps. | Rank. | Regtl. No. |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------|
| GILMAN. | Notts & Derby R. | Pte. | 240594. |
| Sydney. | | | |
| | | | |
| Medal. | Roll. | Page. | Remarks. |
| VICTORY | F/103. B. 24 | 5817. | |
| BRITISH | — | — | |
| STAR | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Theatre of War first served in | | | |
| Date of entry therein | | | |

(4)

K. 1380

Sydney was killed in action during the German attack on the lines at Mory l'Abbaye, France on 21 March 1918. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, France.

The following extracts describe the German attack of 21st March 1918, which was the first German Drive of the Somme Offensive in 1918

The Battalion War Diary for that day states;

'Very heavy enemy barrage on front line from 5.00am to 9.30am. Enemy attacked at 9.30am. Battalion suffered very heavy casualties.'

A further narrative, written by Lt Col H S Hodgkin (4th Dragoon Guards), commanding 2/6th Sherwood Foresters reads;

'The enemy after this by bombing eventually captured the trenches on the embankment up to the Regimental Aid posts. He had also penetrated on my left. After collecting signallers, runners and servants, Battalion headquarters fought (with practically no cover from the rear) until all the ammunition was spent, and most of the officers and men were casualties. It was not until we were entirely surrounded that that part of the railway Embankment near Battalion Headquarters was taken by the enemy.

I am proud to state that all the ranks fought splendidly, and it is difficult, where all did so well to single out any individuals for special praise.'

These two narratives give an indication of the battle that Sydney was involved in and resulted in his death.

Source of information

1. Photograph © Sherwood Foresters Museum
2. Census 1901 © Ancestry.co.uk
3. Census 1911 © Ancestry.co.uk
4. Medal record © Ancestry.co.uk