

George Alexander PEARSON

Timaru Herald. 14 July 1915 (PP) [09/01/2017]

PERSONAL ITEMS.

Mr George Pearson, of the literary stall of the “Timaru Herald” leaves to-day for the war, his purpose being to go home to Scotland to say goodbye to his people and then join the Army on the western front. Mr Pearson, who is a nephew of the late Mr George Pearson, of Timaru, came out to Timaru about two years ago, and joined the staff of this paper. He quickly gained the good opinion of his employers and co-workers as well as of all with whom he had to do; and as an earnest of their appreciation of his action in deciding to offer his services to his country, his fellow workers met him last evening and asked his acceptance of a pair of field glasses. The editor (Mr W. F. Alexander) made the presentation, and in so doing complimented Mr Pearson on his pluck and patriotism, at the same time expressing warm appreciation of his work on the paper, and his earnest desire to see him back in his former position at the conclusion of his military service. Mr Doyle, business manager, and Mr Hardcastle, sub-editor, expressed similar sentiments, the former conveying a message from Mr E. G. Kerr (who is at present in Sydney) that Mr Pearson’s position on the “Herald” would be kept open for him on his return. Mr Pearson made suitable acknowledgment of the gift as well as the sentiments accompanying it, and said that nothing would please him better than to come back to Timaru should he have the good fortune to come through the war all right. Mr Pearson leaves to-day for Wellington, where he will join the Remuera for London.

Timaru Herald. 12 January 1916 (PP) [09/01/2017]

DRILLING IN SCOTLAND

AN EX-TIMARU RECRUIT.

Private George Pearson, late of the “Herald” reporting staff, and now of the 15th reserve battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, writing to a friend in Timaru from Gailles Camp, Ayrshire, says, inter alia, that he was now a unit of Kitchener’s great and historic new army. Private Pearson went into camp first at Witley, Surrey, but was not sorry when the order came to pack up and make for Scotland again. Gailles camp is situated on the west coast, about 10 miles from Ayr. It is a very fine situation for a camp, right in the heart of Scotland’s most famous golf links, but in winter, such as at present, is exposed to bitter winds, “the more bitter when you think of us turning out at 7 a.m. in kilts! . . . We have been going hard at drill now for over a week, and were to-day shifted from the recruits’ squad to the companies.” Private Pearson goes on to say that he was anxious to get through with company drill as soon as possible, as he wanted to get into the signalling squad, which will be commenced soon. So far as his experience of soldering [sic] went, he liked it immensely. “The life is rough and ready. . . . We are kept steadily at work. Reveille sounds at 6 a.m., and first parade is 7 a.m. We generally have a route march for an hour, and have breakfast from 8 till 9. From 10 till 12.30 we have physical drill, squad drill in close or extended order, and a march, or one long route march. Then from 2 till 4 we are again hammering at drill, broken perhaps by a short lecture on a competent subject. . . . There is no lack of exhilaration in soldering [sic] under those conditions.”

Timaru Herald. 7 April 1916 (PP) [09/01/2017]

A PEARSON IN KILTS.

FROM TIMARU TO FRANCE.

WITH THE ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS.

Mr G. J. Sealey, J.P., of Timaru, has received a very interesting letter from Private G. A. Pearson, formerly on the reporting staff of the "Timaru Herald," who went to Scotland and joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and wrote from the Gailes Camp, Ayrshire, Scotland. Private Pearson says: —

"I am now beginning to consider myself as a bit of an old soldier; that is as I look around and see all the young chaps who have joined subsequent to my own enlistment. When this regiment removed to its present encampment we were about 300 strong. In less than six weeks we had grown to 1300 in number. That was the time that the Lord Derby recruiting scheme was first talked about, and I think it had a good effect. The fellows in the Regiment are a good lot being mostly of the commercial and business class. I am in the first draft for the Front, and I do not think we will be long on this side of the water. This Battalion is a reserve or draft battalion, that is a feeder, and lately we have been put through our facings with significant haste. Already we are the length of 20-mile route marches in kilts and full fighting order, while musketry and bayonet fighting are being taught with great rapidity. I have just completed a preliminary musketry course, and am expecting to be sent to the range any day. Musketry as taught now-a-days includes the following subjects - fire positions (prone, kneeling and standing), care and mechanism of arms, trigger pressing, aiming, grouping (on the miniature), rapid loading, rapid firing, snap shooting, visual training, estimating distance, direction, recognition and description of targets, and theory. The class I was in had a fortnight's training; (I had only ten days, having been on four days' furlough), and at the end of that time we were put through standard tests by an officer. We all passed. For myself I must say I got on first rate in all the subjects and passed in every one at first time of asking. In care of arms, mechanism and theory, I was one out of two in our section to pass the officers' test. To-day we have had lectures on trench life and how to combat the enemy's gas attacks, so I somehow deduce from this that we are intended for France, and that in the near future. Skirmishing, digging and bayonet fighting form the greater part of our training now-a-days, and work is not allowed to be interfered with by fatigues, etc. It's all serious business now, and it's really astonishing how soon the restless, careless, and evidently unserious recruit comes to realise that he is not out for a picnic, but real grim, trying business. For my part I always regarded it as such. Still I can conscientiously say that I am glad I came (even all this distance) to be in the good old Highland uniform; and even supposing I am not permitted to wear it long, or to be spared to look back on the days I did wear it, I cannot feel anything but pride at having been an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander and having taken part in this great and awful conflict as a member of such an historic Regiment. I must say I really like the life; it has many interesting and attractive features for any one who is really anxious to do his bit; and I have succeeded so far in thoroughly grasping the work in hand. As the days lengthen so our hours of labour extend, but one can make the work congenial by taking a real interest in it, and doing one's best.

The winter weather has been a bit trying for me (especially with this uniform!) but I'm getting used to it now. Although so busy here, and so many miles away, I still think a good deal of Timaru, and I can assure you I have every hope of seeing its pleasurable shores again. The future is too hazy and obscure to build aerial edifices, but the British soldier never says die. I seem to have been very lucky all through my life so far - fortune seems to have smiled on me in many ways and I have no doubt I'll see through this business too. Of course one never knows, and I am glad to be privileged to do my duty to King and Country . . ."

Timaru Herald. 29 August 1916 (PP) [15/05/2014]

TIMARU MAN'S EXPERIENCES.

WITH THE HIGHLANDERS IN FRANCE.

FIRST TASTE OF FIRE.

The following are extracts from letters written to relatives in Timaru by Private G. A. Pearson, formerly of the literary staff of the "Timaru Herald," and now of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders: -

June 26 - "I arrived over here (France), one of a draft of 100, about a week ago, and have been busy training at the base since. Before coming here we were privileged to see quite a lot of France; as a matter of fact the authorities took us a rather round-about way for a short cut, as the saying is. We left England one fine evening on a turbine steamer, on which I went for a very enjoyable trip from Glasgow to Rothesay several years ago. All the men were served with life belts on boarding the ship. Our equipment was all stored in the after saloon, and very soon after sailing each unit was served with rations for 24 hours. These consisted of a tin of bully beef, three biscuits and a junk of cheese per man, with tea, sugar, milk, and jam per section of fifteen men. We had quite a pleasant little sail till we dropped astern the white chalk cliffs of England. I went below and took what sleep I was allowed, and I had quite a good nap ere I was awakened by a rush upon deck. On going up I saw a long, low, flickering line of lights denoting the coast of France. Away on our port bow flashed intermittently the light from Cape Ushant, a landmark we watched and waited for with suppressed excitement from the Remuera's deck in August last. Soon we drew into what appeared to be a rather important seaport, and by midnight had made fast at the wharf. At 8.30 a.m. we disembarked and made sure of the fact that we were at Havre. We had a march of a mile or two to a rest camp, where we looked round until 4 p.m., when we set out on a two hours' march through a maze of narrow, dirty, uneven streets to a railway siding, where we joined a train about half a mile long. After waiting about 90 minutes, in which time we got another issue of rations, we set out at a crawl. The scenery as we journeyed along was really very fine, and I must say I enjoyed the run until darkness intervened. We soon fell asleep, being all rather tired with travelling two full days without rest. However, we were soon again wakened, this time as we slowed down at the shunting yards of Rouen Station. It was then midnight, and we spent the night sleeping surprisingly sound on the stone floor of the goods shed. Blankets and sheets are luxuries now which one does well to forget about. My "pal" spread his great coat on the floor, mine did as a covering for both of us, and our packs did as pillows. The pillows were undoubtedly hard, but not as hard as some people have slept on. We had no dreams of heavenly beauties ascending ladders of light in their march to the kingdoms above. We spent the whole of the next day at Rouen. Our officers very kindly got permission to take us through the city, and I can assure you we did enjoy the march immensely. It is a fine place in many respects, but I am sorry time does not permit me to detail my impressions now. In the evening we set out again on a train journey, and on waking in the morning we were travelling along the coast. At 7.30 a.m. we stopped at Etaples, a fishing village on the Garouche. Here we have been ever since then, undergoing training and awaiting orders to proceed to that region so vaguely, so indefinitely spoken of here as "up the line." This is a very large encampment, and we have all sorts of troops from every part of the Empire. Your men are

here by the hundreds, but I have never had an opportunity of coming into contact with any I knew. We are having a good time here and I rather like the surroundings. The life, I still enjoy, and we are all looking forward to getting up to the firing line. We may, of course, soon change our tune.

June 28 — “Since leaving the base and joining our battalion, we have been kept pretty busy. The battalion came out of the trenches for a few days’ spell the day our draft arrived here, and we have been training with them. This afternoon we go back for another spell, so that I may have some new experiences ere I write again. The weather lately has been very unsettled and we have had a lot of rain, so the trenches will not be as comfortable as one might wish for in summer. We are only a few miles behind the firing line here and have now become used to the racket of the artillery. There was a big bombardment all along the line this week, but it has died away now. From morning till night there was one continuous volley as of thunder. At night it was fine to watch the flashes of the big guns, the bursting of the shells, and the repeated explosions of the star shells. I daresay had we been in the thick of the bombardment, I would have used different adjectives. I was up near the front line two days ago on fatigue, laying trench boards. The communication trench we went up was in a bad state, and we had to splash through mud and water almost up to the knees. After we got on a bit, however, the trenches became very dry and clean. While we were up there, there was a miniature artillery duel, and we got our first taste of fire. When we were coming back along the trench, the Bosche shells came whizzing over us. From the end of the trench to a sheltered part of the road was a stretch of about 150 yards, and crossing this space made one look pretty lively. But of course, when one has been in one or two such predicaments they assume a much different aspect. We were glad, however, when our party got clear of the village and the German shells. There are several villages round here, and each presents a pitiful appearance. I don’t know what Belgium will be like, but I feel sure that France will take many many years to make good if she ever does. The aeroplanes, too, are always a source of interest, and they are continually being shelled. Our men do a great deal more reconnaissance than Fritz – at least at this part of the front—and cause the enemy no end of trouble and anxiety.”

Timaru Herald. 13 January 1917 (PP) [09/01/2017]

IN THE BIG PUSH.

NOTES BY A TIMARU MAN.

LANCE-CORPORAL GEORGE PEARSON.

Lance-Corporal George Pearson, a member of the literary staff of the “Timaru Herald,” who is fighting in France and took part in the Big Push has forwarded some interesting notes of his experiences to one of his colleagues here. The notes were written in the trenches at odd times, and on odd scraps of paper. They read as follows:

“At such a distance from the scene of action as New Zealand is from France, war news, as presented in our papers by the various writers, often assumes a very peculiar and barren aspect when perused by anyone who has been in or near the localities or actions mentioned. When one reads the bare statement that ‘our infantry advanced still further in the vicinity of

the High Wood at dawn yesterday after a short artillery preparation,' one is apt to conjure up a very erroneous idea of advances and artillery preparations.

A HOT CORNER.

"It is an oft-repeated assertion that Scottish regiments are always to be found where there's most work and hardest fighting to be done, but be that as it may so far as our latest Big Push is concerned, it will be found that the sons of Scotia played a very creditable part. Being attached to a Battalion of a certain 'kilted' division, we found ourselves being marched here, motored there, and trained somewhere else, accompanied all the time by vague speculations and rumours. At last, after many trying and fatiguing marches and journeys, we found ourselves right there. We had been in trenches long and often and considered ourselves inured to the nervy effects of Jack Johnston's, coal boxes, trench mortars and the like, but the oldest soldier readily admitted that our destination was the hottest corner the battalion had been in.

A PICTURESQUE SPECTACLE.

In due course it came our turn to "go up," and the first excursion into the line was by no means an enjoyable one. It was a perfect summer evening, a young mid-summer moon had not yet disclosed its presence, though the shades of night had fallen revealing a beautiful star-spangled firmament. But what a turmoil disturbed the wonted repose of Nature. The country around was undulating, with wide, open, roughly-made roads, here and there blocked with an endless stream of supply ladders, ammunition columns, motor transports and ambulances while the tramp, tramp of infantry to and from the firing line was incessant. Every valley presented a picturesque spectacle, being illuminated with glaring camp fires, and flickering candle lights which revealed phantom figures moving to and fro in the dusk. Added to this was an everlasting roar of cannon from every point of the compass. This was where the 'Great Push' started, and day and night our artillery seemed to infest the entire countryside like ants on a mound, spoke out volley after volley of 'rapid' with telling effect. After dusk, the continual flash of guns produced a rare spectacular effect, illuminating the heavens with a grandeur akin to the aurora borealis. We trudged on each man having to be particularly careful to keep in touch with his own party, as it was the simplest matter possible to lose connection. After about thirty minutes walk we seemed to leave the main road, and soon found ourselves stumbling into old shell holes, tripping over tangled shrubbery, and a hopeless tangle of disused wires and cables. On either hand we could observe through the gloom, immense heaps of debris, bricks and mortar while an effluvium which could almost have been cut, told its own tale. The fact was that we were passing through what was at one time the abode of many peaceful, industrious French peasants, having the dignity of a place on the map as Fricourt, but the map had now been altered, and Fricourt was non est.

A DISCONCERTING ATMOSPHERE.

We halted a little further on; we seemed to be off the beaten track. In a short time we heard the subdued purring of a motor ambulance on our left front, and soon inquired as to our whereabouts. After receiving directions we again set off. The night was oppressively warm and, although we were minus our usual packs and carried only the minimum equipment necessary for action, we were beginning to feel uncomfortable. Added to this, an irritating, disconcerting atmosphere pervaded the valley we were traversing. Our nostrils sniffed and itched, while our eyes smarted and watered till we could not see a yard in front of us. Very soon we realised the cause – lachrymatory gas. At once goggles were donned, and we proceeded on our way slowly forward, expressing as we went, in language as strong as it was emphatic, our regard for the Hun and all his kind.

SENSATIONS AND THRILLS.

"After a two hours' journey we came into that region where one experiences sensations and thrills known only (fortunately) to the soldier at the front. We were now in the Somme valley of to-day. On our left, stretching for quite two miles, was a thickly set plantation, while on our right was a sudden rise of quite 100 feet to an extensive plateau. The enemy had been forced out of his positions here by strenuous but determined fighting on our part, but had kept a note of ranges, which was soon quite evident to us. Spasmodically we would have a shower of Krupp's sent over to us, and with no shelter stronger than tree branches and corrugated iron the predicament was none too pleasant. The road from this point up was strewn with dead horses and the remains of ammunition columns and limbers. At last we came to our position – about midnight - and had to set to work with pick and shovel to provide ourselves with cover for the night. Nothing is more surprising than the energy one can throw into pick and shovel work when a bombardment of the utmost intensity is in progress. A hole narrow, and about four feet deep, covered over with thickly spread tree branches - and if one is fortunate or endowed with 'slippery' qualities, a sheet of corrugated iron may find its way from the 'Dump' - is our abode. But this does for the night. We huddle together two or three to a dug-out, and surprising as it may seem many soon fall fast-asleep.

"Soon after daybreak, however, we are on the move again 'drumming up,' or in other words attending to the tucker department. We fry our ham and bread and tea make up our breakfast. A ramble through the wood on our left, and a visit to the battered trenches therein provide much food for thought and helps to pass our time. During the day our artillery shells intermittently, and the Hun replies only very weakly and at lengthy intervals. All day long ammunition columns roll up and branch off in every direction to feed the apparently insatiable batteries. A Red Cross waggon now and then takes down a "load" from the dressing station over the way, while frequently soldiers, battered, hatless, blood-bespattered and maimed in some way or other plod back from the scene of action - not as despondent or gloomy as one might imagine. Cheery words and jokes are passed between the men going up and those who seem well on the way for 'Boulogne and Blighty.'

A TERRIFIC BOMBARDMENT.

"The day wears on, and night draws in. With the approach of dusk there is a gradual, but quite perceptible increase in our artillery fire. The guns shriek and roar, and it soon would appear that the entire atmosphere is one huge mass of flame. Little comes back in our direction, and so intense and unbroken is the bombardment that one can hardly help feeling for the poor souls who have to face such a curtain of fire as our guns were daily setting up in the face of the enemy. This continues the night through and not until the first streaks of dawn have ushered in a new day do the artillery show any abatement of their relentless and harassing labours. The whole night long, however, in spite of the terrific bombardment and the ever present danger from enemy shelling, our ammunition columns continue their great work of keeping up the supplies to the man behind the gun. Only by those who have been privileged to witness this can the real value of the column driver be appreciated. Soon only a few batteries keep up their fire, and as the day wears on only one or two batteries are kept in service.

"This is as seen from behind the line, but we can only conjure up visions of infantry attacks and hand-to-hand encounters in front, and wonder what has been the verdict. Soon, we know will come our turn to take up a position in the firing line, but then time enough for that thought when that occasion arrives.

Timaru Herald. 30 October 1917 (PP) [09/01/2017]

Mr George Pearson, of the “Timaru Herald” literary staff, who “joined up” for war service as a private, but who now has reached the rank of Lieutenant, was posted to the famous old Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, with whom he has been serving for some time. Lieut. Pearson has always been desirous of joining the Flying Corps, and he writes to say that at a recent call for volunteers for this branch of service he was one of a fortunate six to be selected.

Timaru Herald. 3 September 1918 (Papers Past) [13/05/2025]

BOMBS FROM THE CLOUDS.

AIR RAID OVER LONDON.

(Written for the “Timaru Herald.”)

Mr George Pearson, of the staff of the “Timaru Herald,” who is now a lieutenant in the Air Service in France, writes as follows concerning an air raid which he witnessed in London: — If there is one part of the British Empire which at the present time can be safely said to be immune from enemy interference, that surely is far-off New Zealand. No doubt everyone in the Dominion reads with awe and horror of the repeated raids on the Mother Country made by enemy airmen, and their indiscriminate bomb dropping on our centres, especially in England, with the resultant deplorable loss of life. What adds to the gruesomeness of such raids is the percentage of innocent and helpless women and children who pay the extreme sacrifice as a result of these barbarous tactics.

Happening to be in London the other week when a raid was perpetrated, it might be of interest to relate experiences on such an occasion. The atmosphere was beautifully calm and mild, and the long summer twilight was just fading into a delightful evening. Having a few hours to spend in the great city, and wishing to spend it pleasantly, one naturally makes his way to one of the many halls where high-class entertainment is provided — it is wonderful how much patronage is still bestowed on these enterprises. The programme had just been concluded when the manager appeared before the footlights and calmly intimated that one of the eventualities which have come to be expected in such calm, clear evenings had occurred, but there had been no firing heard for about twenty minutes. He calmly stated that ample bomb-proof cover could be obtained in certain portions of the building, to which as many of the audience as chose could repair. There was no need for panic — and it can be truthfully stated there was none. There were women of nervous tendencies, and some, well advanced in years who seemed to be somewhat disturbed regarding their safety, and officers in uniform soon found themselves besieged by an anxious worried-looking throng, and by no end of questions. Assurances, which it must be admitted were absolutely without foundation in fact, were given that all would be well in the portions of the building indicated, and that as no firing had been heard for twenty minutes it could be fairly safely concluded that the raiders had met more than their match. Deeming discretion the better part of valour they had in all probability turned tail and made off.

Having to proceed to another part of the city for a railway connection, we made our way out to the street. Few lights were exhibited; traffic was reduced to a minimum, and people were endeavouring to make their way to their respective homes as best they could, and as quickly as the jostling and colliding of pedestrians would allow them. The scene was not without humour. Five or six paces were about the limit each pedestrian would take without turning an anxious gaze furtively to the star-spangled heavens. The feeling, it must be admitted, was most uncomfortable, and one could not be certain of the moment one of the fearsome death-

dealing projectiles from the Hun machines might be hurled down on the unprotected, helpless populace.

Buses, taxis, and practically all vehicles of conveyance being at a standstill, we were forced to resort to the underground railway as a means of transport from one end of the city to another. It was here that the terrified and nervous were huddled. One had the greatest difficulty in passing along passages and descending stairways, so densely were the people assembled. Here it was that the homeless, the socially degraded, and the poverty-stricken sought shelter. Yet there was many a laudable trait of character displayed by this class, of which it is only too true that London has a large share. But aged men and women could be seen gathering together into their care toddling, wandering, homeless and otherwise uncared-for waifs. Mothers there were bareheaded, with crying infants at their breasts, and even the babes seemed to understand instinctively that some terrorising element floated near. Here and there the irrepressible spirit would be met with, the character who is to be admired in a way, and whose lightness of heart is ever effervescent. Eagerly were we asked "Have they gone yet?" Every platform, every staircase, and every passage was crowded, men, women and children sitting or lying on the floors, each no doubt wondering where his relatives might be, and whether they were safe.

By the time we returned to the streets. they were deserted, save for police authorities and men in khaki.

At the railway station all was darkness. Several soldiers, just across on leave, made their way with an easy "front line" step, from place to place, as though nothing unusual was afoot. Porters could not be had, and travellers had to commandeer barrows and trolleys as best they could to transport their luggage to the platforms. One young lady, who had made the long journey from Edinburgh, stood sentry over her belongings in the station entrance, and told us in meaning tones that she had to look after her own baggage during the raid, as the station hands had made themselves scarce. All we could murmur — those of us who had been "strafed" by enemy heavy metal, was "sound judges."

Soon afterwards the "all clear" siren sounded, and for a considerable time afterwards the "undergrounds" seemed to pour forth hundreds each unconsciously gazing heavenwards, and simultaneously heaving a sigh of relief that once more they had escaped the dastardly Hun.

As to panic — it was conspicuous only by its absence. In the places of amusement, large numbers had congregated, and to the officials and entertainers are due all praise for their efforts in keeping calmness. Many of the artists must have known that a raid was "on," yet they carried out their respective parts with quite heroic calmness. In the programme at the hall referred to, several items were carried out by ten or twelve little girls. There they were, mere mites, yet by their coolness in carrying out their items they were preventing a panic which could easily have had fatal results.

London is full of such samples of British pluck and courage, and it is only now, when a barbarous foe threatens innocent and helpless women and children, that it is seen and appreciated. The raiders on this occasion were prevented from getting into the heart of the city, though their handiwork had as its result several fatal casualties amongst the civilian public. After a short time however, the great metropolis again assumed its wonted aspect, and business and pleasure were resumed as though nothing had happened.

Timaru Herald. 15 November 1919 (Papers Past) [09/01/2017]

TRINITY CHURCH.

RETURNED SOLDIERS WELCOMED

On Thursday evening the congregation of Trinity Church, Timaru, accorded a welcome-home social to the young men of the congregation who had seen service abroad or at home, in the recent war. There was a large and representative attendance, and the Rev. T. Stinson presided.

The chairman in the course of his opening remarks, extended a hearty welcome to the returned men present, and stated that recently a number had left the district. He also read a letter of apology for unavoidable absence, from Mr E. Drake, who expressed his regret at being unable to be present. Continuing, Mr Stinson referred to the creditable record the congregation had, between 50 and 60 of the men having joined up. He also spoke of the readiness with which the eligible members of the congregation had enlisted, and stated that long before compulsory service was instituted every eligible single man in the congregation had offered his services. (Applause). He paid a fitting tribute to the services of the men who had been fortunate to return, and also referred eloquently to those who would always be remembered amongst "the unreturning brave." He thought it was only right that at such a function as that they should remember those who made the supreme sacrifice for liberty and right, and he asked all present to be upstanding in affectionate remembrance of Norman Crawford, Harold Hay, Bob Norrie, Willie Wotton, Wallace Simmers, Lawson Calvert, Victor Duncan, and Willie Stark. They who had not been able to take an active part in the field could never repay their indebtedness to the young men who had helped to bring about such a great and glorious victory to our Arms. (Applause).

Messrs J. N. Lewis and G. A. Pearson, on behalf of the returned soldiers, thanked Mr Stinson for his kindly welcome, and all present for the manner in which they had endorsed the sentiments expressed by him. They expressed their gratitude to the ladies of the congregation in the different organisations, who had worked unremittingly for the comfort of the boys at the front, and had created a record of which any congregation could be justly proud. As a result of this, many comforts had been enjoyed on the field, in a manner which, to say the least of it, was highly appreciated. They felt they had been privileged in being able to render service for King and Country in an hour of such trouble and danger.

During the evening a very enjoyable musical programme was carried through under the direction of Mr Webb, church organist. Those contributing were Misses J. and C. McKay (duet), Miss Rodger, Miss Young and Miss J. McKay (solos), Mr J. N. Lewis (solos), and Mr B. A. de Latour (violin selections). On the motion of Mr Stinson, all who had taken part in the programme were cordially thanked, especially Mr de Latour, who had given up the entire evening, and who rendered four selections to the great enjoyment of all.

Supper was afterwards served by the ladies of the congregation, and a short conversazione followed, the proceedings, which were of a very enjoyable nature throughout concluding with a hearty vote of thanks to the ladies, and the singing of the National Anthem.

Timaru Herald. 15 March 1924 [14/05/2025]

Mr G. A. Pearson, who for the past twelve years has been a member of the literary staff of the "Timaru Herald," will leave Timaru on Monday for Auckland, where he has accepted another appointment. Yesterday afternoon Mr Pearson was met by a fully attended meeting of the Canterbury Journalists' Association (Timaru Branch), when very sincere regret was expressed at the departure from Timaru of one who had proved so capable and popular in his profession, and the best of good wishes were expressed for his future. As a token of esteem

his fellow journalists asked his acceptance of a set of military hair brushes and a tobacco pouch. Mr. Pearson suitably acknowledged the gifts, and the sentiments by which they were accompanied.

Timaru Herald. 18 March 1924 [14/05/2025]

Prior to his departure for Auckland yesterday to take up an appointment in that city, Mr G. A. Pearson, who has been a member of the literary staff of the "Timaru Herald" for the past twelve years, was met by members of the commercial and literary staffs of the "Herald," when expressions of regret at his departure, and of good wishes for his future, were voiced by all present. On behalf of the "Timaru Herald" Company and members of the staff, Mr M. J. Doyle presented the departing journalist with a cheque as a token of the appreciation in which he was held by his principals and fellow workers. Mr Doyle made eulogistic reference to the capable service rendered by Mr Pearson during his many years of faithful work at the "Herald," and said they were all very sorry to lose him. Mr L. Kane, on behalf of the commercial staff, also paid a high tribute to the qualities possessed by their departing guest. Mr Pearson suitably responded, and in thanking the members of the staff for their expression of goodwill, referred with feelings of regret at the severing of his connection with the "Herald" and the many friends he had made during his stay in Timaru.

Timaru Herald. Wednesday, August 17, 1966 [09/01/2017]

OBITUARY

MR. G. A. PEARSON

Mr George Alexander Pearson, who died in Timaru on Monday night, was a highly respected journalist, and served "The Timaru Herald" for more than 20 years in two periods during a career lasting 60 years. He was 75.

Born at Alloa, Scotland, where he first worked as a reporter, Mr Pearson joined the staff of this newspaper soon after his arrival in New Zealand in 1912. In 1924 he took a position with "Truth" at Auckland, transferring to the sub-editorial staff of the Auckland "Star" in 1926. After 19 years' service with the "Star" he returned to "Truth" until 1952 when he moved back to Timaru to assume the post of cable sub-editor and deputy chief sub-editor on the "Herald." He retired in 1963, but returned to work in a part-time capacity until failing health forced him into permanent retirement the following year.

For a number of years Mr Pearson edited the Auckland "Star" Diggers' Column, was the South Canterbury correspondent for "Straight Furrow," the official journal of New Zealand Federated Farmers, and more recently contributed articles to the New Zealand R.S.A. "Review."

On the outbreak of the First World War, Mr Pearson offered his services to the New Zealand Army, but was rejected on the grounds that he was under the minimum height for enlistment. Soon after receiving this advice, he paid his own way to Scotland and joined what was known as the "Businessmen's Battalion" of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. After active service in France, during which he was commissioned, he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and trained as a pilot in England. His flying career was cut short when, after gaining

his wings, he was injured in a crash, but he remained with the corps until his discharge in 1918.

Fare Refunded

On his return to New Zealand, the New Zealand Government recognised his war service and refunded his fare to Britain and paid the difference between the New Zealand and British forces rates of pay.

Mr Pearson maintained a keen interest in aviation, and held office as patron of the Brevet Club (South Canterbury) for several years.

Always proud of the land of his birth, he had a long-standing interest in association football which he played, and refereed in Timaru, in his younger days.

Mr Pearson is survived by a son, Mr A. R. Pearson (Christchurch), and a daughter, Mrs J. W. Cowdery (Auckland).