

Private John Duncan

Regimental number: 42287

1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders

born: about 1900 - died: 17 July 1918

Private John Duncan, born in about 1900, was the son of James and Helen Duncan, of Easter Cash, Strathmiglo, Fifeshire in Scotland.¹ In 1901, John was living at Lochtyside Farm, Markinch in Fifeshire.² His father was a ploughman, born in about 1872 in Kennoway, Fifeshire and his mother, probably the former Helen Smith, was born in about 1870 in Ballingiry, Fifeshire. James and Helen were married in about 1899 in Auchterderran³ and John was probably their first child.

John served in the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders.⁴ It is not known when John joined the Front but, on 15 July 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with a bullet wound that penetrated his left side.⁵ The day that John was admitted to the 1st CCCS had been a quiet day for the 1st Battalion.⁶ However, the day before, hostile artillery and machine gun fire was more active than usual during the day and at night. That day seven Other Ranks were wounded, mostly men from the carrying parties from the support unit to the front line. John may have been one of those wounded, although his admission to the 1st CCCS was only recorded for the following day. He died at the CCCS two days later and was buried the same day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Grave 47, Plot 5, Row E) with the chaplain, A. D. Reid presiding.

John was just 18 years of age when he died. His mother was notified of his death and received the monies owing to him by the army after his death.⁷ He was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).⁸

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¹ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 21 May 2015), entry for Duncan, John, Service No: S/42287

² "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 March 2015), entry for John Duncan, ED: 11, Household schedule number: 9, LINE: 8, Roll: CSSCT1901_144

³ "Statutory Registers Marriages," ScotlandsPeople (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>; accessed 6 June 2015), District Auchterderran, City/County/MR; Fife, Gros Data: 405/00 0049

⁴ The 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station record of his death suggests that he was in the 15th Battalion, however, all other army records indicate that he served in the 1st Battalion.

⁵ "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 628

⁶ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), Regiment or Unit: Gordon Highlanders, Sub Unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 3rd Division, Diary Dates: 1915 Nov 1 - 1916 Dec 31, Piece Description: Piece 1435/1-3: 76 Infantry Brigade: 1 Battalion Gordon Highlanders (1915 Nov - 1919 Apr), Piece Number: 1435

⁷ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 May 2015), entry for John Duncan

⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 May 2015), entry for John Duncan