

JOHN HERBERT (JACK) COCK

FAMILY

Born in Nelson November 16 1893 to Joseph Henry and Elizabeth Mary (Symons).

Joseph Henry (Henry) Cock arrived in Nelson 1880 he was a successful businessman setting up J H Cock and Co Ltd with branches in Wanganui and New Plymouth and was a founding member of Anchor Shipping and Foundry Ltd, Director of Griffins biscuits and confectionary, he donated land fo the School of Music, served on Board of Governors Nelson College, was a Trustee of Suter Art Gallery and much more. A generous and valued member of Nelson society.

While the boys were away at War Henry ran the businesses. All the strain and the news of Jack's death he took very hard. He had a breakdown from which he never really recovered and died in London whilst on a visit 12 September 1921.

Jacks Mother, Elizabeth Ann led a very busy life and among other things was a founding member of Nelson Golf Club she died 16 April 1946 and is buried Wakapuaka cemetery.

Jack had a brother and two sisters.

Henry Chynoweth (Hal) Jacks elder brother enlisted February 8 1918 and also served WWI. He was a successful businessman a founding member of the Cook Strait Airways, and Nelson Aero club he died in 1956 and is buried in Wakapuaka cemetery with his wife Mabel

Grace born 11 July 1885 married Eric Legget in Nelson.

Winifred married H R Vandadelzen of Napier.

Pre War

Jack was educated at Nelson College 1906 – 1910

Here he was active in the Nelson Cadet Force attaining rank of Sergeant.

Leaving College he spent the next three years in Europe studying in Paris, Lausanne, and Heidelberg, he was a gifted scholar. Jack returned to New Zealand and leaving Nelson he took up a position as clerk in one of his father's companies in Wanganui. He held a commission in Territorial Senior Cadets.

1914

13 August - Enlisted as a private in the Wellington Infantry Division, rather than waiting to get a commission.

Training at Awapuni Camp with the 7th Wellington West Coast Coy.

15 October - Embarked with Main Body Wellington for Egypt.

12 December - Arrived Alexandria to continue training, "hellish heat, flies, sand, long route marches in full pack, empty water bottle clanking against rifle butt slung over shoulder, parades etc."

Jack was always accepted as "one of the boys" in spite of his appearance and up-bringing.

1915

He embarked from Port Mudros on the Island of Lemnos and travelled to Gallipoli where on April 25 he took part in the landing on Gallipoli shores surviving the slaughter of those early days.

29 April - whilst sniping in an exposed position he took a serious gunshot wound to the shoulder (Right scapula).

He was taken by hospital ship and admitted to Kaser – el – Aini Military Hospital, Cairo.

9 June - Embarked for New Zealand to recover arriving on July 15.

He returned home to Nelson where he made a full recovery and it is believed it was during this time in Nelson that he was engaged to Ella Harkness sister of his friend Don Harkness.

10 October - returned to duty with a commission as part of the NZ Rifle Brigade.

1916

5 February - Embarked for Egypt with the NZRB arriving in Egypt on 15 March.

31 May - Embarked for Armentieres, France where he was fighting

as a sniper in the trenches when he was wounded for a second time with a serious gunshot wound to his forearm.

6 June - Embarked for England and was admitted to Hornchurch General Hospital.

24 June - Declared unfit for active service, placed on light duties only for 3 months.

27 June - Transferred to Brockenhurst to convalesce

Ordered back to New Zealand for camp duties no more fighting for him, but he had other ideas!

He was due to embark on the H S *Willochra* but was not on it when she sailed !!

He met up with his old friend Don Harkness and they spent time in London trying to get him into Flying school and in the end they were successful.

14 September - Transferred from NZEF with commission to Royal Flying School as 2nd Lt he joined Christchurch College Oxford Flying School of instruction as trainee Pilot.

23 November – Joined No. 5 Squadron, Castle Bromwich for flying training

1917

16 February - School of Aerial gunnery at Hythe,

6 March - Central Flying school, B Squadron Upavon for training as flying instructor.

3 April – Awarded his Pilots badge; his “Wings” and was promoted to Lieutenant. Jack was then able to take some leave prior to serving in France

11 April - Embarked for France and joined 60 Squadron at Filescamp Farm, as part of 13th Army Wing 3rd Brigade flying Nieuport biplanes.

Around this time Jack wrote a note to his parents with words of farewell and consolation to be read in case of his death.

14 April - 0830 takeoff, Jack was in a flight of five on offensive patrol in Douai area. They were Young, Russell, Chapman, and led by Capt Binnie (Australia).

Approx 0915 they spotted an enemy two seater East of Douai and dived down to attack, but enemy Justa Albatross scouts came to its aid and Binnie's boys put up 'a hell of a fight'.

Binnie, Russell and Chapman made forced landings in the Drocourt Gaurelle area and were captured and became POWs. Chapman died of his wounds two days later. Jack's plane crashed West of Beaumont Railway station and he was killed.

Young made it back to base with mechanical problems, he later took off again and searched for the group in vain.

Much to everyone's distress Jack was reported as missing in action for a period of 4 months. The records were searched in case he was also a POW but nothing was found.

Having no identification Jack had been buried by the Germans in the Beaumont Communal Cemetery North End, Pas de Calais.

One year later the Red Cross confirmed by letter that the British Airman in Plot 39 was indeed **2nd Lt John Herbert (Jack) Cock.**

Service 2 years 43 days. 13.8.1914 - 14.9.1916 NZEF

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