Private Daniel Ballantyne, "C" Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Scots, born in 1878 at Edinburgh, was the only son of Daniel Alexander Ballantyne, a Watchmaker, and Jane Ballantyne, of 55 India Place, Stockbridge, Edinburgh.

His sibling was Mary.

He was educated at Hamilton Place School, Edinburgh, and, after enlisting in the Royal Scots on 1 October 1896, spent six years in India and eight years in the Reserve.

He married Mary Jane Donaldson Ballantyne on 10 October 1906. After his death her address was Fala Hill Farm, Heriot, Edinburgh.

He joined the National Reserve, transferred about 1912 to the Karnes Gunpowder Works (Messrs Curtis & Harvey Ltd), and raised branches of the National Reserve in Kames, Tighnabruaich and Hillhouse, becoming Secretary to National Reserve Rifle Club at Kames, Kyles of Bute, Argyllshire. He and his wife were living at Shore Cottage, Kames, Kyles of Bute with their children, Jane, Alice, Mary, Daniel and Margaret.

On the outbreak of war in August 1914, he arranged rifle competitions in aid of the local Red Cross Society, and received the thanks of the Society for the sum of money he raised. He re-enlisted at Glencorse in his old regiment on 14 September 1914 and while there did good recruiting work. He went to the Western Front in January 1915.

On 27 April 1915, age 37, he died of wounds received in action near Kemmel. When he died he was buried at the rear of the church in La Clytte, then in La Clytte Military Cemetery.

He had been in the trenches on Thursday, 26 April 1915, until midnight, when he left to have a cup of tea, and while he was drinking that, a bullet entered his left shoulder passing across the back and injuring his spine. He was taken down to the hospital, but only lived a few hours.

His letters from the trenches were published in The Buteman and West Coast Chronicle.

His widow was awarded a pension of £1.4s.6d per week from 15 November 1915. Effects returned to her were pipes, coin, disc, belt, knife, shaving brush, tobacco box, photograph, postcard, Christmas card and letter.
On 16 April 1915, *The Bute & West Chronicle* published this letter:

**FROM THE TRENCHES**

**A CHEERY EPISTLE**

Private D Ballantyne (4261) C Company 2nd Royal Scots, 3rd Division, British Expeditionary Force, writes:

We are very busy building trenches. and with right good will, for we know that the thicker the parapet the safer we are. When the dry weather comes in we will be quite comfortable, but it is miserable in the wet and cold. We light charcoal and coke fires, and what dainties are sent from home along with our rations are cooked. We make some very tasty snacks. Cocoa is a grand thing through the night, and when a chap gets a tin from home he is pretty well watched during the night. We have been getting only hard biscuits lately, but we have found a good way of cooking them. We boil them, and having plenty of jam we make a nice pudding. It is grand. You try and see. Men without teeth can tackle them and enjoy them. We get cheese and bacon too. I always save the bacon for the trenches when out.

The German artillery is getting livelier about here lately. but they are whales for hitting the open field and long may they continue to do so. I see we are nearer the lines in some places than I thought. We could throw stones at each other. They are trying hard to catch our relief with their artillery, but we are playing them at their own game and it has not paid them.

The Germans are very kind to us. Sometimes when we are out of firewood they send a shell into a broken-down building sending it to blazes, and then we coolly go out at night and pick up all the firewood. Very generous of them but, if they only knew!

We don't bother much about their shot and shell. We know that if we are to get it - good and well. We have had some casualties, but nothing compared with theirs. The snipers are a bit troublesome. Here is a song we sing in the trenches and the enemy must hear it:

The snipers they are pinging.  
The Royal Scots are singing.  
There is joy, there is joy.

We are all quite cheery and looking forward to the great holiday we are going to have at the finish, which we hope won't be long. I am glad to hear McAlpine is quite well and still here. You might get me his address. He has had a long spell of the trenches. Hope all available young men have enlisted no; if not, it is time they were; come one, come all, and see what you never saw before, and never will probably see the like of again. Tell the boys I was asking for them.
In his last letter, written on 21 April 1915, just five days before his death, he said:

You were asking how we could be so cheery in the trenches. Well, it's like this. There is no use in being sad, and the cheerier you are the better, for one never knows when it may be his turn to stop laughing for a long, long time. We do not think on half the things those at home bother about, and consider our duty our ordinary course of work, as it certainly is; and there you are. Some may not come back, but we get accustomed to that thought, and think nothing of it. It may be our turn next, but we know that if it does come we have tried to the best of our ability to do our duty to our people at home and King and country.