

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

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Private Peter Fridd, No.6/4037

Peter Fridd was born on 2 August 1882 at Awamoko near Oamaru, the eighth of 11 children of George and Mary Ann (née Jackson) Fridd, who had come to New Zealand from England in the early 1870s. Peter was educated at the local Awamoko School, moving to Borton's in 1895. On leaving school Peter worked as a farm labourer in the Georgetown/Awamoko district of North Otago.

Of a musical family, he joined the Oamaru Garrison band when the family moved to Oamaru. By 1914 Fridd was living at Kingsdown. There he was a member of the Kingsdown Mutual Improvement Society, at which he and his nephew, Albert Fridd, contributed musical items. For a fund-raising concert Peter Fridd gave a cornet solo. And in September 1914 he was one of those elected to a newly formed committee to make arrangements for a social to assist the British and Belgium relief fund. Peter Fridd was recruited for the 10th Reinforcements and left for Trentham in November 1915. He enlisted on 17 November 1915, at which time he was living in Timaru and working as a labourer at Kingsdown. He gave as his next-of-kin his brother George.

On 20 January 1916 at his parents' home in Timaru, Peter was the guest at a farewell and presentation to mark his pending departure for the front. Following songs and recitations, he was the recipient of a wristlet watch and a sovereign belt from his many friends. By this time his nephew Albert had already left with the 8th Reinforcements.

A few days later another social was given at the Kingsdown School. Mr Anstey, in the absence of Mr James Craigie, MP, addressed the gathering. Private Fridd was presented with a Kodak. He thanked those present for their kindness. His nephew Private W. Grey, a returned soldier, was also present.

Peter Fridd, a well built, healthy young man, standing 6 feet tall and weighing 154 pounds, though with bad teeth, embarked with the Canterbury Infantry Battalion on 4 March 1916 for Egypt. From there he went to France in April and joined the 2nd Battalion in the field in May. Just four months later, he was provisionally reported missing. Within a matter of days it was confirmed that Private Peter Fridd had been killed in action - on 21 September 1916 at the Somme, France. He is buried in the Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France. The British War Medal and the Victory Medal were later sent to his father in Timaru, as were the plaque and scroll.

Two other family members also served in World War I, Albert returning early and brother John being wounded. As well his nephew, William Grey, served, and another nephew, Sidney Fridd, saw service in World War II. Brother George was turned down for active service and put on the Reserves list, since he was married with

children. There was a reminder of Peter's death when his brother John was preparing to leave for camp in June 1917, the third son to give his services for King and country.

In early September 1917 at the Awamoko Hall, photographs were unveiled of "four brave lads who have fallen on the battlefields of the present war." Captain Carroll of the Salvation Army, Father O'Connell and the Rev. George W. Hunt congratulated the relatives of the men who had paid the supreme penalty through fighting for their King and Country and conveyed their deepest sympathy. All stood for the unveiling of the photographs which would keep these men in their memories. Peter Fridd, 10th Reinforcements, was one of the four.

Peter's family remembered him in an In Memoriam in 1917 – "We gaze at the picture that hangs on the wall, his smile and his welcome we often recall. We mourn our dear lad, yet our hearts swell with pride When we know that for Honour and Freedom he died." And they remembered again in 1918 and 1919.

P. Fridd is honoured on the Timaru War Memorial Wall, the Kingsdown District War Memorial, and the Awamoko War Memorial. Just before Anzac Day 2012, Joyce Johnston of Oamaru, a daughter of John Fridd and niece of Peter, saw a memorial oak planted and a cross placed at Bortons on the Georgetown to Kurow road (a North Otago scheme). Joyce also has a photocopy of a photo of a heavy copper keepsake inscribed thus: "He died for Freedom and Honour" and with the name Peter Fridd, and a memorial card with this inscription –

*Killed in action say the cables,
That is all the tale they tell
Of the brave young lad who loved us,
Of the lad we love so well.*

*How the life was sped we know not,
What the last word, look or thought;
Only that he did his duty,
Died as bravely as he fought.*

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