

Private Walter William Howell©
Regimental number: 241413
5th Battalion, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)

born: 28 February 1888 – died: 25 August 1917

Private Walter William Howell was born on 28 February 1888 in Abbey Green, Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, Scotland.¹ He may have been the only son of William and Margaret Howell. At the time of his birth, Walter's father, William Walter Howell, was a gunner in the Royal Artillery and living in a soldier's home in Maryhill, Glasgow. He had married Walter's mother, the former Margaret Barr, on 16 May 1887 in Anderston District in Glasgow. Margaret was born in about 1851, also in Lesmahagow.²

In 1901, Walter was living with his mother in Lesmahagow. Robert G. Gray (born in about 1899) an adopted son, was also living with them.³

On 10 June 1908, Walter married Jessie Steele at the hall in New Lanark, according to the form of the United Free Church.⁴ Walter's father William was identified as a blacksmith journeyman at the time of Walter's marriage and Walter was a coal miner. Jessie was born in about 1887 in Bathgate, Linlithgowshire,⁵ the daughter of James Steele, a general labourer, and Ann (nee Warrington). She was a cotton millworker.⁶ In 1910, Walter and Jessie had a son, William W. A. Howell.⁷ The next year, the young family was living in Lesmahagow, where Walter was working as a hammerman for a blacksmith.

When Walter first enlisted in the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), he had the Regimental number 5588. He was serving with the 5th Battalion of the Cameronians when he died on the Western Front. On 20 August 1917, the Cameronians were stationed near Nieuport, Belgium. The battalion relieved the 20th Royal Fusiliers and found that the conditions of the line were very bad because of the low-lying ground. Temporary fortifications (called breastworks) were the only protection, but they were not bulletproof, not continuous and only in an adequate state of repair at the posts.⁸ Four days later, Walter was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with abdominal wounds. He died the following day, 25 August, and was buried the next day⁹ in Adinkerke Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: B. 16).¹⁰ Two comrades from the same battalion, Private Hugh Kane¹¹ and Private Hugh Muir,¹² had also died at No. 1 CCCS and had been buried in Adinkerke Military Cemetery.

Adinkerke Military Cemetery is 20 kilometres east of Dunkirk, in the community of De Panne, just across the border into Belgium. There are 168 Commonwealth soldiers from the Great War buried in the cemetery.¹³

His wife, who was then living at 28 Bankend, Coalburn, Lesmahagow, was his next of kin and was notified of his death. She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.¹⁴ His wife later remarried, marrying a Mr. Pearson. She was living then at 8 Water Row, New Lanark, Lanarkshire.

Walter was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹⁵

¹ "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/; accessed 7 June 2016) entry for Howell, Walter William, Lesmahagow, City/County: Lanark, GROS data 649/00 0092

² "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 30 May 2016), entry for Walter Howell, Enumeration district: 11, Household schedule number: 3, Line: 10, Roll: CSSCT1901_341

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Statutory register–marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/; accessed 7 June 2016), entry for Walter William Howell, District: Lesmahagow, City/County/MR: Lanark, GROS Data: 648/00 0021

⁵ "1911 Census," *ScotlandsPeople* (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/; accessed 30 May 2016), entry for Walter William Howell, District: Lesmahagow, City/County/MR: Lanark, GROS Data: 649/01 009/00 007

⁶ "Statutory register–marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/), entry for Walter William Howell

⁷ "1911 Census," *ScotlandsPeople* (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/) entry for Walter William Howell

⁸ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk) Regiment or Unit: Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), Sub-unit: 5th Battalion, Division: 33rd Division, Diary entry start date: 1916, Diary dates: 1915 Dec–1918 Sep, Piece description: Piece 2422/3: 5 Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) (1915 Dec - 1918 Sep), Piece number: 2422

⁹ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 – 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 and 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 350

¹⁰ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, (www.cwgc.org; accessed 25 May 2016), entry for Howell, W.W., Service No: 241413

¹¹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 25 May 2016), entry for Kane, Hugh, Service No: 41655

¹² *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 3 December 2016), entry for Muir, Hugh, Service No: 202522

¹³ "Adinkerke Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org/; accessed 30 April 2016)

¹⁴ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 30 May 2016), entry for Walter W. Howell

¹⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 30 May 2016), entry for Walter Howell