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Researched by Dennis Bush-King

WORLD WAR ONE COMMEMORATION PROJECT

Thomas Fieldon TAYLOR

Church of England
Born 04 June 1879, Beaford, Devon, England
Died 29 May 1937, Wellington, New Zealand
Serial No. 6/1149

Son of Thomas Llewellyn TAYLOR and Priscilla Jones AVERY
Married 21 Jun 1911 Bishopdale Chapel, Nelson, Eleanora Sophia (Nellie) MULES (1873-1951) [only daughter of the Right Rev Charles Oliver MULES Bishop of Nelson and Laura BLUNDELL]

Taylor arrived in Nelson in 1904 moving from England for health reasons. From 1904 to 1906 he was layreader in the Murchison Parish while studying at the Bishopdale Theological College. He was curate at Greymouth in 1908 and vicar at Brunnerton from 1910-1913. He then was appointed curate-in-charge Suburban North, Nelson with prime responsibility for the Port Mission hall.

When the First World War broke out he went to Tapawera as Chaplain at one of the Church of England Men's Services training camps (along with the Vicar of Motupiko Rev G H Curle). He was also one of the first 13 chaplains to travel to Egypt with the main body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces and left for Europe on 16 October 1914.¹



He was wounded at Cape Helles on 15 May 1915.

“What a good fellow he has been with the troops – working harder than anyone, and while in the firing line helping the wounded he received a bullet himself. He just kept going; never said a word about it down at the clearing station, but kept about here, cheering on the wounded and suffering. Then one of the surgeons noticed him

¹ Nominal roll volume 1 number 6/1149

getting whiter and that he was stained with blood and took him in hand.”²

After convalescing was attached to the 2nd Canterbury Battalion in July 1915. He continued to serve on the Gallipoli Peninsula and was mentioned in dispatches for service from September to December 1915 by Gen Sir Charles Munro, the reason cited as follows:

“For his devotion to duty and his untiring efforts to do all he could to assist and cheer the men of the whole Brigade. When the Brigade returned from Lemos he was the only C of E Chaplain in the Division. This meant being called upon at all times but the work was always most cheerfully carried out. At Helles he was wounded but returned to duty before thoroughly fit.

He has been an example of what pluck and cheerfulness can do”³

After Gallipoli he served in France being promoted the Chaplain 3rd Class 10 April 1916. He fell ill in September 1916 and was invalided to Southampton to the New Zealand Hospital Ship *Maheno*. In January 1917 he returned to New Zealand and was discharged from war service to Nelson having served a total of 2 years 228 days.⁴

However on 25 May 1917 he resigned his parish Suburban North because his 'health [was] so seriously impaired that he could not venture upon work in this most difficult diocese'.⁵ He took up the position of chaplain at the Tauherenikau military camp. On 19 January 1918 Rev Canon Taylor was appointed Principal Chaplain of the Church at the Trentham Military Camp⁶ a position he held until July 1918. He then took up work as Missioner based at St Peter's Church, Wellington and from 1921-1926 was Director of the Wellington Diocesan social services board which in 1930 was constituted as the Wellington City Mission Board. Taylor became the first City Missioner, a position held until his death in 1937. More than 7,000 people lined the street to pay tribute at his funeral. Taylor was regarded as one of the Church of England's most 'forceful and magnetic' representatives. His work with boys was commemorated by the building of Fielden Taylor Memorial Boys' Hostel in Taranaki Street in 1940 until it was sold in 1995.⁷

² A letter from Rev C J Bush-King reprinted in the *Nelson Diocesan Magazine*, 1 Oct 1915, p 5

³ NZ Defence Force Record, Archives New Zealand [AABK 18805 W5553 0112664]

⁴ *Nelson Diocesan Magazine*, 1 Feb 1917, p 6

⁵ *Nelson Diocesan Magazine*, 1 Jul 1917, p 1, and Blain, 2012

⁶ *Nelson Diocesan Magazine*, 1 Mar 1918, p 8

⁷ Dictionary of New Zealand Biography,