

## 15: Alfred Crawford

### Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Alfred Crawford

Rank: Private Recorded by the CWGC as Driver

Battalion / Regiment: "A" Bty. 168th Bde., Royal Field Artillery

Service Number: 43355 Date of Death: 07 June 1918 Age at Death: 32

Buried / Commemorated at: Doullens Communal Cemetery Extension No. 2, Doullens, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of Amos and Anne Crawford; husband of Elizabeth Crawford, of 13, Victoria St., Tarporley, Cheshire. Native of Kelsall, Chester

Alfred Crawford lived at Leighton Cottages, Neston. He left a wife and five children.

It is probable that Alfred Crawford was the son of labourer Amos and Ann Crawford who, in the 1891 census, were recorded as living at Outwood Common, Tarvin. In that record the family were living with Amos's widowed father, joiner James Prescott (64) and Alfred was the third of six children. In the census Alfred is recorded, as are 4 of the other children, as having been born in Tarvin; the other child, Mary (8), was born at Delamere. The birth of an Alfred Crawford was registered in the Chester district in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1886.

It is then difficult to trace Alfred although, in 1901, aged 15, it appears that he was a horseman on the farm of Peter and Sarah Frith at Organsdale, near Kelsall. This census records that Alfred was born at Willington, the area between Tarvin and Delamere.

Alfred married Elizabeth Woodcock at St Helen's Church, Tarporley, in the first quarter of 1910 and in the 1911 census they are recorded as living with Elizabeth's parents, William & Martha Woodcock, at Market Court, Tarporley. It appears probable that Alfred & Elizabeth moved to Neston not long after this census, possibly as a labourer for Neston Colliery (although no definite connection to the colliery has been established).



It is believed that, in addition to Olive, Alfred and Elizabeth had the following children:

James and Ruth	born July / September 1911
Amy	born late 1912
Edith	born April / June 1915

In the transcript of "Soldiers died in the Great War 1914-1919" it is noted that Alfred was born at *Weston*, Cheshire (probably meaning *Neston*, although he was actually born at Tarvin/Kelsall) that he was a driver with the Royal Regiment of Artillery Royal

Horse and Royal Field Artillery and that his date of death was 6 June 1918, the day before the 'official' date. The "Medal Index Cards Transcription" gives his rank as Bombardier with the Royal Field Artillery.

In the 1911 census William is recorded as having been born at Tiverton and Martha at Utkinton - both are small settlements near Tarporley, east of Chester.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.														
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 Head of Family.	AGE (on Birthday) and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.					PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.			BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.	
			State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Children born alive to previous Marriage. (If less than one year write "under one year" in Column 7.)	Total Children born alive.	Children who have Died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employer, Worker, or Working on Own Account.				Whether Working at Home.
1	William Woodcock	Head	56	Married	25	11	6	5	Labourer General		Woker	Tiverton	British subject by parentage.	
2	Martha Woodcock	Wife	54	"	35	14	6	8				Utkinton	"	
3	Jessie Woodcock	Daughter	16	Single					General Servant (Domestic)		0	Tarporley	"	
4	John Woodcock	Grand Son	5	Single					School			"	"	
5	Alfred Crawford	Grand Son	24	Married	1	1	0	0	Labourer General		Woker	Kelsall	"	
6	Elizabeth Crawford	Daughter	22	"	1	1	0	0				Tarporley	"	
7	Olive Crawford	Daughter	Months 11	Single								Tarporley	"	
(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)														
I certify that— (1) All the signs on this Schedule are entered in the proper columns. (2) I have counted the males and females in Column 2 and 3 respectively, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons. (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have compared all entries on this Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous. Initials of Enumerator: <i>WJ</i>														
(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 (Room, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count sanitary, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor washhouse, office, shop. I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief. Signature: <i>William Woodcock</i> Postal Address: <i>Market Court, Tarporley</i>														

1911 census – Market Court, Tarporley

William Woodcock	56	labourer, general	born Tiverton
Martha	56		born Utkinton
Jessie	16	general servant (domestic)	born Tarporley
John	5	grandson	born Tarporley
Alfred Crawford	24	labourer, general	born Kelsall
Elizabeth	22		born Tarporley
Olive	11 months		born Tarporley

Alfred and Elizabeth had been married for one year and Olive was then their only child.

WAR ITEMS.—Deep regret was felt in Neston when it became known that two more of our local men have paid the supreme sacrifice for their country. Driver Alfred Crawford R.F.A., of Leighton Cottages, Neston, joined the forces as soon as war was declared, and had been on active service about two years when he received the wounds which proved fatal. Driver Crawford leaves a widow and five children, to whom the greatest sympathy is extended.—Driver William Prosser died from gas shell poisoning in France. Driver Prosser joined the Cheshire Re-

**DELAMERE.**  
DIED OF WOUNDS.—The Parish Magazine states: We are sorry to learn that Bdr. Alfred Crawford (R.F.A.) died from wounds in France on June 7. The family are old parishioners of Delamere, but Bdr. Crawford has been living at Neston for some time. He leaves five young children, the oldest of whom is eight. All will deeply sympathise with his wife and family in their sad loss.

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 3 August 1918

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 27 July 1918

## NESTON SOLDIER'S DEATH FROM WOUNDS.

News has been received of the death from wounds received in action of Driver Alfred Crawford, R.F.A., of Leighton Cottages, Neston. He was a native of Delamere, but had been resident in Neston about eight years. He offered his services as soon as war was declared, and had been on active service about two years and was expecting his leave when he received the wounds which unfortunately proved fatal. The sad intimation was conveyed to his wife in a letter from the chaplain, stating that he had been admitted to the hospital suffering from bad shell wounds in the abdomen, and although hopes were entertained of his recovery and everything possible was done for him, he passed away very quietly and was buried with full military honours in a cemetery near by. He added that Driver Crawford had done his duty and done it well, and expressed heartfelt sympathy with her and her five children in their bereavement.

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regt. No.
CRAWFORD.	R. F. A.	Bomber	43355
Alfred.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	R.F.A./141	14143	Dead. 7. 6. 18.
BRITISH	"	"	
STAR	"	"	
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914 - 1920

Birkenhead News – Saturday 20 July 1918

Transcription:

News has been received of the death from wounds received in action of Driver Alfred Crawford R.F.A. of Leighton Cottages, Neston. He was a native of Delamere, but had been resident in Neston about eight years. He offered his services as soon as war was declared, and had been on active service about two years, and was expecting his leave when he received the wounds which unfortunately proved fatal. The sad intimation was conveyed to his wife in a letter from the chaplain, stating that he had been admitted to the hospital suffering from bad shell wounds in the abdomen, and although hopes were entertained of his recovery and everything possible was done for him, he passed away very quietly and was buried with full military honours in a cemetery near by. He added that Driver Crawford had done his duty and done it well and expressed heartfelt sympathy with her and her five children in their bereavement.

The CWGC records that Alfred Crawford was serving with the "A" Battery the 168<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, when he died; this, presumably, was the CLXVIII Brigade which, from early 1916, was part of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division.

The *Chester Chronicle* noted that Alfred had attested on the outbreak of war, although this cannot have been with the 168<sup>th</sup> Brigade RFA as this was not formed until April-May 1915:

*In 1915, over eight hundred men were recruited for the 168<sup>th</sup> Brigade Royal Field Artillery, most of them during May. The Brigade's four batteries were sent to four areas, the 'A' Battery being based in Huddersfield (the 'Huddersfield Battery').*

*They started out training in their own areas, and moved to Ripon for further training at brigade level in July 1915.*

*Their next move was to Salisbury Plain where the weather conditions were very bad, and the ground soon turned to mud. The horses did not have sufficient rugs to protect them and they died at an alarming rate, but the health of the men remained quite good.*

*In December 1915 they did extremely well in competition at Larkhill and many were given leave at Christmas. On Boxing Day the men received telegrams recalling them and on December 27*

they took the train to the coast and sailed for France on the SS Inventor, arriving at Le Havre the same day. After three days in billets they went into action at Meaulte, where they stayed until 19 January 1916 when they moved to Warloy.

[Adapted from: <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/topic/97359-royal-field-artillery/>]

Four RFA batteries <sup>1</sup> were in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division and each carried 2,816 shrapnel rounds for their 18-pounder field guns plus 27,110 rounds of small arms ammunition. Additionally, the Brigade Ammunition Column carried a further 1,216 shrapnel rounds and 424,000 rounds of small arms ammunition.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Division deployed to the Somme, The Battle of the Somme starting on 1 July 1916 being their first major engagement, their specific objective being the village of Thiepval.

However, in early June 1918, when Alfred was injured by a shell and subsequently died, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division does not appear to have been involved in any significant conflict and it is possible that Alfred was injured by the shelling which took place on a day-to-day basis. Whilst no details are known it is possible that Alfred Crawford died of wounds at the No. 3 Canadian Stationary Hospital at Doullens in Picardie in N. France.

714140	57043 7	Crawford Alfred	R.F.A. 61st Bde Gnr. France 43355	7.6.18 Wounded No 1 7.18.	11 19 10	11	19	10	9mo 10. 18	4. 10. 18	Wid. Elizabeth 11 19 10 & children
				WAR GRATUITY. 1920. 15-9-19 Transfer 667 Regd. Paper 2/2035 (297) Serial No. 27234	13	10					
				11-12-19 2 Elizabeth							

A. F. W. 5070 SENT  
DATE 1 JUL 1918

#### Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid.

Alfred Crawford had accrued a credit of £11 19s 10d and this was received by his widow Elizabeth. Elizabeth received also the £13 10s War Gratuity.

The total payment, £25 9s 10d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £3900 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

Following Alfred's death, nothing is known of his family.

<sup>1</sup> The others were : 155 Brigade (CLV Brigade) RFA ; 161 Brigade (CLXI Brigade) RFA ; 164 (Howitzer) Brigade (CLXIV Brigade) RFA