

FRANK LUCAS

Born: November 11, 1888
Enlisted: September 8, 1914

- Fought in Gallipoli, where he became critically ill with dysentery. Later caught typhoid.
- Took months to recover, but eventually returned to his Light Horse Regiment in Egypt, before finally returning to Australia in May, 1919.
- He was so traumatised he never spoke to his family about his experiences. Died of pneumonia after a car crash in 1941.

ARTHUR LUCAS

Born: March 13, 1882
Enlisted: September 6, 1915



- Killed by a shell while fighting through the night to recapture a trench from the Germans in France in March 1917.
- Buried in a little-visited war cemetery with 461 fellow soldiers, mostly South Australians.



EDGAR LUCAS

Born: September 9, 1893
Enlisted: June 29, 1915

- Suffered horrific wounds while fighting in the Somme in France and was nearly left for dead because his injuries were so severe. Arrived back in Australia late in 1916 but was plagued by his injuries throughout his life.
- He refused to marry his childhood sweetheart for more than a decade after the war because he did not expect to live long. But he outlived all his brothers, dying in 1970.

CHARLES LUCAS

Born: May 7, 1886
Enlisted: August 9, 1915

- While fighting at Pozieres in 1916 was speared through his left thigh and right hand and had his throat and lungs ravaged by gas. Spent time in hospital in London and was repatriated to Australia in January 1917. He never fully recovered and died in 1930 from complications.

OSCAR LUCAS: (not pictured)

Born: April 6, 1884

- Stayed at home in Adelaide to look after the family. Was sent a white feather, the symbol for cowardice. Eventually became the Tasmanian branch manager of the National Bank of Australasia Limited. Died in July 1947.

talion on January 28, 1917, and participated in attacks during the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line.

In the dark of the night of March 2, 1917, in one corner of a much bigger battle, Arthur and two of his mates, Lieutenant Robert Hillman Botten, from Toorak Gardens, and Lieutenant D.W. Caldwell, from Semaphore, were killed as they desperately fought with their men to recapture a trench on a low ridge near the town of Warlencourt, about 28km north of Amiens. His parents would receive the devastating news in a simple telegram from his commanding officer:

"The above-named Officer was killed in action at WARLENCOURT on March 2nd 1917 whilst participating in an attack on a German position. He was buried in a sunken road leading off the main BAPAUME road, in the village of Warlencourt. A cross was erected in his memory."

Today, Arthur's grave lies between those of Botten and Caldwell, in a little-visited cemetery containing 461 of his Australian comrades-in-arms.

As it was the South Australian 27th Battalion fighting in that area at that time, the casualties were also mainly from SA and there are countless headstones of others

from Adelaide who died on the same day.

Such was the heartbreaking efficiency of war, Arthur's father was sent everything the dead soldier had owned in France – right down to his diary, book of verse, two photos, two notebooks, two exercise books, three pairs of underpants, five pairs of socks, and a whistle.

Arthur's death was the lowest point of a devastating six months for the Lucas family.

THE AFTERMATH

THREE months earlier, Edgar had arrived back in Australia nursing horrendous injuries.

Shortly after the family was notified of Arthur's death, Charles arrived home with wounds from which he would never fully recover.

In the same month, Frank was sent back to fight with his beloved Light Horse in Egypt, not returning for another two years.

Edgar's injuries plagued him throughout his life. He refused to marry his childhood sweetheart until 1930 because he had not been expected to live long, and shrapnel was still being removed from his neck in 1942.

But the father of two was ever proud, supporting his family as an insurance clerk

and refusing until 1955 to apply for the disability pension to which he was entitled.

Despite his injuries, he was called up for service in World War II, but once the examining medical officer saw him, he was sent home on the basis he had "done enough".

Edgar would outlive all his brothers, dying on January 19, 1970. He is survived by his sons Noel and Murray, who still live in Adelaide.

Back at the warfront, Frank had been promoted to sergeant and joined his brigade in Egypt in March 1917.

He did not return to Australia until May 1919, when he was discharged on May 23, 1919 – almost five years after enlisting.

Frank remained a keen sportsman, playing lacrosse and cricket for Sturt, and was selected to play cricket for South Australia in 1919.

In a tragic twist of fate, he crashed his car into a poorly-lit tram on Greenhill Rd on a wet August night in 1941.

Despite surviving the war and then the car crash, he died of pneumonia in the Royal Adelaide Hospital 10 days later. He is survived by his third child, Jacqueline, who still lives in the family home.

Frank was so deeply affected by the war

he never spoke to his family about Gallipoli.

It was not until some 90 years later that his surviving daughters and grandchildren learned he had even served at Gallipoli.

Brother Charles never fully recovered from his wounds and the gas that had ravaged his lungs. Still unwell, he was repatriated to Australia in January 1917, and discharged on May 2.

Thirteen years later, he died of complications from his injuries at Kings Park.

In a further twist of tragedy, the soldiers' sister Ida, already blinded in one eye from a school accident, lost the sight in her remaining eye during the birth of her son Arthur and never saw him.

If that suffering was not enough, her only son was later killed while the tail gunner in a Sunderland flying boat over Denmark in World War II.

The Lucas family gave their country so much, but at the height of WWI their sacrifice did not spare them from one final indignity, an act which cut deeply for William and Mary.

Oscar, the only son not to join up and who had stayed home to look after his family, was anonymously sent a white feather – the symbol of cowardice – for not enlisting.

Read the full extract at adelaidenow.com.au