

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

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**By Teresa Scott**

### **Francis Joseph WADDELL (Joe), No. 52668**

Francis Joseph Waddell was the elder surviving son of Francis (Frank) and Amelia Emma (née Taylor) Waddell, of Kimbell, Fairlie. He was born on 23 February 1889 at Oamaru. At school he was known as Frank, but by war time he was known as Joe, perhaps to distinguish him from his father. He started his schooling at Oamaru North School, before transferring to Waimataitai School in Timaru at the age of nine. In April 1898 his father had sold "his pleasantly and healthily situated property, ... with comfortable 4-roomed house and scullery thereon" in Oamaru and moved to Timaru.

Francis was of small build - just 5 feet 3½ inches tall and weighing only 127 lbs - but was in good shape when he underwent the medical examination. He alleged previous cardiac disease but none was observed, and he had had an operation on his nose 23 years before. At the time he was a 28 year old single farm labourer for his father, the family living at Kimbell near Fairlie.

Frank was one of a good number of South Canterbury men who left Timaru for the Front on 11 April 1917. During a brief visit home on leave, to "Londonderry", Fairlie, Joe was farewelled at a very successful social gathering in the Silverstream schoolroom. He was presented with a case of pipes with good wishes for "the best of soldier's luck".

Rifleman F. J. Waddell embarked for Plymouth on 12 June 1917, with the New Zealand Rifle Brigade. He marched into Sling in August, marched out in October, and on 24 October at Rouen was posted to the Otago Regiment. Just under six months after leaving and just six weeks after reaching the battle front, on 6 December 1917, he died at the Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, in Belgium – "somewhere in France" - of gunshot wounds to his chest and abdomen, probably received near Ypres. He was buried in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, near Poperinge, Belgium, one of 10, 785 war casualties buried here.

Private F. Waddell was one of four Fairlie boys who, having died in action, were remembered in sympathy by the Mackenzie County Council at their January 1918 meeting. Condolences were extended to their parents and relatives, with the observation that they were all fine young men.

His brother, Harold George Waddell, was called up in July 1918 but, when he explained that he was the sole surviving son, his only brother having died on active service, his case was adjourned sine die. In July 1919 his father Frank wrote to the *Timaru Herald* that he thought the most sincere monument to commemorate the signing of the peace agreement, a monument which would "fully embrace the awful waste of life which has been felt in every household of the world", would be a free maternity home. "We men are prone to belittle the sacrifices made by the mother and give to the father all the credit. It is time to change

these ideas and to place women first in all the plans and schemes for physically, morally and intellectually advancing the race of mankind.”

Francis Joseph Waddell’s medals – British War Medal and Victory Medal – were sent to his father at Kimbell. He is remembered on the Timaru War Memorial Wall (as WADDELL F. J.) and the Fairlie War Memorial (as F. J. Waddell) and on the Waimataitai School Memorial (as WADDELL J).

*This is part of the SCRoll project. You can find SCRoll stories, hosted by the South Canterbury Museum, at [museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll](https://museum.timaru.govt.nz/scroll)*