

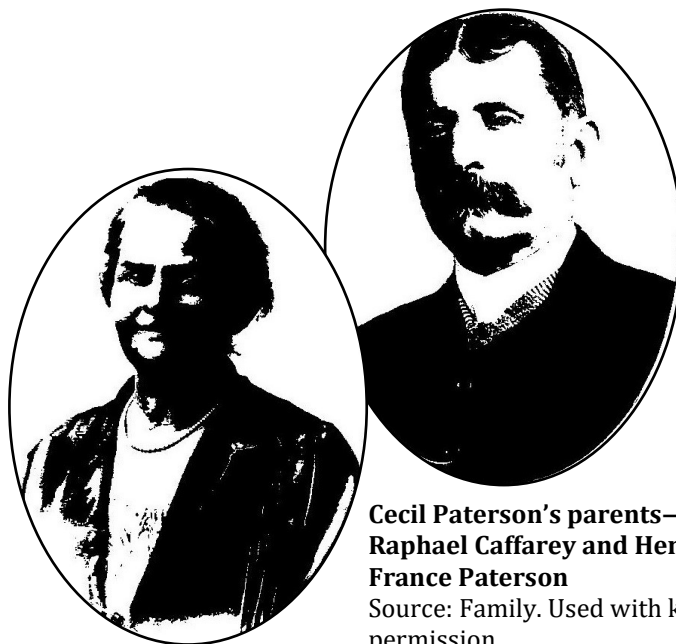
Private Cecil James Richard Paterson[©]

Regimental number: 5122

4th South African Infantry (Scottish)

born: about March 1897–died: 27 May 1916

Private Cecil James Richard Paterson came from South Africa.¹ He was born about March 1897,² the son of Raphael Caffarey Paterson and his wife, the former Henrietta Frances Matthews.³ His father was born in Madras, India, on 6 March 1857, the son of John Carmichael Paterson and his wife, Cecilia Eleanor.⁴ His mother was born in Grahamstown, South Africa, in about 1868, the daughter of Herman and Isabell Matthews.⁵ Cecil's father was described a clerk⁶ when he married and later as an interpreter of Indian dialects.⁷



Cecil Paterson's parents—
Raphael Caffarey and Henrietta
France Paterson

Source: Family. Used with kind
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Raphael and Henrietta married on 2 May 1889 in Kimberley, South Africa.

Cecil was the youngest of their five children: Alice Mabel, John Herman, Amelia Cecilia, Lily Frances and Cecil.⁸ Before the war, the family was living at 111 Bultfontein Road in Kimberley.⁹



C. J. R. Paterson's gravestone, Bailleul
Cemetery

Source: South Africa War Grave Project.
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The Union of South Africa had been formed just four years before the outbreak of the Great War. Since the South African (SA) *Union Defence Act* prevented SA troops from being deployed outside the country's borders and in its immediate neighbouring territories, in order to participate in the Great War, the government created the South African Overseas Expeditionary Force, and the soldiers served as regular British troops.¹⁰ However, before engaging in the war in Europe, the SA army had to address unrest in its own country and then attacked German troops in German South West Africa (GSWA) (now known as Namibia).

When Germany unconditionally surrendered in July 1915, the SA government was ready to engage in the war in Europe. The British War Office specifically requested infantry troops for the war effort and a brigade of four battalions was created as the SA Overseas Expeditionary Force.¹¹

Prior to joining the SA Infantry, Cecil served with the Parkinson's Horse¹²—a commando unit from the Cape that served in the SA attack in GSWA between October 1914 and May 1915.¹³ When he enlisted, Cecil was a junior clerk at the SA Railways.¹⁴

After the German defeat in GSWA, Cecil joined the 4th South African Infantry, which was known as the "South African Scottish," because it was raised from the Cape Town Highlanders Regiment and the Transvaal Scottish Regiment, as well as recruits from the Caledonian Societies of Natal and Orange Free State. It has a long history in SA. It descended from the 77th (Atholl) Highlanders, through the Scottish Horse and the Transvaal Scottish regiments and was made up of just over a quarter Scottish-born soldiers, a further one-fifth English-born and just less than half SA-born soldiers. The troops wore the Murray of Atholl kilt.¹⁵

The makeup of the 4th Battalion was considered to be typical of all SA regiments:

It showed 292 men not older than twenty years, 350 between twenty and twenty-five, 232 between twenty-five and thirty, 212 between thirty and thirty-five, and 196 between thirty-five and forty. Only 344 of the rank and file were without previous military training; of the rest 64 had been in the Regular Army, 760 in territorial, volunteer, or irregular units, 97 in both regulars and irregulars, and 17 in the police. Occupations were thus represented: mining, 234; agriculture, 69; police and military, 21; government service, 145; business, 722; and the various professions, 91.¹⁶

According to the SA forces history, no brigade had men with "a better standard of physical well-being... [and] the level of education and breeding was singularly high."¹⁷

The whole SA contingent embarked in Cape Town between August and October 1915. By November, the infantry was settled in Bordon military camp in Hampshire, England, and engaged in training and inspections. It was expected that the SA brigade would join the Front in France by mid-December. However, on 7 December, the plans changed and the brigade headed back to the continent from which it had just come, embarking in Devonport on 30 December for Alexandria, Egypt. After a fair sea voyage, punctuated by guard and boat drills against submarine traffic in the Mediterranean, the 4th Battalion arrived in Alexandria on 13 January 1916 and was stationed just west of the city. A week later the battalion headed to a marshy area west of Alexandria, to assist the Western Frontier Force. The SA troops were still tired from their journey but, according to the brigade's history, came out well in their "baptism of fire" in the Great War. The SA brigade continued to be engaged in advances in the Western Desert until Matruh and Solium fell to the British troops in March 1916.

After three months in Egypt, the SA brigade received orders to join the Western Front. The 4th Battalion left Alexandria and arrived in Marseilles on 19 April. However, because of a case of contagious sickness on board the *Oriana*, which was transporting Cecil's battalion and part of the 1st Battalion, their ship was quarantined in Marseilles, while the rest of the SA brigade left by train for northern France. The remaining SA troops joined their comrades in Steenwerck, near the French-Belgium border, in mid-May.

It is not known how much action Cecil saw in Egypt, but less than two weeks after his battalion arrived on the Western Front, he died. In May, the SA brigade spent some time on the Front. It is not



Private Cecil Paterson
Source: Family. Used with kind permission

known how he was injured, but at 10:23 p.m. on 27 May, Cecil died of wounds at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station.¹⁸ He was just 19 years old.¹⁹ He was buried at Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot I, Row A, Grave 29) where, after the war, his father had this inscription placed on his gravestone:

CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE²⁰

He is also remembered in the South Africa War Graves Project.²¹ The monies owing to him from the British army upon his death were sent first to the SA High Commission²² and then forwarded to his mother.²³



After the war, Cecil's family had moved to 30 Currey Street in Kimberley. His father died there on 19 June 1929 and his mother on 29 June 1931.²⁴

Of his four siblings, only two had children. One had a son named after his late uncle:

- Alice Mabel did not have any children;²⁵
- John Herman married and had four children—John, Cecil, Joyce and Edna²⁶—and probably died in 1948;²⁷
- Amelia Cecilia married Arthur Norman O'Dea (born in about 1891) on 1 September 1914 in Kimberley. Both were teachers.²⁸ They divorced²⁹ and Amelia remarried, marrying William Haig in Kimberley on 29 September 1923.³⁰ They had two children—Douglas and Roy.³¹
- Lily Frances was born in 1893³² and married Herbert Hunt Venables (on 27 January 1922)³³ but had no children.³⁴

Corporal Cecil Paterson's siblings: John and Lily

Source: Family. Used with kind permission

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Thanks are extended to a family member for assistance with this biography.

¹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 6 February 2019), entry for Paterson, Cecil James Richard, Service No: 5122

² "South Africa, Cape Province, Probate Records of the Master of the High Court, 1834–1989," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QLKL-MDZ2>; accessed 17 March 2018), entry for Cecil James Richard Paterson, 1916; citing Probate, Grahamstown, Albany, Cape Province, South Africa, 1916, Pietermaritzburg Archives (Formerly Natal State Archives), South Africa; FHL microfilm 1,367,861

³ *Ibid.*; "South Africa, Cape Province, Kimberley, Probate Records of the Supreme Court, 1871–1937," *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org>; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Henrietta Francis Matthews Paterson, National Archives of South Africa, Cape Town Archives Repository, Cape Town

⁴ "British India Office Births & Baptisms," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk; accessed 3 March 2019), entry for Raphael Caffarey [sic] Paterson, Archive reference: N-2-38, Folio: 192, Page: –

⁵ "South Africa, Cape Province, Kimberley, Probate Records of the Supreme Court, 1871–1937," *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org>; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Henrietta Francis Matthews Paterson

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- ⁶ "South Africa, Cape Province, Western Cape Archives Records, 1792–1992," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q23Q-NQJH>; accessed 6 February 2019), entry for Caffari [sic] Paterson and Henrietta Frances Mathews, 02 May 1889; citing Marriage, Western Cape Archives, Cape Town; FHL microfilm
- ⁷ "South Africa, Cape Province, Kimberley, Probate Records of the Supreme Court, 1871–1937," *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org>; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Henrietta Francis Matthews Paterson
- ⁸ "South Africa, Cape Province, Kimberley, Probate Records of the Supreme Court, 1871–1937." *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org>; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Henrietta Francis Matthews Paterson
- ⁹ "South Africa, Cape Province, Western Cape Archives Records, 1792–1992," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q23Q-NXD8>; accessed 15 March 2018), entry for Arthur Norman O'Dea and Amelia Cecelia Paterson, 01 Sep 1914; citing Marriage, Western Cape Archives, Cape Town; FHL microfilm
- ¹⁰ "South Africa Infantry, 1st Infantry Brigade (South Africa)," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Brigade_\(South_Africa\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Brigade_(South_Africa)); accessed 6 February 2019)
- ¹¹ "The History of the South African Forces in France," John Buchan, *Internet Archive* (<https://archive.org/>; accessed 2 March 2019). Unless otherwise noted, all information about the South African engagement in World War I and the movements of the 4th Battalion South African Infantry come from this source.
- ¹² *The South Africa War Graves Project* (<http://www.southafricawargraves.org/>; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Paterson, Cecil James Richard
- ¹³ "The Rebellion and GSWA," *The soldier's burden* (<http://www.kaiserscross.com/40020.html>; accessed 18 March 2019)
- ¹⁴ "South Africa, Cape Province, Probate Records of the Master of the High Court, 1834–1989," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QLKL-MDZ2>; accessed 17 March 2018), entry for Cecil James Richard Paterson
- ¹⁵ "1st Infantry Brigade (South Africa)," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Brigade_\(South_Africa\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Brigade_(South_Africa)); accessed 6 February 2019)
- ¹⁶ "The History of the South African Forces in France," p. 17
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca; accessed 6 February 2019), entry for C J R Paterson
- ¹⁹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 6 February 2019), entry for Paterson, Cecil James Richard
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *South Africa War Graves Project* (<http://www.southafricawargraves.org/>; accessed 2 March 2019)
- ²² "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Cecil James Richard Paterson
- ²³ "South Africa, Cape Province, Probate Records of the Master of the High Court, 1834–1989," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QLKL-MDZ2>; accessed 17 March 2018), entry for Cecil James Richard Paterson
- ²⁴ "South Africa, Cape Province, Kimberley, Probate Records of the Supreme Court, 1871–1937," *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org>; accessed 2 March 2019), entry for Henrietta Francis Matthews Paterson
- ²⁵ Family source
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ "Transvaal Province, South Africa, Estates Death Notice Index, 1855–1976," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 18 March 2019), entry for Harry John Herman Paterson, Reference Number: 5548/48
- ²⁸ "South Africa, Cape Province, Western Cape Archives Records, 1792–1992," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q23Q-NXD8>; accessed 15 March 2018), entry for Arthur Norman O'Dea and Amelia Cecelia Paterson
- ²⁹ Family source

³⁰ Copy of marriage certificate, family source

³¹ Family source

³² *FindaGrave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/>; accessed 6 February 2019), entry for Lily Frances Venables

³³ "South Africa, Cape Province, Western Cape Archives Records, 1792-1992," *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q23Q-721J>; accessed 4 March 2019), entry for Herbert Hunt Venables and Lily Frances Paterson, 27 Jan 1922; citing Marriage, Cape Town, Cape, Cape, South Africa, Western Cape Archives, Cape Town; FHL microfilm

³⁴ Family source