

GREAT WAR STORIES

James Alexander Campbell

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

TERESA SCOTT

James Alexander Campbell was the second son of James and Rebecca Ann (née Gibson) Campbell, of Kingsdown. He was educated at Kingsdown School, leaving in 1900 to work in a dentist's office in Timaru. His brothers, John Gibson Campbell and Robert Campbell, also served in World War I.

James was one of the first to enlist, finding himself in September 1914 among 2100 under canvas at the Auckland mobilisation camp. At the December 1917 Kingsdown School picnic, Mr J Craigie, MP, made the observation that few districts in New Zealand, if any, were better represented at the front in proportion to their population.

At that date, 33 past pupils had gone to the front and of the 31 survivors, all were still serving.

Among the names read out

were the brothers James, John, and Robert Campbell. In March 1917, William Campbell, brother of James, John and Robert, appealed against his call-up on the ground of undue hardship - he already had three brothers at the front and two others working on his father's farm; he was unable to sell or lease his own farm. He was twice granted a sine die adjournment. And in June 1917 his father appealed against the call up of another brother, Percival Campbell, as Percival was most essential in the working of the farm, and James already had three sons at the front.

James gave four years and 131 days of service (August 11, 1914 to December 18, 1918), in the Field Ambulance. He was mentioned in despatches - for valuable services rendered in connection with the War (brought to notice of Secretary of State for War and published in the Press by the War Office). This advice was published



The Troopship Ulimaroa. James Campbell was dental officer on the Ulimaroa in 1918.

in the New Zealand newspapers in October 1918, when he was one of the officers mentioned for war services.

Sergeant JA Campbell returned to New Zealand on the "Ulimaroa", embarking on May 1, 1918 at Liverpool and arriving on June 14, 1918, when he returned home for a brief spell before returning to camp.

He was Dental Officer on the Ulimaro. He treated 1086 patients in London between July 21, 1917 and April 13, 1918.

On discharge in December 1918, he intended to return to Rowleys Buildings on Church St in Timaru. He was appointed to Trentham Dental Hospital, but was granted privileges from November 21, 1918, at which time his address was Kingsdown, Timaru; and he was to be struck off the strength of the NZEF from December 18, 1918.

He was discharged as Lieutenant, but this was amended to Staff Sergeant.

His medals had been issued prior to his death in 1927. Lieutenant JA Campbell, NZDC Dental Surgeon, was presented with a Parchment Commission (appointed to temporary rank of Lieutenant) soon after September 11, 1919.

He was appointed an Officer in the Land Forces (i.e. Territorial Force) of the Dominion of New Zealand, from October 14, 1918.

In October 1919 he was recorded as Dental Surgeon, Timaru; he was resident in Timaru in May 1919,

but in September appears to be in Christchurch.

James was found dead in his surgery in Auckland in 1927. His death was self-inflicted. At the time he was residing at a hotel in the city. James had enlisted, was on Gallipoli until the evacuation, earned his commission (as Lieutenant in the Dental Corps), and later saw service in France. When he came home he was assessed as suffering from general debility (rheumatism and deafness). James having left no will, his brothers sought administration of his estate. There were insufficient funds available to meet the claims made on his estate, and administration was in the hands of the Public Trustee. The family brought James home for burial in the Timaru Cemetery.

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