

**A GORDON HERO.**



**EDWARD LAWSON, V.C.**

This is a portrait of Lance-Corporal Edward Lawson, V.C., of the Gordon Highlanders. At the age of 18, just nine years ago, this young soldier joined the Gordons, in which he served with marked distinction throughout the operations for the relief of Chitral in the spring of 1895. At the storming of the Malakand Pass, another Dargai, he was one of the first to enter a fortified village on the crest of that all but impregnable position; was present at the actions of the Swat and the Panjkora rivers, the capture of Umra Khan's stronghold, and subsequent actions leading to the relief of the be-

leaguered in Chitral Fort. During the campaign on the Punjab Frontier, 1897-98, he was present at every action in which Colonel Mathias's battalion was engaged. Three clasps—"Chitral, 1895," "Punjab Frontier," and "Tirah, 1897-98," adorn his medal ribbon.

At Dargai, during the dash of the Highlanders, many fell—some to rise no more, others to return. Among the latter, at the head of his company, was Lieutenant Kenneth Dingwall. Lawson, although himself wounded, on seeing his officer fall, at once went to his assistance, and, though still within the "fire-swept zone," carried him under cover of a friendly rock, but again returned and performed a similar service for others more severely wounded than himself.

It was for these acts of valour that he was awarded the V.C., which was conferred on him by Her Majesty the Queen. On his return from India in April, 1898, he entered the Reserve, but early in the present year, although holding a lucrative appointment, rejoined the Colours at Edinburgh, where he obtained that first step which we are told leads to a Field-Marshal's baton. Lance-Corporal Lawson is now on the march through the territorial district.

Aberdeen Press and Journal Monday 27th June 1898.

The Queen on Saturday afternoon invested at Windsor Castle a number of officers who had figured conspicuously in the recent Indian North-West Frontier campaign with the Distinguished Order, and at the same time decorated Lieutenant Watson and Private Lawson of the Gordon Highlanders with the Victoria Cross in recognition of their bravery at Dargai.

British Newspaper Archive.

Headstone in Heaton Cemetery



Photo : Barry Lawson

Edward and Ursula enjoying a cup of tea



Photo : Barry Lawson

Edward and Ursula on Holiday in Northumberland Thomas on the Balcony,



Photo : Barry Lawson

Dagger brought back by Edward from the North West Frontier.



Photo : Barry Lawson

Edwards Trench Watch fully restored by grandson Barry.



Photo : Barry Lawson



## "I HAVE NOTHING NOW," SHE SAYS

**ALTHOUGH** it will break her heart to do it, the widow of a Newcastle V.C. may have to sell the coveted medal, "For Valour" . . . because she is left with so little money.

In a neat little room of her house in Parsons Avenue, Walker, Newcastle, Mrs. "Cilla" Lawson, aged 71, told me of this sequel to the death—only a fortnight ago—of her husband, Ned Lawson, V.C.

"When Ned was alive he drew his V.C. pension as well as money from a superannuation fund. On top of that I had my pension.

"Now he is dead his V.C. pension stops, as does his superannuation money, and I am to get only a widow's pension of £3 a week.

"I had a little money, but it all went on the funeral expenses. Now I have nothing," she said.

The neat little woman with greying hair was never able to go to work because of ill-health. And as a private in the Gordon Highlanders, Ned Lawson didn't exactly amass a fortune.

But the V.C. widow is not alone in the world. Her grown-

up children have all pledged their help.

But as one of them told me: "She is a proud, independent old lady."

The citation awarding Ned the V.C. tells how on October 26, 1907, during an attack on the Dargai Heights, Pte. Lawson carried Lieut. K. Dugwall, of the Gordon Highlanders (who was wounded and unable to move) out of heavy fire and subsequently returned and brought in Pte. McMillan.

Ned was himself wounded twice.

### HE WAS A SHY MAN

Ned Lawson, man of courage, was one of the shyest men on Tyneside.

Said his married daughter, Mrs. Audrey Smith, of Beaufort Close, Kenton: "Dad was of a retiring nature, and made no friends. But he loved children and often slipped into his pocket for a penny for them."

"The kids in the neighbourhood called him 'Grandpa Lawson'."

Mrs. Lawson told me: "I am having to consider selling the medal, but I don't want to part with it, for sentimental reasons."

"If the worst comes to the worst I would like his old regiment to have it, for that would be what Ned would have wanted."

Ned Lawson was 22 when he died, and the oldest V.C. in the North. He was born in Blandford Street, Newcastle.



MRS. LAWSON

British Newspaper Archive



MRS. LAWSON

Edward's invitation for the VC reunion 1929.

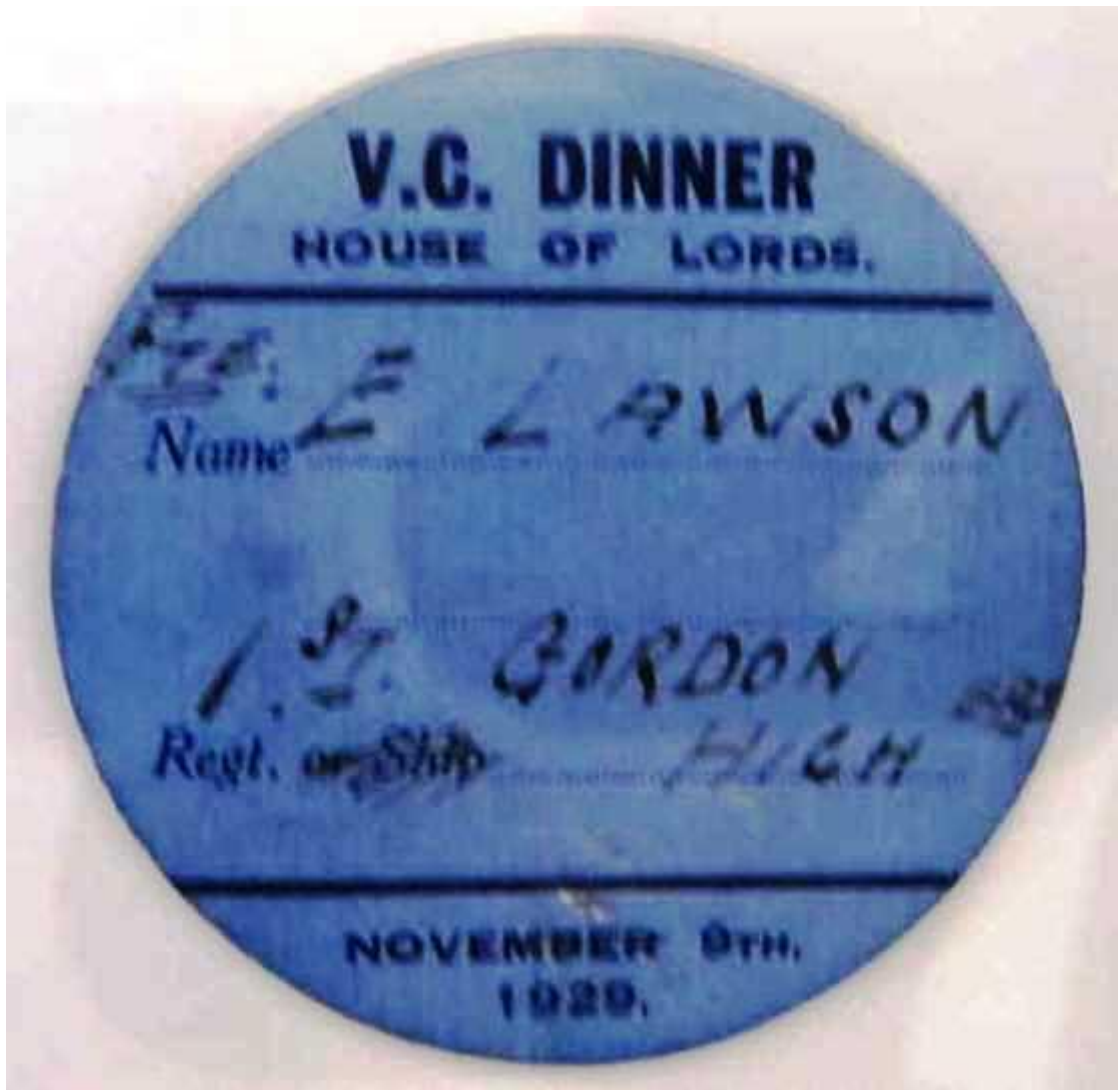
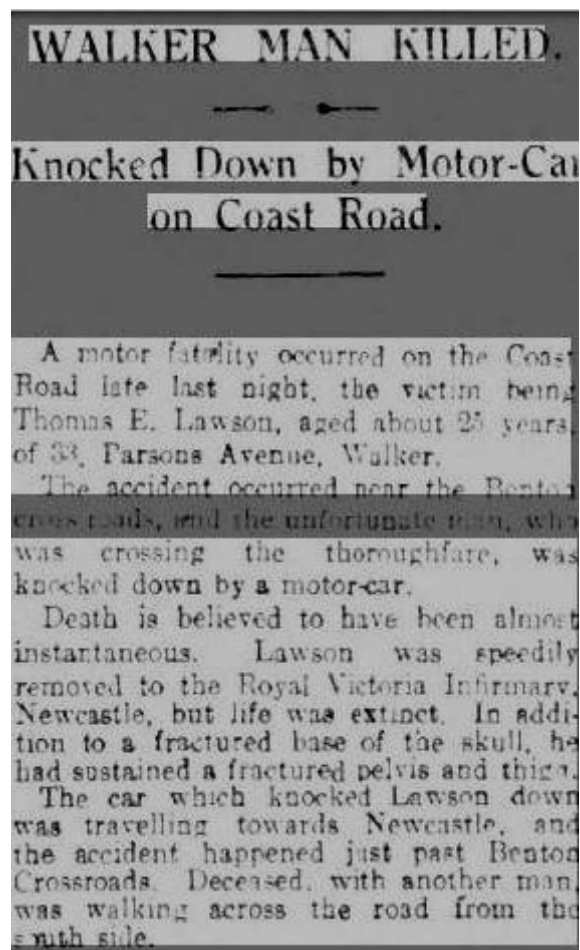


Photo : Barry Lawson





Hartlepool News Daily Mail 16th May 1932.



British Newspaper Archive

VC Reunion Dinner Table 12 at front then 13 behind. 1929.



Northern Daily Mail Friday October 22nd 1897.

**INDIAN FRONTIER WAR.**

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**STORMING OF THE DARGAI  
RIDGE.**

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**THE BRITISH KILLED AND WOUNDED**

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[RIVER'S TELEGRAM.]

Susa, Friday.

Three British officers were killed and five wounded in the storming of the Dargai ridge, and the other casualties amounted in all to 136.

The officers killed were Captain Sedge, of the 2nd Dorsetshire, Captain Smith, of the Derbyshire Regiment, and Lieutenant Lammie, of the Gordon Highlanders. Captain Robinson, of the 2nd Goorkhas, was dangerously wounded; Lieutenant White, of the 3rd Sikhs, Major Macbain, and Lieutenant Dagwell, of the Gordon Highlanders, and Captain Arnold, of the Dorsetshire Regiment, severely wounded.

Among the rank and file the Dorsetshire Regiment had 6 killed and 30 wounded, the Derbyshire Regiment 2 killed and 17 wounded, and the Gordon Highlanders 22 killed and wounded (particulars not known), and the Goorkhas 10 killed and 12 wounded.

Sir William Lockhart and the Second Division reached Karachi yesterday afternoon. Some slight opposition was offered as the force arrived.

The troops are now encamped on the spot where the Meade Expedition encamped in 1891. A halt will be made there to-day and possibly to-morrow, although the enemy are reported to be advancing down the Khairi river.

The Peshawar column is encamped at Bora.

The Kalmuchis, replying to Sir Wm. Lockhart's proclamation, agree to commit no raids and to behave properly. They are willing to surrender any of their tribesmen who transgress this undertaking.

The Chikhal have also offered their submission.

British Newspaper Archive

Newcastle Journal Tuesday 24th May 1898.

## LOOKING AROUND.

### PRIVATE LAWSON, V.C.

In the top list of honours for the Tiralh expedition there appears the name of Private E. Lawson of the Gordon Highlanders. This brave soldier, at the heights of Dargai, carried Lieutenant Dingwall, who was grievously wounded, out of a heavy fire, and thereafter returned and brought in Private Macmillan, Private Lawson being himself wounded in two places. This wearer of the Victoria Cross is a Newcastle man. But there is no way, as far as I know, of locally memorialising the circumstance. Would it not be a fine thing to have erected in some public place, say Eldon Square or the Leazes, a plain pillar, on which might be engraved the names of such local heroes? Were this to be done generally in our towns and villages, I can think of nothing more likely to promote honourable feeling and stimulate love of country.