

Private William Robert Howatson

Regimental number: 13967

"D" Company, 13th Battalion, The King's (Liverpool Regiment)

born: about 1893 - died: 27 April 1916

Private William Robert Howatson was born in about 1893¹ in Glasgow, Scotland.² He was the eldest child of Robert and Margaret Howatson. Robert, Margaret and their first two children were all born in Scotland. Robert was born in about 1854 and Margaret in about 1873. Sometime between 1895 and 1898 the family moved to Yorkshire.³ Robert and Margaret had six children: William, Kenneth H. (born in about 1895), Stanley (born in about 1898), Margaret Annie (born in 1900),⁴ and twins, Hilda and Cora (born in 1905).⁵ Stanley and Margaret Annie were born in Yorkshire. In 1901, William's father, Robert, was a clog pole maker and the family was living at 45 Stannary Street in Halifax, Yorkshire.⁶

Soon after, the family moved to Liverpool, where the twins were born. In 1911, Margaret was living with five of her children at 28 Saker Street in Liverpool.⁷ However, William's father appears to have been back in Yorkshire, living in Snaith and working as a clogsole finisher.⁸ William himself may have been living in North Hykeham, Lincolnshire and working as a clog block maker.⁹

William enlisted as a Private in Liverpool in The King's (Liverpool Regiment), probably in August 1914. At the time he was shown as a labourer.¹⁰ He appears to have had some discipline issues, including overstaying a pass in September 1915, for which he was deprived of 10 days' pay. He joined the British Expeditionary Force in France on 26 September 1915.¹¹

William died of wounds to his back and chest at the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 27 April 1916, just seven months after arriving in France.¹² He was 22 years old. The day that he died, two patients died at the 1st CCCS¹³ – perhaps William was one of them. A total of 45 patients died at the 1st CCCS in April 1916.

A letter was sent to his mother, who was living at 15 Lance Lane in Liverpool, to notify her of his death. The monies owing to him from the army after his death were also sent to his mother.¹⁴

A member of the Church of England, he was buried Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot II, Row D, Grave 150).¹⁵ Bailleul is in France, close to the Belgian border. It was occupied on 14 October 1914 and became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Several Casualty Clearing Stations, including the 1st Canadian, were quartered there for considerable periods. The earliest Commonwealth burials at Bailleul were made in April 1915. An extension was built and burials continued until April 1918, and occurred again in September and after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the neighbouring battlefields.¹⁶

William was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).¹⁷

William's brother, Kenneth, also served in the Great War. He was also a Private in The King's (Liverpool Regiment) (Regimental number 331222) and almost certainly enlisted after William did. Kenneth survived the war and was demobilised on 28 March 1919 in Preston, Lancashire. Kenneth

was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁸

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- ¹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2015), entry for William R. Howatson, Registration district: Halifax, Sub-registration district: Halifax, ED, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 4120, Folio: 111, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 47
- ² "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2015), entry for William Robert Howatson
- ³ "1901 England Census," entry for William R. Howatson
- ⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2015), entry for Margaret Annie Howatson, Registration district: Halifax, Inferred County: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9a, Page: 462
- ⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2015), entries for Hilda and Cora Howatson, Registration district: West Derby, Inferred County: Lancashire, Volume: 8b, Page: 485
- ⁶ "1901 England Census," entry for William R. Howatson
- ⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2015), entry for Kenneth Howatson, Registration district: West Derby, Registration District Number: 455, Sub-registration district: North Everton, ED, institution, or vessel: 28, Piece: 22511
- ⁸ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 6 August 2015), entry for Robert Howatson, Registration district: Goole, Registration District Number: 514, Sub-registration district: Snaith, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 28294
- ⁹ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2015), entry for fdfdfdafd, Registration district: Bolton, Registration District Number: 461, Sub-registration district: Farnworth, ED, institution, or vessel: 9, Piece: 23260
- ¹⁰ "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 July 2015), entry for Wm Robert Howatson. Unless otherwise stated, all information about his military career comes from this army record.
- ¹¹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 29 July 2015), entry for William R Howatson
- ¹² "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 61
- ¹³ "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; accessed 17 June 2015)
- ¹⁴ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 July 2015), entry for William R Howatson
- ¹⁵ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 3 December 2015), entry for Howatson W. R., Service No: 13967
- ¹⁶ "Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Nord," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/2000047/Bailleul%20Communal%20Cemetery.%20Nord>; accessed 17 June 2015)
- ¹⁷ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," entry for William R. Howatson; "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2015), entry for William R. Howatson
- ¹⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 August 2015), entry for Kenneth Howatson