

GREAT WAR STORIES

William Scott

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

CAROL BELL

William Scott, known as Billy, was born on 26 February 1895 at Dannevirke, the elder son of Robert and Kate Catherine (née Fahey) Scott, of Birch Hill, Waitara. His father Robert Scott was born in the Geraldine area in 1867. He had moved to the North Island while still in his teens.

When the Port View subdivision on the slopes of Mt Moturoa, Taranaki, was eventually developed in the 1950s on land which had been Robert's farm, streets were named Catherine Crescent and Scott Street as planned in the original

development in 1918, on the suggestion of their daughter. Scott was educated at various schools in the Dannevirke area – Dannevirke South, Mangatoro, Ngapaeruru, Tongaporutu.

At the time of enlistment, 13 August 1914, Scott was working in the Woodbury district for a Walter Scott (likely his uncle), as a saw-miller.

He had previously registered for compulsory military training at Waitara. Scott departed with the mounted men from Timaru on 17 August 1914, amidst much excitement in the town, whilst their horses were trucked at the Smithfield siding, Waimataitai.

Embarking on 16 October 1914

at Lyttelton - probably on the "Athenic", one of the three vessels transporting troops and horses to Europe - the Canterbury Mounted Rifles headed for Egypt and reached Alexandria on 3 December.

In a letter to the Mayor of Geraldine, Trooper BG Edwards gives news of the Geraldine men - "Billy Scott. - Had a crook spin for a while, but is now his old self again. Had the misfortune to have his horse die en route from Albany to Colombo, the only horse our troop lost." [Timaru Herald, 31 December 1914].

Scott returned to New Zealand from Gallipoli per the Moeraki on 5 May 1915, medically unfit, and was discharged on 9 June, having had dysentery in Egypt, followed by pneumonia.

He left for the front for the second time on 15 September 1916.

At this time he was farming for his father at Birch Hill, Waitara. He was posted as a private to the infantry, then had several transfers while he rose through the ranks, being promoted to sergeant in the 17th Reinforcements before he embarked on 23 September 1916 on the "Pakeha", destined for

Devonport, England. It was February 1918 when Scott reverted to rank and went to France.

In April he joined his battalion in the field from the Field Ambulance.

In October he was detached to the UK.

Scott embarked for the final return to New Zealand on 8 December 1918 per the "Ruahine".

On demobilization he was given a fairly good bill of health although he complained of palpitation since gassing in September 1918 and previously.

On his return to New Zealand he engaged in farming at Ahititi and Urenui then became a storeman and a land agent in New Plymouth.

On 27 June 1923 at Stratford he married Mary Jane Dempster, a teacher, who died in 1936, leaving two children – Robert and Patricia. Some time later he married Hilda Smeaton Squire and they had a daughter. Hilda also predeceased her husband.

In total, Sergeant Scott gave two years and 120 days of service abroad, and was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He died on 5 July 1938 at New



Geraldine Volunteers for Europe (World War One circa 1914). Depicts the volunteers, posed with the Geraldine's Mayor (centre). Those pictured (left to right) are: Back row: Herbert Malcolm Campbell, Edward Darvall Templer, Herbert John Miller, Anthony James Johnstone, Hamilton Burns Elmslie, James Holmes Henry Patrick, Benjamin Gordon Edwards; Front row: William Scott, William John Davis, Leonard Mason, John Kennedy, John Rogers Howard, Thomas Edwin Squire, David Devon."

PHOTOS: SOUTH CANTERBURY MUSEUM 1574

Plymouth, aged 64 years and is buried in the Services Area of Te Henui Cemetery there.

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