

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

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William JEFFERIES, No.8/1267

William Jefferies was born on 7 December 1884 at Timaru, the eldest son of William Jefferies and his wife Ada née Cullimore. The family moved from Timaru to Kongahu about 1891-1892. There his mother was gazetted as a registered midwife. Along with some of his brothers William had been a bushman at Kongahu, a forestry area near Westport. He enlisted on 3 November 1914, close to his 30th birthday. He had been residing at Te Puke for about three years, engaged in bush-felling and flax-cutting. He was single, of Church of England affiliation, and a well-built man, standing at 5 feet 10½ inches, weighing 199 lbs, and in good physical condition, although the teeth, apart from the artificial upper ones, were only fair. He nominated his father, of Kongahu, Westport, as his next-of-kin.

On 14 December 1914 he was on his way to battle, embarking with the Otago Infantry Battalion, Second Reinforcements. It was to be a short-lived and tragic battle. Having reached Egypt on 29 January 1915, he was first posted to the 8th Southland Regiment at Kubri, before embarking at Alexandria on 12 April 1915 to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli. In mid June 1915 the first reports were coming through that Private William Jefferies, 8/1267, Otago Battalion, was missing in action 1-3 May 1915. Casualty List No. 68 was a heavy list and named over 160 men missing. Because of uncertainty over the date of this massive loss, the time period was calculated as 1-25 May. The most likely date was later considered to be 2 May.

A Court of Enquiry held at Moascar Camp, Ismailia, Egypt, on 22 March 1916, concluded that he was "Missing, now reported reasonable to suppose dead between 1 and 25 May 1915". He was probably killed on Dead Man's Ridge (Pope's Hill) in an attack on Baby 700. Dead Man's Ridge, which ran between Pope's Hill and Quinn's Post at the Dardanelles, was so-named following the disastrous attack by the Otago Regiment supported by British and Australian units on the night of 2-3 May 1915. On 25 April when the Australian and New Zealand Army

Corps landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula it was with the aim of capturing Baby 700. William Jefferies is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial, Anzac, Gallipoli. This memorial is dedicated to those who died at Gallipoli and have no known grave.

His brother Job Jeffries died of lobar pneumonia on 12 February 1917 at Codford Hospital, Wiltshire, England, and is buried in Codford St Mary New Churchyard. Another brother, Charles Henry Jefferies (Harry), who gave well over four years of service in World War I, was wounded at Gallipoli just a few months after William was reported missing. A younger brother, Albert Jefferies, a drainer of Kongahu, Westport, who was drawn from the West Coast Recruiting District in the second Military Service ballot, in December 1916, was given three months leave.

William's mother, Mrs A. Jefferies, Kongahu, was to receive his war medals – 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. His father acknowledged receipt of the scroll in 1921. The Public Trustee elected to administer his estate in September 1916. His property included £153.10s.9d. in the bank, a £100 life policy, and £5.8s pay accrued to death, which reflected well on his saving endeavours. His parents were buried at little Wanganui Cemetery but may have been reinterred at Karamea following sea erosion at Little Wanganui. William and his brother Job are honoured on the Westport War Memorial.

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