

Family finally gets to grave

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Private Herbert Marshall's grave has waited 96 years for a visitor.

It was an emotional reunion for Temuka woman Fay Johnston, who was the first of the family to visit her grandfather's grave in Pas de Calais, France.

Marshall was born in Edendale, Southland, to English parents and went on to work as labourer in Makikihi for J Tiffen.

He featured in the *South Canterbury Herald* in August when his granddaughter June Marshall was in a story about him during the World War I centenary.

Private Herbert Marshall entered the service on October 18, 1915. He was on his second stint overseas when he died in action on September 2, 1918, leaving behind his wife Lily Tiffen whom he married on October 26, 1816 in Makikihi and his daughter Ethel born on January 17, 1917.

He had only known Ethel for months before heading back to the war.

Ninety-six years to the day, Fay and her husband Dick and her son



Died: Lance Corporal Herbert Marshall who died in World War I.

Aaron and his family visited the grave.

"It was very emotional when we found him. We just walked straight in and found him.

"The grave was so beautifully kept.

"I brought flowers and also planted a rose there.

"We were the first family members to go to it."



Four generations: Fay with her son Aaron and his sons Will and Alex at the boys' great-great-grandfather's grave.

Photos: SUPPLIED

It was her third attempt to get there.

"The first time we tried to go from England (where her son lives) the wharfies were on strike, the second time we ran out of time, but this time we did it."

Marshall was first discharged for being medically unfit. He was also hospitalised during his second stint.

He was for a time Lance Corporal but reverted to Private on his second tour.

In a letter to her grandmother Lily, from the company chaplain G T Robson, the nature of how private Marshall died is explained.

"It was during our second attack west of the village of Fremicourt that Mr Marshall fell in action: from what I remember he was killed instantly so he would not suffer in any way," the chaplain wrote. The Bancourt British Cemetery also contains the graves of six officers of the Royal Flying Corps buried by the enemy in autumn 1916.



RIP: The grave of Herbert Marshall.



Remembering: Fay Johnston at the Tower of London where 888,246 ceramic poppies are being planted for fallen World War I soldiers to make Armistice Day on November 11. One will be for her grandfather Herbert Marshall.



Stunning tribute: The Tower of London gets ready to mark Armistice Day.