

HAROLD FREDERICK BERKETT

Harold was born 20 August 1894 Hope Nelson, 10th of 15 [16?] children
Father: Henry Samuel Berkett of Hope. Henry was son of William Berkett who took up land at Hope in 1843.
Harold was educated at Hope School and received prizes.

PRE WAR

Employed as a railway worker for NZ Rail at Taihape where he lived in the Railway Barracks.

1914

On 20 August he enlisted at Taihape Aged 20

(NOTE: 19 September 1917 2nd Attestation was for purposes of travel back to England)

21 September Medical at Awapuni Military Camp classed fit for service and posted to Wellington Infantry Bttn. 17th Ruahine Coy

16 October – the NZ Expeditionary Force embarked Wellington for **Egypt**

3 December - Disembarked at Alexandria and marched to Zeitoun camp

1915

He was posted to the Dardenelles, arrived at Gallipoli, landing on 6 August

8 August at Sulva Bay During an attack on enemy position wounded by a rifle bullet which struck a little above the right wrist, coursed up the arm shattering the Humus and shoulder. He was taken by Hospital ship to Alexandria. Family recollections suggest he may have been left on the beach overnight until the medical evacuation took place.

13 August admitted to 15th General hospital in Alexandria

16 August he had an operation to amputate upper end of Humus, which was splintered. Did well for a time then sepsis set in and he was placed on the Dangerously ill list

31 August Further amputation going through to the shoulder joint 'eunsol' much improved temperature settling down.

By September he was taken off the Dangerously ill list and on **6 November it was recorded that** 'Wounds practically healed'.

26 November 26 Transferred to hospital train for Suez then embarked on the '*Maheno*' for New Zealand

1916

January Out patient Nelson Hospital undergoing Occupational therapy and living in Hope.

24 January Medical Board declared Harold to have a permanent disability and awarded a pension.

14 February DISCHARGED from army service and awarded a pension 30/- a week

5 May Embarked '*Maheno*' to England for artificial limb fitting at Roehampton. Men issued with one and a spare, he was happy with just one.

29 June Admitted to NZ General hospital Walton-on-Thames as his stump is very painful

7 July Operated on stump piece of bone and scar tissue removed wound cleaned

3 August NZ Convalescent Camp Hornchurch

31 October Admitted to VD ward Hornchurch with Gonorrhoea

11 November Discharged from VD ward Hornchurch

1917

March Awarded a pension 6 pound 10 shillings a month

29 June re Admitted NZ Gen Hospital Codford to finish amputation

2 July Transferred to Walton-on-Thames NZ General Hospital where an operation by Lt Col Acland Anaesthetist Capt Williams was to remove piece of bone and scar tissue from shoulder site of amputation.

29 July Transferred to NZ Convalescent Hospital Hornchurch

10 October Discharged from 3rd General hospital Codford to return to NZ

16 November he finally **embarked at Liverpool on the "Ruahine" for NZ.**

15 December The Medical board at sea reported his, right arm amputation at shoulder - joint had healed well – artificial limb supplied.

Fit for civilian service.

5 January home at last he disembarked ex S S Ruahine in Auckland.

He served NZ 71 Days Foreign 1 year 149 days.

1918

January pension increased to 88 pounds 8 shillings per annum

17 January requested from Nelson hospital his pension be transferred to Richmond Nelson

11 March Returned soldiers Hostel New Town Wellington. Request pension be transferred from Richmond to Wellington

3 April A long series of negotiations began regarding the amount of the pension. In a letter to the Commissioner War Pensions makes comment that his pension is 6 pounds 10 shillings pre month and he has lost his right arm he knows of those who have lost their left hand and are receiving 8 pound 13 shillings per month and asks for consideration.

26 June A letter from the Returned Soldiers Hostel The Terrace Wellington request pay Mrs McDonald his pension

1919

16 July from NZ Military forces requesting recovery of monies not taken out of his pension while he was in hospital in England in 1917 - an amount of 6pound 10shillings.

9 September **In a letter from** N Z Railway workshops Petone asking for his pension to be paid to Petone Post Office suggests he has just started this job.

1920 Married Mary Ellen BATIE

In **May 1920** Taihape and District Patriotic Society writes on behalf of Harold that they thought he may be entitled to a higher pension that 7 pounds 7 shillings a month he was being paid at present.

Had a family

1925

He applied for advance on his pension to purchase a confectionary and dairy business in 103 Aro Street Wellington. The official comment made that price rather high for this locality and much competition.

9 March reply was price reasonable and no competition from the two adjacent shops the present owner Mrs Simmons has been advised to give up the shop owing to health problems.

12 March application for 350 pounds for the shop he goes into great detail re the business and premises. 6 year lease, two garages rented out.

His wife and her sister intend to run the shop and he will stay at his job with the railways. Mentions he is unable to take up farming as other returned service men due to his disability and feels that the shop is fitting in his case, his reasons for application are that his family will have some security if anything should happen to him

1927 surrendered a life insurance policy for advance of 4 years on his pension
1945 He and Ellen celebrated their Silver wedding they were living "Springfield" Manaia Road Masterton.
On retirement he was a mixed Farmer.

Harold died 9 December 1969 aged 75 at The Alexander Home, Richmond.

FAMILY HISTORY

William Berkett arrived Nelson 1843 and took up land in Hope he married Christina nee
Children :

Henry Samuel Berkett – Hope (Harolds Father)

William Berkett Palmerston North

Thomas Berkett – Patea Married Sarah she died 15 June 1895 in Nelson hospital aged 26 yrs

Charles Berkett – Wife Johanna died 4 March 1914 aged 39. Charles drowned Wairoa river 19 December 1917. He had been to the A & P Show, he had been drinking, his watch pipe etc were found in handkerchief on the bank-it was recorded no suspicious circumstances.

There were five daughters whose married circumstances are recorded:

Mrs James – Ahaura; Mrs Jessop – Hope; Mrs Phillip Cross – Vanguard Street Nelson; Mrs Schroeder – Redwoods Valley; Mrs C Frost – Midhurst Taranaki.

William died at his daughters home, Mrs Phillip Cross 86 Vangaurd Street Nelson on September 19 1905. His wife Christina died 1903 they are buried side by side in Richmond cemetery.

His son

Henry Samuel Berkett 28.5.1852 – 28.5.1930

In 1879 he married Louise Henriethe Sophia 5.10.1856 – 1928

Children:

1878 - 1903 George Ernest

1881 - 1846 Arthur Charles

1883 - Florence Emily - married James Wood Leytonstone Essex England 9.3.1908

1884 - 1885 Ada Margarethe

1886 - 1887 Eleanora Marie

1888- 1963 Leo Francis

1890- 1920 Johanna Heinrich (John)

1891 – 1892 Olive Louisa

1893 - 1946 Leonard Edward

1894 - 1969 Harold Freidrich (Frederick)

1895- 1895 Beatrice Amy

1896 – 1897 Jolean Grace

1898 –1898 Daisy Maud

1900 – 1963 Allan Roy

1902 – 1923 Linda Gladys

Nora May Berkett married Herbert Hall of Hope Nelson 27.6.1904. Whether this is another daughter is unclear.

This Biography was extracted from an extensive file, and compiled by Syd Daughtrey in 2014