

## **OUR BOYS IN CAMP.**

### **INTERESTING LETTER FROM LANCE SERGEANT WILD.**

Following are excerpts from a letter received yesterday from Lance Sergeant R. H. Wild, who left Hokitika with the first contingent for the front. The communication is dated 26th August and is written from the camp at Addington. As regards clothing we are like a draper's shop already. We have just had everything the regulations allow us to carry issued to us, and when we leave here, everything above that will have to be left so with what was given to me in Hokitika, what I bought, and what has been issued, I don't know what to do with it. We had two blankets and an oil-sheet issued when we arrived, so I have four blankets and the weather is not cold. We may be able to take a little extra from here and use it while we are in barracks at Aldershot for a month or so, but when we go to the front the regulations will be strict, but by that time we will be hard and will not notice the stringency.

We are being worked fairly hard, but not very. We have done a lot of night marches which do not allow us time to ourselves, but taking it all round we have had a lot of general leave, when, of course, we go to town. We never know till we get it when we are going, so we can't make any arrangements to see anybody and have to trust to luck to pick them up when in town.

Last Thursday we had a big march and slept out at Wainoni Park under the trees. We were only allowed two blankets, and an oil sheet each, but we didn't feel cold and slept well. We got back to camp at dinner-time on Friday, and had general leave until five o'clock in the evening when we paraded again for outpost duty from 7 till 10 that night. I suppose the equipment in marching order, with rifle, full water-bottle, and ration in haversack that we have to carry, weight thirty to forty pounds, but after the first march we didn't feel the weight of it, and hardly feel that we are carrying anything.

We were inspected on Saturday by General Godley and owing to the good work of the men were allowed leave till eleven that night. A team of camp footballers played the Canterbury reps that afternoon and I went in with the players as an emergency. The camp beat the reps by 6 to 3 after a splendid game. With all our marching my feet were as good as gold and I was as fit as a fiddle, but on Monday's march I was wearing the service boots which we all have to wear and the backs of my heels got chafed so my feet to-day are too sore to go marching, and I have got a job helping to fix up the companies roll and pay sheets which suits me all right. It was hard luck getting a pair of boots that got on to my heels but they will be all right now. On Monday we took raw rations in our messtins, the lids of which have a handle and we cooked our dinners on fires which we

made ourselves and everybody enjoyed the dinner. It was the most tasty I have had for some time. Meat fried with potatoes and onion in butter.

There are several rumours as to when we are leaving and the latest on the 14th September, is, I think, the most likely. Though that date is probable it is quite possible we may get sailing orders much sooner. There is a tremendous lot of work organising the regiment to full strength on account of new men arriving every day, but things are nearly completed here and everything issued, so we can settle down to hard work and regular army discipline. I have been put in among the Greymouth men of our company. I was extremely lucky in getting a good tent of all decent chaps and none of them loafers. It includes two very good singers—Bob Wilson, a relative of W. Wilson (Hokitika) and **McKenzie Gibson**, who was relieving in the Bank of New Zealand at Hokitika lately. I think it is one of the best tents as far as men go in our company.

I have been extremely lucky in retaining my rank, other Sergeants senior to me having been reduced to corporals. A lot of the Sergeants' positions were taken by Staff Sergeant-Majors, and there were nine Sergeants left to fill three vacancies, so most of us had to go down, and so by this it seems that if I have any luck I will come out fairly lucky. One of the papers here printed a souvenir of the camp, giving all details and the names of every man.

*Auckland Star*. 20 October 1917 (PP) [29/10/2017]

## ROLL OF HONOUR

### CAREERS OF THE FALLEN.

#### LIEUT **MACKENZIE GIBSON.**

Mr **Mackenzie Gibson**, headmaster of the Dilworth Institute, has received news of the death of his only brother Lieut **Mackenzie Gibson**, killed in action on 12th inst.

*Press.* 22 October 1917 (page 8) [16/08/2015]

## **THE FALLEN AND WOUNDED.**

### **PERSONAL NOTES.**

Quite a gloom was cast over Sumner on Saturday when the news came through that Lieutenant **Mackenzie Gibson** had been killed in action in France. Lieutenant Gibson was the younger son of the Rcv. Mackenzie Gibson, and was educated at Christ's College, afterwards joining the staff of the Bank of New Zealand in the South Canterbury district. He enlisted early in the war, leaving as a private with the Main Expeditionary Force. He was at the landing at Gallipoli, and later on was invalided from Gallipoli. He recovered and returned, and took part in the evacuation from the peninsula, having by that time been promoted to sergeant. He then left for England, and was engaged in training operations, eventually obtaining his commission. He was also engaged in training operations in France. His father, the Rev. Mackenzie Gibson, was the vicar of All Saints' Church, Sumner when war was declared, and left as chaplain for Trentham Camp in March, 1915. He eventually left New Zealand with the 6th Reinforcements. The deepest sympathy is expressed with the parents in Sumner, where they are so well known.

*New Zealand Herald.* 22 October 1917 (page 6) [16/08/2015]

## **MEN WHO HAVE FALLEN.**

### **LIEUTENANT MACKENZIE GIBSON.**

Lieutenant **Mackenzie Gibson**, who has been killed in action, was an old boy of Christ's College, Christchurch. On leaving school he entered the service of the Bank of New Zealand. He sailed with the Main Body as a private, and won promotion on Gallipoli for rescuing a wounded man under heavy fire. At the evacuation he was in charge of the Cheshire Ridge section. Later he was adjutant at Tel el Kehir, Sling, and Etaples. He rejoined the division early in August last. Lieutenant Gibson's father also is on active service as a chaplain. Mr. Noel Gibson, headmaster of the Dilworth Institute, is a brother of the late Lieutenant Gibson.

*Greymouth Evening Star*. 23 October 1917 (Papers Past) [25/10/2017]

## **ROLL OF HONOUR.**

Lists of wounded contain about 900 names.

### **Lieut. McKENZIE GIBSON.**

The sad intelligence was received in town on Saturday night that Lieut. McKenzie Gibson had been killed in action. He was a son of the Rev. McKenzie Gibson, formerly Vicar of Waimate, and now chaplain to the N.Z. Forces at the front. Both father and son enlisted with the son as a private. Young McKenzie passed unscathed through the campaigns in Egypt, Gallipoli, and France. He had the usual share of sickness, but treated his ailments lightly and speedily recovered. He had the soldierly spirit and the ability to command. He speedily rose from the ranks to be a Quartermaster-Sergeant, Sergeant-Major, and Adjutant, and finally he received a well-earned commission. Last Sunday morning Archdeacon York briefly alluded to Lieut. McKenzie Gibson's death, and said that he intended to hold a solemn memorial service next Sunday morning. Mr Gibson was the sixth member of the Holy Trinity Choir to pay the supreme sacrifice since the outbreak of the war. The other members killed were: Messrs Cribb, Mansfield, Avent, Robbie, and an old member, Mr Walter Hogg. The sympathy of the whole community, he felt sure, would be extended to the Greymouth young lady whom Lieut. Gibson had been engaged to be married, and also to the McKenzie Gibson family and friends in their sad bereavement.

*New Zealand Times*. 24 October 1917 (Papers Past) [29/10/2017]

Lieutenant Mackenzie Gibson, reported killed in action in France, was the younger son of the Rev. Mackenzie Gibson, late vicar of All Saints' Church, Sumner. Lieutenant Gibson was educated at Christ's College, and joined the staff of the Bank of New Zealand, Christchurch. He enlisted early in the war and left as a private in the Main Body. He took part in the landing at Gallipoli and was afterwards invalided to Egypt. Here he recovered and returned to the peninsula, where he was promoted to sergeant. He was wounded later but took part in the evacuation, and went to England, where he was promoted to lieutenant. His father is at present at Hornchurch Hospital as chaplain-major, having previously acted as chaplain at Abassia Hospital, Egypt, where he arrived with the 6th Reinforcements.

*North Otago Times.* 27 October 1917 (Papers Past) [29/10/2017]

## **THE FALLEN AND WOUNDED**

### **Lieutenant M. Gibson.**

Lieutenant Mackenzie Gibson was the younger son of the Rev. Mackenzie Gibson, and was educated at Christ's College, afterwards joining the staff of the Bank of New Zealand in the South Canterbury district. He enlisted early in the war, leaving as a private with the Main Expeditionary Force. He was at the landing at Gallipoli, and later on was invalided from Gallipoli. He recovered and returned, and took part in the evacuation from the peninsula, having by that time been promoted to sergeant. He then left for England, and was engaged in training operations, eventually obtaining his commission. He was also engaged in training operations in France. His father, the Rev. Mackenzie Gibson, was vicar of All Saints' Church, Sumner, when war was declared, and left as chaplain for Trentham Camp in March, 1915. He eventually left New Zealand with the Sixth Reinforcements. The deepest sympathy is expressed with the parents in Sumner, where they are so well known.

*Greymouth Evening Star*. 29 October 1917 (Papers Past) [25/10/2017]

## MEMORIAL SERVICE AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH.

Holy Trinity Church was crowded yesterday morning with a mixed congregation consisting of men and youths in khaki, hospital nurses, the usual worshippers, and many visitors from other churches, who had all assembled out of respect for the memory of the brave fellows so recently fallen in battle. The service was impressively conducted by Archdeacon York. As one of the men who had fallen had been a valued member of the church choir, two of his favorite hymns were sung, "Lead, Kindly Light" and "Abide With Me." The Archdeacon said these hymns were loved by all the men at the front, and although they were evening hymns it was appropriate to sing them at this morning service in memory of the men who had passed away.

The Archdeacon, in the course of his sermon, said that no fewer than six members of the choir had been killed at the war. The last of the six to be killed was **Lieut. McKenzie Gibson**. The others were Messrs Cribb, Mansfield, Robbie, Avent and Hogg. During the past week the Church of England here in Greymouth had lost seven of its members. They were met that morning to pay their last tribute of affection and respect to the memory of these brave men. Their names were: Captain George McIlroy, a member of the Trinity Institute; Lieut. Arthur Talbot, hon. sec. of the Institute; **Lieut. McKenzie Gibson**, a member of the choir; Sergt.-Major Sotheran, an old Sunday School scholar; and Privates Harry Debenham, Joseph Brown, and Jack Beaman, all of them members of the Church. These deaths were all recorded during the past week. The Archdeacon said that if he began to mention those killed who were outside the Communion of the Church of England, or made the list retrospective, the recital would take too long. He would, however, make one exception by referring to Wallace Tomlinson, a young soldier of great promise, and whose parents reside at Cobden. He had been reported missing since the early part of the year and now was reported as having been killed. They would all sympathise with his sorrowing parents at the sad termination to such anxious months of suspense. Taking as his text the words of Deut. 33, verse 27, "The Eternal God is thy Refuge and underneath are the Everlasting Arms" the Archdeacon briefly unfolded the meaning of the text and spoke of the comfort such words are to our lads on the battlefield. The knowledge of the invisible presence of God and His almighty and sustaining power enabled them to face death unflinchingly, in the certainty that their souls were safe in His mighty keeping for all eternity. The Archdeacon then touched briefly on the strong points in the characters of each of the men whose names had been mentioned.

**Lieut. McKenzie Gibson**, whose father was now a chaplain at the front, had been a painstaking and capable officer of the Bank of New Zealand, and a most useful member of their Church choir. He had enlisted as a private and by dint of hard work and soldierly qualities had worked himself up from the ranks to a well-earned commission. He was engaged to be married to a Greymouth young lady and hoped some day to return and lead her to the altar. The sympathy of the whole community was extended to his sorrowing fiancée and to the members of the McKenzie Gibson family in their sorrow.

Captain George McLroy, whose parents resided in Greymouth, was a native of Kumara . . . . .

Lieut. Arthur Talbot, the senior master of the secondary division of the High School . . . . .

Then we have to mention the name of a Greymouth boy, one born in this town, baptised in this Church and confirmed at Trentham just before he went away, whose mother and family are here in our midst and whose sister is the energetic secretary of our Women's Guild—Sergt. Major Oliver Sotheran—a telegraph operator expert . . . . .

The call "To arms!" has sounded, and having done their utmost each is ready to say, "Let me like a soldier fall."

Having mentioned the officers, the Archdeacon spoke of the privates. They were not quite so well known to him.

Harry Debenham, whose sister was one of their most regular communicants and whose father and family reside at Jacksons. . . . .

Joseph Brown, brother to Mrs Jack Weaver, and uncle to two of our boy choristers, was a native of the Lyell and a line stamp of young man, as was also Jack Beaman, whose mother (Mrs Moore) formerly lived within a stone's throw of the church. These men heard their country's call and responded with alacrity. They turned out to be good soldiers of the King. They made the supreme sacrifice. They gave their lives, like so many more, for us and for the maintenance of the Christian ideals of Truth, Righteousness, Justice and Liberty. The Gospel of Christ teaches us to "weep with those who weep," and we mingle our tears to-day with that innumerable company whose hearts have been made sad by the ravages of war. They need our sympathy and they need the consolation of our text, that the Eternal God is our Refuge and underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

*Sun.* 19 January 1918 [12/07/2016]

Chaplain Mackenzie Gibson received the following letter from General Braithwaite, commanding the 2nd New Zealand Brigade in France, after the offensive in October last: — “Headquarters, 2nd New Zealand Brigade, New Zealand Division, France, October 20, 1917.— Dear Mr Mackenzie Gibson, - I am well aware that no words of mine can be of the slightest comfort to you and yours at such a time, but I should like to tell you how much I feel for you in the great sorrow that has befallen you through the death in action of your most gallant son. I knew him very intimately, both at Sling as adjutant there, when I was in command last winter; again at Etaples, and lastly in my own brigade out here in France and Flanders. I knew his worth, and it was I who recommended to the authorities that he was just the sort of man to put Etaples on its proper legs; and he did not disappoint us. It was a great pleasure to me to see him rejoin the 1st Canterbury Battalion, and he was very happy in coming back to us. He was a great soldier, and he possessed the rare qualities of a disciplinarian. It is, indeed, hard that he should have been taken from you, and from us; men like him cannot be replaced in a day. If it is any consolation and comfort to you, you have the certain knowledge that he died fighting at the head of his men, within a few yards of the enemy, in the most desperate engagement that New Zealanders have faced during this war, and under conditions of hardship and suffering almost unparalleled in the history of war. To him belongs the glory of it, and perhaps he would have wished it so; who knows? Anyhow, we all mourn his loss, and offer to you, his father, our heartfelt expressions of sympathy; and I can only hope, as time goes on, you may be cheered in your sorrow at the remembrance of his glorious death facing the enemy. — With deepest sympathy, believe me, yours very sincerely, W. G. Braithwaite, Brig.-General, Commanding Second New Zealand Brigade.”



## KILLED IN ACTION.

CAPTAIN **MACKENZIE GIBSON:**

AN APPRECIATION:

At the close of the October offensive the following letter was written by General Braithwaite, Commanding the Second New Zealand Brigade, to Chaplain **Mackenzie Gibson**, No. 2 New Zealand General Hospital, Walton on Thames:—

“I am well aware that no words of mine can be of the slightest comfort to you and yours at such a time, but I should like to tell you how much I feel for you in the great sorrow that has befallen you through the death in action of your most gallant son. I knew him very intimately, both at Sling as adjutant there when I was in command last winter; again at Etaples, and lastly in my own brigade out here in France and Flanders. I knew his worth, and it was I who recommended to the authorities that he was just the sort of man to put Etaples on its proper legs; and he did not disappoint us. It was a great pleasure to me to see him rejoin the 1st Canterbury Battalion, and he was very happy in coming back to us. He was a great soldier, and he possessed the rare qualities of a disciplinarian. It is indeed hard that he should have been taken from you and from us; men like him cannot be replaced in a day. If it is any comfort and consolation to you, you have the certain knowledge that he died fighting at the head of his men, within a few yards of the enemy, in the most desperate engagement that New Zealanders have faced during this war, and under conditions of hardship and suffering almost unparalleled in the history of war. To him

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