

Private George Crichton[©]
Regimental number: S/21422
1st Battalion, Gordon Highlanders

born: 1899 - died: 20 May 1918

Private George Crichton was born in about 1899¹ in Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland.² His parents were William³ and Isabella⁴ Crichton and they lived in Invergordon, Scotland.⁵

George served with the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders and had enlisted in Inverness,⁶ in about May 1917.⁷ A year later, his battalion was stationed in Chocques, just west of Bethune, in northern France.⁸ On the night of 19/20 May 1918,

[t]wo working parties [of the battalion] of 250 each worked on cable burying in HINGES château grounds. One party lost [a lieutenant] killed and 7 other casualties. The others came in for a gas bombardment of HINGES including the château and grounds. They had about 7 men wounded and [an officer] and 11 others gassed before getting back to billet. The effects of the gas made themselves felt about 8 am and by nightfall about 120 cases have been reported . . .⁹

George was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 20 May with shrapnel wounds and a fracture of his left leg.¹⁰ Perhaps he had been a member of the first working party that was burying cable. He does not appear to have suffered from the gas attack. However, he died of his wounds the same day. He was buried on 21 May in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 1, Row F, Grave 30) with the Canadian chaplain R. K. Lambert presiding. This 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.¹¹

George was one of 370 admissions to No. 1 CCCS on 20 May but, in the whole month of May, a total of nearly 4,000 soldiers were admitted to this station and 115 died.¹²

George's father was his next of kin and was notified of his death. He had the following inscription carved on George's gravestone:

UNTIL THE DAY BREAKS

George was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹³

In 1911, George and his family were probably living at Kilmuir Easter, Ross-shire, where his father was a farm manager. Both his parents had been born in Aberdeenshire—his father in about 1862 and his mother in about 1866. George probably had at least four sisters— Isabella (born in about 1896), Bessie (born in about 1898), Jennie (born in about 1902) and Helen (born in about 1905).¹⁴

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¹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Crichton, George, Service No: S/21422

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- ² "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for George Crichton
- ³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Crichton, George
- ⁴ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for George Crichton
- ⁵ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Crichton, Geo.
- ⁶ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for George Crichton
- ⁷ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for George Crichton
- ⁸ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 April 2018), Regiment or unit: Gordon Highlanders, Sub-unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 3rd Division, Diary dates: 1915 Nov 11–1916 Dec 31, Piece description: Piece 1435/1-3: 76 Infantry Brigade: 1 Battalion Gordon Highlanders (1915 Nov–1919 Apr), Piece number: 1435
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for Crichton, Geo.
- ¹¹ "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- ¹² "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=FIND&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 15 December 2014)
- ¹³ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 April 2018), entry for George Crichton
- ¹⁴ "1911 Scotland census," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 18 April 2018), entry for Crichton, George, Reference: 069/3/4, Registration district: Kilmuir Easter, City/County: Kilmuir Easter