

## Remembering the sacrifices of those with SC connections who served their country 100 years ago.

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### Private Joseph Briggs, No.38931

Joseph Briggs was born at Woodend, Canterbury, on 23 September 1896, the second son of five boys and six girls, born to John (1864-1941) and Mary Jane nee Scoon (1872-1941) Briggs. John had earlier emigrated from Cumberland, England, and was working as a farmer, when he married Mary Jane, born in Rangiora, at Woodend, Canterbury, in 1893. The family later moved to the Waihao Downs district, Waimate, where the young Joseph worked as a labourer on his father's farm.

He enlisted at Waimate, aged 20, on 5 October 1916. He was described as being single, C of E, 5 foot 6 inches tall, weighing 11 stone 2 lbs, his chest measuring 33 – 36 inches, of medium complexion, blue eyes, light brown hair and being dentally fit. He had also had some service with D Company, 2 South Canterbury Regiment.

He was posted to C Company, Canterbury Infantry Regiment and after initial training, was part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements which left on the Navua from Wellington on 16 February 1917, bound for Devonport, Devon, England. Further training followed at Sling Camp in England before being posted to 2 Company, Canterbury Infantry Regiment in France on 26 May 1917, where the Regiment was at Basseville, preparing for the attack on Passchendaele. Joseph also undertook a short course at the School of Instruction from 11 July until returning to his unit on 19 August.

On 2 October 1917, near Passchendaele, he received a gunshot wound to the face and was admitted to No 3 Australian Field Ambulance and later transferred to No 12 General Hospital at Rouen. By 30 November he was back with his unit at New Hutting Camp, which was half a mile south of Ypres. In December he had 2½ weeks leave in England before returning to Ypres on 7 February 1918. On 25 August during the battle of Bapaume, Joseph's battalion was involved in the capture of the town and the high ground to the east when he received further gunshot wounds to his neck and a compact fracture of his spine. After a short admittance to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital at Rouen, he was transferred to England aboard the hospital ship Guildford Castle.

He died during the passage aboard ship on 28 August 1918. His body was taken to Brockenhurst where he was buried in the St Nicholas churchyard in Plot A, Row 4, Grave 19 by New Zealand Chaplain the Reverend E.D. Rice. After the war Joseph's medals, the British War Medal and Victory Medal, plus a scroll and plaque were sent to his father at Waimate. His name is commemorated on the Waimate War Memorial Gates.

*This is part of the SCRoll project. You can find SCRoll stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at [museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll](http://museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll)*