

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, 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

Sydney 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 on 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, musterer for Jack Flowers, and operated a Fire clay pit at Onekaka.

WAR

Pte N Skilton 68848 2nd Batt Canterbury Regt C 12 Coy

Enlisted **1918**

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

16 September 12th co Battery left for Etaples France.

Dec 1918 He was wounded and admitted to Hospital.

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

Discharged October 31 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 aged and is buried with Jean in Rototai Cemetery

SYDNEY 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 Saunder 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. Poviding housing for families by the out break of WWI they had a thriving community but later with so many men enlisting they struggled and eventually closed down in the early 1920s

Sydney Skilton was one of their Bushmen

WAR

Pte S Skilton 7/782

Enlisted October 20 1914

Embarked 14 December 1914

1915

May 9 1915 Embarked for the Dardenelles 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 night fall he following day the ANZACS had formed a beach head much smaller than intended.

Sydney Skilton was to fight here for 14 weeks

July 1915 at **Walkers Ridge** he received **multiple gunshot wounds to upper arm and elbow, with fractures to Radius and Ulna.**

On 25 July 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

February 1916 he was invalided back to NZ aboard the S S Ruahine for further treatment it was here he was found to have Diabetes.

September declared medically unfit for further service. and discharged 7 November.

After convalescing he went home to live in Puramahoi.

Sydney 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 funeral 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 1914 – 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 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

April 25 1915

Landed with the Main Body into 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 difficult dysentery, heat, cold, flies, no cooking living off 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 Dardenelles.

27 June Rejoined his unit.

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

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

5 Sept 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 discharged as medically unfit, permanent deafness in one ear due to bomb concussion and jaundice.

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

POST WAR

December 30 1916 he was back in Onekaka

1916 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 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.

1951 was living at 8 Rangiora Terrace Tahunanui until the time of his passing.

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 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 ANZAC

1916

January Back in Egypt

February Admitted to NZ Auxillary hospital Ismalia with **Mumps**.

Rejoined his unit.

FRANCE

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

23 September **Wounded in action** and taken to XV Corps M D Station and on to the 18th

General Hospital Comiers Rouen.

28 September Convalesced Comiers.

12 October Back to Base depot Etaples. France

21 November 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, **wound and 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.** No 3 NZ Field ambulance. Then on 16 December 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 Dardenelles

1 September Admitted to Hospital Cairo suffering Enteritis.

11 September transferred to Convalescent Camp Aexandra

Returned to Alexandria and rejoined his Unit in Ismalia.

1916

24 January admitted to NZ 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 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??? found a Robert Skilton train driver

1951 Carpenter Wakatu

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

Note he also served WWII 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 admitted 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 Museum Cenotaph database

National Archives.

This Biographical information was compiled by Syd Daughtrey in 2014.