

SAMUEL DAWSON NAYLOR

1889-1916 Age 26



31st May 1916



Lieutenant 52nd Battalion Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regiment).

Samuel Dawson Naylor was born in Bradford on 7th October 1889. He was the seventh of eight children born to Samuel Smith Naylor, from Northamptonshire, and Jane Campbell of Bradford. Seven of their children survived childhood. The elder Samuel worked successively as a rent and rate collector, a clerk and a shipping agent. However, in the early 1890s the Naylor family spent several years in King County, Nova Scotia, Canada. Samuel had a parallel career as a soldier, although he was never a professional in the British Army. It seems likely that he served with the volunteers in Britain, and in Nova Scotia he held the rank of Captain and Adjutant in the 68th King's County Regiment of the Canadian militia and was present at their Annual Muster at the newly-established Aldershot Camp for three consecutive years (1896-98). The couple's youngest son Arthur was born in Nova Scotia in 1896.

By 1901, the Naylor family were back in Bradford, where Samuel elder was in business as an auctioneer, with his eldest son John William as his assistant. The company of S.S. Naylor & Son, 25 Cheapside, was listed in Kelly's Directory of Bradford in 1912. It was during these years that Samuel Dawson Naylor attended Bradford Grammar School in 1906 and 1907. His academic record in his first year, in Form Third Classical Upper, was not distinguished, as was frequently the case with boys who entered the school later than the majority of pupils. His best subject was Art, in which he came third in the form. However, the Canadian connection had not been severed, for one by one members of the family moved to Port Arthur in the Thunder Bay district of Ontario, on the shores of Lake Superior. Between 1907, the year the younger Samuel left BGS, and 1911, three of his sisters emigrated to Port Arthur, Ontario, and two of them married there. Samuel joined them, and in 1912 his parents crossed the Atlantic with their youngest child. It is possible that only John Naylor stayed in Bradford.

Both Samuel Dawson and Arthur Naylor served in the local militia regiment, the 96th Lake Superior, and so it was natural that when war broke out and Canada pledged its support for Britain, they enlisted in the Canadian Army. Arthur attested in March 1915 when he was 18. His height was 5' 11" and his chest 33". It is not known at present whether he served overseas for in January 1918 he married in Port Arthur. His occupation was given as 'salesman'. His elder brother Samuel was passed fit for over-seas service in October 1915. His occupation was 'Civil Engineer' and he held the rank of Lieutenant. He served with the 52nd Battalion Canadian Infantry which over-wintered in Britain before embarking for France on 20th February 1916. The battalion was part of the 3rd Canadian Division, and it made its first visits to the trenches in March in the Zillebeke area south-east of Ypres. In late May they were holding the line around Sanctuary Wood and Hill 62. The battalion War Diary records that the men were in a *'critical condition owing to prolonged period under constant and heavy shell fire'* and an eight-day tour of duty was reckoned too long. The 31st began with a *'quiet morning'*, however in the afternoon there was a German bombardment. Naylor, who was in reserve with 'D' Company, was killed at 4 p.m. when a German 5.9" shell exploded between two dugouts. He was buried by sandbags.

The 52nd Battalion suffered five dead on 31st May; four of them including Naylor have no known grave and are recorded on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing. Samuel Dawson Naylor was also remembered on his parents' gravestone in Port Arthur, Ontario, where they remained until their deaths.



Acknowledgements:

The photo of Samuel Smith Naylor's grave at St John's Norway Cemetery and Crematorium, Toronto, Ontario, is courtesy of <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=156218002&PIpi=133066909>.

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