

Arthur Oswald SLAWSON



- Born:** 1886, Padstow, Cornwall
- Occupation:** Farm labourer
- Enlisted:** Sometime in 1916 (Conscripted)
- Unit:** 331st Siege Battery, RGA (Territorial Force)
- Rank/number:** Gunner: No.321049
- Death:** Died of wounds, 1st May 1918
- Detail:** Arthur was severely wounded when his battery was shelled during the German Offensive in the Spring of 1918. The 331st Siege Battery was located at Blangy-Tronville near Amiens trying to stem the advance when he was hit by enemy gun-fire. Arthur was taken 25 miles to the 55th Casualty Clearing Station at Longpre-Les-Corps Saint, but died nine days later.
- Age at death:** 33
- Military info:** Arthur did not rush to volunteer, being the only breadwinner for his widowed mother. But by late 1915 recruits were badly needed and in January 1916 conscription was introduced. Arthur was neither married nor in an exempted occupation and was soon called up. He was posted to the Territorial Royal Garrison Artillery and in December that year he joined 331st Siege Battery, one of 14 formed at Prees Heath barracks in Whitchurch, Shropshire. Each battery had 4 of the newly-developed 6-inch howitzers. On 15th May 1917 the 331st SB arrived in France where for six months they served in a variety of Heavy Artillery Groups. On 27th September they joined 69th Brigade, RGA, where they remained until the end of the war. During the Third Battle of Ypres, the 69th Brigade was attached to the Canadian Corps where its guns supported the capture of Passchendaele. Following Russia's exit from the war in late 1917 thousands of German troops were released from the east to take part in a huge Germany offensive in the west. On 21st March 1918 the British Third and Fifth Armies were attacked and with huge odds in their favour of 3-to-1 the Germans made huge gains. Though blocked north of the Somme, they came within 10 miles of the Allied rail centre at Amiens in the south before being halted at Villers-Bretonneux on 24th April. Three days early the 331st SB was badly strafed east of Amiens. A gunner in the battery wrote in his diary: "A very hot time, many gassed and wounded..." Arthur was injured and later died.
- Grave/memorial:** Arthur is buried at Longpre-Les-Corps Saint Military Cemetery, France and commemorated at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and Padstow War Memorial.
- Family info:** Father: Thomas Slawson, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1856. Seaman. Mother: Sarah Sybella Lobb, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1860. Married in 1880 they the couple had two sons, but Thomas died soon afterwards.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com