

**Corporal Walter Gordon Brown©**  
**Regimental Number: 138524**  
**87th Battalion Canadian Infantry (Quebec Regiment)**

**born: 16 October 1881 – died: 16 March 1918**

Walter was born 16 October 1881 in Portsoy, Banffshire, Scotland, to George Brown and Jane Smith.<sup>1</sup> George and Jane had married on 14 December 1867 in New Pitsligo, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

George was born 4 September 1845 in Banff, Scotland, to George Brown and Christian Brodie,<sup>3</sup> and like several of his sons, he was a house painter.<sup>4</sup> George died of a heart attack in Toronto, Ontario, on 17 April 1917<sup>5</sup> while Walter was fighting in the Great War. Jane was born about 1846 in New Pitsligo.<sup>6</sup> She died on 18 June 1931 in Wentworth, Ontario, of a cerebral haemorrhage.<sup>7</sup>

The 11 children of George and Jane were:

- Christina, who was born about 1867 in New Pitsligo.<sup>8</sup> She married John Kellett, a printer, on 22 November 1893 in Toronto, Ontario,<sup>9</sup> and had three children;
- James, who was born on 18 March 1869 in Banff, Banffshire.<sup>10</sup> Like his father, James was a house painter;<sup>11</sup>
- Henry Smith, who was born on 31 October 1870 in Banff, Banffshire.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that Henry preceded his family's immigration to Canada, arriving in Halifax aboard the SS *Nova Scotian* on 2 September 1888.<sup>13</sup> Henry married Catherine Meehan in Toronto, Ontario on 18 January 1894,<sup>14</sup> and they had two children.<sup>15</sup> Like his father, he was a painter, and he died on 31 July 1906 when he fell from a building;<sup>16</sup>
- George, who was born about 1873 in Banff, Banffshire.<sup>17</sup> George, a printer, married Christina Duncan Florence on 26 February 1897 in Toronto, Ontario,<sup>18</sup> and they had three children.<sup>19</sup> George died on 22 January 1946;<sup>20</sup>
- Helen, who was born 12 November 1874 in Fordyce, Banffshire.<sup>21</sup> Helen did not emigrate with her family;
- Charles Innes, who was born on 1 November 1877 in Scotland.<sup>22</sup> Charles married Agnes Johnston on 29 September 1909 in Toronto, Ontario,<sup>23</sup> and had two children.<sup>24</sup> Charles was also a soldier with the Canadian Overseas Expedition Force. He was a plumber, and a private with the 2nd Pioneer Battalion, regimental number 138132. Charles had enlisted on 17 August 1915 in Toronto, and at that time he had a partial upper denture consisting of 11 teeth. On 22 July 1916, Charles was wounded in Ypres by a sniper's bullet. His right patella was fractured, requiring it to be wired. After convalescing, he was deemed unfit for war service, discharged, and returned to Canada.<sup>25</sup> Charles died on 22 May 1943 of colon cancer;<sup>26</sup>
- Jane (Jennie), who was born about 1877 in Scotland.<sup>27</sup> She married William Kellett on 27 March 1900 in Toronto, Ontario [William does not appear to be a brother to Christina's husband John Kellett.]<sup>28</sup> Jane was still alive in 1937 when William died of stomach cancer;<sup>29</sup>
- Margaret (Maggie), who was born about 1879 in Scotland;<sup>30</sup>
- Walter Gordon;
- Joseph Bruce, who was born about 1883 in Scotland.<sup>31</sup> Joseph married Emma Maria Hedderson on 25 February 1910 in Toronto, Ontario.<sup>32</sup> Like his father, he was a painter. Joseph died in 1963 and is buried with his wife in Midland, Ontario;<sup>33</sup>

- Mary, who was born in June 1886 in Scotland.<sup>34</sup> She married Herbert Granville Munro on 23 June 1910 in Toronto, Ontario.<sup>35</sup> Mary and Herbert had two children and the family immigrated to the US in 1928.<sup>36</sup>

Most of the Brown family emigrated from Glasgow, Scotland, aboard the *SS Hibernian*, arriving in Quebec City, Quebec, on 3 June 1890.<sup>37</sup> In 1890 the advertised cost for transatlantic passage averaged about \$75 for first class, \$45 for second class, and \$25 for steerage.<sup>38</sup> Even if they travelled in steerage, that would have been a very great cost for this large family.

Walter married Alice Jane Diment on 4 January 1911 in Toronto, Ontario. He was then 32 and she was 34. Alice's parents were John Diment and Prudence Sheridan.<sup>39</sup>

Walter's attestation form noted that he had Alice's name tattooed on his left arm. He had enlisted with the 75th Battalion, S Company, Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 15 July 1915. He was a painter, of average height with a fair complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. Although he had been married, he identified himself as not being married, and named his mother as his next of kin.<sup>40</sup>

On 28 December 1915 Walter was hospitalized for about a week in Niagara, Ontario, suffering from bronchitis. On 29 March 1916 Walter embarked with his battalion from Halifax on the *SS Empress of Britain*, arriving in England about ten days later. On 17 June 1916 Walter and his battalion were transferred to France. On 23 September 1916 Walter was admitted to Bagthorpe Military Hospital, Nottingham, for gunshot wounds on his left arm. The lower one-third of the humerus was fractured, extending downwards into the elbow. Walter convalesced at the Canada Convalescent Hospital, Hillingdon House, Uxbridge, England, from 3 to 11 January 1917, with excellent results.<sup>41</sup>

Walter was promoted to Corporal on 1 October 1917.<sup>42</sup>

As was permitted, Walter had \$20 of his monthly salary paid to his mother in Canada.<sup>43</sup> Permission was granted to soldiers to assign a portion of their pay to their relatives, that portion not exceeding four-fifths of the monthly amount to a maximum of \$25. In 1914, daily rates of pay for a private were \$1 plus \$.10 for being in the field.<sup>44</sup>

A book by John F. Meek describes one chilling event that Walter would probably have been part of during his tenure with the 75th Battalion:

One raid, pulled on the night of the 28th of February-March 1st [1917], is today referred to as the 'March 1st Gas Attack'. 1700 men of the 54th, 72nd, 73rd and 75th Battalions lined the trenches awaiting the word to go 'OVER THE TOP!' The Staff were afraid that if the wire-cutting torpedoes were employed, the enemy would be alerted. In place of the mechanical wire-cutting devices, clouds of poison gas were to be used to cover the attack.

The tanks of chlorine were opened, and the gas wafted into the gentle breeze. As the men started off, the wind changed and blew the lethal gas back into the Canadian lines. As a result, the attacking Battalions (the 54th and 75th) both lost their Colonels and a total of 687 Canadians were lost. About 35 Germans were captured.<sup>45</sup>

On 15 March 1918, Walter received shrapnel wounds penetrating his right axilla (underarm) and arm, and was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. He died the next day of those wounds.<sup>46</sup>

Walter was buried on 17 March 1918 in the Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Barlin, France, at Plot II, Row E, Grave 31. The extension was commenced by French troops in October 1914, but was taken over by Commonwealth forces in March 1916. In November 1917, Barlin began to be shelled and the hospital was moved back to Ruitz, but the extension was used again in March and April 1918 during the German advance on this front. The extension contains 1,095 Commonwealth burials of the Great War.<sup>47</sup>

In September 1920 Walter's mother received the final instalment of a War Service Gratuity of \$180 as his dependant, and posthumously received the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Memorial Cross for her son's involvement in the Great War.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Walter Gordon Brown, FHL film number: 232629, reference ID: v153-2 p 25

<sup>2</sup> "Scotland Marriages, 1561–1910," *FamilySearch* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for George Brown, Indexing Project (Batch) number: C11147-4, System origin: Scotland-ODM, GS film number: 990818

<sup>3</sup> "Scotland Births and Baptisms, 1564-1950," *FamilySearch* ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for George Brown, Indexing Project (Batch) number: M11908-1, System origin: Scotland-ODM, GS film number: 6035516

<sup>4</sup> "1881 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for George Brown, Enumeration district: 3, Household schedule number: 132, Line: 1, Roll: csct1881\_45

<sup>5</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for George Brown

<sup>6</sup> "1881 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for George Brown, Enumeration district: 3, Household schedule number: 132, Line: 1, Roll: csct1881\_45

<sup>7</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for Brown, Jane (Smith)

<sup>8</sup> "1881 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for George Brown, Enumeration district: 3, Household schedule number: 132, Line: 1, Roll: csct1881\_45

<sup>9</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Christina Brown

<sup>10</sup> "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for James Brown, FHL film number: 6035516

<sup>11</sup> "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for James Brown, Province: Ontario, District number: 132, District: York West, Sub-district: St Albans Ward

<sup>12</sup> "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Henry Smith Brown, FHL film number: 6035516

<sup>13</sup> "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Henry S Brown

<sup>14</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Henry Smith Brown

<sup>15</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Henry S Brown, Province: Ontario, District: Toronto East City, District number: 117, Sub-district: Toronto East City Ward No 2, Sub-district number: B 18

<sup>16</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 23 January 2017), entry for Henry Brown

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- <sup>21</sup> "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Helen Brown, FHL Film Number 6035516
- <sup>22</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Charles Brown, Province: Ontario, District: Toronto East City, District number: 117, Sub-district: Toronto East City Ward No 2, Sub-district number: B 18
- <sup>23</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Charles Innes Brown
- <sup>24</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Charles Brown, Province or territory: Ontario, District: Parkdale, District number: 113, Sub-district: Toronto (City), Sub-district number: 16, City, town or village: Parkdale Toronto
- <sup>25</sup> "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 13 January 2017) entry for Brown, Charles Innes, Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1128 - 52, Item number: 67648, Digitized service file - PDF format: B1182-S052
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- <sup>33</sup> "The Canadian Gravemarker Gallery." *Rootsweb* (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cangmg/ontario/centont/simcoe/midland/lakeview/sect5/a-to-k/page0002.htm>: accessed 24 January 2017), entry for Lakeview Cemetery, Section 5, Midland, Simcoe County
- <sup>34</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Mary Brown, Province: Ontario, District: Toronto East City, District number: 117, Sub-district: Toronto East City Ward No 2, Sub-district number: B 18
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- <sup>36</sup> "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Mary Munro, Indianapolis, Marion, Indiana
- <sup>37</sup> "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 20 January 2017), entry for Walter Brown

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- <sup>39</sup> "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 13 January 2017), entry for Walter Gordon Brown
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- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>44</sup> "Lest We Forget Information Package First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/lest-we-forget/Documents/First-World-War-Information-Package.pdf>: accessed 13 January 2017), Pay and Allowances, page 15
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