

Lance Corporal Joseph Telford Cameron©

Regimental number: 1001095

43rd Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 1879–died: 1918

Lance Corporal Joseph Telford Cameron was born in Leith, Midlothian, Scotland, on 17 December 1879 to John Cameron and Jane, née Telford.¹ He was the third of six children, the others being William (b. 1875),² Archibald (b. 1878),³ Isabella (b. 1885),⁴ Mary (b. 1889),⁵ and Ann (b. 1897).⁶

Joseph's father John was born around 1845 in Auchtergaven, Perthshire, where he was living with his parents and working as a ploughman in 1861.⁷ By 1871 he had moved south to Leith, Edinburgh, where he was a boarder with the family of Michael Telford and working as a house carpenter.⁸ In 1874 he married Michael's daughter Jane.⁹ He was still living in Leith and working as a carpenter, or joiner, in 1901,¹⁰ which is the last definitive reference found for him. Jane died in 1902¹¹ at the age of 47.

Joseph was still living with his parents and working as a clerk in 1901,¹² at age 26. Later that year, he was admitted to the Royal Edinburgh Asylum¹³ for an unknown duration and issue. However, a medical report in his military personnel file indicates that he also had nervous breakdowns from overwork in 1909 and 1913.¹⁴

In April 1905 Joseph married Euphemia Houlston, a photographer's assistant.¹⁵ Five years later, now with an infant son George, they moved to Canada, heading for Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, where he intended to farm.¹⁶ In the June 1916 Canada Census they were recorded as living in Portage La Prairie, but his occupation was cited as bookkeeper. He was also listed as being on military service in Canada, at Camp Hughes.¹⁷ Camp Hughes was a training camp designed specifically to recreate the tactics and conditions of the war overseas. It contained trenches, rifle ranges, grenade training grounds, artillery observation posts, and a cemetery.¹⁸

Joseph had enlisted on 27 March 1916 in Portage La Prairie.¹⁹ At 37 he would have been older than most recruits. He was assigned to the 226th Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). Its members were recruited in Portage La Prairie and surrounding towns, mobilized and trained at Camp Hughes, and sailed from Halifax on the SS *Olympic* on 20 December 1916, arriving in England on 26 December.²⁰ Joseph was appointed acting corporal shortly before the sailing.

Once in England, Corporal Cameron was transferred to the 14th Reserve Battalion. He was hospitalized with varicocele (an enlargement of the veins within the scrotum)²¹ in February 1917, then with myalgia, a weakness of the legs, and pain in the chest and back, in April 1917. For the latter he was treated first at Moore Barracks, Canadian Hospital, Shorncliffe, then at the Canadian Convalescent Hospital, Monks Horton, Kent, and went from there to the Canadian Convalescent Depot in St. Leonards. He returned to the 14th Reserve Battalion on 24 July 1917, having reverted to the rank of private.

On 10 November 1917 Private Cameron was transferred to the 43rd Battalion and landed in France on 30 November. However, his health issues returned in December and January, with pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin (PUO), then a recurrence of myalgia and further PUO. He was discharged to duty on 13 January 1918 but readmitted to a casualty clearing station six days later with PUO,

and thence to Calais and Boulogne for treatment and recovery. He had still not rejoined his unit when he came down with influenza on 5 September 1918, finally rejoining his unit on 3 October. He was promoted to lance corporal on 10 October.

On 26 October Lance Corporal Cameron was in charge of an observation post consisting of six men. One man was on post upstairs, and the remainder were in the cellar. Lance Corporal Cameron was alone on the main floor cleaning his rifle²² when it went off, shooting him in the leg, causing a compound fracture of the tibia and severe hamstring injury. The initial report stated that it was an accident, with no-one at fault, but after a review by the Company Sergeant Major (CSM), it was concluded that the injury was negligently self-inflicted. In addition to the spent cartridge, the CSM found four live rounds in the magazine.

Lance Corporal Cameron was taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCCS), where he died of his wounds the next day, 27 October 1918. He was buried that day in the Emerchicourt Churchyard (Grave 18), two miles south of Auberchicourt. However, in 1950 his grave was transferred to the Daoui British Cemetery, Cuincy (Grave G 31).²³ The inscription on his grave reads:

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A CCS was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation.²⁴ Casualties who did not return to their unit, die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital.

No. 1 CCCS, originally designated as No. 2 Clearing Hospital, was organized at Liverpool, Nova Scotia, and at Valcartier, Quebec, in August and September 1914. It was part of the first contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force sent to Europe, arriving in England in October 1914. Casualty clearing stations were not stationary: after being first established at Aire, France, in March 1915, No. 1 CCCS moved 12 times to various locations in France, Belgium and finally, Germany. It ceased operations in February 1919.²⁵

The unit was shelled at least three times in 1916 and 1917. At the conclusion of the war, it was one of the foremost medical units on the advance into Germany. An incomplete record of the unit's operations underestimates a total of 42,489 admissions to the unit, of which 37,546 were transferred to other hospitals, to base, or returned to the field. At least 879 servicemen died at No. 1 CCCS.²⁶

No record was found, but Lance Corporal Cameron was eligible to receive posthumously the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918).

Joseph's widow **Euphemia** remarried in 1920, to William Umbach.²⁷ He, too, had a son from a previous marriage.²⁸ Euphemia died in 1969.²⁹

His brother **William** enlisted in the Royal Scots Regiment on 4 February 1901 and fought in South Africa in the Boer War until April 1902.³⁰ His occupation was given as warehouseman when in 1906 he married Jemima Taylor Caird.³¹ She had been married before, to Robert Caird in 1893, and her maiden name was Young.³² No further definitive records were found for William. Jemima died in 1955.³³

Archibald was still living at home with his parents in 1901 and working as a flour mill store man.³⁴ That is the last definite reference found for him.

Isabella married Neil Smith Bogie, a ships plater, in 1905.³⁵ By the time of the 1911 Census they had moved south to Selby, Yorkshire, England, and had four children, three boys and a girl.³⁶ Their fifth and last child, Roy, (born in 1923, 14 years after the fourth)³⁷ was a merchant seaman during WW 2, serving as 3rd Radio Officer on the SS *Tabaristan* in May 1941 on an unescorted trip of Basrah - Capetown - Freetown - UK. On 29 May, off the coast of Freetown, Sierra Leone, it was attacked by the German submarine U-38, which fired two torpedoes. They both hit the *Tabaristan*, sinking it within four minutes. The master, 35 crew members and three gunners were picked up by British warships, but 21 crew members were lost, including Roy Bogie.^{38, 39} Isabella died in 1961.⁴⁰

Not much is known about **Mary**. She and her older sister Isabella were living with her mother's sister Ann Telford in 1901, when she was an 11-year-old scholar.⁴¹ She subsequently lived with her sister Ann until the latter's marriage in 1931.⁴² No further record has been found.

Ann married Philip Blackie, a labourer, in 1931 at age 34.⁴³ She died suddenly at age 47 in 1944.⁴⁴

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¹ "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Joseph Telford Cameron

² "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for William Cameron

³ "Scotland, Select Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Archibald Cameron

⁴ "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Cameron, Isabella Lawrie, City/County: Leith North, GROS data 692/1/703

⁵ "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Cameron, Mary, City/County: Leith North, GROS data 692/1/348

⁶ "Statutory Registers–Births," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Cameron, Ann Telford, City/County: Leith North, GROS data 692/1/686

⁷ "1861 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 February 2026), entry for John Cameron

⁸ "1871 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 February 2026), entry for John Cameron

⁹ "Scotland, Select Marriages, 1561–1910," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 February 2026), entry for John Cameron

¹⁰ "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 February 2026), entry for John Cameron

¹¹ "Statutory Registers–Deaths," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Cameron, Jane, City/County: Leith North, GROS data 692/1/68

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¹³ "Web: Scotland, General and Admission Registers for Asylums, 1858–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 1 February 2026), entry for Joseph Telford Cameron

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¹⁵ "Statutory Registers–Marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>: accessed 30 January 2026), entry for Cameron, Joseph Telford, City/County: Leith South, GROS data 692/2/107

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- ¹⁸ "Camp Hughes National Historic Site of Canada," *Parks Canada* (https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=13019: accessed 1 February 2026), search for Camp Hughes
- ¹⁹ "Canada, World War I CEF Personnel Files, 1914–1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.ca: accessed 1 February 2026), entry for Joseph Telford Cameron
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- ²³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 31 January 2026), entry for Lance Corporal Joseph Telford Cameron
- ²⁴ "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ²⁵ "War Diaries - 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Home/Record?app=fonandcol&IdNumber=2005082&new=-8585804116857646704&ecopy=e001509146>: accessed 17 January 2026), search for No.1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station war diary
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