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

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By Carol Bell

Private Arthur Percy Stowell, No.6/3483

Arthur Stowell was a tally clerk at Pareora Freezing Works when he enlisted on 26 August 1915. He gave his last employer as W. Watkins, foreman butcher of Pareora Freezing Works and his next of kin as his mother Louise Stowell of Pareora near Timaru. He was born at Springbrook on 27 August 1894, so was just one day short of his 21st birthday, and had served in the territorials. He was 5ft 9in tall, weighed 147lbs, had fair hair, brown eyes and brown hair. He passed all physical tests. He embarked with the 8th Reinforcements of the Canterbury Infantry Battalion on 13 November 1915, sailing from Wellington to Suez.

Private Stowell's army record states that he took part in the Egyptian campaign of 1915-16 and was then on the Western Front 1916-17. He was hospitalised with German measles in France in April 1917. He spent eight days in hospital before being transferred back to base depot. Two months later he died of wounds received in action on 6 June 1917 – that he was brought in dead to an Advanced Dressing Station of the 3rd NZ Field Ambulance in the field in Belgium. He was buried at Underhill Farm, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium.

The Timaru Herald of 25 June 1917 stated: "Quite a gloom was cast over Pareora when the news came through that Private A.P. Stowell had died of wounds received in action. Private Stowell, who was the youngest son of Mrs H. Stowell, Pareora, was a most popular boy and highly esteemed by all who knew him. His mother has received messages of sympathy from all parts of the Dominion. Private Stowell left with the 8th Reinforcements, went through the Somme push last yer, and it is surmised that he fell in the last great fight when the New Zealanders made such a glorious name for themselves and so many brave men made the supreme sacrifice. Private Stowell was 22 years of age."

This is part of the SCRoll project. You can find SCRoll stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll

[Postscript: It was later discovered that Arthur Percy Stowell had put his age up by one year He was one day short of his 20th birthday, born 1895, his mother's name was Louisa, not Louise, and he was registered Alfred Percy, not Arthur Percy. The story, however, does accurately reflect his army record.]