

**Sergeant Arthur James Lindley Biggs**  
**Regimental number: 27388**  
**20<sup>th</sup> Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery**

**born: 9 June 1889 - died: 25 July 1918**

Sergeant Arthur James Lindley Biggs, born on 9 June 1889, was the son of Henry and Sarah Biggs.<sup>1</sup> He was baptised on 11 August of the same year at the church of St Peter and St Paul, Aston, Warwickshire.<sup>2</sup> His older brother, Alfred, was baptised the same day.<sup>3</sup>

Arthur's father, Henry Alfred, was born in about 1856 in Shrewsbury, Shropshire,<sup>4</sup> probably the son of Richard and Sarah Biggs of Kinnerly, Shropshire.<sup>5</sup> His mother, the former Sarah Lindley, born in about 1862 also in Shrewsbury, was the daughter of James and Eliza Lindley of Atcham, Shropshire.<sup>6</sup> Henry and Sarah were married near Atcham, Shropshire in the spring of 1880. Their first two children<sup>7</sup> – Harry Percy Lindley (born in 1882)<sup>8</sup> and Lizzie May L. (born in 1884)<sup>9</sup> – were born near Atcham, Shropshire. Then the family moved to Birmingham, where they had seven more children – Alfred Seymour Lindley (born in December 1886),<sup>10</sup> Arthur James Lindley., Dorothy Ellen (born in October 1891),<sup>11</sup> Daisy Louisa (born in October 1893),<sup>12</sup> Sidney Lindley (born in about 1896),<sup>13</sup> Jesse Lindley (born in about 1897),<sup>14</sup> and Hilda Marjorie (born in February 1904).<sup>15</sup> They had two other children who died in childhood<sup>16</sup> - one was Edith Gladys (born in 1901 and died the same year)<sup>17</sup> but the identity of the second was not found.

Arthur's father was a stationary engine driver.<sup>18</sup> In 1911, his father and mother were living, with five of his siblings at 81 Couchman Road, Aston, Birmingham. Arthur had already enlisted in the army – he was a Gunner with the 96<sup>th</sup> Company of the Royal Garrison Artillery, serving in Malta.<sup>19</sup> Although he was in the army in 1911, his military service during the Great War probably did not begin until at least 1916.<sup>20</sup>

During the war, he served with the 20<sup>th</sup> Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. The Royal Garrison Artillery was one element of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Equipped with heavy Howitzer guns firing large calibre shells in a high trajectory, they were deployed behind the front line, tasked with destroying enemy artillery, supply routes, railways and stores.<sup>21</sup>

On 24 July 1918, he was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with bullet wounds that penetrated his chest and left arm. They were caused by an accident. He died the next day, at the age of 28, and was buried the following day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row F, Grave 40) with the chaplain R. L. Brydges presiding. Chaplain Brydges was replacing Chaplain J. K. Tibbits, who had left on leave a week earlier.<sup>22</sup> Arthur was a member of the Church of England. His mother, who was then living at 41 Miller Street in Aston, was notified of his death.

The day that he was admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS, there were 108 admissions and Arthur was one of 39 to die at that CCCS in July.<sup>23</sup> Most of the over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery died at one of the nearby clearing stations.<sup>24</sup> This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

Arthur was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>25</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Arthur J. Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Sub-registration district: Duddeston, ED, institution, or vessel: 38, Piece: 2871, Folio: 112, Page Number: 5, Household schedule number: 26
- <sup>2</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Arthur James Hedley Biggs, Reference Number: DR041, Archive Roll: 646
- <sup>3</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Alfred Seymour Lindley Biggs, Reference Number: DR041, Archive Roll: 646
- <sup>4</sup> Alfred birth
- <sup>5</sup> "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Henry Biggs, Registration district: Oswestry, Sub-registration district: Knockin, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Household schedule number: 44, Piece: 2778, Folio: 20, Page Number: 8
- <sup>6</sup> "1871 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Sarah Lindley, Registration district: Atcham, Sub-registration district: St. Mary, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Household schedule number: 63, Piece: 2769, Folio: 38, Page Number: 12
- <sup>7</sup> All the sons in the family had, as a middle name, their mother's maiden name, Lindley.
- <sup>8</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Harry Percy L. Biggs, Registration district: Atcham, Inferred County: Shropshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 664
- <sup>9</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Lizzie May L. Biggs, Registration district: Atcham, Inferred County: Shropshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 678
- <sup>10</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," entry for Alfred Seymour Lindley Biggs
- <sup>11</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Dorothy Ellen Biggs, Reference Number: DR031, Archive Roll: 673
- <sup>12</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Daisy Louisa Biggs, Reference Number: DR031, Archive Roll: 673
- <sup>13</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Sydney Lindley Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Inferred County: Warwickshire, Volume: 6d, Page: 296
- <sup>14</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Jesse Lindley Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Inferred County: Warwickshire, Volume: 6d, Page: 372
- <sup>15</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Hilda Marjorie Biggs, Reference Number: DR031, Archive Roll: 674
- <sup>16</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Sarah Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Registration District Number: 385, Sub-registration district: Erdinton, ED, institution, or vessel: 32, Piece: 18351
- <sup>17</sup> "Birmingham, England, Baptisms, 1813-1912," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Edith Gladys Biggs, Reference Number: DR031, Archive Roll: 674. Although she was baptised Edith Gladys, her birth and death records show her as Edith Gertrude. "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Edith Gertrude Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Inferred County: Warwickshire, Volume: 6d, Page: 353; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Edith Gertrude Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Inferred County: Warwickshire, Volume: 6d, Page: 236
- <sup>18</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Arthur James L. Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Sub registration district: Aston Manor, ED, institution, or vessel: 52, Piece: 2435, Folio: 127, Page Number: 8; "1901 England Census," entry for Arthur J. Biggs; "1911 England Census," entry for Sarah Biggs
- <sup>19</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 13 June 2015), entry for Arthur James Biggs, Registration district: Aston, Registration District Number: 641, ED, institution, or vessel: Malta, Piece: 34985
- <sup>20</sup> He was not awarded the 1914-15 Star, which was given for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915. "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 June 2015), entry for Arthur J. Biggs

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<sup>21</sup> “20th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery,” The Wartime Memories Project - The Great War (<http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/rga20siegebty.php>; accessed 13 June 2015)

<sup>22</sup> “War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31,” *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)

<sup>23</sup> “War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31”

<sup>24</sup> “Pernes British Military Cemetery” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

<sup>25</sup> “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920,” entry for Arthur J. Biggs