

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

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By Teresa Scott

Private Ellis Childs, No.55423

John Ellis Childs was born on 13 March 1897, the second son of Albert Edward Childs and Anna née Coleman, and baptised at St Albans Anglican Church, Pleasant Point on 11 May 1897. He was known as Ellis, the name of his maternal grandfather, and enlisted by this name only. His mother died in 1902, not long before little Ellis started school. He was educated at Pleasant Point School and spent from April 1902 until February 1904 at Waitohi School. His father Albert, who married Agnes Young in 1903, was an old resident of Pleasant Point and lived there until his death in 1925. Ellis Childs was fined 10 shillings and costs when he was caught driving a horse and trap at night without a light at Pleasant Point in December 1916.

Ellis Childs, 55423, was single, Church of England, and working as a labourer for Mr Tozer at Pleasant Point when he embarked on 28 July 1917 on the Ulimaroa. His had been one of 368 names drawn in the ballot of April 1917 to fill vacancies in the 30th Reinforcements, leading Ellis to enlist on 4 May, shortly after his 20th birthday. He nominated his father, Mr Albert Childs, of Pleasant Point, as his next-of-kin. He was in good physical and mental health - Class A, and belonged to the 2nd South Canterbury Regiment. Ellis actually left with the 28th Reinforcements, Canterbury Infantry, having been transferred in late June, destined for Plymouth, England.

He marched into Sling Camp on 3 October and in three weeks was on his way to France. After a week at Brigade School in November, he rejoined his battalion, to see just 15 days further service. Private Ellis Childs, 28th Reinforcements, was killed in action on 13 December 1917 "somewhere in France", just 20 years old and not quite five months after he had embarked. All his service was in Western Europe. Albert Childs had lost two sons to war within the space of seven months. Like his brother Charles, Ellis left no will. Receipt of the memorial plaque and scroll was acknowledged by his father, who was also sent his medals – British War Medal and Victory Medal. Initially buried near the Butte Crucifix Cairn by the Rev. G. T. Robson, he is buried in

Polygon Wood Cemetery in Belgium, along with 57 other men who served with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. His name is inscribed on the Timaru Memorial Wall, the Pleasant Point War Memorial and the Pleasant Point School Memorial.

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