

HAROLD EDMUND WINDLE



13th September 1916

1887-1916 Age 29

Lance Corporal 4/453 3rd Field Company New Zealand Engineers.

Harold and his elder brother Arthur were the two children of John Thomas Windle, from Burnley, and Mary Osyth nee Turner, from Preston. They married shortly after John qualified from Aberdeen as a medical doctor. He established his practice at Ovenden, near Halifax, where both sons were born, and where he remained until his death in 1902. However, Mary died in 1888, leaving John with two young sons to bring up. In 1891 he married his second wife, Jane Elizabeth Burnet, from Poulton in Lancashire. They had no children of their own.

Both boys attended Bradford Grammar School in the later 1890s, Harold from 1896 until July 1899, from the ages of nine to twelve. His elder brother stayed on a further year. Harold did well in Latin and French, while Arthur was a talented artist. The journey to school cannot have been an easy one, unless the brothers were in lodgings in Bradford. By April 1901 the brothers were boarding at St. Olave's School in York, which at this time was merging with St. Peter's. What happened when their father died is unknown, although he was a wealthy man leaving close to £4000 to his widow, nor what the boys did after school. At some point Harold served in the volunteers for a year, with the medical corps (R.A.M.C.), while Arthur qualified as a solicitor. The brothers only reappear in the records in 1914, by which time they had emigrated to New Zealand's North Island: Arthur was a solicitor for the Whanganui School Board, whereas Harold was a farm hand at Awahuri, near Palmerston North.

Harold enlisted a fortnight after war was declared in August 1914, joining the New Zealand Engineers. His height was 5' 5^{1/2}", his weight 10st 4lbs, and his physical development was good. He had blue eyes and light brown hair. In May 1915 he embarked for Gallipoli where he served with the Engineers' Field Troop until the end of the year. In March 1916, the Field Troop became the nucleus of the 3rd Field Company, their numbers being made up with men from the disbanded Otago Mounted Rifles who had arrived from Gallipoli. By chance, this was the unit his elder brother had enlisted in a week after Harold



volunteered. They both accompanied the New Zealand Division to the Western Front. During 1916, Harold was promoted to Second Corporal, a rank he relinquished preferring the lower rank of Lance Corporal. The only blemish on his disciplinary record was when he was absent for a few hours one night in Egypt.

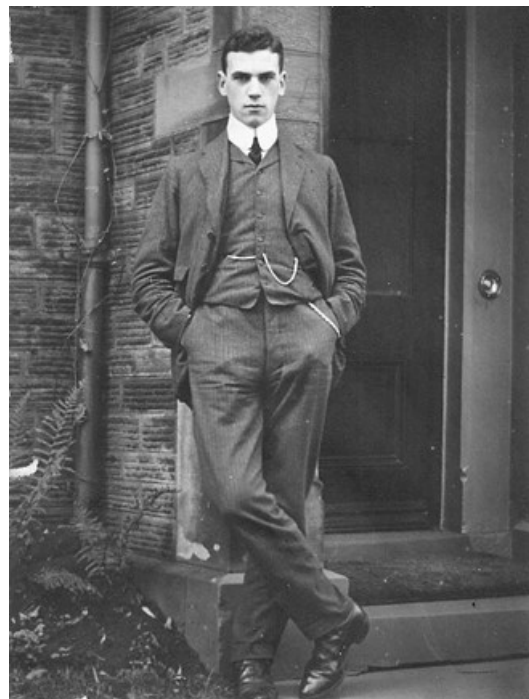
Initially the New Zealand Division were sent to the Armentieres sector in France. In early September the Engineers were sent to prepare for the arrival of the New Zealand Division at the Somme, where they were to participate in the attack planned for the 15th. They repaired the road from Mametz to Montauban, dug two new communication trenches each some 4000 yards long right up to the front line, and prepared assembly trenches. This work was done in continuous wet weather and under German shell-fire. On 13th September, 3rd Field Company was in reserve at Fricourt and Windle's service record does not give the circumstances of his death. In his pay-book he left his money to his step-mother in England, and his possessions in New Zealand to his brother. He was buried in Quarry Cemetery Montauban. Arthur survived the war and returned to New Zealand, where he married.



Acknowledgements:

There is no photo of Windle in the O.B.A. Roll of Honour—the photo of his grave is taken from <http://www.nzwargraves.org.nz/casualties/harold-edmund-windle>. His family history was reconstructed from the records on Ancestry.com, with the addition of material from the B.G.S. Annual Reports for 1899 and 1900, and <https://www.stpetersyork.org.uk/great-war-memorial/harold-edmund-windle>. His military record is available at <http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/587142>.

For Arthur John Windle's military record, <http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/records/639669>. The images of him below are from <http://person.ancestry.co.uk/tree/3733902/person/-1368360549/story> and <http://mv.ancestry.co.uk/viewer/afc65d5f-07c1-4f9c-8c58-e1ea6980489b/23297748/1487189165>. The civilian image appears from the stone to have been taken in Yorkshire. Comparison of the service records shows that Arthur was 4" taller than Harold and his colouring was different (brown eyes, black hair).



For the New Zealand Engineers and Division in World War One, I consulted <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1-Engi-t1-body-d18.html>, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1-Engi-t1-body-d7.html#n108> and <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1-Fran-t1-body1-d3.html#n88>.

All websites were accessed on 6-9-2016.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper, September 2016
(Nhooper1956@gmail.com).