

## **Roy Albert Ricketts**

Roy Albert Ricketts was born on 29 July 1893. He was the son of Charles Albert and Jane nee Stains, who came from a Riwaka family. Charles and Jane had a family of five children, Hilda, the eldest, Stella, Roy, Eunice and Darcy, the youngest. The family lived at Beachville Road, in Nelson. Hilda married Neal Prussing, Stella married Charlie Woodward, Eunice remained single and cared for Jane Ricketts in her Jane's age.

Roy attended Nelson College for Boys from 1907-1909 and became a fitter and turner and worked for J. Wylie in Waimea Street, now named Rutherford Street<sup>1</sup>. He had prior military experience in the territorial forces in H Battery and entered his religion as Anglican on his attestation form.<sup>2</sup>

He enlisted, army serial no. 2/1665, at the rank of gunner on 18 April 1915,<sup>3</sup> with the Field Artillery, in the Canterbury Military district and embarked on 13 June 1915 as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements.<sup>4</sup>

He was at the Balkan (Gallipoli) 1915, Egyptian Expeditionary Force in 1916 and Western Front 1916-1918 theatres of war. He served a total of 3 years and 362 days.<sup>5</sup>

He embarked for the Dardanelles 21 September 1915<sup>6</sup> and Roya, his daughter, recalls that an experience at Gallipoli was the only story his father would tell of his war years. He told her that he was amongst the last few Anzac troops to leave, when the troops withdrew from Gallipoli. He was a gunner and they were defending the evacuation. He looked out and saw all the ships had departed and left, 'well that's that', he thought, then around the corner of the bay came a few little ships and they were brought safely off.<sup>7</sup>

He disembarked at Alexandria 3 January 1916 and was in camp at Moascar, Egypt. He was promoted to bombardier in February and transferred to 15<sup>th</sup> battery in March 1916.<sup>8</sup> His unit embarked for France, from Alexandria 5 April 1916.<sup>9</sup>

On the Western Front he was wounded in the field by shrapnel to his back and leg and was hospitalized at 3<sup>rd</sup> general Hospital in October 1916. He was discharged to camp at Etaples 24 October.<sup>10</sup> By 20 December he had rejoined his unit in the field. In 1 September 1918 he went on leave to the United Kingdom and on his return was promoted to corporal.<sup>11</sup>

During 1918 he was further promoted to sergeant by April 1918 and again on leave in the United Kingdom in October.<sup>12</sup>

His final discharge was 13 April 1919.<sup>13</sup>

He was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Military Service Medal. The Military medal was awarded for recognition of valuable services rendered with the armies in France and Flanders.<sup>14</sup>

After the war he married Lily Mary Taylor at St Mary's in Manuka Street on 19 April 1926 at St Mary's church, Manuka Street Nelson<sup>15</sup>. They had two children. Their son, Ian Ray, was born in September 1927 but only lived for 5 days. Their daughter, Roya, was born 2 September 1929 and resides in Nelson and was able to provide most of the family information for this biography.

During World War 2 Roy worked as a mechanical engineer for the Ministry of Works.

While overseas Roy had mailed back two scarves from Egypt for his sister Stella and Christmas cards made from the cardboard section of shell casings in 1915. He made a model naval gun and a model Howitzer gun and the family had some photographs of himself and his cousins Charles Nelson and Hubert James in their uniforms.

The Nelson Provincial Museum has been fortunate to be able to exhibit some of these objects and images and is pleased to have some of them included in the collection. The family has lent the museum his war diary which is being transcribed.

Roy died at the age of 75 years on 5 July 1969.<sup>16</sup> His wife Lily died 10 July 1988 aged 94 years old and they are both buried at the Marsden Valley cemetery<sup>17</sup>. Roy had continued to live at 4 Beachville Street in Nelson with his family until he died<sup>18</sup>.

#### Footnotes

- 1 Roy De Lorenzo, in conversation, 27.11.2014.
- 2 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Attestation form + History sheet.
- 3 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Attestation form.
- 4 Ricketts, Roy. Cenotaph Database Record.
- 5 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. History sheet.
- 6 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Casualty form.
- 7 Roy De Lorenzo, in conversation, 27.11.2014.
- 8 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Statement of services.
- 9 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Casualty form.
- 10 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Casualty form.
- 11 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Casualty form.
- 12 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Statement of services.
- 13 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Discharge certificate.
- 14 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. History sheet and NZEF form 2.
- 15 Diana Clark, St Mary's Parish Archivist, by email, 28.11.2014.
- 16 Ricketts, Roy. Military Personnel Record. Death notification.
- 17 Ricketts, Lily. NCC Cemeteries database.
- 18 Postal Directories 1931, 1934, 1953-54.

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