

**Private John Wilson©**  
**Regimental number: 14203**  
**Royal Scots Fusiliers**

**born: 1886-died: 1918**

John Wilson was born in Girvan, yrshire, Scotland on 6 December 1886, the son of John and Catherine, née Dummigan.<sup>1</sup> His father was a joiner<sup>2</sup> (carpenter) who was also born in Girvan in 1859.<sup>3</sup>

John was one of six children living in 1911, another three having died before then.<sup>4</sup> Those living at home were Sarah, 26, a dressmaker, John, 24, a tailor, Jane, 20, Robert, 18, a joiner apprentice, and Richard, 16, a crack painter. Also living was the oldest, Alexander, 27, a joiner, who married Agnes Nocher in 1911.<sup>5</sup>

Early in the First World War, John enlisted in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and was assigned to the 8th Battalion. He disembarked with them in France on 20 September 1915.<sup>6</sup> At some point Private Wilson was transferred to the 1st Battalion,<sup>7</sup> likely shortly after arriving in France, as the 8th Battalion moved on to Salonika (Greece) in November 1915,<sup>8</sup> whereas the 1st Battalion remained on the Western Front,<sup>9</sup> as did Private Wilson.

The 1st Battalion at that time was stationed in Northern France in Mazingarbe, north of Arras.<sup>10</sup> He would have participated in the Battle of the Ancre (the last Battle of the Somme) in November 1916, the Battles of the Scarpe in 1917, and the Battle of Bethune in April 1918.<sup>11</sup>

In early June 1918, the Battalion was in the trenches near Chocques, just west of Bethune.<sup>12</sup> It was a relatively quiet period, but on 17 June while relieving the platoons on the front line, there was an exchange of artillery fire resulting in two Other Ranks killed and four wounded.<sup>13</sup> One of these was Private Wilson, who was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with severe wounds to the buttocks, penetrating the abdomen.<sup>14</sup> He lingered on for almost two weeks, but died on June 30, age 31, and was buried the next day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row D, Grave No. 8). The inscription on his headstone reads

BORN AT GIRVAN 1886 AGE 31 IN THE HEARTS AT HOME<sup>15</sup>

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, as well as the 1915 Star.<sup>16</sup>

No record has been found of military service of his three brothers, Alexander, Robert and Richard. All lived to a ripe old age, with Alexander dying in Ardrossan in 1973, age 89,<sup>17</sup> Robert in Girvan in 1976, age 84,<sup>18</sup> and Richard in Ardrossan in 1978, age 83.<sup>19</sup> His two sisters Sarah and Jane died around the same time.<sup>20</sup>

- 
- <sup>1</sup> “Statutory Registers–Births,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 29 December 2019) entry for Wilson, John, City/County: Girvan, Ayrshire, GROS data 594/171
- <sup>2</sup> “1911 Scotland census,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 9 January 2020), entry for Wilson, John, District: Girvan, City/County: Ayrshire, GROS data: 594/06/003
- <sup>3</sup> “Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 14 January 2020), entry for John Wilson, FHL Film Number: 6035516
- <sup>4</sup> “1911 Scotland census,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 9 January 2020), entry for Wilson, John, District: Girvan, City/County: Ayrshire, GROS data: 594/06/003
- <sup>5</sup> “Statutory Registers–Marriages,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 9 January 2020) entry for Nocher, Agnes, City/County: Springburn, Lanarkshire, GROS data 644/06 0154
- <sup>6</sup> “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 15 January 2020), entry for Wilson John
- <sup>7</sup> “UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 15 January 2020), entry for John Wilson
- <sup>8</sup> “The Royal Scots Fusiliers”, (<https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-british-infantry-regiments-of-1914-1918/the-royal-scots-fusiliers-in-1914-1918/>: accessed 26 January 2020)
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> “UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920,” *National Archives* ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk): accessed 27 January 2020), entry for Royal Scots Fusiliers Regiment, Sub unit: 1st Battalion, Piece description: Piece 1422/3, Page 47
- <sup>11</sup> “Unit History: Royal Scots Fusiliers” (<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/313/royal-scots-fusiliers/>: accessed 27 January 2020)
- <sup>12</sup> “UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920,” *National Archives* ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk): accessed 27 January 2020), entry for Royal Scots Fusiliers Regiment, Sub unit: 1st Battalion, Piece description: Piece 1422/3, Page 71
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., Page 73
- <sup>14</sup> “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 27 January 2020), entry for Wilson T. (*sic*)
- <sup>15</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 27 January 2020), entry for Wilson, John, Service No: 14203
- <sup>16</sup> “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 15 January 2020), entry for Wilson John
- <sup>17</sup> “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 January 2020) entry for Wilson, Alexander D, City/County: Saltcoats, GROS data 662/16
- <sup>18</sup> “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 January 2020) entry for Wilson, Robert, City/County: Girvan, GROS data 686/43
- <sup>19</sup> “Statutory Registers–Deaths,” *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 25 January 2020) entry for Wilson, Richard Dummigan, City/County: Saltcoats, GROS data 662/49
- <sup>20</sup> “The Ancestors of William Dummigan Wilson” ([http://www.burnawn.co.uk/wdw/adw\\_2.html](http://www.burnawn.co.uk/wdw/adw_2.html): accessed 27 January 2020)