

55: Alfred Lawton

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

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

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: Army Service Corps 179th Coy. 19th Div. Supply Col.

Service Number: M2/032814

Date of Death: 04 August 1915

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Terlincthun British Cemetery, Wimille, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France

Additional information given by CWGC: None

Alfred Lawton was the son of ship's carpenter Alfred and Mary Lawton of Parkgate and the older brother of Raymond Frederick Lawton (born 11 June 1884) who also died in the war (see entry [56: Raymond Frederick Lawton](#), below).

Mary Alethea Jones married Alfred Lawton snr in Neston Parish Church on 23 March 1879, Alfred gave his occupation as ship's carpenter and his address as 'the Collieries' and it was recorded that he was of 'full age'. His father, William Lawton, was also a carpenter. Mary (also of 'full age') recorded that her father, Thomas Jones, was a saddler.

Alfred, their first child, was born in Parkgate and baptised at Neston Parish Church on 29 September 1882. In the 1891 census the family (Alfred Lawton snr was not with the family and has not been found elsewhere in the 1891 census) was living with Mary's father, Thomas Jones, in Parkgate:

Thomas Jones	Head	M	72	Retired Saddler			
Mary A. Lawton	Daughter	F	36				
Lucy Paulington	Boarder	F	24	Knitting Machinist	X		
William Jones	Son	M	26	Pawnbroker's Assistant	X		
Sarah Jones	Grandchild	F	12				
Alfred Lawton	Grandchild	M	8				
Raymond Lawton	Grandchild	M	6				
Arthur Lawton	Grandchild	M	3				
Mary A. Lawton	Grandchild	F	1				

1891 census (extract) – Parkgate

Thomas Jones	72	retired saddler	born Neston
Mary A. Lawton	36	daughter	born Neston
Lucy Paulington	24	boarder, knitting machinist	born Hodnet, Shropshire
William Jones	26	son, pawnbroker's assistant	born Neston
Sarah Jones	12	grandchild	born Neston
Alfred Lawton	8	grandchild	born Neston
Raymond Lawton	6	grandchild	born Neston
Arthur Lawton	3	grandchild	born Neston
Mary A. Lawton	1	grandchild	born Neston

By the time of the 1901 census Alfred had become an apprentice electrician and the family was in their own home in Parkgate:

Alfred Lawton	Head	47	✓	Ships Carpenter		Neston, Cheshire
Mary A. Do	Wife	46	✓			Do
Alfred Do	Son	18	✓	Apprentice to Electrician		Parkgate, Cheshire
Raymond Do	Son	16	✓	Do to Blacksmith		Do
Arthur Do	Son	13	✓			Do
Mary Do	Daughter	11	✓			Do
Albert Do	Son	4	✓			Do

1901 census (extract) – Parkgate

Alfred Lawton	47	ship's carpenter	born Neston
Mary A.	46		born Neston
Alfred	18	apprentice to electrician	born Parkgate
Raymond	16	apprentice to blacksmith	born Parkgate
Arthur	13		born Parkgate
Mary	11		born Parkgate
Albert	4		born Parkgate

Raymond joined the 46th Bn. Canadian Infantry (Saskatchewan Regiment) and was killed in action in France on 27 September 1918 (see the following entry).



SS Dominion [http://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=domip]

For reasons now unknown, the family emigrated to Canada in March 1904, sailing from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia aboard the SS *Dominion* and arriving in Canada on 25 March. The *Dominion* was built in 1894 at Belfast by Harland & Wolff and was used almost exclusively by

the Dominion Line for emigration from Liverpool to various ports on the Atlantic seaboard of North America. During WW1 the ship was requisitioned as a store and supply ship and in 1919 was converted to a cargo ship before being scrapped in 1922.

At the beginning of the 20th century, emigration to the United States of America and to Canada was encouraged both by the British government and by the governments of North America. Canada, as a British colony, was an especially popular destination. Cities such as London were over-crowded and the idea was that the Canadian economy would be boosted by the influx of workers, thus creating demand for British-made products. For Canada, the period between the turn of the century and 1913 involved years of hope and vision. The population increased by more than a third, from 5.3 million to 7.2 million, thanks to immigration. Vast stretches of the Prairies were settled, two transcontinental railways were built and industrial production increased dramatically. Prospects for continued growth began to dim, however, in 1913 (the peak of immigration) and the country started to slide into a severe depression. Unemployment figures soared, especially in urban areas.

No. of Passengers	Number of Railway Order.	Amount of Cash. To be filled in by Immigration Agent at Port of Landing.	NAME OF PASSENGER.	Age of Adults.		Children under 14 years of age.	ABLE TO		Married or Single.	Profession, Occupation or Calling of Passengers.	Nation or Country of Birth.	Countries in British Isles from which Passengers came.	Births at Sea.	Deaths at Sea.	Place of ultimate destination of Passengers excepting "Tourists and returned Canadians," who are to be so described.
				Male.	Female.		Read.	Write.							
34/55 65			Alfred Lawton	✓ 50	✓	✓	✓	✓	M	Carpenter Farmer	Cheshire	Cheshire			Broadview
			Mrs	✓	✓ 48	✓	✓	✓	M	Wife	Cheshire	Cheshire			Cheshire
			Alfred	✓	✓ 6	✓	✓	✓	S	Child	Cheshire	Cheshire			Cheshire
			Mary	✓	✓ 13	✓	✓	✓	S	Child	Cheshire	Cheshire			Cheshire
			Albert	✓	✓ 20	✓	✓	✓	S	Carpenter	Cheshire	Cheshire			Cheshire
			Raymond	✓	✓ 19	✓	✓	✓	S	Youth Farmer	Cheshire	Cheshire			Cheshire
			Arthur	✓	✓ 16	✓	✓	✓	S	Youth Farmer	Cheshire	Cheshire			Cheshire

Passenger List – SS Dominion [Liverpool – Halifax, Nova Scotia, March 1904] (extract)

Alfred Lawton	50	carpenter farmer	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview
Mrs Lawton	48	wife	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview
Alfred	6	child	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview (could not read or write)
Mary	13	child	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview (could read and write)
Albert	20	carpenter	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview
Raymond	19	youth farmer	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview
Arthur	16	youth farmer	born Cheshire	Place of ultimate destination : Broadview

On this list, two names – Albert and Alfred – have been transposed; Albert would have been 6 and it was Alfred jnr who was the carpenter, aged 20.

[Emigration to Canada, 1902-1913 <http://personal.ph.surrey.ac.uk/~phs1df/genealogy/Canada>]

For reasons again unknown the family determined that they would establish their new home at Broadview (homestead NW22-15-5-W2), a town about 95 miles east of Regina in Saskatchewan (although, in 1904, the town was in the North West Territories - the Province of Saskatchewan being formed the following year). Interestingly, a Thomas Lawton (born April 1880) had emigrated to Broadview in 1901, although he appears not to have been a close relative of Alfred Lawton snr. Broadview got its name during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1882 when this was the west end of rail and the only "view" was a vast expanse of prairie.



Main Street, Broadview, in 1908

Alfred's Service Records have not been located but it is known that he was born in Parkgate and lived in Birkenhead. In the 1911 census he is recorded as a visitor, aged 28, single to William Jones (45), a lodging house keeper at 'Sunset House', Parkgate. Alfred's occupation was domestic motor driver and William Jones was his uncle - his

mother's brother - who, living in the same household as the Lawtons in the 1891 census, was then recorded as a pawnbroker's assistant. It appears that Alfred had, at this time, returned from Canada to England and it is known that in late 1911 he married Sarah Elizabeth Rose Clary at St Paul's Church, Tranmere, and that a son, Kenneth Raymond Lawton, was born in late 1912 in Neston. Sarah, who was 31 in 1911 (born Bromborough), was a daughter of domestic gardener Mark and Mary Ann Clary of Higher Tranmere.

All that is known for certain of Alfred's military service is that he enlisted in Chester and, when he died of pneumonia, was serving with the Army Service Corps 179th Coy. 19th Div. Supply Col., a Mechanical Transport Company providing supplies to the frontal areas.

Soldiers can not fight without food, equipment and ammunition. In the Great War, the vast majority of this tonnage, supplying a vast army on many fronts, was supplied from Britain. Using horsed and motor vehicles, railways and waterways, the ASC performed prodigious feats of logistics and were one of the great strengths of organisation by which the war was won.

The 179th Company was formed in January 1915 for the 14th (Light) Division, but soon transferred to 18th (Eastern) Division and later the 34th Division.

Each Division of the army had a certain amount of motorised transport allocated to it, although not directly under its own command. The Divisional Supply Column Companies were responsible for the supply of goods, equipment and ammunition from the Divisional railhead to the Divisional Refilling Point and, if conditions allowed, to the dumps and stores of the forward units. Used, of course, where loads were heavy. A Company initially comprised 5 officers and 337 other ranks of the ASC, looking after 45 3-ton lorries, 16 30-cwt lorries, 7 motor cycles, 2 cars and 4 assorted trucks for the workshop and stores of the Supply Column itself.

The British Army was already the most mechanised in the world when the Great War began, in terms of use of mechanical transport. It maintained that leadership, and by 1918 this was a strategically important factor in being able to maintain supply as the armies made considerable advances over difficult ground.

All Mechanical Transport Companies were part of the Lines of Communication and were not under orders of a Division, although some (unusually known as Divisional Supply Columns and Divisional Ammunition Parks) were in effect attached to a given Division and worked closely with it. Those in the Lines of Communication operated in a wide variety of roles, such as being attached to the heavy artillery as Ammunition Columns or Parks, being Omnibus Companies, Motor Ambulance Convoys, or Bridging and Pontoon units.

[Italicised text from: *The Long, Long Trail : The British Army in the Great War* <http://www.1914-1918.net/>].

It is quite possible that Alfred was serving as a driver when he died, but all that is known is that he died of pneumonia exactly one year after Britain declared war on Germany and very shortly after he had arrived in France. It is quite possible, therefore, that he never saw active service.

A brief, somewhat florid, mention was made in the *Chester Courant*:

It seems but yesterday that a healthy youth of joyous countenance was bidding good-bye to his friends ere taking up duties on transport work abroad. He went in buoyant spirits. "I've no right to be here when I can be more useful there," was his firm decision. Separation meant much to him. He left behind a young wife and baby son of marked intelligence, to whom he was devoted. They are now bereaved. A few days on the Continent and pneumonia claimed him. His father, Mr. Lawton, a captain of the seas, was well-known when in residence at Parkgate. The family emigrated to Canada, but Alf returned, married, enjoyed his post of employment with Miss Ward, and was the pleasant friend of all who knew him intimately. He is now with those of whom we talk softly, yet proudly, and the district acclaims him on the roll of honour. It was not destined that he should fall by shell or bullet, but he died in the cause of his country. Charming letters from

NESTON AND PARKGATE WAR ECHOES (extract)

It seems but yesterday that a healthy youth of joyous countenance was bidding good-bye to his friends ere taking up duties on transport work abroad. He went in buoyant spirits. "I've no right to be here when I can be more useful there," was his firm decision. Separation meant much to him. He left behind a young wife and baby son of marked intelligence, to whom he was devoted. They are now bereaved. A few days on the Continent and pneumonia claimed him. His father, Mr Lawton, a captain of the seas, was well-known when in residence at Parkgate. The family emigrated to Canada, but Alf returned, married, enjoyed his post of employment with Miss Ward, and was the pleasant friend of all who knew him intimately. He is now with those of whom we talk softly, yet proudly, and the district acclaims him on the roll of honour. It was not destined that he should fall by shell or bullet, but he died in the cause of his country.

Chester Courant - Wednesday 1 September 1915

[Note: The identity of 'Miss Ward' is unknown]

Alfred Lawton was buried at Terlincthun British Cemetery on the northern outskirts of Boulogne.

The first rest camps for Commonwealth forces were established near Terlincthun in August 1914 and during the whole of the First World War, Boulogne and Wimereux housed numerous hospitals and other medical establishments. The cemetery at Terlincthun was begun in June 1918 when the space available for service burials in the civil cemeteries of Boulogne and Wimereux was exhausted. It was used chiefly for burials from the base hospitals...

[Source: <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=2175793&CScn=Terlincthun+British+Cemetery&>]

Although the Lawtons have not been found in any earlier census, the 1916 census of Saskatchewan (began 1 June 1916 - this was 10 months after Alfred jnr died in France) shows only the two youngest sons living in the household in Broadview:

Alfred Lawton	farmer (own account)	61	born England
Mary Ann Lawton		60	born England
Arthur Lawton	son, labourer	28	born England
Albert Lawton	son, labourer	18	born England
Alexander Gordon Medley	lodger, farm labourer	54	born England
Johann Funk	lodger, farm labourer	14	born Germany

Somewhat oddly, although Alfred, Arthur and Albert Lawton are all recorded as having emigrated to Canada in 1904, Mary Lawton's date of immigration is recorded as 1909. Additionally, the census notes that both Arthur and Albert were in the Canadian military service, presumably as reservists.

Sarah Elizabeth Rose Lawton, Alfred's widow, did not remarry and she died in Lancaster in late 1956, aged 77.

Nothing further is known of Alfred and Sarah's son, Kenneth R. Lawton.

166955/2804, Lawton Alfred A.S.C. B.R.#. 4. 8. 15 Woollool 10/15 2 4 7. 2 4 7 M. 6 1/14 19. 1. 15. Mid = Sublyta Sarah R. 2 4 7. 15/8/19 Midsole leg Sarah E. 3 - =

see also 210/384207/16/14. A. J. H. 5070 22 APR 1919

WAR GRATUITY 20/5/19 2027

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. In April 1919 Sarah, Alfred's widow, received £2 4s 7d from the army, representing his unpaid wages and she later received a War Gratuity of £3. The £5 4s 7d she received is approximately equivalent to *labour earnings* (wages) of £790 in 2016.

The war gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men, or their relatives, 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.

(To be rendered in duplicate.) ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS. REGIMENT OR CORPS. ROLL NO. 2263 B. 2263 ORIGINAL

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders 501 30-8-1919 & V. of 16-7-1919 respectively.

On 11/11/18 or on a following date	NAME	Unit previously served with. Regt. Mark in some cases into theatre of war	Theatres of war in which served						Record of disposal of decorations	REMARKS	
			From	To	From	To	From	To			From
M2/032814 Pte. ✓	LAWTON Alfred	R.A.S.C. M2/032814 Private.									Died 4. 8. 15
M2/032815 Cpl. ✓	MALTMAN Harold	R.A.S.C. M2/032815 Corporal.									

R.A.S.C. RECORD OFFICE, WOOLWICH DOCKYARD certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above. 5 MAR 1920 MEDAL SECTION. Signature and mark of Officer certifying. Captain. for Col. /c R.A.S.C. Records.

WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920, British War Medal and Victory Medal (extract)

Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
LAWTON	A.S.C.	Pte	M2/032814

Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	Rasc/1013 23	2263	Died 4. 8. 15
BRITISH	— do	do	
15 STAR	Rasc/7132 109		

Theatre of War first served in (1) France
Date of entry therein 22. 7. 15

As noted earlier, it is likely that Alfred Lawton died very shortly before his 33rd birthday.

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920