

Mt Benger Mail. 20 September 1916 (page 3) [10 August 2015]

FAREWELL TO PRIVATE JAMES FALCONER. A Successful "Smoker."

There was a large attendance at the farewell, in the Library Room of the Athenaeum Hall on Friday night, to Private James Falconer, Coal Creek, who left on Monday morning for one of the military camps to undergo the customary training before proceeding to the field of battle.

The function took the form of a "Smoker," the Mayor, Mr J. A. Roggiero, presiding. In his opening remarks the Chairman explained that the short notice they received did not give them sufficient time to arrange for a social such as had been tendered to our departing recruits, but he felt sure those present would enjoy the "smoker," possibly more so than a social. Private Falconer was not going with the Milton group and that was the reason they had not been notified sooner. However, he felt very gratified to have been offered the opportunity of meeting him to say farewell and wish him God-speed. Everyone was proud of the men who had gone from this district, the total to date numbering 84 or 85. About 40 who had offered their services were not accepted, but this was no fault of their own.

After the Royal toast had been honoured, Mr J. H. Waigth, jun., was called upon to propose the toast of "The Men at the Front." In doing so he said he considered it a distinct privilege to be entrusted with such an important toast, as it was generally recognised that there were no men in the world today so important as those at the front. The soldiers on the side of the Allies were not only assisting in the subjugation of a tyrannical and oppressive race but they were assisting in an endeavour to retain and establish for all time that liberty and freedom so long enjoyed by the nation to which we are proud to belong. The men at the front were shedding their blood and enduring severe hardships, while hundreds had given up their lives in order to save us from a tyrannical nation. He therefore considered it a privilege to publicly proclaim their worth. He quoted the familiar text: "Greater love hath no man than he who lays down his life for his friends." This had been only too often exemplified by our men who had given up their prospects in life for our comforts. Being so remote from the din of battle it was very difficult for us to realise the hardships and privations endured by the soldiers who would be regarded with the greatest reverence and highest admiration. In conclusion he referred to the noble death of Sergeant Vernon who had taken part in deeds that would be immortalised. The Australasians and New Zealanders had performed deeds that would add pages of history to the lands lapped by the waters of the Aegean Sea.—(Applause). The reply to the foregoing was entrusted to Sergeant Ernest

Falconer, a brother of the guest who enlisted early in the war and went through the Gallipoli Campaign. He said he felt honoured to have the opportunity of responding on behalf of the boys at the front. They fully realised their responsibilities and considered it was their bounden duty to go out and fight for those who were unable to bear arms to defend themselves. They were not looking for praise or applause. The "boys" had a conscience and the knowledge that they were doing no more than their duty was considered by them to be a sufficient reward for their sacrifices.— (Applause.).

Mr H. Henderson proposed the toast of Our Allies and especially mentioned Belgium who bore the brunt of the enemies' onslaught when Germany was at full strength and held them in check until the armies of the British and the allied nations were organised. The Russian bear was now hugging Germany and quickly taking her breath away. The Eagle of France was taking her flesh and the British bulldog was tearing her to pieces.— (Applause.)

The toast of "The Guest of the Evening" was in the hands of Mr J. Rattray. He referred to the reputation established by those who had already gone from this district to fight for King and country and he was quite sure Private Falconer would do his best to uphold it. He was perhaps longer acquainted with Private Falconer than anyone else present and could testify to his sterling qualities as a man. He was one who, he was certain, would be [sic] his part at the front. He would [sic] proud of the step he was taking and in asking the company to drink heartily to the health of the guest wished him the best of good luck and a safe return to Roxburgh.

Private Falconer briefly replied. He was gratified at the hearty reception they had given him, although in his opinion a man going to the front did not need any applause as he was only going to do his duty. He was going into camp as an N.C.O. on probation and they could rest assured that he would do his very best to uphold the reputation established by those who had gone before him. — (Applause).

The remaining toasts were those of The Press," proposed by Mr G. Laloli and responded to by the representative present, and "The Ladies," proposed by Mr Michelle and replied to by Dr Gilmour.

The Mayor at this stage took the opportunity of extending to the guest of the evening the hearty good wishes of the people of Roxburgh. On their behalf he wished Private Falconer God-speed and good-luck at the front and trusted that he would maintain the noble traditions set up by the men who had already gone from this district. Continuing, he stated some good men had gone, and made special mention of Sergeant Vernon. His full worth was not known until he left the district. He was quiet and unassuming, but his qualities as a soldier were much beyond the ordinary. In conclusion he wished Private Falconer all sorts of good luck and expressed the hope that when the war was brought to a successful issue he would return safely to Roxburgh.

Private Falconer being an ex-footballer, the Mayor asked the footballers and ex-players to join in singing the familiar Rugby song "On the Ball" and this was rendered with gusto.

During the evening songs were contributed by Messrs A. H. Williamson, J. Gilchrist, H. Henderson, A. Orr, R. Sinclair, Jas. Gilmour, G. Laloli, R. Gordon, W. Tansey, J. George, J. H. Waigh, jun., M. Morton, and Private Falconer and a recitation was given by Sergeant Falconer.

A most enjoyable gathering closed with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and a vote of thanks to the chair.

Otago Daily Times. 21 September 1916 (page 9) [10 August 2015]

ROXBURGH NOTES

Mr J. C. Falconer, who is going into training as an N C.O., was tendered a "smoke" concert last Friday evening. Despite the short notice of his departure there was a large attendance, the Mayor presiding. After a light repast a toast list was gone through, the principal toast. "Our Guest," being proposed by Mr J. Rattray. A very pleasant evening was spent. Mr Falconer left for Trentham on Monday morning.

Alexandra Herald and Central Otago Gazette. 27 September 1916 (page 4) [10 August 2015]

ROXBURGH NEWS.

Mr J. C. Falconer, who has gone into training as an N.C.O. for the 23rd Reinforcements, was entertained at a "Smoker" before he left the district. The gathering was well patronised and the guest's popularity was fully evidenced by the numerous references of the various speakers.

One hundred and twenty-four men have enlisted from this district. The borough is practically depleted of its eligibles and very few can be left outside it.

Tuapeka Times. 20 October 1917 (page 3) [10 August 2015]

ROLL OF HONOUR.

SERGT. –MAJOR FALCONER.

On Wednesday, advice was received in Lawrence that Sergt.-Major James C. Falconer, eldest son of Mrs C. Falconer, for many' years a resident of Lawrence, had been killed in action in France on the 2nd October. The deceased, who was 33 years of age, was born at Willow bridge, in Canterbury, and was educated at the Waitaki and Alexandra Schools. On completing his education he joined the clerical branch of the railway service, subsequently transferring to the Public Works Department, being employed for some time in connection with the construction of the Waikaka branch line, and later at Auckland. About, five years ago he took up a fruit farm at Coal Creek, from which place he enlisted, leaving with the 24th Reinforcements. He was well-known and deservedly popular throughout the Lawrence and Roxburgh districts and much sympathy is felt for his mother and family in their bereavement.

Press. 23 October 1917 (page 8) [10 August 2015]

THE FALLEN AND WOUNDED.

PERSONAL NOTES.

Sergeant-Major J. C. Falconer (killed) was the eldest son of the late Mr James Falconer, of Waitaki, and of Mrs Catherine Falconer, of Ettrick. He was born at Willowbridge, Studholme Junction, 33 years ago, and was educated at Bald Hill and Waitaki. After leaving school he was employed in the Government stores, Hillside, but, resigning this position, he was for some time, during the dredging boom, engaged in dredging at Alexandra. Subsequently he joined the staff of Mr J. H. Lewis, railway engineer, under whose management he assisted at the survey and construction of the Waikaka railway. From Waikaka he was transferred to North Auckland, where he joined the staff of Mr McEnnis (district engineer), but ultimately left the Government service to commence fruit farming at Roxburgh. He left his orchard to join the Colours with the 24th Reinforcements. He was a prominent athlete, and had some good sprint wins to his credit.

Mt Bengier Mail. 24 October 1917 [19 September 2017]

ROLL OF HONOUR

The grim reality of war was brought home to district residents last week when at least three young men who enlisted locally paid the supreme sacrifice.

SERGT.-MAJOR FALCONER.

The sad news that first reached Roxburgh was the death of Sergt.-Major Falconer who was killed in action on October 2nd. Deceased, who was 33 years of age, and born at Willowbridge, Canterbury, was the eldest son of Mrs C. Falconer, at one time of Bald Hill Flat, and for many years a resident of Lawrence. He was educated at the Waitaki and Alexandra Schools, and on completing his education joined the clerical staff of the stores department of the New Zealand Railways, During this rime he was an active member of the Duuedin Engineers, Five years later he entered the employ of the Public Works Department, being engaged as foreman in connection with the construction of the Waikaka branch line and later at Auckland. He remained with the Department for about three years when he resigned and entered into partnership with his brother-in-law, Mr W. Nicholson, of Ettrick, in an orchard area purchased from the Mt. Bengier estate when it was cut up for closer settlement. Subsequently deceased took over Mr Nicholson's interest in the section adjoining Mr G. Winslow's property, Coal Creek, and spent about six years on it before enlisting. During this period he put in a lot of time developing the land, and the excellent work he accomplished now stands as a monument to his memory. Singlehanded he cleared the area of heavy scrub and ploughed and planted 35 acres in fruit trees in one year. Jim, as he was most popularly known, was a keen student of nature and agriculture and an interesting conversationalist on many matters. He was a good sport and took a keen and active interest in football, being a member of the Coal Creek fifteen. He was also a good swimmer and an athlete, being well-known as a sprinter at the various centres throughout the Goldfields and in the south. In brief, the deceased soldier was a good clean sport and honest and upright in all his actions. While in this district he made many friends whose heartfelt sympathies go out to his relatives. Sergeant-Major Falconer, who left New Zealand with the 24th Reinforcements, won his stripes before leaving camp, and at subsequent examinations in England was successful in retaining his rank.

"A"

New Plymouth.

24th Oct. 1916.

Dear Jim,

Just got word that you are in hospital suffering with the "flue". Hope it isn't serious and that you will be O.K. again within a day or two. I have sent Bob Barber 5 weeks wages up till yesterday. I also wrote Moyle regarding our mortgage telling him that I wanted to increase it when it falls due. I had a yarn to the Mater and would like to square her up altogether. If you are agreeable to increasing the mortgage to £300 - giving me £300 to pay off the Mater and the £100 for Martin. I would pay the extra interest out of my own pocket, and to protect your share I could give you a sub-mortgage or an agreement to sub-mortgage for the £300 over my half share. I had a yarn to my solicitor here on the matter and he says that would be quite in order. That would protect you fully. Anyhow we can talk that over when you come up.

I have had your Will prepared and am enclosing it herewith for your signature. I think it fixes things up as you wanted. There is a similar provision in my will about not disturbing the partnership for 3 years unless you so desired. Perhaps it would be as well to send it back to me when signed for safe keeping.

The mater left us on Saturday. We went down to Eltham with her for the week end and she is going on to Quinlans tomorrow. She will be with them for a month or two. Am expecting Ernie up here next week. He is to start toil here. No more just now Jim. Hope you are soon on your legs again. Ella sends her love.

Hooray

Bill.

This is the copy letter marked "A" referred to in the annexed Affidavit of William Mowat Falconer sworn before me this 14th day of December 1917.

William Mowat Falconer

A Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

Letter from Will (William Mowat Falconer) to his brother Jim (James Courtney Falcon),
included with probate of Jim's Will
(Archives NZ/FamilySearch) [24 May 2016]