

CENTENARY OF THE ARMISTICE ENDING THE GREAT WAR 11:00 ON 11th DAY OF 11th MONTH, 1918.

A Remembrance History of William Charles George Harvey, fatally wounded 4 Oct 1917 during the 3rd Battle of Ypres.
First issue prepared Nov 2018 by Ken Rolston, great-nephew of William Harvey. Revised & extended September 2021.

**IN REMEMBRANCE OF
WILLIAM CHARLES GEORGE HARVEY**

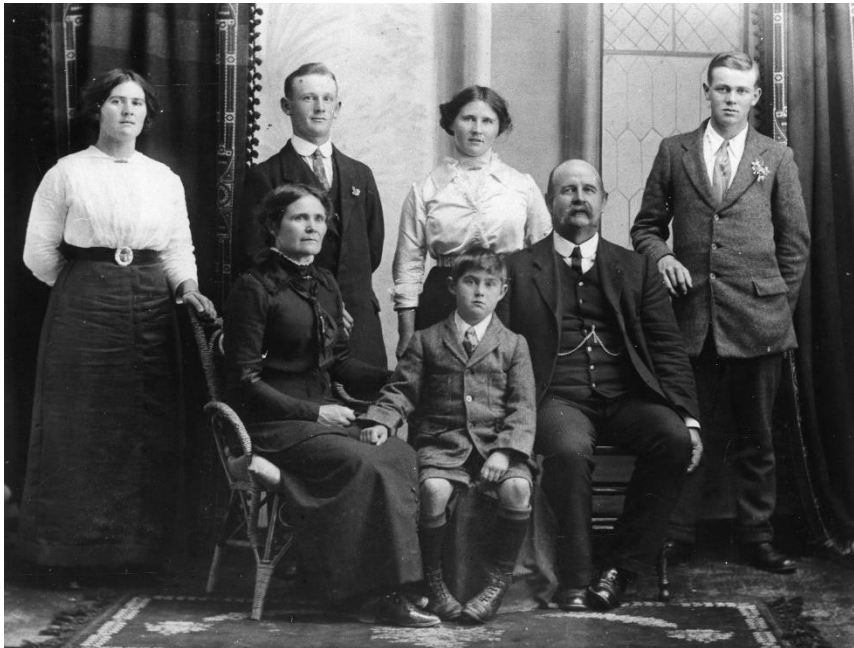
**A Private in New Zealand Expeditionary Force, Wellington Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion
died 9th October 1917.**

1st Revision, issued September 2021.

William Charles George Harvey was the second son of Charles Tilly Harvey and his wife Phoebe (Henderson) and was twin brother of Eva Caroline Ellen Harvey. The twins were born 25th April 1894. The family details are as follows:

Charles Tilly Harvey, born 21st August 1864 at Upper Moutere, NZ, died 19th August 1952 at Palmerston North. He married 3rd August 1891 at Halcombe, in the Primitive Methodist Church
Phoebe Ellen Henderson, born 5th August 1870 at Hokitika, NZ, died 7th August 1933 at Palmerston North. Their children were:

- **Ruby May Harvey**, born 4th March 1892, died 18th March 1961.
She married 1st on 1 Jan 1923, **Harold Avery Clayton**, divorced 1926.
Ruby married 2nd on 5 Feb 1927 **Cyril Waldon Hardway**, b: 4th May 1900, d: 3rd July 1958.
- **William Charles George Harvey** (twin), born at Rata 25th April 1894, died 9th October 1917 in Belgium during WWI. William was unmarried.
- **Eva Caroline Ellen Harvey**, (twin), born at Rata 25th April 1894, died 6th January 1963.
Eva married 1st on 16 Aug 1916, **Robert David Rolston**, b: 10 Aug 1893, d: 16th June 1951.
Eva married 2nd in 1954, **Edward Buchanan**.
- **Leslie Cuthbert Harvey**, born 1899, died 3rd September 1965 at Greymouth.
He married in 1927, **Julia Lynch**, born 1902, died 14th July 1967 at Greymouth.
- **Stanley Withy Harvey**, b: 2nd April 1908 at Auroa, d: 13th August 1973.
He married in 1932, **Flora McRae Hinkley**, b: 10th July 1911 at Bulls, d: 18th November 1984 at Palmerston North.



HARVEY FAMILY

**L to R: Ruby, William, Eva, Leslie,
Phoebe, Stanley, Charles.**

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World War I began in Europe on 28th July 1914 and ended with the Armistice on 11th November 1918.

William Harvey's address was 43 Riverbank, Wanganui when he was called up for compulsory military service and received a medical examination on 28th Oct 1915. His medical record stated that he was 21 years 6 months of age,

Height: 5 ft 4in

Weight: 123 lb,

min chest measurement: 31 inches, max chest expansion: 37½ inches.

Complexion: fair

Eye colour: grey

Hair colour: fair

Religion: Rata Gospel hall.

Eyes: both 6/6

Hearing: normal

Colour vision: normal

Limbs & body condition & lungs: normal

Teeth: good order

Illnesses: none whatever

Hernia, varicocele, varicose veins, haemorrhoids: free of

Skin disease: none

Ever had a fit? No, (3 faints)

He enlisted in the Infantry at Trentham on 22nd December 1915 as a Private. His service number: 10036. On entry, he listed his occupation as "Dairyman" and gave his next of kin as Mrs C.T.Harvey (mother), at Winchester Street, Levin.

Initial postings were:

D Squadron 11th Reinforcements, 22 Dec 1915 for training.

K Company 11th Reinforcements, 29 March 1916.

This official photograph ¹ was taken during or near the end of training and was used by the army for his service record.



¹ This and some other photos were sent to me by Dave Hardway, grandson of Ruby and Cyril Hardway. Used with thanks to Dave. The original of the photo was black & white.

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William embarked for foreign service onboard the troopship *HMNZT 49 Maunganui* that departed Wellington on 1st April 1916, in company with *HMNZT 50 Tahiti*, both carrying troops of 11th Reinforcements.² NZ Infantry Brigade was transported onboard *HMNZT 49 Maunganui*. Of 1204 military personnel onboard, Infantry were 790 troops and 19 Officers.

The two ships convoyed together, both reaching Suez in Egypt on 3rd May 1916. William's military record states that he disembarked from his vessel at Suez on 3rd May 1916.



***HMNZT 49 Maunganui* departing Wellington, 1st April 1916,
Transporting 11th Reinforcements NZEF to Egypt.³**

William Harvey was one of the soldiers thronging the rails and rigging, waving to families on the wharf. His Harvey parents and siblings will be amongst those seeing the ship off to war. Many of the families would be weeping, in fear that they might not see their son or brother again, a valid fear for many families and very relevant in the case of William Harvey.

Two other troopships, *HMNZT 47 Willochra* and *HMNZT 48 Tofua*, carrying 10th Reinforcements, departed Wellington earlier on 4th March 1916 and for some undiscovered reason,⁴ *Maunganui* and *Tahiti* caught up with them and all 4 vessels arrived at Suez on 3rd May 1916.

² Wellington Archives, AAYS 8638 AD1/798 25/198/1. Records of troopship *Maunganui* No.49, includes Embarkation States for *Maunganui* and *Tahiti*. It is clear that NZ Infantry Brigade, Companies A, B, C, D were all carried onboard *Maunganui*. There were no Infantry onboard *Tahiti*.

³ Alexander Turnbull Library (Wellington Archives), Ref: 1/2 014623-G Photo 27407_pm_01.tif by John Dickie.

⁴ *Willochra* and *Tofua* may have been held back during port calls at Albany and Colombo.

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The next day, 4th May, William was posted to 7th Company, Wellington Infantry Regiment at Tel-el-Kelvi. NZ Troops received further training in Egypt before transfer to Europe for active service.

William embarked for France onboard *HT Ivernia*⁵ at Alexandria on 20th May 1916, although the ship apparently did not sail until 5th June. The ship arrived at Marseilles in France on 12th June. He was posted to his unit in France on 29th June 1916, with the **7th Company, 2nd Battalion, Wellington Infantry Regiment**, probably at the large NZ Reinforcements base at Etaples. Some leave must have been taken in Paris, perhaps around this time during training and preparations. This photograph below of William with several fresh and cheerful looking mates was taken there by "*R. Guilleminot, Boespflug & Cie, Paris*". William is seated at front right. Names of the other soldiers are not known.



Now follows a fairly detailed account of the New Zealand Battalions' operations⁶ during 1917, in which William Harvey was engaged. From his arrival in France on 29 June 1916 until his death on 9th October 1917, he was on active duty in France and Belgium for 1 year, 3 months and 10 days, although that includes 6 days laying wounded in hospital before his demise.

The intent of this summary of operations is to provide a taste of this important period of his life and of the areas in France and Belgium where he served, including intense and successful NZ actions against the Germans at Messines and near Ypres.

⁵ In January the following year, *Ivernia* was torpedoed by a German submarine and sank in the Mediterranean with loss of 36 crew and 84 troops.

⁶ Much of this operational description of the NZEF Battalions is summarised from a very detailed and informative account: *The Wellington Regiment N.Z.E.F. 1914—1919* by Cunningham, Treadwell & Hanna, readable online at <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1-Well.html>

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Summary of NZEF activities in France and Belgium in 1917.

On 1st Jan 1917, the NZ Battalions were re-organised. **The 1st & 2nd Battalions of the North Island, Auckland & Wellington Regiments became the 1st Brigade** and similarly the South Island Battalions became the 2nd Brigade.

On New Years day, the 1st Brigade were in billets at Saily-sur-Lys and on 8th Jan they moved up to the line, relieving the Rifle Brigade. The line at that time was in the Armentiere area and Houplines where NZ troops occupied the trenches and exchanged sporadic raids and artillery duels with the Germans.

On 16th Jan the 1st Battalion were relieved in the trenches by the **2nd Battalion** and went to billets at Fleurbaix. The Battalions changed around again on 24th Jan. Weather was very cold with snow on the ground. Sporadic shelling and mortar activity were experienced from the German lines, but remained minimal. Sporadic gas shelling caused a few casualties. A few cases of trench feet occurred and to guard against the problem, gumboots were issued, a daily change of dry socks was arranged, and everyone was required to massage his feet, each day, with whale oil.

During February and March, the troops were engaged in trench duties and marching to new billets at Saily-sur-Lys and De Seule, then onwards to Le Bizet, a village uninhabited by civilians and badly damaged by shell fire.

On the 15th March, the 1st Battalion was relieved by the 42nd Battalion, Australian Infantry Force and marched to billets in Nieppe. There, training was carried on daily, and in the afternoons inter-platoon Rugby matches and inter-company Soccer matches were played on very rough grounds. On the 18th March, the 1st Battalion marched about three miles to Bulford Camp and relieved the 10th Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

The weather during March had been changeable with a fair amount of rain and occasional snow storms, and there was a certain amount of sickness.

On 1st April, the 1st Battalion relieved 4th Battalion, Rifle Brigade, in line in the Ploegsteert sector (St. Yves Hill), marching some four and a-half miles from Bulford Camp.

On the night of the 1st and again on the night of the 2nd, and morning of the 3rd April, snow fell, making it impossible to patrol to any extent.

In general, the Ploegsteert sector was fairly quiet, with sporadic fire between the two sides.

Nevertheless, on 2nd April William Harvey received a gunshot wound to the hand and finger, recorded as "wounded in action", possibly whilst on patrol. The next day he was admitted to No.3 NZ Field Ambulance for treatment. The wound was not too serious, as he rejoined his unit the following day, on 4th April.

The Battle of Messines

Soon it was learned that an offensive was being planned, with the New Zealand Division allotted to capture the village of Messines in Belgium, just a few miles south of Ypres.

By 4th May it was now definitely known that both battalions were, within a few days, to go out for Brigade training and preparations were being made accordingly. Time was snatched on the 6th May for a football match between teams from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, the former winning handsomely.

It might have been during their few weeks at their village billets that this following photograph was taken. William Harvey is standing, with an unidentified friend seated. Both wear steel helmets and carry gas respirators in the chest pouches. Both wear waterproofed trousers and boots, for life in the trenches and mud. Notice the cigarette in William's hand. Most of the soldiers were smokers. He wears a signet ring on the 3rd finger and there is no sign of a battle wound on that hand, which suggests that his earlier wound may have been on the right hand.

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During May the Battalions were at Leuline and Tatingham, in training for the push at Messines. By the end of May, the 1st Brigade's training for Messines was completed, and both battalions were now ready for the offensive. Several days marching brought them back to De Seule.

Much preparation work was needed, including digging of new trenches to better assist the line of attack on the German defenses. An important new trench had to be pegged out in no-man's land during night-time and was successfully dug with the enemy remaining oblivious to what was happening.

While the Infantry were digging, the Artillery and the trench mortar men were busying themselves in destroying the enemy trenches, strong points machine-gun posts, and barbed wire. There was to be a greater concentration of guns for Messines than ever before and already the 60-pounders and heavies were pounding away at the German defences.



William Harvey (standing) and friend.

The NZers, along with the 3rd & 4th Aust divisions were assigned to attack and capture Messines and the ridge behind the village. The tasks of the New Zealand Division were to capture the village. Tanks were detailed to co-operate, but all plans were based on the assumption that no co-operation from them would be forthcoming.

The enemy knew from the course of events that the advance would now not be long delayed, and shelled the tracks with gas shells, although not yet with mustard gas.

Zero hour was at ten minutes past three in the morning of 7th June. At that very moment, there was a muffled roar, that seemed to die down and then increase and die down again. Then there was a shake that rocked the very earth. That explosion was the detonation of many tons of explosives in tunnels dug below the German trenches. Around 10,000 enemy troops were killed by the mines explosions. Between the last roar of the mines exploding and the opening of the guns was no perceptible interval. The guns belched forth their concentrated fury.

Partly due to the devastating explosions at the German lines and partly due to the heavy artillery barrage from the massed Kiwi guns that pounded the trenches and destroyed the wire barriers, the NZ attack was highly successful and their final objective was reached at 5.20 a.m. and all set to work to dig themselves in.

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What of **2nd Battalion** in reserve?⁷ It had emerged from the new subsidiary line fifty-five minutes after zero hour. To the 2nd Battalion moving forward, there was ample evidence that the storming troops, while waiting their turn to advance, had not escaped altogether, for in one trench, lay the bodies of five men killed by a single shell, and close by an abandoned tank and other bodies lay in the road.

At Messines, the losses were not so great in the course of the advance itself; but were sustained during the holding on, the crouching down in shallow ditches, and submitting hour after hour to the concentrated fury belched forth from the enemy's guns. The nature of the ground prevented digging of very narrow or deep trenches, for water was soon reached and the sides of the trenches would slip in.

About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, orders were received for the rest of the **2nd Battalion** to relieve the 1st Battalion, and the relief was made during the evening, although not finally completed till midnight. Just before the relief was complete the enemy commenced a heavy bombardment and seemed to be on the point of counter-attacking. All troops stood to, and NZ artillery clapped down a thunderous barrage. The enemy counter-attack, however, did not pass the Australians in front and luckily, the German barrage succeeded generally in missing the NZ trenches.

Beautiful Weather continued the following day, being midsummer. The **2nd Battalion** made itself as comfortable as possible in the newly dug trenches. Late that night, 9th June, both the 1st and 2nd Battalions were relieved by the 14th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 4th Australian Division. Companies then made their way down to Bulford Camp, and both battalions went into reserve there. William Harvey was fortunate that he came through the Messines operation unscathed.



THE NEW ZEALAND SOLDIER.

A memorial statue at the town square in Messines.

⁷ In this description of the NZ operations and their attack on Gravenstafel Spur where William was wounded, his 2nd Battalion is bolded in the text to emphasise that this was where he and his unit were involved in the preparations and the battle a few days before the assault on Passchendaele.

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On the 11th June, the **2nd Battalion** moved from Bulford Camp, to billets at Gravier—Brune Gave and, on the 12th, the 1st Battalion marched to the Rue de Sac area, the battalions remaining in these billets until the 18th June.

At dusk on the 18th June, after a hot day with a heavy thunder-storm, the **2nd Battalion** relieved 1st Canterbury in the front line immediately opposite La Basse Ville. At this time, the enemy had not quite recovered from the disorganisation resulting from the Messines-Wytschaete battle. Artillery action on both sides was fairly violent, although most of the NZ heavy guns were now being withdrawn. After a few days, artillery fire noticeably decreased on both sides.

On the evening of 23rd June, the 1st Battalion relieved the **2nd Battalion** in the line and the 2nd Battalion moved back to bivouacs and dug-outs on the wooded slope of Hill 63.

The **2nd Battalion's** first two nights on the Hill were the essence of discomfort. For nearly two weeks, the enemy had been using his new mustard gas, and he now bombarded the Hill with H.E. and gas shells—(mostly lachrymatory, but some phosgene and some mustard). There was nothing to do but to endure it, and seek such shelter as was available if possible, in the trenches towards the top of the hill, and there spend the night, weeping copious tears into respirators from inflamed and streaming eyes.

On the 28th June, the **2nd Battalion** left Hill 63, and marched back to De Seule, The day was spent in resting and bathing.

On the 30th June, the 1st Battalion marched to billets in Le Verrier Area, and there it remained until the 19th July. Platoon and company training was carried out, and on two different days all companies carried out two courses of musketry on a 25 yards range.

On the 29th, **2nd Battalion** entrained for Hazebrouck and then marched about four miles to St. Marie Capelle. During the evening of 13th July, the **2nd Battalion** moved into the trenches opposite La Basse Ville, relieving parts the 4th Australian Division.

The **2nd Battalion** stormed and captured La Basse Ville on two occasions. On the 27th July, with little difficulty in taking the village, but the Germans, a few hours afterwards, counter-attacked in comparatively great strength, and drove out the posts left as a garrison. On the 31st July, NZ again seized the place, and this time all the attackers remained and held it against the counter-attacks that followed.

Capturing La Basse Ville, The operation turned out a distinct success, although won at the cost of hard fighting. The casualties out of the 8 officers and 328 other ranks, were officers 1 killed, and 4 wounded, and other ranks 36 killed and 93 wounded. As usual, many of the casualties were incurred from artillery fire after the objectives had been gained. On the night of the 31st July, the 1st Battalion relieved the **2nd Battalion** in La Basse Ville.

Training was going on as usual, and digging parties were going up every night to the trenches. These digging parties had many narrow escapes from aeroplane bombs, for enemy aircraft were now particularly hostile in this direction.

On the 17th August, the **2nd Battalion's** spell at Bulford Camp ended.

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First Wellington remained in line until the night of the 21st August. During that time the front line companies improved and added to the wire and traversed and improved the front line posts, and carried out patrolling operations. The support companies employed all available men in carrying trench boards to the posts.

On the night of the 21st August, 1st Battalion was relieved and moved out to Romarin Camp. Before midnight the same night, 2nd Wellington relieved 2nd Auckland in the front line and posts on the right of La Basse Ville with battalion headquarters at Lewisham Lodge. This sector was comparatively quiet. The weather was gloriously fine, and a great deal of work was done in improving the front line and communication saps.

William's Company must have been relaxed at Romarin camp, because on 23rd August, William proceeded on leave to UK. He was granted 10 days leave and returned to his unit on 3rd September.

On the 29th, the 1st and **2nd Battalions** marched to Caestre railway station and entrained there for Wizernes. The 1st Battalion detrained there, and proceeded thence by motor buses to Selles. The **2nd Battalion** then proceeded to Lottinghem by motor buses, arriving there after midnight. The 1st and 2nd Battalions now settled down in billets which were not altogether satisfactory for the billets themselves were poor and companies widely dispersed.

It was here that William rejoined his unit in **2nd Battalion** after leave. Training by companies and battalions was soon in full swing.

The 3rd Battle of Ypres

It was now known that the NZ troops were destined for the Ypres Salient. The march was commenced on the 25th September. On that day, the 1st Battalion marched to the Wardrecque area, and billeted at Heuringhem. The **2nd Battalion** marched to Le Sablon, and the 3rd Battalion from Henneveux to Seninghem, a distance of about 12 miles. The distance marched by the 1st and 2nd Battalions was about 25 miles and the march, was a most exhausting one. The day was hot, and the men marched in full marching order (i.e. full pack up), and for the greater part of the distance upon cobbled roads. These all combined to test severely their endurance, because, during the whole month's training, they had been marching to and from the manoeuvre grounds in fighting kit only, and on roads that were not cobbled.

On the following day, the 1st Battalion marched from Heuringhem, some twelve miles to Wallon Cappel, and billeted in farms there. The **2nd Battalion** marched about eight miles to Staple, while the 3rd Battalion marched from Seninghem to Arques, a distance of nine miles, and went into billets there.

On the 27th September, the march was continued, the 1st Battalion marching to No. 2 Area Watou, a distance of twelve miles, and going into tents at Mill Camp. The **2nd Battalion** marched to Pear Tree Camp, four miles west of Poperinghe. The next two days were spent in resting after the march and in final preparations for the coming operations.

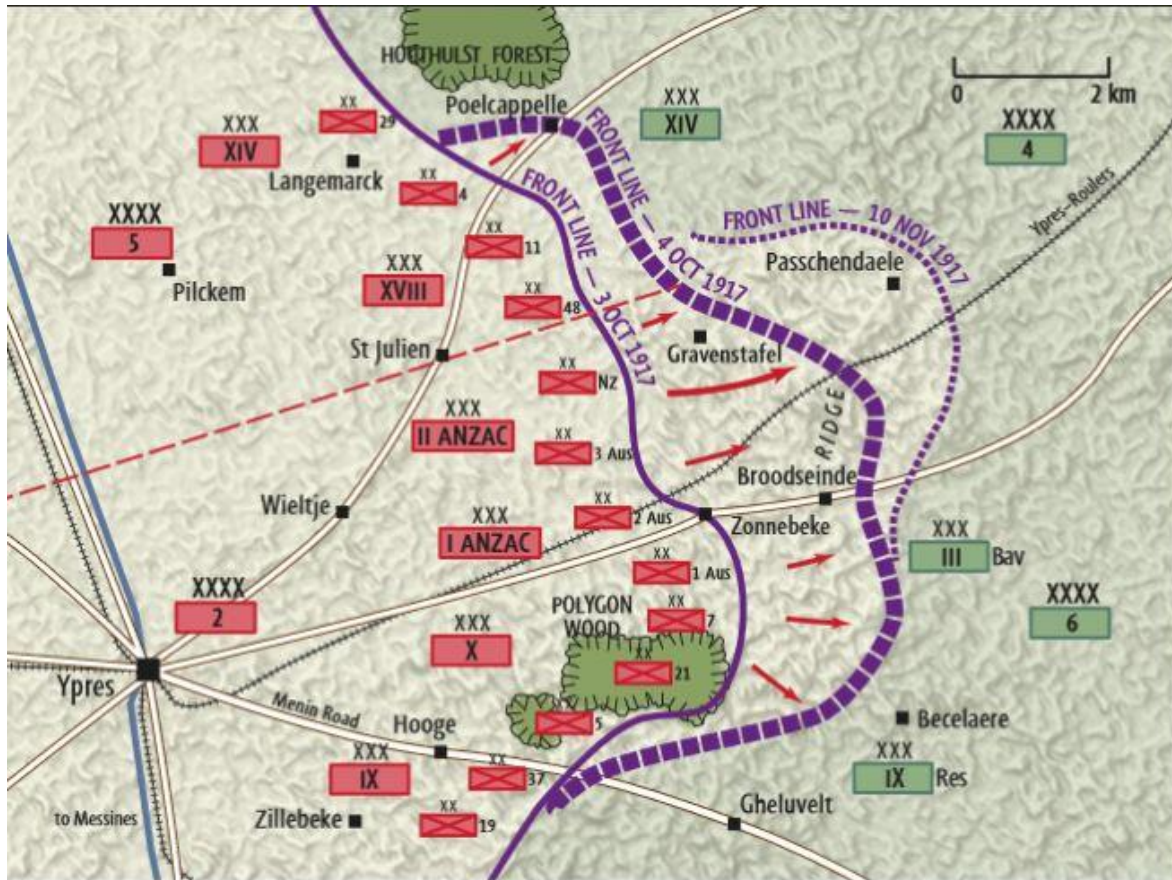
The NZ battalions were given the objective of capturing Gravenstafel Spur, on the west flank of the Australians, whose objective was to capture the village and area of Broodseinde.

This attack, scheduled for early in the morning of 4th October was the first preparatory action before the planned offensive to capture Passchendaele. The battle for Gravenstafel and the battle for

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Broodseinde were highly successful for the New Zealanders. In comparison, the follow-on battle on 12 October for Passchendaele in dreadful wet and muddy conditions was a disastrous failure.



The 3rd Battle of Ypres, 4th October 1917.

In the centre of the map can be seen the positions of I ANZAC and II ANZAC, with the NZ troops depicted just west of Gravenstafel. Their attack on Gravenstafel Spur is shown by the red arrow. South of NZ can be seen 2 AUS and 1 AUS positions for their attacks on Broodseinde and Zonnebeke.

The **2nd Battalion** was the first to move up into the line, on the 30th September by buses to Vlamertinghe, and from there marched to a position in the old German support line, with battalion headquarters at Cal Farm. On the 1st October, both 1st and 3rd Battalions marched to Goldfish Chateau and bivouaced in the fields there, the men digging holes in the ground in which to sleep, so that, unless by direct hit, aeroplane bombs would be unlikely to injure them. On the following day, final details for the attack were completed.

On the 3rd October, in fine weather, detailed reconnaissances of forward areas were made by battalion and company commanders, and, as far as possible, by platoon and section commanders in daylight. Routes of approach to assembly positions were allotted and extra crossings over the Hanebeek Stream arranged for, and all details made for assembly and the preliminary move forward.

During the evening of the 3rd October, the companies of the 3rd Battalion, one by one, left the old trench and moved up to the point of assembly at Pommern Redoubt. The men lay in shell holes there, and made themselves as comfortable as possible for the night.

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Shortly after midnight, **2nd Battalion** also began to assemble, some companies east of the Hanebeek, while the other two companies moved along the road past Spree Farm and assembled in rear of Schuler Galleries. All were in position by 4 o'clock a.m., with **2nd Battalion** headquarters at Schuler Farm. At about 5.20 a.m. the enemy artillery opened a heavy fire on the forward areas and barraged the Hanebeek along the western slope of Hill 32; but with comparatively few casualties, At **6 o'clock of 4th October**, zero hour, the support artillery barrage came down and the attack commenced. The whole of the 1st Battalion at once moved to the attack, following as closely as possible behind the barrage. There was no difficulty in keeping up with the barrage in spite of mud and, though the Hanebeek was very boggy, it did not present any serious obstacle. Rapid progress was impossible. Fire from the German machine-guns was too heavy to permit that. 1st Wellington pushed on to the Red Line, capturing the whole brigade frontage on scheduled time.

To the battalions now moving forward, it was noticeable that the enemy had organised a double line of shell hole defences about three hundred yards apart. Each shell hole contained from two to four dead Germans. The enemy losses must have been very severe. It was later learned that the enemy had himself been massing for an attack, and the intense artillery barrage must have wrought havoc amongst his assembled troops.

The men worked their way up to the German position, and then rushed in with the bayonet. Seven machine-guns and thirty-nine prisoners were captured and left the enemy trench full of German dead. It turned out that Kron Prinz Farm had been an enemy battalion headquarters, and the plans and papers captured there were to yield much valuable information. The **2nd Battalion** now established its headquarters in a shell hole and small trench in Boetleer. All companies suffered many casualties. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, 2nd Wellington were ordered to push forward three posts to conform with a proposed attack and capture of Alder Farm by troops from the brigade on its immediate left. The **2nd Battalion** carried out its task; but, owing to the advance upon Adler Farm not being made, was subjected to an intense machine-gun and rifle fire from Adler Farm, so that it was found necessary after the new posts had been established to withdraw to the original line. Up till about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the weather had been moderately fine; but heavy rain had then set in and the battlefield quickly became a quagmire, making the work of carrying parties and stretcher-bearers extremely heavy. Nevertheless, the wounded were taken out as soon as could possibly be done, the stretcher-bearers working continuously and with the greatest bravery.

It was during this intense fighting of 4th October, that at some time during that day, William Harvey was mortally wounded, amongst many others who did not survive that phase of battle. During the day he was stretchered out of the line and admitted to No.3 Australian Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds in the abdomen and both elbows. It seems probable that his wounds may have been caused by a German machine gun, of which there were very many protecting the battle area.

During the night of the 4th, rain was intermittent, and the weather bleak and cold. The following day, the 5th, the captured positions were consolidated, and the rest of the wounded got in, and the dead buried. During the day, divisions on both flanks called for artillery assistance, but no counter-attack developed against the New Zealand Division's newly captured positions. Later in the day, orders were received that the three Wellington Battalions were to be relieved by the 5th, 6th and 7th battalions of the West Riding Regiment. The relief was complete shortly after midnight, and all three battalions then moved back to bivouacs near Goldfish Chateau. On the 6th, the 3rd Battalion marched to Vlamertinghe and proceeded from there by motor buses to Eecke, while the **2nd Battalion**, late in the day, marched to another camp, which it reached at 11 p.m. There was no rest, for the enemy aeroplanes bombed neighbouring camps during the night, some of the bombs dropping within seventy-five yards of the **2nd Battalion's** camp. The following day, that Battalion moved to another camp near Poperinghe. On the 7th, the 1st Battalion marched to the Brandhoek

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Area and camped in tents, near Poperinghe Railway Station, remaining there till the 15th. The weather was now very wet and all camps in a state of liquid mud. Things were very unpleasant, and it was quite impossible to keep dry. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were to spend another day resting and re-organising and were then called upon to supply large working parties to bury cable in the forward area.

On 12th October, NZ troops advanced in terrible muddy conditions as part of the disastrous attack to capture Passchendaele. NZ suffered their worst number of casualties of the war during that failed attack. In due course Passchendaele was captured by Canadian troops with even larger numbers of casualties.

This marks a suitable stage to end this description of the New Zealand Battalions' involvement during the first stage of battle in the Ypres area, and indeed of all of their involvement throughout 1917, in which William Harvey contributed, up to October.

Six days after being wounded, on 9th October 1917, William Charles George Harvey succumbed and died of his wounds.

William was buried, along with other casualties in Nine Elms British Cemetery at Poperinghe. The burial was conducted by Rev. E.G. Muschamp. William was laid to rest in Plot IV, Row B, Grave No.23. He was age 23 years, 5 months and 14 days.

THE FIRST ROLSTON VISIT TO WILLIAM'S GRAVE:

One year and 4 months later, on 2nd February 1919, William's grave was visited by his brother-in-law Robert David Rolston, husband of William's twin sister Eva, during Robert's deployment as a medic with the NZEF in France. This was after the Armistice and Robert's medical unit formed part of the NZ contribution to the occupation forces in Germany. The map shows his route by train from Cologne to Poperinghe. Robert described his visit to Poperinghe in his war diary, from which I provide the following summary:

Robert was stationed temporarily at Monheim and went to Cologne on 5th Feb to buy some photographic materials. Next day he and his friend Ernie Ault had leave and they travelled together by Red Cross car to Reception Camp at Uplardels, drew some rations and left at 1:42pm. They had 3 loaves of bread, 4 tins of bully beef, 1 tin of butter and 1 tin golden syrup. They travelled by train from Cologne to Liege, to Brussels, to Courtrai. Took a goods train from Courtrai to Roulers, then another train to Ypres, saw some of the war devastation around Ypres, then to Poperinghe, arrived 1pm on 9th. They both went out to Nine Elms cemetery and found the grave. "Took out a couple of nice vases and put on the grave, took some photos of grave etc and cemetery etc and the Nine Elms trees etc". In the evening, wrote a letter to Mr & Mrs Harvey (William's parents) & family. He said it was bitterly cold and the ground covered in snow.

On 10th they took a train at 6:18am to Bailleul, went to the cemetery and found Ernie's brother's grave⁸. Found it easily because all of the other crosses had been blown away so they were fortunate to find it and took photos. Bailleul was shattered by the war and hardly

⁸ Ernie's brother was Horace Alfred Ault, a Private in 41st Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was killed 13 Feb 1917.

CENTENARY OF THE ARMISTICE ENDING THE GREAT WAR 11:00 ON 11th DAY OF 11th MONTH, 1918.

A Remembrance History of William Charles George Harvey, fatally wounded 4 Oct 1917 during the 3rd Battle of Ypres. First issue prepared Nov 2018 by Ken Rolston, great-nephew of William Harvey. Revised & extended September 2021.

a house was left liveable. Train back to Brussels, then to Liege, slept on the station floor, train to Cologne and arrived 7pm on 14th.



Map of Robert Rolston's route by train to visit William's grave.

The photo following shows Robert at the marker cross on William's grave. The decorative vases that they took there can be seen standing on the snow surface:



**Robert Rolston at the grave of William Harvey
10th February 1919.**

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Nine Elms Cemetery is now administered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Their on-line website⁹ describes it as follows:

The cemetery was begun and used by the 3rd Australian and 44th Casualty Clearing Stations when they moved to Poperinghe from Brandhoek and Lijssenthoek respectively in September 1917. Nearly all the burials in Plots I to IX came from these casualty clearing stations whilst they operated in this area during the 1917 Battle of Ypres, up until December 1917. Plots X, XI, XIII, XIV and XV cover the dates between the beginning of March 1918 and the 12th October 1918, the period of the German offensive in Flanders, the British counter attacks and the final advance of August-September. The burials in these cases were carried out almost entirely by fighting units. The cemetery contains 1,556 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 37 German graves from this period. There are also 22 WWII burials, all dating from the Allied retreat to Dunkirk in 1940.

THE SECOND ROLSTON VISIT TO WILLIAM'S GRAVE:

One hundred years later, on 5 September 2019, William Harvey's grave at Poperinghe was visited by three grandsons of Eva Rolston, twin sister of William Harvey. The visit was intended to present their respects to William's memory, at the centenary of the Armistice and centenary of their grandfather Robert Rolston's visit.

The following photograph is of the 3 brothers at William Harvey's gravestone in Nine Elms Cemetery.



**3 Rolston brothers at the grave of their great-uncle William Harvey, 100 years after his death.
Stephen Rolston, Kenneth Rolston, Ronald Rolston.
Grandsons of William's twin sister Eva.**

⁹ <https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/14300/nine-elms-british-cemetery/>

CENTENARY OF THE ARMISTICE ENDING THE GREAT WAR 11:00 ON 11th DAY OF 11th MONTH, 1918.

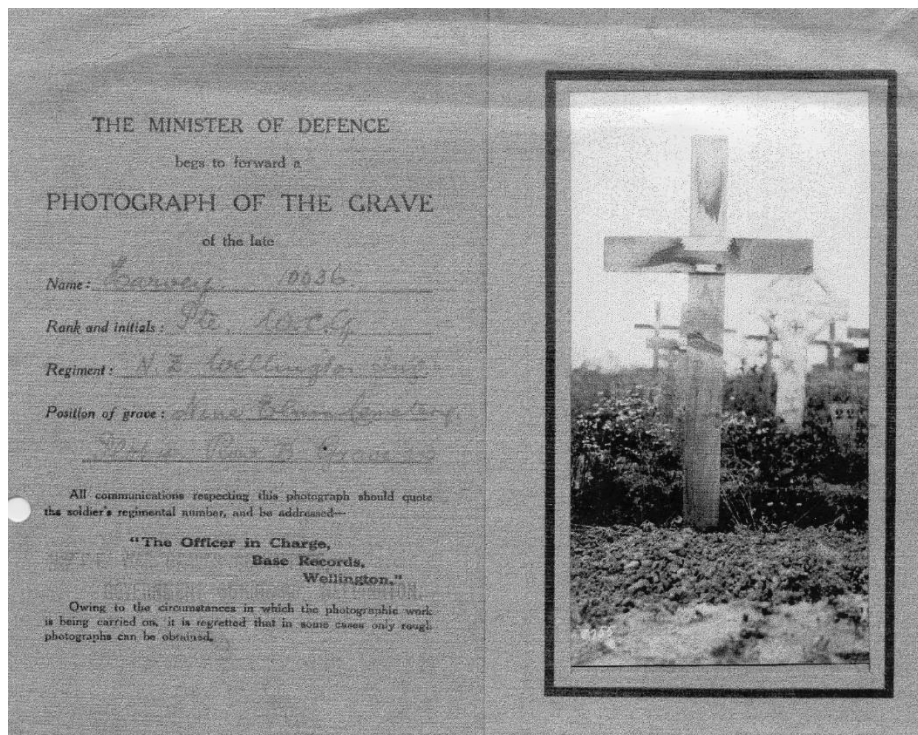
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Ron and Steve were on holiday in UK from New Zealand. Ken is resident in England. With Lilian Rolston and Lorna Rolston, wives of Ron & Steve, the party drove from West Byfleet¹⁰ to Folkestone, took the car across the channel by train through the channel tunnel, stopped to visit and walk on Dunkirk beach, drove to Ypres for accommodation and visited Nine Elms Cemetery the next morning, Thursday 5th September, easily finding the grave at the designated reference.

At the evening of the same day, the party of 5 attended the memorial ceremony at Menin Gate in Ypres. The band of the Coldstream Guards played and marched through the entrance of the Menin Gate and the ceremony included wreath laying in memory of many thousands of British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in WWI but have no known grave. The Last Post was sounded by 5 buglers at 8pm exactly, as they do every evening¹¹ since 1928. This was the 31,519th time that Last Post was sounded at Menin Gate to commemorate those soldiers.

AFTER THE WAR:

After the war ended, the NZ Ministry of Defence sent the following grave certificate to William's mother Phoebe, one of many that they sent to bereaved families. They also provided a notice summarising his particulars from disembarking at Suez until dying of wounds in Belgium. There was also a scroll despatched to her in June 1921 and a plaque despatched in Jan 1922.



**“At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember Them”.**¹²

¹⁰ At the home of Ken's daughter Melanie.

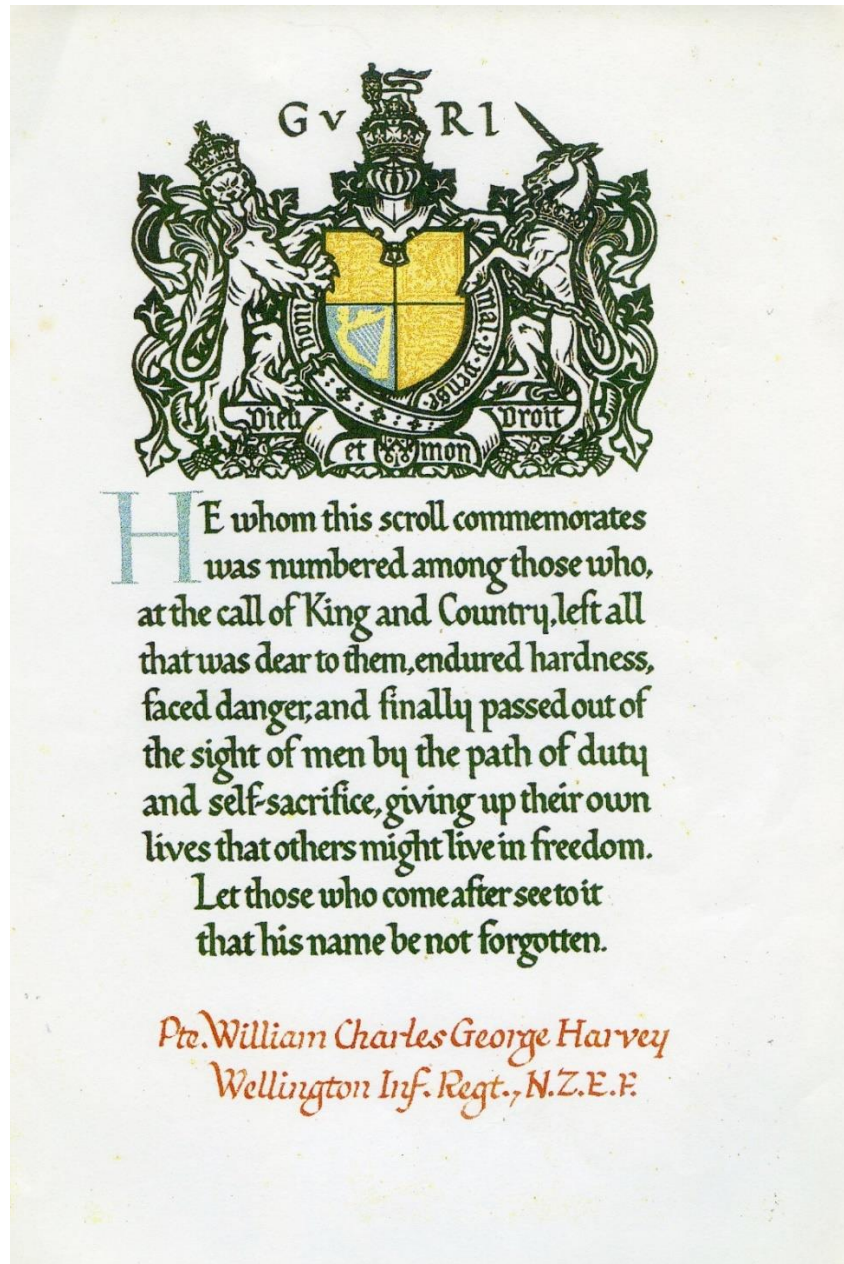
¹¹ Except for a period of interruption during the German occupation of the town in WWII.

¹² “To the Fallen”: Poem by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), published in *The Times* newspaper on 21 September 1914.

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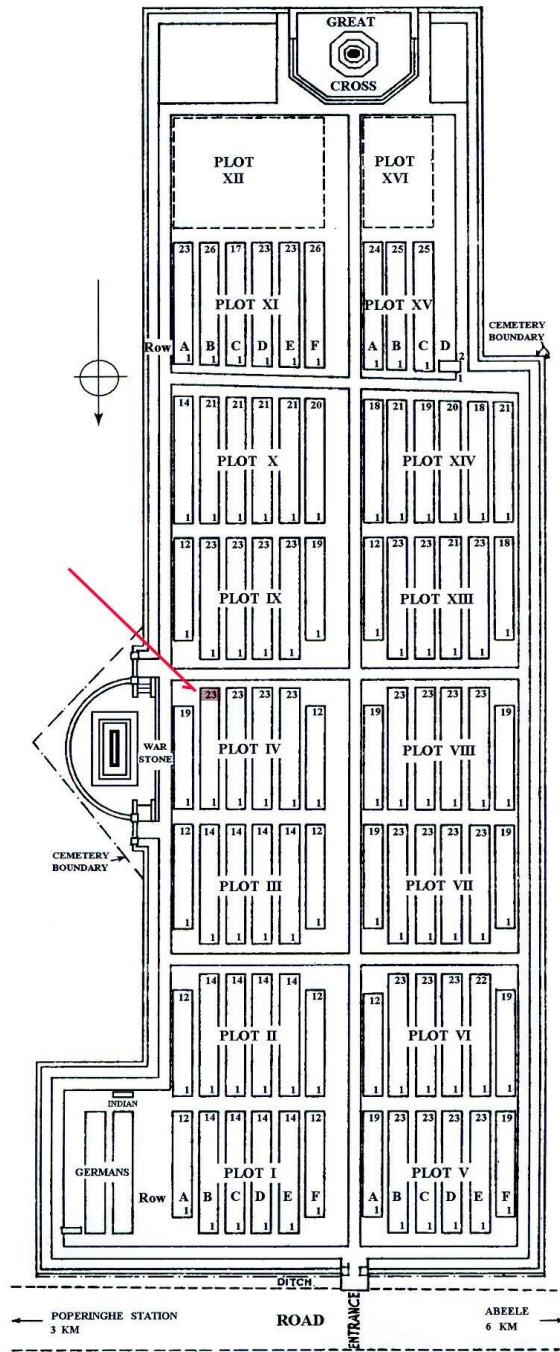
Below is the official remembrance certificate issued by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



The next page shows a plan of Nine Elms Cemetery and the location of the grave is highlighted pink in Plot IV near the War Stone and indicated by the arrow.

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NINE ELMS BRITISH CEMETERY, POPERINGHE

WILLIAM CHARLES GEORGE HARVEY
Private 10036, 2nd Battalion, Wellington Regiment
New Zealand Expeditionary Force.
Died : Tuesday 9 October 1917, age 23.
Buried: Plot IV, Row B, No.23

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Here is the Embarkation State for HMNZT 49 Maunganui,¹³ the only surviving evidence known, confirming the troopship in which William Harvey and all of the NZ Infantry Brigade of 11th Reinforcements were carried from Wellington to Suez. The Infantry entry is outlined in red. William's K Company is not listed because it was apparently amalgamated with one of the main companies. There were no Infantry carried on the accompanying troopship HMNZT 50 Tahiti, except one infantry officer commanding troops.

51/457/3.M.G. N. Z. IMPERIAL ARMY FORCE 1918. 25/198/1
 CONFIDENTIAL. EMBARKATION STATES - ELEVENTH REINFORCEMENTS.
 Headquarters, Wellington, 21 March 1918.

OFFICER COMMANDING ELEVENTH REINFORCEMENTS: Major A. S. McKenzie, A Squadron.
 SHIP'S OFFICER TO O.C. FORCE: Captain F. H. Hudson, N.Z. Staff Corps.

EMBARKATION STATE: H.M.N.Z.F. No. 49 ("MAUNGANUI").

OFFICER COMMANDING TROOPS ON BOARD: Lieutenant W. H. Secon, C Company.
 SHIP'S ADMIRALT: Lieutenant J. L. Herbert, B Squadron.
 SHIP'S QUARTERMASTER (Permanent): Captain W. H. Fraser.

Unit.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Remarks.
HEADQUARTERS' STAFF: Staff Officer to O.C. Troops-	1 *	4	* Captain F. Hudson N.Z. Staff Corps.
N.Z. EQUIPPED BEEFEE BRIGADE: Headquarters-	-	2	
A, B, C, & D Squadrons-	12 *	364	* Includes O.C. Force & Ship's Adjutant.
N.Z. INFANTRY BRIGADE: Headquarters-	-	1	
A, B, C, & D Companies-	19 *	720	* Includes O.C. Troops. (1 Officer Commanding Troops, Transport No. 50.
DIVISIONAL SIGNAL SERVICE: Div. Signal Company (3 sections)	1	16	
DIVISIONAL MEDICAL UNITS: N.Z. Field Ambulance No. 1	-	12	
N.Z. Field Ambulance No. 2	-	12	
N.Z. Medical Corps (unattached)	2	8	
SHIP'S QUARTERMASTER- GENERAL	1	-	Captain W. H. Fraser
ENGINEER	2	-	
BOILER	1	-	
NAVY DEPARTMENT-	1	2	
N.Z. PORTAL SERVICE-	-	2	
Total =	41	1163	

EMBARKATION STAFF.

SENIOR EMBARKATION OFFICER: Major A. F. Roberts, N.Z. Field Artillery.
 ASSISTANT SENIOR EMBARKATION OFFICER: Major F. Bethune, Unattached List (B).
 SHIP'S EMBARKATION OFFICER: Lieutenant D. A. Ewen, N.Z. Field Artillery.
 ASSISTANT SENIOR EMBARKATION OFFICER: Captain V. Beauchamp-Platts,
 N.Z. Motor Transport Corps.

Codes issued to:-

1. G.C.C.	8. A.M.S.	14. R.T.C.
2. C.M.S.	9. G.C. Trenbham	15. Transport Board.
3. P.M.S.	10. G.C. Foxthornton	16. Transport Shipping.
4. A.S.	11. P.H.B. Fairlie	17. O.C. Force:
5. C.M.C. (3)	12. G. Aspinall	Major H. S. McKenzie
6. C.M.C. (4)	13. S.H.O.	11th Reinforcements
7. D.S.A.	18. S.H.O.	

This Remembrance study was prepared by Ken Rolston and re-issued with additions and modifications in September 2021.

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ken.rolston@rolstonge.co.uk

¹³ The 2 pages of Embarkation States are contained in a large file of records for HMNZT 49 Maunganui. Wellington Archives: AAYS 8638 ADI/798 25/198/1