

Private Arthur Elson
Regimental Number: 140067
3rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force

born: 2 August 1896 - died: 30 December 1918

Private Arthur Elson, born on 2 August 1896 in Wolverhampton, England, was the son of John and Fanny Elson.¹ His father, John, was born in about 1863 also in Wolverhampton, the son of Joseph Elson.² His mother, the former Fanny Blackham, born in about 1865, was the daughter of Henry Blackham,³ and was baptised at St. Mary's, Wolverhampton on 2 May 1865.⁴ John and Fanny married at St Luke's in Wolverhampton on 14 January 1888. Arthur was one of nine children born to John and Fanny: John Henry (born in about 1888),⁵ Charles (born in about 1889),⁶ Joseph (born in about 1890),⁷ Thomas (born in about 1892),⁸ Selina (Lina) (born in about 1894),⁹ Arthur (born in 1896), George (born in about 1898),¹⁰ Florrie (Florence) (born in about 1900)¹¹ and Fanny (Frances) (born in about 1902).¹²

Arthur's father was an iron galvanizer and "wipper."¹³ Most of the family immigrated to Canada in 1907, settling in Toronto.¹⁴ In 1911, they were living at 499 Eastern Avenue.

Arthur enlisted in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 28 July 1915 in Toronto. He was nearly 19 years old and a tinsmith. He was 5' 8½" tall, had a fair complexion, blue eyes and brown hair and was considered fit for the Expeditionary Force. He was a member of the Church of England, although other records suggest he was Presbyterian.¹⁵

Arthur served in the 3rd Battalion. In late December 1918, the Battalion was stationed in Lind, 65 kilometres south of Cologne, Germany.¹⁶ The 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station was located in Bonn, nearly 40 kilometres north of Lind when Arthur was admitted on 27 December 1918.¹⁷ The day that he was admitted, the 3rd Battalion was on parade in the morning and later preparing a camp for repatriated prisoners.¹⁸ The soldiers had to patrol the area at night because of some trouble between the soldiers and civilians. The 1st CCCS admitted 75 patients that day.¹⁹ Arthur died three days later of appendicitis. It is probably his death that is mentioned in the 1st CCCS war diary – "One case of appendicitis died. This was one of three who came in [with] large suppuration about appendix." ²⁰

He was buried three days later in Poppelsdorfer Communal Cemetery (Grave 2, Plot 1, Row A) with the chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. His father was notified of his death. His body was later exhumed and reburied in the Brussels Town Cemetery (X. 11. 5.).²¹

Three of Arthur's brothers also served in, and survived, the Great War. Charles enlisted on 24 January 1916 in Toronto and served in the 95th (O.S.) Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He survived the war and continued to live in Toronto²² with his wife, Eva May (née Foster),²³ and son, George William (born in 1913).²⁴ He was a tinsmith.

Thomas enlisted on 4 March 1916 and served with the 180th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.²⁵ After the war, he married Lena Thomas in 1919 in Toronto. In 1921, he and his wife were living with the rest of Arthur's family in Toronto.²⁶ Thomas was a sheet metal worker.

George enlisted on 30 August 1915 and served with the 83rd Overseas Battalion.²⁷ George married Henrietta Mary Baxter in 1924.²⁸ He was a leather sorter.

Arthur's father, John, lived in Toronto after the war. In 1921, he was living at 108 Edgewood Avenue with six of his children and a daughter-in-law and a grandchild, Ruth.²⁹ He was working as a night watchman. His brother, John, married Nellie Sproat in 1915³⁰ and had at least one son, Royston, born in about 1920).³¹

Several members of the family are buried in Saint John's Norway Cemetery in Toronto.³² Arthur's father, John, died in 1927; his brother, Charles, in 1937; Arthur Royston Elson (son of John Elson) in 1942; Selina in 1974 and Florrie (née Elson) Pike in 1980.

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¹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 January 2015), entry for Arthur Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Western, ED, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 2672, Folio: 153, Page Number: 18, Household schedule number: 118

² "1901 England Census," entry for Arthur Elson. "Staffordshire marriages," *findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk, accessed 15 April 2015), entry for John Elson, Archive Reference: D3299/2/2, Page: 128, Register Type: Marriage 1837 type, Record set: Staffordshire marriages

³ "Staffordshire marriages"

⁴ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 7 March 2015), entry for Fanny Blackham, FHL Film Number: 1040910, Reference ID: p164 rn1305

⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for John Henry Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 543

⁶ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Charles Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 562

⁷ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Joseph Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 486

⁸ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Thomas Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 557

⁹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Selina Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 569

¹⁰ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for George Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 566

¹¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Florrie Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 561

¹² "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 April 2015), entry for Fanny Elson, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 591

¹³ "1901 England Census," entry for Arthur Elson

¹⁴ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 April 2015), entry for John Elson, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: York East, District Number: 142, Sub-District: Toronto (City, part), Sub-District Number: 20, City, Town or Village: Toronto. However, Arthur's mother, Fanny, does not appear in this census. No other records have been found of her in Canada or the United Kingdom.

¹⁵ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 738

¹⁶ "3rd Bn War Diaries 1918," *The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada Regimental Museum and Archives* (<http://qormuseum.org/the-first-world-war/perpetuated-battalions/3rd-toronto-battalion-canadian-expeditionary-force/3rd-battalion-war-diaries-1918/>; accessed 9 April 2015)

¹⁷ "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)

¹⁸ "3rd Bn War Diaries 1918"

¹⁹ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31"

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 3 December 2015), entry for Elson, Arthur, Service No: 138566

²² "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for Charles Elson, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: Toronto East, District Number: 131, Sub-District: Ward 1, Sub-District Number: 4, City, Town or Village: Ward One

²³ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for Charles Elson, Marriage County or District: York

²⁴ Geo birth

²⁵ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for Thomas Elson

²⁶ "1921 Census of Canada," entry for John Elson

²⁷ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for George Elson

²⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for George Elson, Registration district: York

²⁹ "1921 Census of Canada," entry for John Elson

³⁰ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for John Henry Elson, Registration district: York

³¹ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for Royston Elson, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: York East, District Number: 142, Sub-District: Toronto (City, part), Sub-District Number: 55, City, Town or Village: Toronto

³² *Find a Grave* (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=138942017&ref=acom>; accessed 15 April 2015), entry for John Elson