

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

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Private Arthur William King, No.25/1769

By Teresa Scott

Arthur William King, born on 28 February 1886 at Temuka, was the son of London-born Maria Stevens King (née Holton) and William King. William King died in 1902 and is buried at Temuka. Arthur was educated at Temuka School, along with his brother Walter and sister Alma. At the Temuka Wesleyan Sunday School annual prize distribution held in February 1895, Arthur was awarded first prize and he was successful again in 1899, when he was a scholar in the First Division. Prizes were awarded for work done during the year, and good attendance.

Arthur enlisted on 24 August 1915 but was discharged on 25 December medically unfit. When he re-enlisted on 23 December 1915 he was 29 years old, a fit and healthy man. He was 5 feet 9½ inches tall and weighed 154 pounds, of fair complexion with blue eyes and brown hair. His next-of-kin was his mother, Maria King, then living in Dannevirke, and later of Southport, Queensland, Australia, and 50 Browne Street, Timaru. Arthur himself was single, a teamster, and of 'No address'. He had been a teamster for a few years at Weber in the Pahiatua area, living with his mother.

On 1 April 1916 he embarked at Wellington, destined for Suez, with the 2nd Reinforcements, a rifleman in the New Zealand Rifle Brigade. On reaching Suez, he embarked at Alexandria almost immediately for France and was attached to strength at the Base Depot at Etaples in May 1916. Early July saw him attached to the Anzac Entrenching Battalion in the field; a week later in July 1916 he was attached to the Infantry Base Depot at Rouen, from hospital. A month later he joined the 2nd Battalion of the Auckland Infantry Regiment. Nothing more was heard of Arthur until October 1917. Private A. W. King, a native of Temuka, was killed in action on 4 October 1917 in the Field at Ypres, Belgium, aged 28 years. In the newspaper lists of casualties in late October 1917 it was reported that Arthur William King, 25/1769, Auckland Infantry, was missing, believed killed on 4 October. This was the finding of a Court of Inquiry in mid December 1917, and a Death Card was duly issued. Casualty List No. 744, circulated by the Press Association on 18 December 1917, contained the names of 60 killed in action.

Private Arthur William King, 25/1769, is honoured on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, one of 35,000 soldiers – 1176 New Zealanders - commemorated on this memorial. His name is recorded on the Timaru Basilica of the Sacred Heart Memorial (as King Arthur W.), the Temuka War Memorial (addition), the Timaru Memorial Wall (addition), and on the Dannevirke War Memorial (Pvte A. W. King).

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