

SKILTON FAMILY BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

PURAMAHOI

Situated between Takaka and Collingwood

It was thriving community, Silverstream cheese factory, Timber and saw mills, flax milling, gold mining, orchards, fishing, farming sheep and cattle and dairy. Iron ore, clay pits Abattoir, Community hall, Tennis club, seven a side football, school, Post office, the first being in a room at the Walkers farmhouse.

Father - THOMAS SKILTON

Born in 1852 in Edmonton Middlesex in England emigrating to New Zealand in 1868 he lived in Onekaka until his death. He died 27 November 1940 aged 88

In his time Thomas had been a gold miner, farmer, roadman. He built Skilton wharf at Onekaka. In 1882 he Married Florence Octavia (Neal) She was born 1857 in Puramahoi and died 9 June 1927

They are buried side by side in Collingwood cemetery.

As far as we know they had seven sons and one daughter:

Neal 18 May 1883 – 9 July 1961

Sidney Thomas – 10 February 1885 – 11 August 1918

Rupert George – 10 June 1887- 15 October 1966

John James 8 August 1888- 16 December 1917

Vincent Mark 18 June 1891- 6 August 1969

Phillip Robert 20 August 1893 – 12 November 1989

George Edward 20 August 1893 [twin of Phillip] he died aged 2 years

Ellen Pheobe 1895

Further details of the boys War Service can be found in the individual biographies.

NEAL SKILTON

1883 - 1991

Raised in Puramahoi, went to the Pariwhakoaho School, which was later to become Puramahoi School.

PRE WAR

He was a self employed farmer and musterer for Jack Flowers, and operated a Fire clay pit at Onekaka.

WAR

Pte N Skilton 68848 2nd Batt Canterbury Regt 12 Coy

Enlisted 1918

Embarked April 2.1918 on the '*Tofua*' from Wellington for Suez

16 September 12th Co Battery left for Etaples France.

December 1918 He was wounded and admitted to hospital.

Returned on the hospital ship NZ *Adolph Woermann* (Ex German liner) to New Zealand.

Discharged 31 October 1919

His Foreign Service 1 year 216 days

POST WAR

1920s

Operated an abattoir that provided meat for the Onekaka Iron Works.

1942 - 1955 Farming in Onekaka.

1942 Married Jean Adeline [nee Douglas]

They had two daughters

Florence Catherine and Annie

Neal died 9.7.1991 and is buried with Jean in Rototai Cemetery

SIDNEY THOMAS

1885 – 1918

PRE WAR

He was a farmer and bushman for Prouse and Saunders who had a very successful business in Mangarakau saw milling and flax Milling and farming. The Prouse and Saunders families came from the Manawatu Levin area both had timber and flax mills. Prouse had land in Mangarakua and in 1902 came over with enough men and machines to set up the mills. Providing housing for families by the outbreak of WWI they had a thriving community but later with so many men enlisting they struggled and eventually closed down in the early 1920s

Sidney Skilton was one of their Bushmen

WAR

Pte S Skilton 7/782

Enlisted October 20 1914

Embarked 14 December 1914

1915

9 May Embarked for the Dardanelles via Alexandra.

FIGHTING AT WALKERS RIDGE

25 April Assault troop mostly NZ and Australians landed at night on Eastern side of the Peninsula, one mile short of the intended destination.

Started to make way inland but fired upon from above the casualties were very high, battle plans discarded and orders to dig in along the Ridge.

By nightfall the following day the ANZACS had formed a beach-head much smaller than intended.

Sidney Skilton was to fight here for 14 weeks

In July at Walkers Ridge he received multiple gunshot wounds to upper arm and elbow, with fractures to Radius and Ulna.

On 25 July he was evacuated on the hospital ship *H S Gascon* to Malta, where he was admitted to the Florian Hospital. It was said that his wound was calcified and infected.

8 August He embarked for England on the "*Letitia*" and admitted to Military Hospital Mt Vernon Hampstead.

1916

In February he was invalided back to NZ aboard the *S S Ruahine* for further treatment and he was found to have Diabetes.

In September he was declared medically unfit for further service and discharged 7 November. After convalescing he went home to live in Puramahoi.

Sidney Thomas Skilton died August 8 1918 of disease and the effects of war aged 33.

At his funeral he was given full Military Honours, the burial service taken by Rev Windup and he is buried in the Collingwood Cemetery.

RUPERT GEORGE

1887 – 1966

PRE WAR

Prior to enlisting he lived and worked at Kotuku, Westland as an engine driver for Stratford Blair at Paroa Forest.

WAR

1914

Pte R Skilton 6/722 13th Canterbury Infantry, 14 August enlisted at Greymouth, 17 August declared medically fit to serve

16 October – “6am grey ,quiet, calm, 10 escorted Troopships slipped anchor, no fuss, no band or sendoff, the men were glad they were finally on their way.”

En route to the Mediterranean they were joined by the Australians and naval escorts at Albany.

On 3 December NZ troops arrived in Alexandria and on to training at Zeitoun camp near Cairo.

They were joined by the 1st Australian Light Horse, 4th Infantry and 1st Australia Division to form the ANZACS

1915

25 April

Landed with the Main Body at ANZAC Cove, Gallipoli to dig in and fight in the rabbit warren of trenches in the cliff face that was to become known as Quinns Post. As time went on things became extremely difficult, dysentery, heat, cold, flies, no cooking facilities, and living on tinned food.

8 May received gunshot wound to foot and shrapnel in leg.

12 May taken by hospital ship “ *Franconia* “from the Dardanelles to Cairo admitted to NZ General Pont de Kobbah hospital.

13 June On recovery attached to DS advance base embarked once again Mustapha Base for the Dardanelles.

27 June Rejoined his unit.

In all he was to spend 14 weeks in the Quinns Post nightmare.

On 4 September he was wounded a second time shrapnel in fingers and had also contracted Jaundice.

5 September Admitted to H S *Salta* and shipped to the NZ General hospital Cairo.

At the end of September he was invalided to NZ and came home on the S S *Willochra* to Dunedin, from there he was taken to Greymouth hospital to receive treatment for 2 months.

1916

On 3 April he was discharged as medically unfit, with permanent deafness in one ear due to bomb concussion and jaundice.

His service; New Zealand 216 days; Foreign 1 year 15 days.

POST WAR

30 December 1916 he was back in Onekaka

In Wellington he Married Effie Clara Grace [nee Duncan] who was from a local Puramahoi family.

Children :

Coral Iris 1916 - 1987

John James 1918 - 1941 KIA WWII

Donald Norman 1920 - 2002 buried with his mother at Marsden Cemetery

Raymond 1927 - 1990

Rupert

1920 operated a clay pit Onekaka

1930 operated timber Mill Tukurua

1942 Sawmiller

Shifted to Nelson he was a carpenter.

By 1951 he was living at 8 Rangiora Terrace Tahunanui until the time of his death.

Died 15 October 1966 aged 79 and is buried RSA Marsden Cemetery

JOHN JAMES

1888 – 1917

PRE WAR

He farmed for Charles Wells of Waikawa Bay, French Pass

WAR

1915

Private J J Skilton 6/2345 1st Battalion Canterbury Regt. 12th Coy

3 March Enlisted at French Pass

9 April Took his Oath at Trentham.

13 June Embarked 5th Reinforcement from Wellington for Suez

EGYPT

14 July – 6 August

GALLIPOLI

Joined his Battalion in Dardanelles.

10 October Admitted to Hospital Mudros with Jaundice. Transferred to Lowland casualty clearing station.

13 December Rejoined his unit at ANZAC Cove until being evacuated at Christmas time.

1916

By January, back in Egypt

In February he was admitted to NZ Auxillary hospital Ismalia with Mumps.

After recuperating he rejoined his unit.

FRANCE

4 April he embarked for France from Port Said on the H.S. *Franconia*.

23 September He was wounded in action and taken to XV Corps M D Station and on to the 18th General Hospital Comiers Rouen.

For the remainder of September he convalesced at Comiers.

12 October Back to Base depot Etaples. France

21 November He rejoined his Unit 1st Batt Canterbury Rifles in the Field

1917

January 1st Bn D H Q re-fusing ammunition

7 June Wounded in action.

10 June No 1 Field ambulance, No 4 Stationery Hospital Arques
18 June London admitted to hospital, wounded and suffering shell shock.
23 November On leave for 16 days
9 December Rejoined his Unit and back fighting.
15 December Wounded in action, multiple gunshot wounds to his left thigh, left foot, left forearm, right leg, right knee. Collected by No 3 NZ Field ambulance. Then on 16 December he was moved to No 3 Canadian Casualty clearing Station where he died of his wounds aged 23.

His medals went to his Mother Florence

PHILLIP ROBERT

1893 - 1989

PRE WAR

Phillip farmed for William Scrimgeour at Ferntown

WAR

1915

Pte P Skilton 6/2346, 1st Battalion Canterbury Regt 12th Coy.

Enlisted 15 March Takaka

GALLIPOLI

1915 Dardanelles

1 September Admitted to Hospital Cairo suffering Enteritis.

11 September transferred to Convalescent Camp Alexandria

Returned to Alexandria and rejoined his Unit in Ismalia.

1916

24 January admitted to NZ General Hospital with Mumps.

6 April rejoined his unit and embarked "*Franconia*" at Port Said for France.

FRANCE

21 July promotion to L/Cpl

Reported wounded at Rouen this was later rescinded.

1917

2 February promoted L/Sgt and attended Brigade school in England

1918

January Promoted to Sgt

Returned home on the "*Remuara*" 5 March 1919 and was discharged 4 June.

Served Egypt 1915 – 1916 Gallipoli 1915 Western Europe 1916 - 1918

Service NZ 130 days, Foreign 4 years 92 days.

POST WAR

He married Mary Ogilvie Solly

Children ?

1932 was he an engine driver at Kohatu

1951 Carpenter Wakatu

Died 12 November 1989 aged 96 Buried Marsden Cemetery with wife Mary.

Note he also served WWII as a Flt/Lt

VINCENT MARK

1891 – 1969

PRE WAR

Farmed for William Scrimgeour at Ferntown. He was in the Territorials, C Squad 10, the Mounted Rifles

1916

Pte V Skilton 33rd Mounted Rifles Enlisted at Takaka 17 April

May the 13th Draft left for Trentham

10 July contracted influenza and admitted to Trentham Hospital.

During training he sustained an accidental severe ankle sprain this resulted in him not being able to handle rough ground. On 14 July a medical board deemed him unfit for further service due to permanent injury and he was discharged having served just 3 weeks.

POST WAR

Married Ethel Mary Scrimgeour

Son William

1951 Labourer Pakawau

1955 Dairyman Pakawau

Roadman for the Council for many years and highly regarded.

Lived Pakawau and Kaihoka

Vincent died August 8 1969 Buried Collingwood Cemetery

GEORGE EDWARD

Born 1893 – 1895

Twin brother of Phillip Robert

Died age two years

ELLEN PHEOBE

Born 1895 – 1970

Married 1918 to Horace Ives

Sources

Golden Bay Museum

Nelson Provincial Museum

Golden Bay schools

'Between the Ports Collingwood to Waitapu'.by Dawber and Win
Papers Past.

Collingwood Kaleidoscope

TDC cemetery records

NCC cemetery records

Commonwealth War graves

Auckland War Memorial Museum Cenotaph database

National Archives.

This Biographical information was compiled by Syd Daughtrey in 2014.