

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

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### **Amos William GODSELL, No.1/279**

Amos William Godsell was the youngest son of John and Margaret Eleanor (née Meagher) Godsell, of Kakahu. He was born on 3 December 1896, not 3 December 1893 as stated in 1914 on his attestation form, and educated at Roman Catholic convent schools and Onehunga High School. Amos's father died of injuries from a kick from a horse in July 1897, when Amos was just an infant. John Godsell, born in Tipperary of a Welsh father, had left Ireland for the colonies at the age of 18 and eventually settled in New Zealand in about 1861, firstly in Auckland, then in Canterbury. While at Kakahu, he was a representative on the Geraldine Road Board. For some time he ran two farms – one at Kakahu and a larger one in the Hakataramea Valley, and employed a large number of labourers. After drought affected his grain crops, Mr Godsell returned to Auckland with his wife and young family. Amos' sister Elizabeth, religious Sister Mary Vianney, a teacher of music, died of pneumonia and heart failure in February 1914 at Nelson, aged just 27 years.

On 12 August 1914 per the Monowai, aged 17 years 8 months, A. W. Godsell embarked with the Advance Guard, in B Company, arriving at Apia, Samoa on 29 August. His nominated next-of-kin was Miss C. M. Godsell - his sister Catherine. Amos was on active service in Samoa, with the Samoan Advance, for 8 months (15 August 1914 - 14 April 1915).

On 15 April 1915 Amos was discharged at his own request. At this time he was considered to be of very good character. He was not eligible to enlist for further active service being only 18 years of age. In early 1916 he was elected as a Warden to the St Patrick's (Wellington) Branch of the Hibernian Society. In April, employed as a clerk in the Deputy Chief Censor's Office in Wellington, he responded to the Call to Arms, was passed medically fit, and in June, still not 20, he went into camp for the 17th Infantry Reinforcements. His sister Catherine, now Mrs McKeowen, was again next-of-kin.

In July 1916 he was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. While at Featherston and just before embarking on 27 September 1916, he was appointed temporarily to be Corporal. On 7 January 1917 he marched out of Sling for France where he joined his Battalion of the Wellington Infantry Regiment at Etaples in February. At this time he relinquished his rank as Lance Corporal.

Just one year after re-enlisting and only 20 years old, Amos was killed in action at Messines. He was killed by shrapnel, on 7 June 1917, whilst carrying ammunition to the front lines, death being instantaneous. His medals (1914-1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal) were sent to his legatee, Mrs Mary Boland, Princess St, Onehunga, his executor Mr J. P. McKeown (McKeowen) desiring to have no further action re medals. Amos had made out a pay book will (no date given), in which he

named John Patrick McKeowen as his executor and trustee. He left all his property both real and personal to Mary Boland. His connection to Mrs Mary Boland is not apparent. She was born Mary Moore in Ireland and married there before coming to New Zealand. In 1920 she died, aged 74. His plaque and scroll were sent in 1921 to his surviving brother James, living at Doyleston, Canterbury. His brother John Amos Godsell was also killed in action in 1917 and his brother James Richard Godsell who also served in World War One, was about this time wounded in Palestine. Their mother, Margaret Eleanor Godsell formerly of Hakataramea, Canterbury, died in November 1918, predeceased by a daughter and two sons in the war. The name of Private Amos William Godsell is inscribed on the Messines Ridge (New Zealand) Memorial in the Messines Ridge British Cemetery, Belgium.

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