

**Private Marcus Calder©**  
**Regimental number: 43769**  
**1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders**

**born: 17 April 1890 - died: 22 May 1918**

Private Marcus Calder was born on 17 April 1890 at 30 minutes after midnight on Church Street in Portsoy, Banffshire, Scotland. He was the son of Marcus and Isabella (nee Flett) Calder.<sup>1</sup> Both his parents were born in Wick, Caithness Shire—his father in about 1858 and his mother about three years later.<sup>2</sup> They married on 29 November 1881 in Banff, Scotland,<sup>3</sup> and Marcus was probably their only son. He had two older sisters: Ann Elizabeth., born in 1876,<sup>4</sup> and Janet,<sup>5</sup> born two years later. In 1891, Marcus Sr. and Isabella were living on Church Street with their three children—Ann, Janet and Marcus—where Marcus Sr. was a printer and publisher.<sup>6</sup>

Two years later, Marcus Sr. and Isabella had a third daughter, born prematurely at 1:45 a.m. on 8 November 1893,<sup>7</sup> but sadly she died exactly four days later—at 1:45 a.m. on 12 November.<sup>8</sup> She died of convulsions and had not lived long enough to have been given a name. To add to the family's sorrow, Isabella also died three days after her daughter. She died at 9 a.m. on 15 November. She had had gastric influenza and pneumonia for two weeks and this, combined with the premature labour nine days earlier, took her life.<sup>9</sup> Marcus was only 3 years old.

Marcus Sr. remarried six years later, marrying Georgina Hamilton Donaldson Edward on 15 July 1897 at 31 St. Catherine Street in Banff—Georgina's home.<sup>10</sup> In 1901, the family was still living on Church Street in Portsoy.<sup>11</sup> Ten years later, Marcus Jr. had joined his father in the printing trade and was a compositor working for a letterpress printer, as was his sister Annie. They may have been working for their father who was a printer and publisher and owned his own business. They were living with Marcus Sr. and Georgina at 36 Church Street.<sup>12</sup> It is not known where Marcus Jr.'s sister was at that time.

Marcus Sr. had an older brother, George, born in about 1850. George, also a printer, and his wife Jessie (nee Mitchell) also had a son Marcus, but sadly he had died at the age of 10 months in 1881.<sup>13</sup> In 1908, George immigrated to Canada.<sup>14</sup> George probably went back to Scotland at some point and then returned with Jessie and several of their children in 1912.<sup>15</sup> The family lived in Toronto<sup>16</sup> and George and Jessie died there in 1934<sup>17</sup> and 1930,<sup>18</sup> respectively. At least three of their sons served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Marcus Jr. enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force about April 1916<sup>19</sup> in Banff.<sup>20</sup> He probably first served with the Machine Gun Corps, (regimental number 69842), but, at some point, he transferred to the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders.<sup>21</sup>

At the beginning of May 1918, the 1st Gordon Highlanders was near Chocques, northeast of Bethune in northern France. It relieved the 1st Royal Scot Fusiliers, about six miles away, near Locon, on 8 May in what was a familiar front line for the soldiers. On 16 May, the battalion was relieved by the 4th Battalion of the Royal Scots and returned to Chocques. There the troops were engaged in routine matters—cleaning up, inspections, pay outs and baths. But, on 19 May, two working parties of 250 men each were sent out to bury cables in the grounds of Hinges chateau, a few miles away. Over the next two days, one party had eight casualties and the other experienced heavy gas bombardment of Hinges and the chateau. By the evening of 20 May, about 120 cases of

gas poisoning had been reported. Nonetheless, the battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Scots because it too had suffered gas attacks, but more severely than Marcus' battalion.<sup>22</sup>

Marcus was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station—about 15 miles away—on 20 May with shrapnel wounds to his back.<sup>23</sup> So perhaps he was in the party that had casualties but did not report a gas attack. He died two days later and was buried in Pernes British Cemetery (Plot 1, Row F, Grave No. 40) with the Canadian chaplain Robert K. Lambert presiding.

His father, whose address was c/o Banffshire Reporter, Reporter Building, 36-42 Church Street, was sent a letter notifying him of his son's death.<sup>24</sup> Marcus Sr. and his daughter Annie received the monies owing to Marcus Jr. from the army upon his death<sup>25</sup> and the bereaved father requested the following inscription for his son's gravestone:

LIFE'S CROWN WELL WON  
BELOVED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM<sup>26</sup>

In May 1918, nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS.<sup>27</sup> There were 115 deaths that month—more than in any of the other three and a half months that No. 1 CCCS was in Pernes. The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.<sup>28</sup>

Marcus was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>29</sup>

Marcus Sr. probably died in Portsoy in 1932.<sup>30</sup>

At least three of Marcus' Canadian cousins served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and one lost his life in the war:

- John Mitchell Calder, born in 1886, was a printer, like this father and uncle.<sup>31</sup> He enlisted in September 1914 and served with the 15th Canadian Battalion (48th Highlanders of Canada). He was appointed acting sergeant in the field in April 1915. He earned the Distinguished Conduct Medal. "His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the DCM for conspicuous gallantry & devotion to duty from [22 April 1915 to 3 May 1915] in carrying messages & maintaining communication under fire." He received shrapnel wounds to his right thigh the following month and was hospitalized for 75 days. He then served on base duty in England for six months. In November 1917, he began a 10-week furlough in Canada and ultimately remained in Canada until he was discharged in November 1918 as being medically unfit for service, due to the partial loss of function of his right leg.
- William Calder, born in 1889, was a clerk when he enlisted in the 48th Highlanders in June 1917.<sup>32</sup> He had previously served for 18 months with the same battalion. He did not go overseas and was demobilized, as a corporal, in March 1919.
- James Alexander Bruce Calder was the youngest of the cousins to enlist. He was born in 1895 and enlisted in the 123rd Battalion (Canadian Pioneers) (regimental number 766781) in December 1915 at the age of 20.<sup>33</sup> He was a grocer and enlisted as a private. He arrived in England in August 1916, proceeded to France in March 1917 and was killed in action in

Belgium nine months later. He died on 11 November 1917—exactly one year before the end of the war.

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- <sup>1</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 17 April 2018) entry for Calder, Marcus, Reference 153/2 26, Registration district name: Portsoy
  - <sup>2</sup> “1891 Scotland Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 April 2018), entry for Marcus Calder, Enumeration district: 3, Household schedule number: 98, Line: 18, Roll: CSSCT1891\_43
  - <sup>3</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 17 April 2018) entry for Calder, Marcus
  - <sup>4</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 17 April 2018) entry for Calder, Anne Elizabeth, Reference 153/2 9, Registration district name: Portsoy
  - <sup>5</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 17 April 2018) entry for Calder, Janet, Reference 153/2 10, Registration district name: Portsoy
  - <sup>6</sup> 1891 census
  - <sup>7</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 17 April 2018) entry for Calder, —, Reference 153/2 47, Registration district name: Portsoy
  - <sup>8</sup> “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 12 April 2018) entry for Calder, —, Reference 147/ A 13, Registration district name: Portsoy
  - <sup>9</sup> “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 12 April 2018) entry for Calder, Isabella, Reference 153/2 44, Registration district name: Portsoy
  - <sup>10</sup> “Statutory Registers–Marriages,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 18 April 2018) entry for Calder, Marcus, Reference 153/2 33, Registration district name: Banff
  - <sup>11</sup> “1901 Scotland Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 23 March 2018), entry for Alexander Samuel, Enumeration district: 2, Household schedule number 153, Line: 7, Roll: CSSCT1901\_45
  - <sup>12</sup> “1911 Scotland Census,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Calder, Marcus, Reference: 153/2 3/ 15, Registration district name: Portsoy, County/City: Banff
  - <sup>13</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 13 April 2018) entry for Calder, Marcus, Reference 147/ 46, Registration district name: Banff; “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 14 April 2018) entry for Calder, Marcus, Reference 147/ 145, Registration district name: Banff
  - <sup>14</sup> “Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 3 July 2018), entry for George Calder
  - <sup>15</sup> “Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 3 July 2018), entry for George F. Calder
  - <sup>16</sup> “1921 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 March 2018), entry for Gep Calder, Province or territory: Ontario, District: Toronto North, District number: 132, Sub-District: Ward 2, Sub-district number: 9, City, Town or Village: Toronto North (Ward 2)
  - <sup>17</sup> “Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1946,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 5 July 2018), entry for George Calder
  - <sup>18</sup> “Ontario, Canada, Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869–1946,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 3 July 2018), entry for Jessie Ann Calder
  - <sup>19</sup> Based on “War Gratuity Calculator” (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); “UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Marcus Calder
  - <sup>20</sup> “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Marcus Calder

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- <sup>21</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 April 2018), entry for Marcus Calder
- <sup>22</sup> "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 April 2018), Regiment or unit: Gordon Highlanders, Sub-unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 3rd Division, Diary dates: 1915 Nov–1916 Dec 31, Piece description: Piece 1435/1-3: 76 Infantry Brigade: 1 Battalion Gordon Highlanders (1915 Nov–1919 Apr), Piece number: 1435
- <sup>23</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 13 April 2018), entry for Calder, M.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 19011929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Marcus Calder
- <sup>26</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 3 December 2017), entry for Calder, Marcus, Service No: S/43769
- <sup>27</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* ([http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G): accessed 15 December 2014)
- <sup>28</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- <sup>29</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 April 2018), entry for Marcus Calder
- <sup>30</sup> "Statutory Registers–Deaths," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 18 April 2018) entry for Calder, Marcus, Reference 153/2 22, Registration district name: Portsoy
- <sup>31</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 3 July 2018) entry for Calder, John Mitchell, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1383 - 18, Item number: 81758, Digitized service file - PDF format: B1383-S018
- <sup>32</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 3 July 2018) entry for Calder, William, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1383 - 48, Item number: 81789, Digitized service file - PDF format: B1383-S048
- <sup>33</sup> "Personnel Records of the First World War," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 3 July 2018) entry for Calder, James Alex Bruce, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1383 - 46, Item number: 81739, Digitized service file - PDF format: B1383-S046