

Lance Corporal Archibald Kerr Boyle[©]
Regimental number: 420022
406th Field (Renfrew) Company, Royal Engineers

born: 1896–died: 23 April 1918

Lance Corporal Archibald Kerr Boyle was the only son of James Boyle and his wife, the former Janet Kerr.¹ His parents had married in Paisley, Renfrewshire, in Scotland in 1893,² and Archibald was born there in 1896.³ His father James, a ship stoker,⁴ probably died soon after his birth.⁵ In 1901, Archibald and his mother were living with Janet's family—her mother Euphemia and her sisters Agnes and Euphemia and her brother Archie—at 16 Seedhill Road in Paisley.⁶

The following year, Archibald's mother remarried. She wed Daniel Robertson Barr, a building inspector,⁷ in Paisley.⁸ Daniel was a widower; his first wife, Isabella Erskin Hamilton, whom he had married in 1881,⁹ died in 1896.¹⁰ They had had at least five children—Daniel Robertson (1882),¹¹ William Hamilton (1886),¹² Mary Hamilton (1891),¹³ Margaret Hamilton (1892)¹⁴ and John Hamilton (1895).¹⁵

In 1911, Janet and Daniel were living in Paisley with three of Daniel's children—William, Margaret and John¹⁶—but Archibald was still living with his grandmother, his aunt Euphemia and his uncle Archie, although they had moved to 21 Whitehead Street, Paisley. Archibald, at the age of 14, was working as a message boy for a grocer.¹⁷

Archibald was educated at Williamsburgh School and was a member of Greenlaw Parish Church and also the Alexander Wilson Lodge of the Oddfellows. He had been employed with Bow, McLachlan & Co.—a marine engineering and shipbuilding company.¹⁸ In 1914, when he enlisted to serve in the Great War, he was an apprentice fitter at Lobnitz & Company, another shipbuilding company that built dredgers, floating docks, fishing boats, tugs and workboats.¹⁹ Thomas Arthur, an engineer with the company, described Archibald as a good apprentice fitter.²⁰

Archibald enlisted in Paisley. He was nearly 19 years old, 5' 8½" tall and living at 3 Williamsburgh in Paisley. He enlisted as a sapper on 15 January 1914 and reported to the Royal Engineer's Drill Hall. He remained in the United Kingdom until 19 December 1915, then left to serve in both Egypt and France.

The 406th Field Company of the Royal Engineers was initially called the Renfrewshire Fortress Royal Engineers and was a Scottish volunteer unit of the British Army created in 1888.²¹ The year after the beginning of the Great War, the unit became the 1/1st Renfrewshire Field Company, a Territorial Force of the Royal Engineers. On 19 December 1915, it embarked at Plymouth and sailed for Egypt as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. Archibald was with the company when it arrived in Port Said on 3–5 January 1916 and was assigned to work on the Suez Canal Defences. In early April 1916, the company received orders to leave Egypt for the Western Front and join the British Expeditionary Force in France. The soldiers embarked at Alexandria on 17 April 1916, arriving in Marseilles on 24 April, joining the 4th Division in May. It remained with that formation until the end of the war.

The company arrived in northern France in time to participate in the Battle of the Somme in early July 1916. During 1917, the company took part in the Battle of Arras and the later stages of the

Third Ypres Offensive. In early 1918, it was defending positions in front of Arras when the second phase of the German Spring Offensive began in March 1918.

It was during this offensive that Archibald was fatally wounded. Just six days before his death, he had been promoted to lance corporal. But, on 23 April 1918, he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to his left eye, left arm and left leg. He died the same day and was buried on 24 April in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 1, Row D, Grave No. 34) with the Canadian chaplain Robert K. Lambert presiding.²²

A letter was sent to his mother, who was living at 3 Williamsburgh at the time.²³ She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.²⁴

Archie was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre). He was not eligible for the 1914–15 Star but was awarded the Territorial Force medal for those who volunteered for service overseas on or before 30 September 1914, had served overseas and had been serving with the Force on 4 August 1914, but did not qualify for the 1914 Star or 1914-15 Star.²⁵

Two of Archibald's step-brothers—the eldest and youngest sons of Daniel Robertson Barr—also gave their lives in the Great War. The first to die was Daniel Robertson Jr., who enlisted as a private (regimental number: 251242) with the 1/6th (Renfrewshire) Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in September 1914. He had married Ursula R.R. Birch Russell in 1907²⁶ and they had five children. He had been employed as an Assistant Inspector of Poor with the Parish Council of Paisley. He died at a casualty clearing station of bomb wounds on 1 October 1917 and is buried in the Outtersteene Communal Cemetery Extension in Bailleul, France.²⁷

The second son to die was John Hamilton, a lance corporal (regimental number: 278714). He enlisted in Paisley in the 1/7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in October 1914. Before the war, he had been employed as a grocer with Galbraith's Stores. He was killed on 9 April 1917 and was buried in Roclinourt Valley Cemetery in Pas de Calais, France.²⁸

Archibald's step-father Daniel died on 3 December 1933.²⁹ His mother died on 16 October 1954, at the age of 88. She died at 11:50 a.m. at the Cottage Hospital in Elderslie of atherosclerosis and microcytic hypochromic anemia. Her death was reported by her step-daughter Margaret Blackwood. Janet's usual residence at the time of her death was 60 Glasgow Road, Paisley.³⁰

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¹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Boyle, Archibald Kerr, Service No: 420022; "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Archie Boyle, Enumeration district: 80, Household schedule number: 05, Line: 19, Roll: CSSCT1901_209

² "Index of Statutory Registers–Marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Kerr, Janet, Reference: 573/209, Registration district: Paisley

³ "Index of Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Boyle, Archibald Kerr, Reference: 573/1608, Registration district: Paisley

⁴ *Paisley's Fallen in the War 1914–18 revised and updated* (<https://libcat.renfrewshire.gov.uk/iguana/uploads/file/Paisley%27s%20Fallen%20in%20the%20War%201914%20-%201918%2C%20revised%20and%20updated%20-%20Iguauna%20version%20%20-%20Copy.pdf>: accessed 28 September 2019) by James Meikle Smith, Renfrewshire Council 2016

⁵ There are two death records for a James Boyle shown in *ScotlandsPeople*—one in 1897 (“Index of Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 26 September 2019), entry for Boyle, James, Reference: 573/1676, Registration district: Paisley) and one in 1898 (“Index of Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 26 September 2019) entry for Boyle, James, Reference: 573/1750, Registration district: Paisley). Archibald’s father may have been one of these.

⁶ “1901 Scotland Census,” entry for Archie Boyle

⁷ “1901 Scotland Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Daniel R. Barr, Enumeration district: 73, Household schedule number: 207, Line: 1, Roll: CSSCT1901_208

⁸ “Index of Statutory Registers–Marriages,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Boyle, Janet, Reference: 573/1396, Registration district: Paisley

⁹ “Index of Statutory Registers–Marriages,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 September 2019), entry for Barr, Daniel Robertso [sic], Reference: 573/216, Registration district: Paisley

¹⁰ “Index of Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 September 2019), entry for Barr, Isabella Erskin, Reference: 573/709, Registration district: Paisley.

¹¹ “Index of Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Barr, Daniel Robertso [sic], Reference: 573/804, Registration district: Paisley

¹² “Index of Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Barr, William Hamilto [sic], Reference: 573/1986, Registration district: Paisley

¹³ “Index of Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Barr, Mary Hamilton, Reference: 573/1327, Registration district: Paisley

¹⁴ “Index of Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Barr, Margaret Hamilton, Reference: 573/1782, Registration district: Paisley

¹⁵ “Index of Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Barr, John Hamilton, Reference: 573/1098, Registration district: Paisley

¹⁶ “1911 Scotland census,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 September 2019), entry for Barr, Janet, Reference: 573/174/15, Registration name: Paisley, County/City: Renfrew

¹⁷ “1911 Scotland census,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 September 2019), entry for Boyle, Archibald, Reference: 573/178/22, Registration name: Paisley, County/City: Renfrew

¹⁸ *Paisley's Fallen in the War 1914–18 revised and updated*

¹⁹ “Lobnitz,” *Wikipedia* (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobnitz>: accessed 26 September 2019)

²⁰ “British Army WWI Service Records, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Archibald Kerr Boyle. Unless otherwise indicated, all information about Archibald’s military service come from this source.

²¹ “Renfrewshire Fortress Royal Engineers,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renfrewshire_Fortress_Royal_Engineers: accessed 27 September 2019). Unless otherwise stated, all information about the movements of Archibald’s company comes from this source.

²² “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 25 September 2019), entry for Boyle, A. K.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 September 2019), entry for Archibald Rerr [sic] Boyle

²⁵ “Territorial War Medal,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_War_Medal: accessed 29 September 2019)

²⁶ “Index of Statutory Registers–Marriages,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 September 2019) entry for Barr, Daniel R., Reference: 573/1475, Registration district: Paisley

²⁷ *Paisley's Fallen in the War 1914–18 revised and updated*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ “Scotland, National Probate Index (Calendar of Confirmations and Inventories), 1876–1936,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 September 2019), entry for Daniel Robertson Barr

³⁰ “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 28 September 2019), entry for Barr, Janet, Reference: 573/2184