Private Alexander Gibson©
Regimental number: 203266
1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders

born: 1891 – died: 1918

Alexander Gibson was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on 5 April 1891,[1] the first of six children born to Daniel and Margaret, née Tweedie.[2] Daniel was a boot finisher, working in 1911 in a boot factory.[3] Margaret was the daughter of a shoemaker, William Tweedie.[4]

In 1911, Alexander was 19, living at home, and working as a flesher, shop assistant.[5] (A flesher was a butcher.)[6] Later that same year, on 12 October, he married Agnes Orr, the daughter of George and Helen, née Livingston.[7]

Alexander and Agnes had three children: Margaret Tweedie, born in 1913;[8] Helen Livingston, born in 1915;[9] and Daniel Alexander, born in 1917.[10]

Later in 1917, probably in May,[11,12] Alexander enlisted in the Gordon Highlanders and was posted to the 1st Battalion,[13] though he is also recorded as belonging to the 1st/6th Battalion (Territorial Force).[14] Both battalions were fighting in France, in many of the same battles, such as Menin Road and Cambrai (1917), and Estaires and Hazebrouck (1918).[15]

In June 1918 the 1st Battalion was in the trenches in the Hinges sector. At the end of a quiet week, on June 24, the enemy opened up with a burst of shelling and machine gun fire.[16] One Other Rank was killed and seven wounded. One of these may have been Private Gibson, who was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on June 25 with severe wounds to the head.[17] He died on June 27 and was buried the same day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery, Plot 5, Row C, Grave No. 35.[18] His wife, his next-of-kin, was notified by letter. The inscription on his headstone reads

THEY MISS HIM MOST WHO LOVED HIM BEST

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. The cemetery lies one kilometre west of Pernes-en-Artois, in the region of Pas de Calais, and contains the remains of 1096 soldiers from the two world wars.

Private Alexander Gibson received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service.[19]

There is no evidence that any of Alexander's three younger brothers served in the army: William Tweedie, born 1893,[20] was an electrical engineer; George, born about 1898, was a butcher;[21] and Archibald, born in 1901, was a machinist.[22] All three spent some time in the United States after the war, with Archibald the first to go in 1923,[23] followed by William in 1929[24] and George in 1930.[25] Archibald remained, married,[26] and died there aged 93 in 1995,[27] but William was back in Glasgow by 1936 at the time of his father's death.[28] He remarried in 1969,[29] four years after the death of his first wife, Elizabeth,[30] and died in Glasgow in 1977.[31] It is not known what happened to George.

Alexander's two daughters, Margaret Tweedie and Helen Livingston, never married and died in Glasgow in 1969[32] and 1983[33] respectively.

Alexander's son Daniel Alexander studied at Anderson College Medical School in Glasgow to be a dental surgeon;[34] he set up practice first in Glasgow[35] and subsequently in Worthing, on the South coast of England.[36] Here, in 1959, he was convicted of driving without due care and attention, for going through a red light and causing an accident in his Jaguar. He was fined £20 and banned from driving for a month. He died in Worthing in 2001 at the age of 84.[37]

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