

Lance Corporal Samuel Read Learmonth[©]

Regimental number: 500419

2nd Army Troops Company, Canadian Engineers

born: 1874–died: 1916

Samuel Read Learmonth was born in Fitzroy Harbour, Carleton County, Ontario, Canada on 28 November 1874, the son of George Learmonth and Ann, née Fraser.¹ (Note that his last name is recorded in multiple references as either Learmonth or Learmouth).

George was born in East Lothian, Scotland, on 9 March 1809,² the son of Alexander Lermont and Margaret, née Pringle. The family emigrated to Canada in 1827³ and settled in Fitzroy Township, Ontario.⁴

In 1856, at the age of 47, George married Ann Fraser (b. 1831)⁵, who was 22 years younger, in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa.⁶ George was a general merchant and a grist and sawmill proprietor in Fitzroy Harbour.⁷ They had eight children, of whom Samuel Read was the youngest. (George was 65 when he was born, and his mother 43). The others were Elizabeth (b. 1857),⁸ George (b. 1859),⁹ Francis (b. 1862),¹⁰ John Fraser (b. 1864),¹¹ Margaret Pringle (b. 1867),¹² Mary (b. 1869),¹³ Alexander (b. 1871),¹⁴ and Jessie (b. 1872).¹⁵

In 1881 Samuel Read, age 7, was attending school and living with his large family.¹⁶ His father was now listed as "Farmer",¹⁷ perhaps because working the grist mill was too much for him at age 72. Indeed, George died the following year, from tubercular congestion of the lungs.¹⁸

In 1890, when Samuel Read was 15, an article in the local newspaper, *The Arnprior Chronicle*, records that "Mr. Read Learmonth, of Fitzroy Harbor, has passed his examination at the Toronto Business College with high honours, and been awarded a first-class diploma for book-keeping, penmanship, and the various other branches which are indispensable to a sound business education. He stood high up in the graduating class, having secured 97 per cent. of the marks in all the examinations. We congratulate Mr. Learmonth on his success, and wish him all manner of prosperity in his future career."¹⁹

Despite this academic success, in 1901 Samuel Read was working as a farmer, and living with his sister Mary,²⁰ his mother having died in 1897.²¹

In September 1915, at age 41, Samuel Read signed up in Ottawa for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.²² His trade was listed as "Farmer" and he was unmarried. He was assigned to the 2nd Army Corps Troops Company of the Canadian Engineers as a sapper.²³ On 2 November 1915 he was promoted to Lance Corporal. Four days later, the 2nd Army Troops Company left Montreal on SS *Scandinavian*, arriving in England on 16 November.²⁴ Then, in January 1916 he and his unit were sent across the English Channel and arrived in France on 18 January. They travelled by train from Le Havre to Bailleul, then marched to Dranoutre.²⁵

In July 1916 the 2nd Army Corps Troops Company of the Canadian Engineers was stationed at Vlamertinghe, about 10 km north of Dranoutre. It was working on building huts, digging communication trenches, and installing wiring.²⁶ On July 16 the Circumstances of Casualty Register, in reference to Lance Corporal Learmouth, records that "At about 8 p.m. on the 16th of July, 1916, when off duty he was attempting various gymnastic exercises at an aerodrome near Arras: he stood

back in a hanger to rest, but almost immediately fell to the ground. He was given First Aid, and taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station where he died of Heart Failure.”²⁷

He was buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, Reference II. E. 16.²⁸ No personal message was added to his headstone.

The cemetery lies in the east end of the town of Bailleul, in the Nord department of the Hauts-de-France region, and contains the remains of 4,344 soldiers from the two world wars.

Lance Corporal Learmonth received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service.

Samuel Read was the only one of his family to serve in World War 1. His brother **Alexander** enlisted in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, in April 1916, but was declared medically unfit less than two months later.²⁹ Two other brothers died before the war, **George** in 1907 from typhoid fever,³⁰ and **Francis** in 1912.³¹

The other brother, **John Fraser**, was listed as Samuel Read’s next-of-kin in his attestation papers, living in Quebec. In 1911 John Fraser was working as a machinist in a cotton mill in Beauharnois, Quebec.³² He died back in Carleton, Ontario in 1928,³³ and was buried in Fitzroy Harbour.³⁴

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¹ “Ontario, Canada Births, 1832–1914,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Samuel Read Learmonth Learmonth [sic]

² “Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for George Lermont [sic]

³ “U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s–1900s,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Alexander Learmonth

⁴ “Canadian Genealogy Index, 1600s–1900s,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for George Learmonth

⁵ “Canadian Headstone Index, 1840–2017,” (<https://canadianheadstones.ca/search-item.html?psid=427898>: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Anne Fraser Learmonth

⁶ Fraser, Roy. *Happy Journey*, (Toronto; Ryerson Press, 1958)

⁷ “Canada, City and Area Directories, 1819–1906,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Geo Learmonth [sic]

⁸ “Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Mrs. Elizabeth Shearer

⁹ “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for George Learmonth

¹⁰ “1911 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Frances Leomin [sic], Province: Ontario, District: Carleton, District number: 61, Sub-district: 3 - Fitzroy, Sub-district number: 3

¹¹ “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for John Fraser Learmonth

¹² “Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1826–1938,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Margaret Pringle Learmonth

¹³ “Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Mary Learmonth

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- ¹⁴ "Canada, World War 1 CEF Personnel Files, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Alexander Learmonth
- ¹⁵ "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Jessie Learmonth, Enumeration district: 83
- ¹⁶ "1881 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 January 2021), entry for Samuel L. Larmouth [*sic*], Province: Ontario, District number: 108, District: Carleton, Sub-district number: I, Sub-district: Fitzroy, Division: 3
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, entry for George Larmouth [*sic*]
- ¹⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for George Learmonth
- ¹⁹ "Personal," *The Arnprior Chronicle* (<https://search.adarchives.org/media/arnprior-chronicle---1890-08-29/arnprior-chronicle---1890-08-29.pdf>), 29 August 1890, p. 1
- ²⁰ "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 22 January 2021), entry for Samuel R. Learmonth, Province: Ontario, District: Lanark (North/Nord), District number: 80, Sub-district: Fitzroy, Sub-district number: 3
- ²¹ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Anne Learmonth
- ²² "Canada, World War 1 CEF Attestation Papers, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 24 January 2021), entry for S. R. Learmonth
- ²³ "Canada, World War 1 CEF Personnel Files, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Samuel Reid Learmouth [*sic*]. Unless otherwise specified, all information about his military service comes from this source.
- ²⁴ "Guide to Sources relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force: Army Troop Companies, Canadian Engineers," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Documents/army%20troop%20companies%20canadian%20engineers.pdf>: accessed 24 January 2021)
- ²⁵ "War Diaries - 2nd Army Troop Company, Canadian Engineers," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/CollectionSearch/Pages/record.aspx?app=fonandcol&IdNumber=2004893&new=-8585900871031545355>: accessed 24 January 2021)
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 24 January 2021), entry for Samuel Read Learmouth
- ²⁸ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 30 March 2020), entry for Lance Corporal S. R. Learmouth
- ²⁹ "Canada, World War 1 CEF Personnel Files, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 25 January 2021), entry for Alexander Learmonth
- ³⁰ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for George Larmouth [*sic*]
- ³¹ "Canada, Find a Grave Index, 1600s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for Francis Learmonth
- ³² "1911 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for John Learmonth, Province: Quebec, District: Beauharnois, District number: 145, Sub-district: 21 - Valleyfield, Sub-district number: 21
- ³³ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 21 January 2021), entry for John Fraser Learmonth
- ³⁴ "Canada, Newspapers.com Obituary Index, 1800s–Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 26 January 2021), entry for John Fraser Learmonth