

The Foster Men

by Bern Foster

The wartime record of a father and his three sons 1915-18

William Foster. Reg. No. 26740. 3rd Infantry Brigade.

Entered camp 1 June 1916 aged 46 years. Served in Western Europe following Sling Camp Training. Was overseas for 2 years, 40 days. Discharged as a Warrant Officer II, 21 January 1919.

William Foster's Sons

Earnest Robert Foster. Reg. No. 11266. 1st Battalion Wellington Reg.

Entered camp 4 November 1916 aged 20 years. Served in Western Europe 20 September 1916 following Sling Camp Training. Was overseas for 2 ½ years. Discharged as a Private 20 June 1919.

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Alfred George Foster. Reg. No. 6/2128. Infantry Cycle Corps.

Entered camp 13 February 1915 aged 19 years. Served in Egypt and was at Gallipoli 1915. Served in Western Europe following Sling Camp Training. Was overseas for 3 years. Discharged as a Private 24 August 1919.

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Charles William Foster. Reg. No. 23/424. New Zealand Rifle Brigade.

Entered camp 13 July 1915 aged 21 years. Served in Palestine and Egypt 1915-16. Western Europe following Sling Camp Training 1916. Was wounded at Le Transloy 1 October 1916 - fell back into the trench and landed on a duckboard. His main fear was to be wounded and drown in a trench or a shell hole. Spent 10 days in a dressing station and was then taken by hospital ship to England. He was wounded in the stomach by three lead balls. An operation found only two balls which were removed. Some time later, while walking around the hospital, his right leg locked up. [After] X-rays and another operation, the third ball was found in his right hip. He returned to France for duty on 10 October 1918 and was accidentally wounded in the forehead. He was overseas for 3 ¾ years and discharged on 24 May 1919 as a Sergeant. Considering the terrible number of casualties suffered during the war it was amazing the four men returned home safe and sound.

He settled down to civilian life with his war bride. Worked as a storeman at the auction company H. Allchurch in Beswick Street.

On 16 November 1920 he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Reserve.

He was unemployed during the depression years, was given work on relief schemes, 2 days a month, worked on the Rangitata Rail Bridge, putting up rock walls on Centennial Park. About 1940 he was employed as a storeman for Macfarlane & Co a fruit produce auction company in Strathallan Street. He retired from there in 1948. Prior to this he assisted in the training for reservists at the Army Drill Hall in High Street in his spare time.

He was a serving member of the Legion of Frontiersmen and enjoyed the many tasks they performed.

In later years, ill health took its toll, and he passed away on 19 June 1965 aged 71 years. He was survived by his wife, three daughters and a son.