

Features

GREAT WAR STORIES

Sergeant Stanley Joseph Bowker

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

CAROL BELL

Stanley Bowker lived in College Road, the son of Charles and Harriet A Bowker of 10 Sarah Street when he enlisted in 1914.

He embarked for Gallipoli as a corporal with the Canterbury Mounted Rifles on 16 October 1914 and was killed in action on 21 August 1915 aged 22.

He is remembered at Hill 60 (NZ) Memorial, Hill 60 Cemetery, Turkey.

The battle of Hill 60 on 21 August was the last major assault of the doomed Gallipoli Campaign when an attempt was made to link the Anzac and Suvla landings. Two attacks were made on 21 and 27 August, and although limited gains were made during the first assault the attacks were ultimately unsuccessful.

The Timaru Herald of 15 September 1915 recorded: 'Mrs C. Bowker of The Pines, College Rd, received the sad news yesterday that her son, Sergeant Stanley J. Bowker, had been killed at the Dardanelles. The late Sergeant Bowker was an exceptionally fine type of young man and his death will come as a severe blow to many people besides his relatives. Though only 23 years of age, he had, through his courteous, unassuming and always manly ways, made a friend of every one with whom he had ever come in contact. 'Born in Timaru he was educated at the Timaru Main and High Schools, after which he went to Lincoln College, having decided to follow agricultural and pastoral pursuits. On leaving the College he accepted an engagement with Mr John Withell, working first on the latter's Otupua and Ealing properties, and when the war broke out he was in charge of Mr Withell's Wairoa estate, Hawkes Bay. Prior to going to the North Island he had been a member of the South Canterbury



Hill 60, Gallipoli

Mounted Rifles in which he held the rank of Corporal. When the war broke out he lost no time in informing his employer that he considered his place was at the Front - though he had no personal desire to go apart from the desire to do his duty. He accordingly came down to Timaru and joined his old regiment, leaving Timaru as a Corporal, but subsequently gaining promotion to the rank of Sergeant. He was killed in action at Gallipoli on August 21.'

In his last letter to his mother, he wrote: 'If this war is to be over quickly we must have more men; the more we get and the quicker we get them the sooner will it be over.'

Mrs Bowker was the recipient of many messages of sympathy, including one from the members of the Wesley Ladies Guild, when they met to continue their work on behalf of the soldiers.

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



Stanley Joseph Bowker