

GREAT WAR STORIES

Lance Corporal Silas George Ellery

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

CAROL BELL

Silas George Ellery, born 14 June 1890, was a farmer at Belfield, Geraldine working for his father Silas Ellery when he enlisted in March 1916.

He was 25 years old, 5ft 10in tall, of fair complexion with grey eyes and dark hair.

He was posted to D Company, 3rd Battalion, NZ Rifle Brigade and embarked on for England on the troopship Waitemata on 26 July 1916.

He left Sling Camp for France on 20 October 1916 and was appointed Lance Corporal in the field the following August.

Lance Corporal Ellery was reported missing in action on 12

October 1917 – the day termed the blackest day in NZ military history when 45 officers and 800 men lost their lives in a futile attack across the mud at Passchendaele, and was deemed to have been killed in action at a military court of inquiry on 18 April 1918.

He is remembered on the NZ Apse at Tyne Cot Memorial, Passchendaele, Belgium.

The Timaru Herald of 25 February 1918 reported: Mrs Ellery and family, of Belfield, have received a letter from Private E.W. Belcher, NZ Machine Gun Corps, dated Grantham, Lincolnshire, December 16, 1917, expressing sympathy with the family in the loss by the death in action of their son George, who had been his

constant companion and closest friend from the time they went into camp up to the time the writer left France for Blighty.

“From all information I can gather he fell in the attack on the Heights of Abraham, Passchendaele, Ypres, on 12 October, while gallantly leading his section against the enemy.

“I hope you will find some consolation in the fact that he died doing his duty, and with his face to the enemy.”

I am going back to France next month, and will endeavour to find out where he was buried, and further particulars if possible.”

Prior to the receipt of the above letter the only information received by the family concerning Lance Corporal S.G. Ellery was



Silas George Ellery, above, and right; the Tyne Cot Memorial, Passchendaele, Belgium.

that he was reported missing on October 12.

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

