

Corporal James Nicol[©]
Regimental number: 23117
1st Battalion, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)

born: 18 November 1898 - died: 28 May 1918

Corporal James Nicol (known to his family as Jim)¹ was born at 9 a.m. on 18 November 1898, on Manse Road in Markinch, Fifeshire, Scotland.² He was the illegitimate son of Christina Husband and his birth was recorded under the name James Nicol Husband. Christina, a dressmaker, was the daughter of John Husband, a carter, and his wife, Christina Cargill.³ She was born in Largo, Fifeshire, in about 1879.⁴

In 1901, James and his mother were living with Christina's parents at 6 Bow Butts in Markinch.⁵ Christina wed William Nicol later that year. They married on 6 December 1901 in Bow Butts, Markinch, in the United Free Church of Scotland. William, a plumber, was the son of James Nicol, ploughman, and his wife, Helen Stark.⁶

It is not certain where James and his family were living in 1911—perhaps in Callander, Perthshire,⁷ because his parents were living at Etrick Cottage in Callander at the end of the war.⁸

James enlisted in the Black Watch Regiment⁹ in about April 1916.¹⁰ In May 1918, the 1st Battalion of the Black Watch was near Noeux-les-Mines, northeast of Lens, in northern France.¹¹ On 20 May, the battalion was relieved and went into camp in Noeux-les-Mines, where it engaged in training activities, range practices and battalion sports. On 28 May,

[a]bout 2 PM when A. and C. [Companies] had paraded ready to march off to the line, a solitary shell burst immediately in rear of C. [Company]. FIFTYNINE casualties were sustained of whom 6 were killed, and 4 died of wounds.¹²

James was probably one of the wounded, because he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 28 May with gunshot wounds to his right leg, which was fractured. He died the same day, aged 19, and was buried on 29 May in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row D, Grave No. 10) with the Canadian chaplain R. K. Lambert presiding.¹³

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.¹⁴ James was one of 102 injured admitted to No. 1. CCCS on 28 May 1918. In total, there were nearly 4,000 soldiers admitted to this CCCS in the month of May and 115 died.¹⁵

His mother, who was then living at Etrick Cottage in Callander, Perthshire, was sent a letter to notify her of her son's death.¹⁶ She requested the following inscription be included on his gravestone:

HE GAVE HIS LIFE
THAT WE MIGHT LIVE¹⁷

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

Two sisters, Elizabeth G Dyse and Annie Christie, and two brothers, William and John, received the monies owing to James from the army upon his death.¹⁹

His father William died on 8 March 1940 and his mother Christina on 11 February 1942. They are both buried in Callander Cemetery and their son is also remembered on their gravestone.²⁰

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¹ *Findagrave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/168447822/christina-nicol>: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for Christina Nicol

² "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 May 2018) entry for Husband, James Nicol, Reference: 447/1 3, Registration district: Markinch

³ "Statutory Registers–Marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 May 2018) entry for Nicol, William, Reference: 447/1 28, Registration district: Markinch

⁴ "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 30 May 2018), entry for James Nicol, Enumeration district: 5, Household schedule number: 22, Line: 7, Roll: CSSCT1901_144

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ "Statutory Registers–Marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 May 2018) entry for Nicol, William

⁷ "1911 Scotland Census," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 May 2018), entry for Nicol, William, Reference: 336/2 12, District: Callander, County/City: Perth

⁸ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2018), entry for Nicol, James, Service No: 23117

⁹ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for James Nicol

¹⁰ 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 4 May 2018), entry for James R. Nicol

¹¹ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 May 2018), Regiment or unit: Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), Sub-unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 1st Division, Diary dates: 1914 Aug–1919 Mar, Piece description: Piece 1263/3: 1 Battalion Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) (1914 Aug–1919 Mar), Piece number: 1263

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for Nichol [sic], J.

¹⁴ "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

¹⁵ "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=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 15 December 2014)

¹⁶ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for Nichol [sic], J.

¹⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2018), entry for Nicol, James

¹⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for James Nicol

¹⁹ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for James R. Nicol

²⁰ *Findagrave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/168447822/christina-nicol>: accessed 4 May 2018), entry for Christina Nicol