

# The Diary of William (Bill) Crimmins



**Voyage to World War One**  
**HMNZT No 93 *Corinthic***

**Compiled by Judith Crimmins**



## **Introduction**

Some years after my mother's death, I discovered that amongst the small pile of books that she had always kept by her bed (and which I had always assumed were her prayer books) was the diary that my father had written as a 20-year-old at sea enroute to serve his country in World War One. The diary is a day by day account of the six week voyage from Wellington to Liverpool.

The compilation of this 'work' has taken many hours and sweat and could not have been completed without the support of a number of people. I thank each of them very, very much.

It has also taken me much closer to my father whom I loved very much and can thank for the many opportunities that have come my way because of the many hours of interactions and talks we had.

The diary is reproduced exactly as my father wrote it. This includes style of writing, punctuation, what appear to be date omissions, inverted commas, grammar, spelling and what may appear as typist errors!

**Judith Crimmins 2019**

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62267  
Pte W Crimmins  
Rectangular Slip

C. 30

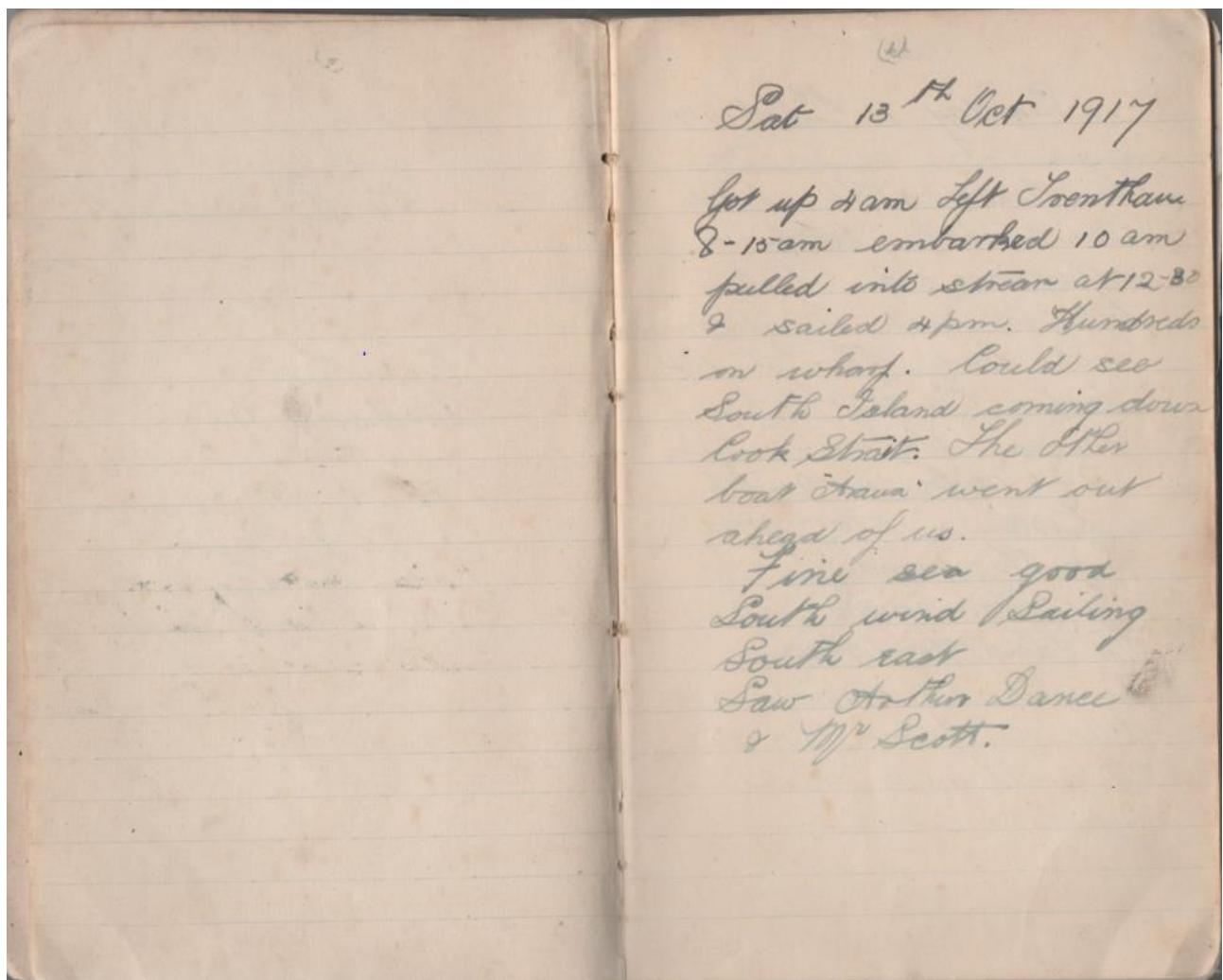
"Corinthic"  
Troopship 93

62267. W. Crimmins  
No 9 Platoon  
"C" Coy  
30<sup>th</sup> Refts.

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30<sup>th</sup> Refts<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviation for Reinforcements

### *First Diary Entry*



### *Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 1917*

Got up 4am Left Trentham 8.15am embarked 10am pulled into stream at 12-30 & sailed 4 pm. Hundreds on wharf. Could see South Island coming down Cook Strait. The other boat "Arawa" went out ahead of us.

Fine sea good South wind Sailing Southeast

Saw Arthur Dance<sup>2</sup> & Mr Scott.

### *Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1917*

The "Arawa" still ahead seen 3 whales' porpoises albatrosses etc. Got a bit sea sick in afternoon not bad though. Met Archie Hardy from Tauranga.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Dance was a Cousin from Waihi (son of Annie (nee Toomey) and Walter Dance). Bill and Arthur shared much together in their lives. It is assumed Arthur went to Wellington to 'see Bill off'. It is assumed that Mr Scott was the father of Bill Scott mentioned on Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.

220 miles in 24 hrs      Fine sea good      South wind      Sailing East      No land to be seen      We gain 25 minutes a day in time so in a week we gain 2hrs 15 minutes. Hundreds sea-sick. Passed the other ship & it is to the left now. Had our life belts fitted on today

Afternoon      the other ship out of sight

280 miles since yesterday

Fine sea good      South wind      Sailing Northeast      No Land to be seen

Wellington time      Noon      Ships time      11-35am

(14)	(15)
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> 1917	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> 1917
Still going tucker not too good everyone made complaints.	Fine sea good travelled 280 miles
The Arawa just out of sight.	Orders out Every man must wear or carry his life belt & have it in his hammock at night.
I travelled 285 miles since yesterday.	All hands shower baths very cold too
Fine weather sea good South wind Sailing south east No land to be seen.	Tucker much better South wind Sailing South east
Wellington time Noon Ship's " 11-10 am	Wellington time Noon Ship's " 10-45am
<del>at 11-15 I slept on the cabbages as we did not like below but we were chased out by the mice at 11-15 So I went up</del>	<del>below &amp; slept under the ventilator.</del>

### Monday 15<sup>th</sup> 1917

Still going tucker not too good everyone made complaints.

The "Arawa" just out of sight.

Travelled 285 miles since yesterday.

Fine weather sea good      South wind      Sailing Southeast.      No Land to be seen.

Wellington time      Noon      Ship's time      11.10am

Met chap & slept on the cabbages as we did not like below but we were chased out by the police at 11.15. So I went below & slept under the ventilator.

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Fine Sea good      Travelled 280 miles

Orders out every man must wear or carry his life belt & have it in his hammock at night.  
shower baths very cold too. Tucker much better

All had

South wind      Sailing Southeast

Wellington time - Noon.      Ship's time - 10-45am

**Wednesday Oct 17<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Rained a little but turned out a good day.

Sailing East      Wind North

Orders came out every man to his hammock at 8-15pm 240 men sleeping in a big room. They put 56 more men down to sleep & told us to move up closer. At tea time our company had a meeting & decided to go up on deck if the extra men came down. Promptly at 8-15pm a guarded Police were put on the top of our stairways to stop any disturbance. The extra men came down with their Sergeant they were told to get out at once. Then Officers appeared on the scene & told us it had to be done & we had to make room for extra men.

They gave the head officer 10 minutes to put them out or to keep them in. All immediately marched up the stairs & rushed passed the ship's Police officers etc & got to the top deck – Not one man would go down until we got our proper sleeping space back. At 11-15pm an officer who was on our side stated everything was clear so we got what we wanted & that ended it.

Travelled 284 miles today

Food good.      We were vaccinated to-day at 10am.

“Arawa” still out of sight      No land to be seen

Wellington time - Noon      Ship's time - 10-20am

**Thursday Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Travelled 294 miles      Sailing East      Wind West

Rained in morning a little. Food very good.

Went down Stoke hold to have a look. 8 boilers each 8 fires Very hot. 18 men firing. No land in sight

“Arawa” still out of sight.

Wellington time - Noon      Ship's time - 10-55am

Wellington Races today. I think we are going Panama way.

### ***Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 1917***

Travelled 290 miles	Sailing Northeast	Wind North
Cold early but turned out a lovely day.	Calm as a cucumber	No land to be seen
Wellington time Noon	Ship's time	7-45am

"Arawa" still out of sight. No land to be seen.

Dick Cross (Waihi chap) & I went through the engine rooms. It was very interesting too. She is twin screw. 2 big engines 7500 HP each. Piston stroke 5 ft long. Dia of cylinders about 4ft 5ins. Piston rods – 9ft long (a bit longer than a ford's.) Each engine 2 cylinders. Saw a big condenser for condensing sea water for washing purposes. The shafts on which the propeller shaft are on are 1 ft 8 ins in Dia. There are 2 shafts. There are also a few engines for pumping water to the boilers made by (A. Hall Bartfon Eng.) 2 centrifugal pumps. 2 Dynamos 300 revs 102 Volts 210 amps. These 2 are in conjunction with the freezing room. The temperature in this engine room was 3 points below Zero on one gauge & 30 deg on another. We did not see the Refrigerating Room as it is full of Mutton. We saw bearing 4 ft 6 ins long a terrible big size. Also saw the reversing gear & driving gears. We saw spare cranks too each of weighing about 15 tons. We saw every thing we could see. The Rooms are kept lovely every thing clean as a whistle. We then went in the stoke hold & filled barrows of coal & stoked for about an hour. There are 2 boys wheeling coal in barrows to the fires. There are 18 firemen. They work 4 hrs at a time. After this we came up on deck & walked passed the officers cook house. So we looked in a round window (porthole) into the cook house & saw a few ducks getting roasted. They made our mouths water & we decided to try & buy one. We offered a cook 4/-for one & he said 'Right Oh' So we got out 2/- each & he said "Well I can't get any now but I will get you a jolly decent cake for 2/6" we said "Right Oh" And he told us to walk along & he would open a door. He opened the door & we ducked in. He had it rapped up & told us to put it under our coat & don't let anyone see us, so when getting out we saw a basket of cakes & pinched about 12 of them. We got out alright & went off thinking we had a good bargain down to our cabin we went to have a good feed of cake. We bought some coffee & sat down to have a good supper. We opened up the cake & the jolly beggar (a Cockney bloke) of a cook had pawned a current loaf on us. We laughed for about an hour the way he had us. We were so careful about this precious cake under our coats, so not to crush it. Once caught, twice shy. So we got a bit wiser in that deal.

(Had a bath the salt water stings some)

### ***Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Strong North wind	Sailing Northeast	Travelled 280 mls	Weather - Cold & rainy
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The "Arawa" still out of sight. No land today Done 1 hr drill to-day. Having an easy time Reading Ben Hur. Just been having a talk to Bill Scott. Having a yarn about how the "Mavis" would do in this breeze with Bert on the tiller. She would sail some.

Wellington time - Noon	Ship's time - 7-15am
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### ***Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> 1917***

North strong Wind Sailing East

Weather Cold & Rainy & pretty rough too. The "Arawa" still out of sight. No drill to-day as it is Sunday.

## Wellington time - Noon

Ship's time - 6.55am

At tea to-night A Company had bad cheese in a terrible state. So they all lined up & one chap with the cheese & a black card with

*Born in 1852. Died 1900 Came to life 1917*

R.I.P

headed the lot & the remainder with hats off marched behind one with a wooden cross. A chap was playing an accordion "Nearer My God to Thee."

They had a burial Service & put it overboard. Started to wear our shorts

*Monday Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>*

Wind North              Sailing N.E.      Travelled 302.      No land to be seen "Arawa" still out of sight. Was a grand day & sea calm as a mill pond.

*Tuesday Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917*

No land to-day. A lovely day the warm weather noticeable. I was mess orderly & things were in a mess. Felt a bit crook the vaccination beginning to work. Pay day 10/- the best I ever had. They keep 1/- a day & give it to us as the end of the trip.

*Wednesday Oct 24<sup>th</sup> 1917*

Wind E Sailing N.E.      Travelled 296 No Land to-day

This morning was a sight one will remember for many a time. The sea was calm as a plate Glass window & a gentle swell. One could never realize it could be so calm in mid ocean. I felt a bit groggy & saw the doctor & got medicine & done nothing for the rest of the day.

*Thursday Oct 25<sup>th</sup> 1917*

A very nice day. Saw a few flying fish. Feeling a bit groggy with vaccination. It gave me a head ache makes knees knocks etc. Nothing fresh to-day.

## Very hot A Concert

*Friday Oct 26<sup>th</sup> 1917*

Wind E              Sailing N.E.              Travelled 274

A lovely day & a nice breeze. Feeling pretty good. It is getting warmer now, so we only have a shirt shorts & shoes on.

**Saturday Oct 27<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Wind E    Sailing N.E.    Travelled    280

A grand day & a good breeze made things cool. Had a Life belt inspection. There are different places we have to go to in case of getting torpedoed. They blow 4 blasts of the whistle & that is the sign to all get ready to get into the boats. Every one puts on his lifebelt & goes like a racehorse to his deck. They call the roll & then we are inspected to see if we have our life belts on right. It is a good idea too in case of accidents. While we were getting to our decks the fire signal sounded & hoses were playing in no time. These 4 blasts go anytime. It took the whole ship load 4 minutes to get to their stations. About 100 crew & 1400 men. Pretty slick for a big body of men

At 4pm this afternoon The Gunners had practice. They dropped a barrel on a raft overboard & let it go about until one could hardly see it only now & then. They fired at it but just missed it. They had 4 shots. One went about 8 miles we could just see it land. It is a 6" gun & does not make such a row. All flame shoots around the mouth of the Gun when fired. Started sleeping on deck.

**Sun Oct 28<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Wind E    Sailing N.E.    Travelled 295

A good day & a nice cool breeze. Church parade at 9.45am. Had a few songs & prayers. The band played in the afternoon. So we sat up on spud Island (where they keep the spuds cabbages) & listened to the charms. A lovely sunset & daylight up till 8pm.

**Monday Oct 29<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E.    Wind E    Travelled 270

Lovely day. Nothing startling. Schools of small flying fish. A big canvas bath put on the deck so we have a bath every morning & sleep just near it.

**Tuesday Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E.    Wind E    Travelled 295

Good weather. Went on Guard at 10am to guard the isolation Hospital 4 of us. A chap died this morning & was buried at sea at 4.15pm. The boat stopped all lined up. The band played & every man stood to attention then the Last Post was blown by the buglers & the 3 volleys fired. It was very sad.

**Wednesday Oct 31<sup>st</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E.    Wind E    Travelled 280

Nothing startling. They have submarine Guard on now. Chaps stationed around the ship looking for mines submarines etc. They have 10 rounds in the rifle & 10 in their pouches

Came off guard at 10am this morning

**Thursday Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E. Wind E Travelled 274

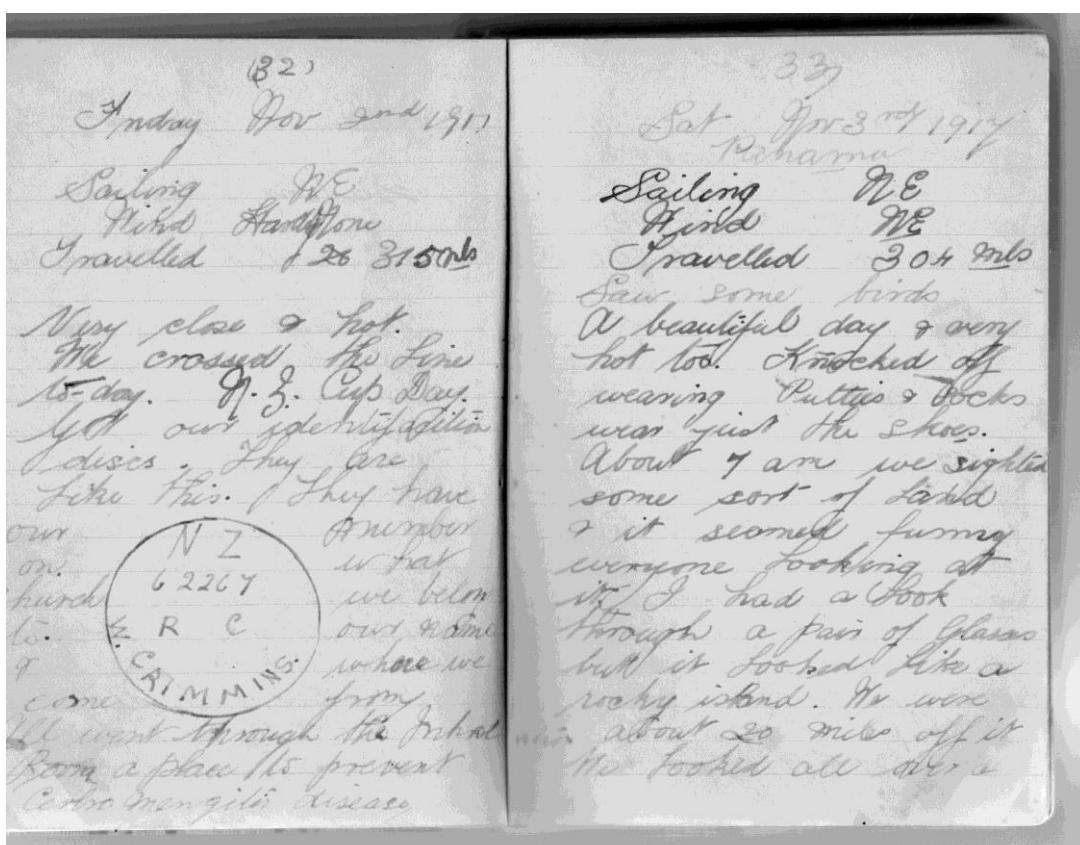
Nothing fresh. Company started sports. Our platoon won the Light weight tug a war & Physical Drill. The Canvas pond bursted & all sleeping around got wet through, but I just missed it. At 5pm the sailors come along "get up what will you have Water or Coffee so we get up & then they hose the decks.

**Friday Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E. Wind, Hardly None Travelled 315 mls

Very close & hot. We crossed the line to-day. N.Z. Cup Day.

Got our identification discs.<sup>3</sup> They are like this. They have our number on. What church we belong to. Our name & where we come from. All went through the Inhalation Room a place to prevent Cerbro mengitis disease



<sup>3</sup> The diary page which illustrates the identification discs

**Sat Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> 1917      Panama**

Sailing N.E.

Wind N.E.

Travelled 304

Saw some birds. A beautiful day & very hot too. Knocked off wearing Putties & socks wear just the shoes. About 7am we sighted some sort of Land & it seemed funny everyone looking at it. I had a look through a pair of glasses but it looked like a rocky island. We were about 20 miles off it we looked all over a map a chap had & as far as we could find out it is named 'Cococos' [Cocos] Island. We are 300 miles off Panama canal. At 2pm it started to pour rain a shower passing over for about an hour. The Coy held the bun & treacle race to-day. They tied a bun covered with treacle on strings & we had to eat them our hands tied behind our backs. I went in it just to have a bun to eat & it was good too.

**Sunday Nov 4<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E. Wind E

Travelled 295

A foggy sort of morning & then rained a little. When we got up we could see the coast of America going up a big Gulf. We passed plenty of small islands. We passed a yacht at 8am then a steamer "Airdale" at 10.30am & a couple of more yachts. We could see land all around At 1-45pm we were at the entrance of the Panama Canal. It was very pretty going into it too. Buoys were everywhere. A launch came out with the pilot & this was the first time I seen the niggers. One was driving & the other standing on the lookout. The launch went very fast & pulled up at the ships side then the pilot came on board.

The launch had a steering wheel with spark & throttle on & gears just like a car. The nigger wanted a cigar but we can't raise them on 1/- a day. We then made headway towards the 1st lock & passed the place called "Balboa". There were a lot of Troops buildings there. Then the inspector & Doctor came on & then went away also Some nigers then came to work the boat through the canal. We saw where the French tried to put the canal through but failed. We saw big cranes working after the style of an aerial tram buckets, running from one end to the other & dropping. It was about 300 ft long. When we got up a little further we saw Cocoanut palms Banana trees etc & they looked very pretty. We also saw the Yankee soldiers on guard everywhere along the sides. Then we saw niggers hundreds of them. We came to the Lock & all very anxious to see how it worked. They have the place just like big concrete baths. One on each side so a boat can go up & another can come down at the same time. The locks are 100 x 110 and 1000 ft long. We sailed into the 1st lock & it was about 80 ft high & the gates closed on the back of us just like 2 swing gates closing & meeting in the centre. Then the water came in from the bottom & it rose about 20 ft a minute. We rose about 38 ft. Then on both sides there were big concrete posts about 30 ft high with electric lights when dark & Towing Locomotives all electrical driven. They had big wire ropes fastened on to the ship. 4 Locoes on each side & they pulled the ship through the lock which was about 500 yds long. When we got to the other end of the lock the gates opened & we were towed into the next lock & the gates closed again & water came in & we rose about 40 ft again. There were niggers running along the sides keeping the ropes clear. White men drive the locos & there are bosses conducting the work. What amused me was they carried a small telephone under their arm & when they wanted to ring up any where around the locks they just opened a door about 6 in long & pushed the 2 plugs in & rang up. The doors were on the electric light poles.

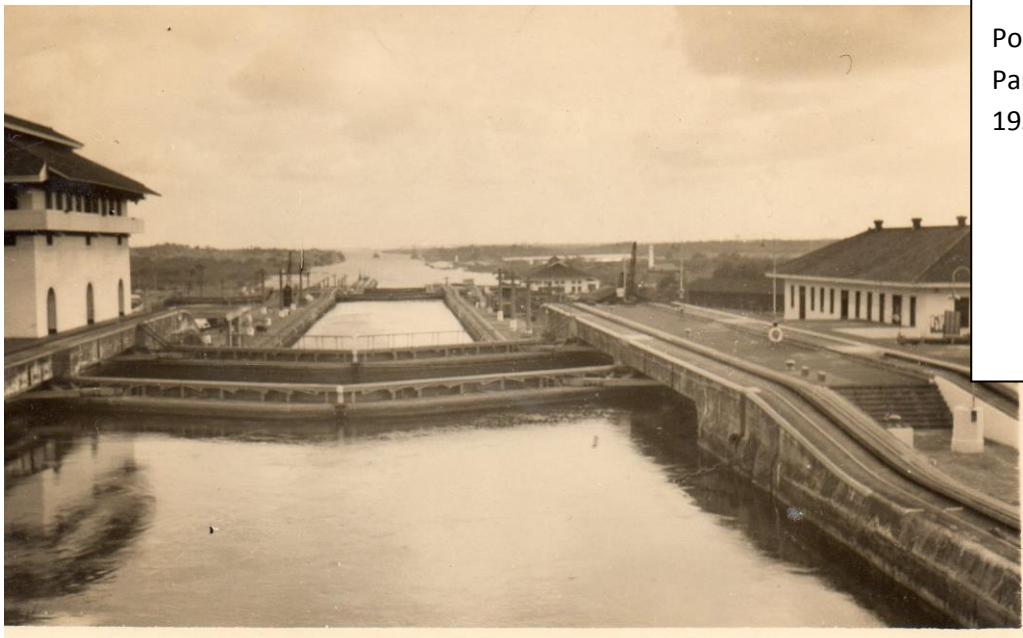
This is what the locks were like. The name of this lock was "Miraflores 1913".

They had grass squares laid out on them. There were Yankee Soldiers & people niggers etc down. We got chocolate, books & everything thrown to us. When we left this lock we floated into a lake. We passed a Japan boat Anyo-Maru 18500 ton & there were a big crowd on, hundreds of them.

Then we passed a boat "Ceylon" & "Port Hacking" which was going to Sydney.

Then another marked "Izbal" There were 2 steps in this lock. We came to the next one at 5pm. The name of this one was Pesdo - Miguel & worked the same as the 1<sup>st</sup> only it had 3 steps went through 3 gates & rose up again. There were a big crowd here & we were treated very decently too. We saw the train something like the Waihi train. The scenery was grand every thing green & nigger houses all the way along. There were 2 big water falls flowing in the canal too & Electric Lights on the bank every 300yds & big lights flickering & it looked

lovely. After leaving this one it became dark & we went through a big lake & passed little village. The next lock was "Gatun" & it looked lovely with all the Electric Lights going in the town. We arrived at Gatun at 11pm. We went in the lock the water lowered then were floated into the next it lowered & then we floated into Colon. We anchored at 11pm then went to bed. This ended the trip it was 47 miles. There were 10 locks each lock named Emergency Dam.



Postcard of  
Panama Canal in  
1950's

Postcard of Panama Canal in 1950's

**Monday Nov 5<sup>th</sup> 1917**

**Colon**

To day it rained a little & it cooled the air. When we got up we saw boats everywhere. A cruiser & a patrol boat destroyer. Little boats were running up & down the harbor. At 7am we moved towards the wharves to coal. The name of the coaling place was "Christabel" coaling place. We saw a submarine running around near us as breakfast time. On entering near the wharves we saw 4 more submarines. Then a Yankee boat came in through the canal. They started to coal & niggers were like flies. They came aboard & went to the coal hatches. There was on the wharf a big Electric tram lines about 25 ft in the air & 10 ton trucks of coal coming along every few yards. The niggers would turn a handle then the truck would go & another nigger stop it at the other end. It would then empty into a big pass or box & a belt was running on a big crane from under the pass to the hatch & the coal would drop on the belt & go across to the hatch & into the hold. They had these big cranes everywhere. We got word no one was to land. Only American troops can land so we were greatly disappointed not being able to go on shore. The niggers were selling views but were a terrible price so I did not get any here but may get some again. There were a lot of Spanish troops stationed here 2500 of them & they were down to see us & a very decent lot too. We were exchanging badges, buttons, money & everything possible. They got away & bought us fruit & all sorts. They are United States troops & are from Porto Rigo. Spanish descendants. A few ladies came down & gave us fruit etc. At 5pm the "Arawa" came in the 1<sup>st</sup> time we seen it for about 22 days. She is coaling up now. The niggers speak good English but the troops can't speak it too well. They coal a boat here 1000 tons in 20 minutes so you have some idea what it is like. There are 5000 Yankee troops on the other side of the canal on guard. Wireless stations everywhere.

Travelled 545 miles

Got a few badges off the Soldiers here.

**Tuesday Nov 6<sup>th</sup> 1917**

When I got up we were still along side the wharf. It was a grand morning too & old King Sol just rising over the hills. There were some Soldiers down on guard on the wharf. It is always guarded. We pulled out to stream at 7-30am & there were niggers & US Soldiers seeing us off. We can see the "Arawa" just going in front of us. We can see wharves everywhere & big sheds hundreds of ft long.

All the wharves are concrete. Now I can see 6 submarines beside the wharf. They are not big ones thought. There is a boat they call a Monitorist floats in about 2 ft water & it has guns etc on. There is a destroyer on our left anchored. At 8.30am we saw the 1<sup>st</sup> Airaplane & it was a long way away but is now coming near us. It goes along lovely, but we can hear the engines humming a lot. It is just overhead now & we can see 2" big stars painted on the bottom.

It flew for about 1 hr. then went out of sight. At 1-30pm the boat signaled to the warship & we started on our 2<sup>nd</sup> lap of the journey. We have gone 6545 miles so far. The warship went in front then the "Arawa" & we followed on in the "Corinthic" next.

It looked pretty going out. We passed a Yankee steamer coming in. This place is well watched they have big concrete blocks piled up & it makes a breakwater for the Colon harbour. The entrance is about 1/4 mile wide & a submarine always about there. No boat is allowed in after 6pm. & going through the canal no boat can get through after 2 pm But transports get through any time. It is now their winter here & it was 92 in the shade to-day. We passed along the coast & there was land till night. At 2pm we had to go on submarine Guard & the heat was terrific. I was guarding one of the boats.

### ***Wednesday Nov 7<sup>th</sup> 1917***

When we got up it was the same old thing sea sea everywhere. The small cruiser "Minna Rosa" U.S. was ahead & the "Arawa" next then us.

At 9am the cruiser went to the left & in the afternoon it was to the right. Zig Zagging everywhere. It was pretty warm to-day & I done some washing.

At right we saw 2 ships before tea & later we could only see 2 lights. The cruiser left us & went over towards them.

Sailing North                    We are in the Caribbean Sea now.                    Travelled 273

### ***Thursday Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Sailing North                    Wind North                    Travelled 274

I got up in a hurry as they were hosing down the deck. We could see the other cruiser just on the horizon at the back of us. At 11am she was along side us & at noon we passed a ship she looked like an Oil carrying boat. This afternoon the cruiser was on the right & just now 4pm is in front of the "Arawa". We are just passing a light house on an island & on the right there is a big island. I think it is one of the Jamaica Group We can see the lighthouses working & they look pretty. It was dark at 6 pm tonight. We are passing Cuba & a few other islands to right & Hytii. [Haiti]

### ***Friday Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Sailing North                    Wind North                    Travelled 265

It is blowing a bit to-day & it cools the air a good deal. We are all one after the other to-day. We can see islands on the left of us. I think they are the Burmedus [Burmudas] I think & all around are the West Indies. Pay day a quid. Time of the big money.

### ***Saturday Nov 10<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Sailing North                    Wind North                    Travelled 266 mls

Nothing startling                    No land.

### ***Sunday Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Sailing North                    Wind North                    Travelled 262

A splendid day very calm a bit of a haze around. Passed 2 ships one very large one.

### ***Monday Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Going North                    Travelled 268 Miles

Grand day. Passed 3 steamers. Peeling spuds today.                    No land.

We passed the U.S. Big Naval Base in the night.

### **Tuesday Nov 13<sup>th</sup> 1917**

A very foggy morning. Saw another cruiser coming towards us & signalling. We followed it & saw many ships going all directions. We arrived as our 2<sup>nd</sup> Port of call at New Port Neuse in Virginia United States. We anchored in stream & ships are everywhere hundreds of them all big steamers too. The fog hung around all day & very cold. Patrol boats everywhere & saw a few destroyers small ones & a few cruisers. Also saw a flying machine & saw it loop the loop 3 times. Saw an observation balloon & forts. Big disappearing guns about 18ft long the barrel.

Travelled 48 miles

Travelled 1658 miles from Colon and 8203 miles from NZ.

### **Wednesday Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Still laying in stream. A very foggy day. Nothing startling. Saw an airplane Loop the Loop 6 times & do the corkscrew dive done. A pretty cold place this.

### **Thursday Nov 15<sup>th</sup> 1917**

#### **Newport News**

A foggy day. Pulled into wharf about 1pm & all went ashore. The boat started to coal up when we left. We marched around the places for about 3/4hr & were very pleased to feel earth under us after 5 weeks on water. We were told to fall in at 4-45pm. We wandered around the streets & the Yankee money tangled us up & our money tangled them up too & it was great sport. I got some views & that are not bad. The town is nothing flash good building but not very clean. Cars were everywhere & all driven left handed. We went into several shops & they sold everything at Chemist's place in one part lolly & fountain next post cards tobacco etc. Very clean but mixed up. The trams have a place for Whites & one for Blacks. We saw mules & horses loading up 5000 of them for the front. We saw a lot of Yankee Soldiers & they showed us around. There is a big camp here got 30,000 men in & they are making it bigger. There is also an airvation [aviation] school & big forts I see.

### **Friday Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 1917**

The fog cleared & we went ashore at 10-30am & marched up town. We met the "Arawa" chaps Wynn Kirk Black etc & had a good day. Saw the North Island play South won by South 5 to 3. I saw a lot of 1 ½ ton trucks "Service" & "Republic" they named. Also Studebakers with bodies built on to carry 16 passengers & they reckoned they done well. Saw the camp. 30,000 men in it & motor trucks 3 tons "Carford". There were hundreds of them & water waggons transport waggons etc & mules. They said 30,000 mules were to be shipped this week. There was also Hospitality Building & they gave any soldiers tea & cakes & sang songs & done everything they could do & gave every one a cigar when leaving. At the camp they are building acres of building & will shortly accommodate 70,000 men & hay acres of it in bales. We also saw a 20 inch gun ready to be shipped to France.

### **Saturday Nov 17<sup>th</sup>**

No leave pulled into steam at 9am. Saw an airplane flying doing loop the loop, flying upside down. Doing corkscrew dive, turning over side ways, he could do anything in it. There were several out in the air. A nice day. The weather is like N Z here. "Ärawa" boys got leave.

### **Sunday Nov 18<sup>th</sup> 1917**

No leave. Still in stream. The "Arawa" boys got leave. All kicked up a row but could not get it as the Capt was away. Church parade. Grand Day. All hands rushed the promenade deck & could not get leave so they sang "Rule Britannia" and England never shall be slaved & Kicked up a terrible row. If the boat was along side the wharf they would have climbed off & taken notice of no one.

### **Monday Nov 19<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Cold day. Pulled up anchor & sailed out to the heads at 11am & stayed there till 3pm then sailed out a warship coming with us. We saw the entrance all mined & nets across with just an opening for shipping.

### **Tuesday Nov 20<sup>th</sup>**

Sailing North      Wind N.E.      Travelled 217

Nothing startling only just sea. We passed a ship. Getting colder. Revellie 6-45am instead of 6am. It is dark at 6am so that is the reason it was altered.

### **Wednesday Nov 21<sup>st</sup>**

Travelled 270      Sailing North      Wind Strong N.E.      Sea everywhere & pretty cold.

### **Thursday Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>**

#### **Halifax Nova Scotia**

Sailing North      Travelled 291      5.30 pm

Sea very rough in morning but quietened down in afternoon. Saw a few ships. As 5pm we entered Halifax harbour (Novo Scotia) We saw 2 reefs & lighthouses everywhere. We saw a wrecked steamer beached & there was some one working on her. We also passed a big "Good Hope" battleship 4 funnels a beauty & guns galore and later we passed 4 more & they were all big ones. Big steamers laying everywhere. We dropped anchor at 7pm & the place looked decent.

### **Friday Nov 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917**

It was a very foggy morning. We could hardly see 40 yds distance. About 11am the fog rose & we saw the "Arawa" along side. There was also a big ship of Canadian troops near by. Then we saw ships all around us. Many were troopships & cargo boats. I think they will be going with us. They say 15,000 troops are here & waiting for more to come. In the afternoon they lowered the boats & we went out on a boat excursion. All got in the boats & went for a row around the place. 70 men in a boat. They are big pulling boats fitted up with a compass etc in case of wreck. We went around as few transports & then went around the "Olympic" a sister ship to the "Titanic" There were hundreds of Chinese on board her. I think they are going to the front too. It had 7 decks & a fine up to date boat but those Chows spoiled the look of her. When we rowed back to our boat we got out & another lot got in just then the Captain of the Ship came along on a launch & ordered all boats to be put & hung up again & be ready to leave in  $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. They did buzz round getting them in too. We moved & thought that we were off but landed in at a wharf at 6pm. There is a concert now so I will go & have a look at it. Alongside us is a big Goods Shed Concrete. On top there is a soldiers Hospital I think. Nurses etc we could see.

778 miles from Newport to Halifax

8981 miles from NZ

## Saturday Nov 24<sup>th</sup>

It was a rough night Thunder Storm. In the morning it was raining. They had been loading up the ship all night with timber I think. At 9-30am we were told to be ready at 10.30am for shore leave. It is only a rumour how we bustled. We marched up town & got leave till 4pm. The people were very friendly & were only too willing to do anything for us. We went & had a look at the new Railway Station Site. It will cost 75,000,000 dollars. This is the terminus of Canadian Pacific Railways. We then had dinner & went up to a big hill which was a fort. There were big barracks on top in the hill All Concrete. The "Citadel" it is called. We then came back & a chap took us into a shop where they stuff animals. There were big "Mause" like deer. They had all sorts of things stuffed there. We then went into the fire brigade station. It was built in 1872 & has just been done up. There were horses there (Greys) & they were kept lovely. We could see for miles on the top of the hill. This is a big place. There were a lot of horses in gigs carts etc & they were kept in grand order I saw a few new model Hudsons & there is not much improvement on yours only the radiator front is not honeycomb but like a Carriage window shutter. There were cars of all descriptions & Tin Lizzies & Lizzie Trucks by the score Studebakers are plentiful also. Nearly all cars had chains on & it reminded one of the Tga Rd [Tauranga Road]. The place is very hilly. There are trees grown on each side of the Rd everywhere & has a few parks. It would be a pretty place in summer but it is winter now. There are trains also. We saw a Regiment of Canadians 10<sup>th</sup> Battery going to embark. They looked well too. It was now time to get ready to go home so we marched home after having a good day's sport. There are no liquor pubs here. There are some fine buildings & churches here.

There were hundreds of Canadian Soldiers on leave.



## Sunday Nov 25<sup>th</sup> 1917

A Canadian priest came on & had church at 6.30am. We went to Church Parade on shore at 10am. The ship load went, each one to his own church & all marched too. It looked well. The RC Church was a beauty. All inside was statues & all painting on windows of Saints. There was a big organ after the Style of Auckland Town Hall one. They had a good choir too. They had steam pipes along side the wall for heat. The whole place was fancy painting everywhere simply beautiful. There were about 50 altar boys & 4 priests & a bishop I think saying Mass. We marched back again & were headed by the 66<sup>th</sup> Canadian Band. They played decent & it looked well. The band had dinner on board. In the afternoon we went out on a route march & marched all around town for 2 hr. We had great sport too. There were crowds out. The band played all the time. We marched back & that ended it. There are lovely parks here for views. The end of a perfect day.

## Monday Nov 26<sup>th</sup> 1917

In the morning it was very cold & at 8am it started to snow very light. It was about 1 inch everywhere & we started to throw it about & had great sport. There was not very much & it stopped by noon. All the pipes were frozen in morning. At 1pm the ship pulled out from the wharf & away we were & still going off to old ~~old Dart~~. [word illegible, probably 'Old Dart' slang for England] When we got out a bit we saw forts & submarine nets right across the entrance of harbour & just enough rooms for ships to pass. They could swing another piece and close the gap. We passed a Yankee Field Artillery on a big ship too. I think they are with us now. It was a pretty sight to see all the ships coming out. I could see 10 but we will know tomorrow how many are out. While I was watching them we were talking & I met the chap Calder from Waihi. He is in the Machine Gun Section. I did not see him on the boat before. We had a yarn & he asked after Dad.

**Tuesday Nov 27<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing East                   Travelled 250 mls

Today has been fairly good & not too cold. I am on Submarine Guard. All our Company is on. We have 2 hrs & 4 hrs off for 24hrs.

**Wednesday Nov 28<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E.                   Travelled 262

Passed a convoy of 5 ships going to America I suppose. One of our boats is taking water over wholesale. They are like buckjumpers too. We just had a big sea over one side & it knocked down everything out of our cupboards shelves etc. I went up on deck & saw where it knocked some of the side railing out.

**Thursday Nov 29<sup>th</sup>**

Sailing N.E.                   Travelled 259

It was pretty cold & rough last night & today but is calming down now. Had our 3<sup>rd</sup> pay on board the sum of 1pound & got 7/6 Canteen money.

**Friday Nov 30<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing E                      Travelled 226mls

It is a bit rough today & a very stiff wind. We were on Spud Island peeling potatoes.

The name of some of the boats with us are "Baltic", "Gloucestshire", "Migantic", "Etonic", "Scotia", "Carpathia", "Arawa" & I do not know the others. The "Carpathia" rescued the "Titanic" passengers when she sunk a few years ago.

**Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup>**

Sailing N.E.                   Travelled 120 miles

It was very rough today & water coming overboard often. Some of the others boats are having a bad spin taking seas over wholesale.

**Sunday Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E.                   Travelled 250 miles

Very rough she jolly near stands on her head at times. Foggy. Church Parade.

**Monday Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 1917**

Sailing E                      Travelled 200 mls

Not so rough today but very foggy. Cannot see 60 yds at times. Fog whistle blowing all the time. They have a barrel or big buoy on the end of a big rope from the back of the ships so as to stop coming too close.

**Tuesday Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing N. E.      Travelled 246 mls

I was on boat Guard today & came off as 5pm. They got a wireless call this morning from a ship sinking up the Northern Coast of Ireland. Very calm today.

**Wednesday Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing N.E.      Travelled 210 mls

Very foggy. Orders came out to wear lifebelts instead of carrying them & sleep in clothes & it too.

**Thursday Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**

Sailing N      Travelled 260 mls

Picked up 5 destroyers at 2pm today. They have great speed up to 30 or 40 knots. A bit rough. Saw land.

**Friday Dec 7<sup>th</sup> 1917**

Sailing South

In the morning there were 7 destroyers with us & they dart here & there everywhere. At 11am we saw land again & sailed into Liverpool Harbour & dropped anchor at 3pm opposite Brighton Tower. It is recognized as the highest one in England. It has a ball room on the top of the dome. The beaches are all sandy. We saw the "Olympia" here too. It left Halifax 4 days after us & got here 2 day before us. She is very fast.

**Saturday Dec 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Liverpool**

Got orders to get ready to disembark. We hand in our blankets in on board. We left ship at 3.30pm & marched to the station & left at 6-45pm. There were Yanks entertaining Canadians & others besides us. Train & train loads leaving about every 20 min. The one we went on had about 40 carriages on & 3 compartments in a carriage to seat 8 men. Spring cushions too the best seat we had for ages. We stopped at "Cowes" Birmingham, Oxford & many other places. We stopped at Bulford Salisbury Plains at 3-30 am on Sat morning & marched to the camp. We then gave in our papers. It was dark & we lined up & thought we heard a dog barking but it was the officer ordering us around. We pricked our ears & went for our lives. Had breakfast at 5-30am & told off to huts we all missed each other. Gil & I in one hut. Morris & Fred Franklin in another, but they had not taken our names in the hut so before the day was out we all got together again in one hut & are now Pie Ok. We got marched up to the barber & they sheared our hair off. Had a bath parade & Medically Exam. The food was good but the boat tucker was absolutely rotten. We got 4 blankets issued to us. We are posted to 4<sup>th</sup> (Reserve) Canterbury Batt. They are vey strict here & NZ Camps are a home to this one.

### ***Monday Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Reveillie at 6am. Were inspected by a General & a few chaps fainted & it was cold (very). He gave a speech to us in the Officers Mess. In the afternoon we had our teeth looked at & I saw Wilson<sup>4</sup> dentist there. The food is splendid & the only thing in the food line cut down is bread we get one slice each meal  $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch thick & about 6 inches square. Got some mail today, the chaps here.<sup>5</sup> .....

### ***Tuesday Dec 11<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Nothing startling - only going here & there getting gear.

I met Peter McQuillan<sup>6</sup> today. He is baking at the bakehouse & works from 8 to noon & is as fat as a porpoise. He just came off 7 days leave. 2 weeks he went to Ireland. We went to the Vaudeville.

### ***Wednesday Dec 12<sup>th</sup>***

Had a Route March & got our wet equipment. There are 73 buckles to polish & if one is dirty we Parade over  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr from 7 to 9pm. It takes about 1 hr every night to do up.

### ***Thursday Dec 13<sup>th</sup>***

Started work in the bullring. Just the same as NZ drill only have to put more Ginger into it. We do bayonet [bayonet] fighting Physical Drill & Squad Drill. Pretty Solid too.

### ***Friday Dec 14<sup>th</sup> 1917***

Same as Yesterday

### ***Saturday Dec 15<sup>th</sup>***

We scrubbed out the hut & done washing & had kit inspection. In the afternoon we must play football or hockey or go Paper Chasing. This is we do every Saturday & Church Parade on Sunday & have 5 days drill & it is enough too.

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<sup>4</sup> Wilson was the dentist in Waihi & well known in the area – he was still practising there in the 1960's.

<sup>5</sup> There is no more to this comment.

<sup>6</sup> One of the Auckland cousins! (Peter was the son of Catherine (nee Toomey) & Terrence McQuillan). Apparently, Peter went to Ireland to 'look up' family there. It is said that he was not at all well received as he was fighting for the British.

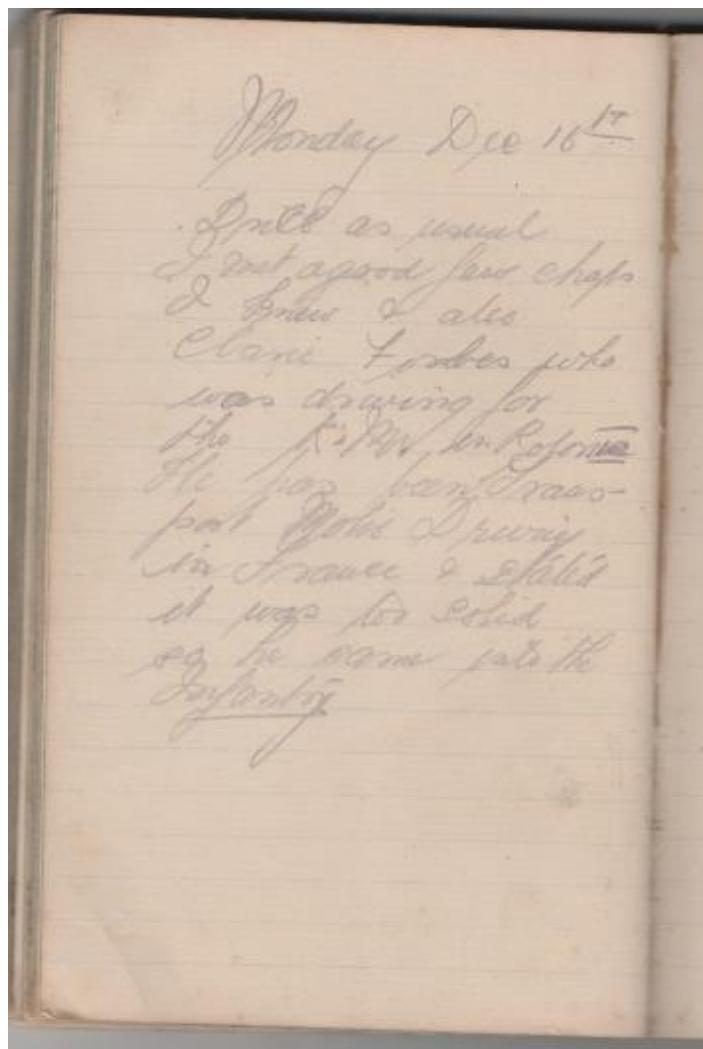
**Sunday Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**

Had a snow fall & it was 5 inches deep. Everything is white & it looks funny too.

**Monday Dec 16<sup>th</sup>**

Drill as usual. I met a good few chaps I knew & also Clarrie Forbes<sup>7</sup> who was driving for the K Mtr in Rotorua. He has been transport Motor Driving in France & stated it was too solid so he came into the Infantry.

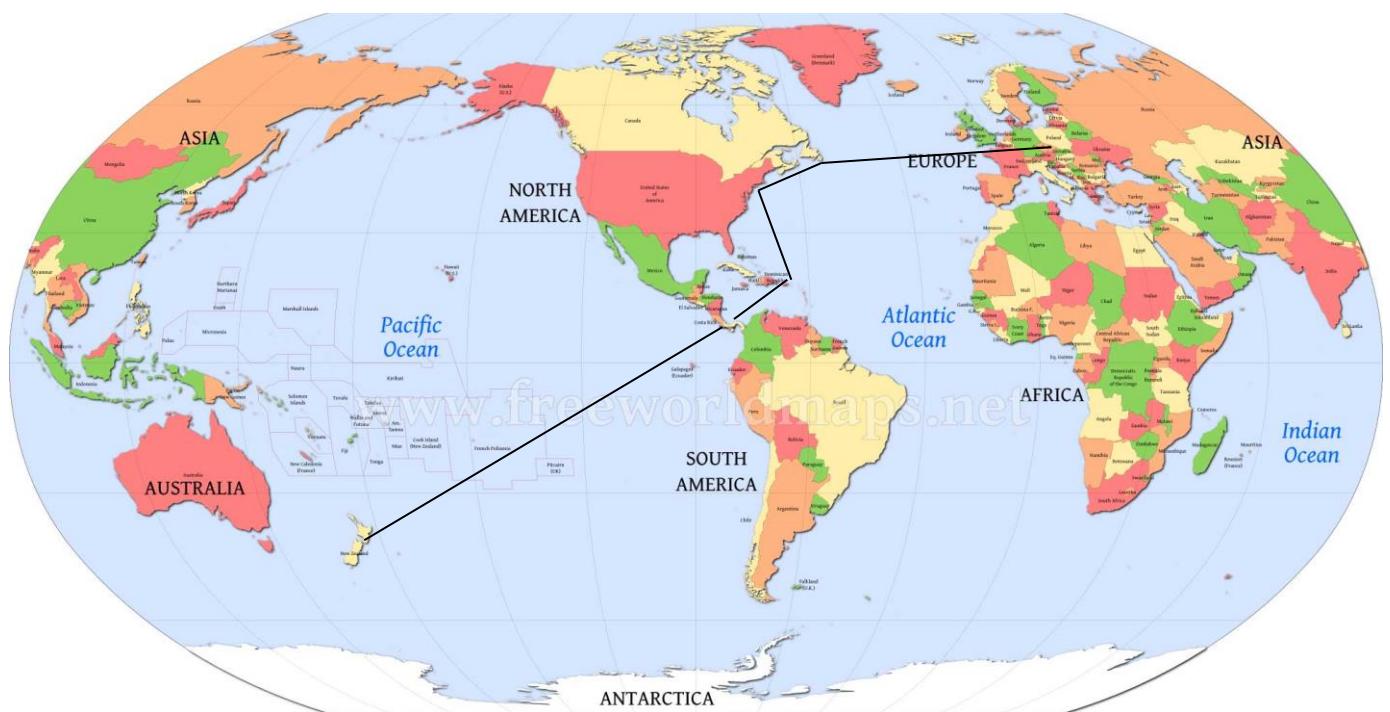
**Last Diary Entry**



<sup>7</sup> Clarrie Forbes was an old family friend. As Grace said, 'A name from ancient history!'

## BILL'S WAR

**The Voyage of HMNZT No 93 *Corinthic* Oct 13<sup>th</sup> - Dec 16<sup>th</sup> 1917**



1. 11.10.17 Wellington, New Zealand.
2. 3.11.17 Cocos Is; 4.11.17 Entrance Panama Canal; 4-5.11.17 Colon; 5.11.17 Cristobal.
3. 6.11.17 Caribbean 6.11.17 Cuba.
4. 13-19.11.17 1<sup>st</sup> Port of Call - Newport Neuse in Virginia, USA.
5. 22-26.11.17 Halifax, Nova Scotia.
6. 9-12-17 Liverpool, England.



be Gil;  
on

EMBARKATIONS OF 30 <sup>th</sup> REINFORCEMENTS							
FROM NEW ZEALAND 1914							
and RETURN TO NEW ZEALAND 1919							
Corinthic	93	Captain H.L. de F. Garland	2 ships 1,707		30 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements NZEF 22 <sup>nd</sup> Reinf. Maori Contingent 29 <sup>th</sup> ,30 <sup>th</sup> Reinf. NZRB	13/10/1917	08/12/1917 Liverpool
Arawa	94	Captain Meikles			30 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements NZEF [roll No.72]		
Ruahine	19 May 1919	Plymouth	08 Jul 1919	Wellington	859 soldiers, 139 women, 35 children (or 38 officers 840 men 6 nurses)		

## Bill's Attestation Form

An Attestation Form was completed by all those enlisting in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. This includes the Soldier's Oath and the Medical Certificate.

<small>Form of attestation of voluntary recruits and of men called up for service under the Military Service Act, 1916, who are willing to be attested in this manner.</small>		<b>DUPPLICATE.</b> C 20 <small>[E.F. Form No. 2.]</small>
 <b>NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE</b> <i>1916/872 ATTESTATION FOR GENERAL SERVICE. 62269</i>		
<b>QUESTIONS TO BE PUT TO THE RECRUIT.</b>		
What is your name?	...	1. <i>William Grimmins</i>
Where were you born?	...	2. <i>Waihi N.Z.</i> ✓
3. Are you a British subject?	...	3. <i>Yes</i>
4. What is the date of your birth?	...	4. <i>8/3/1897</i> ✓
5. What are the names of your parents?	...	5. { Father: <i>Agnes Grimmins</i> Mother: <i>Bridget Grimmins</i>
6. Where were your parents born?	...	6. { Father: <i>Opata N.Z.</i> Mother: <i>Ronson N.Z.</i>
7. If they are of alien origin, when and where were they naturalized?	...	7. { Father: <i>/</i> Mother: <i>/</i>
8. How long have you been resident in New Zealand?	...	8. <i>One year</i>
9. How long have your parents been resident in New Zealand?	...	9. { Father: <i>One year</i> Mother: <i>One year</i>
10. What is your trade or calling?	...	10. <i>Electrician</i>
11. Are you an indentured apprentice? If so, where, and to whom?	...	11. <i>No</i>
12. What was the address at which you last resided?	...	12. <i>Devon St. Waihi</i>
13. Have you passed the Fourth Educational Standard or its equivalent?	...	13. <i>Yes</i>
14. What is the name and address of your present or last employer?	...	14. <i>John Cleary Co Ltd</i>
15. Are you single, married, widower, divorced, or legally separated from your wife?	...	15. <i>Single</i>
16. If married, a widower, divorced, or legally separated from your wife, how many children under sixteen years of age have you?	...	16. <i>/</i>
17. If single, how many persons are absolutely dependent on you?	...	17. <i>No</i>
18. Have you ever been sentenced to imprisonment by the Civil power? If so, when and where?	...	18. <i>/</i>
19. Do you now belong to any Military or Naval Force? If so, to what corps?	...	19. <i>6th Manawatu Regt</i>
20. Have you ever served in any Military or Naval Force? If so, state which and cause of discharge.	...	20. <i>/</i>
21. Have you truly stated the whole (if any) of your previous service?	...	21. <i>Yes</i>
22. Have you ever been medically examined for service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force? If so, when and where?	...	22. <i>Yes</i>
23. Have you ever been registered for compulsory military training under the Defence Act, 1909? If so, where?	...	23. <i>Yes</i> <i>Waihi</i>
24. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for the Military or Naval Forces of the Crown? If so, on what grounds?	...	24. <i>No</i>
25. Are you willing to serve in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in or beyond the Dominion of New Zealand for the duration of the present war with Germany and six months thereafter, if your service is so long required?	...	25. <i>Yes</i> <i>24 July 31st</i>
26. For which Reinforcement draft do you volunteer?	...	26. <i>/</i>
<small>Note.—Your discharge will not be granted before you return to New Zealand unless permission for discharge elsewhere be obtained from the G.O.C. the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.</small>		
I, <i>William Grimmins</i> , do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagement made.		
Signature of Recruit: <i>W. Grimmins</i> Signature of Witness: <i>L. Johnson</i>		
<b>Oath to be taken by Recruit on attestation.</b>		
I, <i>William Grimmins</i> , do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to our Sovereign Lord the King, and that I will faithfully serve in the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces against His Majesty's enemies, and that I will loyally observe and obey all orders of the Generals and Officers set over me, until I shall be lawfully discharged. So help me, God.		
<b>Certificate of Attesting Officer.</b>		
The above questions were read to the above-named recruit in my presence. I have taken care that he understands these questions, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered. The said recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath of allegiance before me, at <i>Pearse</i> , N.Z., on this <i>thirty-first</i> day of <i>July</i> , 1916.		
Signature of Attesting Officer: <i>W. Johnson</i>		
<small>Note 1.—If any alteration is required in the attestation, the Attesting Officer should be requested to make it and initial the alteration.</small>		
<small>NOTE 2.—The recruit expresses a preference to enlist for <i>any term by month</i> <i>or otherwise</i> (Branch of service)</small>		

17-37631

Apparent age: 20 years months.  
(To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Service.)

Height: 5 feet 7 inches.

Weight: 114 lb.

Chest-measurement: Minimum, 34½ inches.  
Maximum, 37½ inches.

Complexion: Medium

Colour of eyes: Blue

Colour of hair: Brown

Religious profession: R.C.

Distinctive marks, and marks indicating peculiarities or previous disease  
*Nil.*

#### Medical Examination.

Pulse 75

- |   |                      |  |             |
|---|----------------------|--|-------------|
| Sight: Right eye,                                     | <i>6/6</i>           | Is he free from hernia?  | <i>Yes.</i> |
| " Left eye,   | <i>6/6</i>           | Is he free from varicocele?  | <i>Yes.</i> |
| Hearing: Right ear,                                   | <i>Fair</i>          | Is he free from varicose veins?  | <i>Yes.</i> |
| " Left ear,   | <i>Fair</i>          | Is he free from haemorrhoids?  | <i>Yes.</i> |
| Colour-vision:  | <i>Fair</i>          | Is he free from inveterate or contagious skin-disease?   | <i>Yes.</i> |
| Are his limbs well formed?                            | <i>Yes.</i>          | Is there a distinct mark of vaccination?   | <i>No.</i>  |
| Are the movements of all his joints full and perfect? | <i>Yes.</i>          | Is he in good bodily and mental health and free from any physical defect likely to interfere with the efficient performance of his duties? | <i>Yes.</i> |
| Is his chest well formed?                             | <i>Yes.</i>          | Are there any slight defects, but not sufficient to cause rejection?   | <i>No.</i>  |
| Is his heart normal?                                  | <i>Yes.</i>          | Have you ever had a fit?   | <i>No.</i>  |
| Are his lungs normal?                                 | <i>Yes.</i>          |  |             |
| What is the condition of the teeth?                   | <i>For treatment</i> |  |             |
| Have you had any illnesses?                           | <i>Consumption</i>   |  |             |

#### 1. Have you been notified for Consumption No. Remarks.

2. Have you been under treatment in a Sanatorium? No.

3. Have you ever been discharged from H.M. Service? No.

4. Have you ever been absent from work through ill-health or accident? Consumption  
*Two yrs ago, off work 2 weeks.*

CLASS

A

#### Certificate of Medical Examination.

I HAVE examined this recruit and find that he does not present any of the causes of rejection specified in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.

I consider him fit for service in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in and beyond New Zealand.

31 May, 191

Examined by Travelling Medical Board

Place Paeroa Date

Signature

LIEUT. COL. N.Z.M.C.  
Address: *Post Office*  
LIEUT. COL. N.Z.M.C.

**William Crimmins**

<b>FORENAME(S)</b>	William
<b>SURNAME</b>	Crimmins
<b>WAR</b>	World War I, 1914-1918
<b>SERIAL NO.</b>	62267
<b>FIRST KNOWN RANK</b>	Private
<b>OCCUPATION BEFORE ENLISTMENT</b>	Electrician
<b>NEXT OF KIN</b>	M.E. Crimmins (father), Devon Street, Waihi, New Zealand
<b>BODY ON EMBARKATION</b>	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
<b>EMBARKATION UNIT</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> Reinforcements Canterbury Infantry Regiment, C Company
<b>EMBARKATION DATE</b>	13 October 1917
<b>PLACE OF EMBARKATION</b>	Wellington, New Zealand
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	HMNZT 93
<b>VESSEL</b>	Corinthic
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Liverpool, England
<b>NOMINAL ROLL NUMBER</b>	72
<b>PAGE ON NOMINAL ROLL</b>	11
<b>ARCHIVES NZ SOURCE</b>	<a href="#">Military personnel file</a>
<b>SOURCES USED</b>	Nominal Rolls of New Zealand Expeditionary Force Volume III. Wellington: Govt. Printer, 1918

## 32nd REINFORCEMENTS.MEN FOR CAMP.

The following men leave for Trentham on Thursday, 26th July :—

Allen, E. Thames.  
Adams, E. C. Waitakaruru.  
Amy, I. T. Thames.  
Anderson, K. Waihi.  
Archer, F. Cabbage Bay.  
Barnett, M. Morrinsville.  
Bellamy, W. Waikino.  
Blundell, H. K. Waitakaruru.  
Casey, J. Hunga Hunga.  
Casley, T. J. Waihi.  
Cox, A. E. Hearne Bay.  
Crimmins, W. Waihi.  
Dean, E. M. Waihi.  
Dunbar, M. W. Thames.  
Duxfield, Matamata.  
Erwing, J. Tatuanui.  
Flowerday, F. V. Te Aroha.  
Fallett, G. Waihi.  
Franklin, F. L. Waikino.  
Fugill, J. E. Te Aroha.  
Gibson, J. Thames.  
Hedly, J. H. Kerepeehi.  
Hoffman, G. Waitakaruru.  
Howie, C. Morrinsville.  
Innis, E. J. Wharepoa.  
Jones, A. Morrinsville.  
Jones, E. Waihou.  
Kells, T. K. A. Manawaru.  
Kinsett, H. E. Te Aroha.  
Kraggs, W. Waihi.  
Knight, J. H. Mangaiti.  
Kneebone, C. Matamata.  
Law, R. R. Thames.  
Lawter, J. L. Kerepeehi.  
Milliken, E. H. Tairua.  
McRae, A. Waihi.  
Marston, J. A. Thames.  
Marx, B. Ngaruia.  
McGauhey, J. P. Kihi Kihi.  
McNeil, K. L. Netherton.  
McSweeny, E. B. Wairongamai.  
Ninson, E. E. Waitakaruru.  
Prescott, B. Thames.  
Ryan, G. E. Thames.  
Robe, H. C. Thames.  
Spencer, R. Pipiroa.  
Teller, S. J. Cabbage Bay.  
Thomsen, P. Mangaitia.  
Trethaway, P. Paeroa.  
Vercoe, F. T. Paeroa.  
Wallace, H. Te Aroha.  
Yarr, A. Thames.

Newspaper articles in the *Thames Star* (9 May 1917) and *Ohinemuri Gazette* (25 July 1917) each show Bill as being selected for the 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> reinforcements.

Bill's NZ Army personnel files, as well as his diary, however, show that he was in the 30<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements.

Apparently, it was while enroute to Britain that he was allocated to the Canterbury Infantry Regiment.

This may not have been easy as he was then separated from many of the folk from his own area.

Following his death in 1952, however, we received a number of cards from the Canterbury area.

Reg. No.	Rank.	Name.	Occupation.	Name and Address of Next-of-kin.
CANTERBURY INFANTRY REGIMENT.—C COMPANY—continued.				
39949	Private ..	Campbell, John William ..	Seaman ..	Mrs. E. A. Campbell (mother), Forester's Arms Hotel, Ghuznee Street, Wellington.
61125	" ..	Cannon, William ..	Taxi-driver ..	Mrs. R. I. Cannon (wife), Kaikoura.
62255	" ..	Casey, James ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. E. E. Casey (wife), care of Mrs. Nixon, Pokeno.
60903	" ..	Cawthorn, John Allen Secord	Metal-worker ..	Mrs. J. Cawthorn (mother), 481 Colombo Street, Sydenham, Christchurch.
62806	" ..	Clarke, Arthur ..	Cleaner ..	T. Clarke (uncle), 45 School Lane, Kettring, Northamptonshire, England.
57481	" ..	Coker, Alfred Walter ..	Freezing - works Hand	Mrs. C. Coker (wife), 31 Leeds Street, Linwood, Christchurch.
60907	" ..	Cowles, Richard John ..	Ploughman ..	Mrs. M. H. Cowles (mother), Upper Waitohi, Temuka.
62261	" ..	Cowley, John William ..	Blacksmith ..	J. Cowley (father), High Street, Dannevirke.
60908	" ..	Crawford, James McKee ..	Farmer ..	W. McC. Crawford (father), Belfast, Canterbury.
62267	" ..	Crimmins, William ..	Electrician ..	M. E. Crimmins (father), Devon Street, Waihi.
60913	" ..	Dalzell, Norman Gilbert ..	Farmer ..	J. Dalzell (father), Medbury, Canterbury.
62268	" ..	Davis, Wm. John Sylvester ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. S. Davis (mother), Anglesea Street, Hamilton East.
62270	" ..	De Andrad, Lewis ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. M. A. De Andrad (mother), Herokino.
60914	" ..	Dimond, David George ..	Bricklayer ..	Mrs. E. C. Dimond (wife), Jackson Road, Lyttelton.
62273	" ..	Donnelly, William Henry ..	Carter ..	Mrs. C. Donnelly (wife), Gisborne.
60916	" ..	Doran, Thomas James ..	Ploughman ..	Mrs. E. Doran (mother), 74 Harman Street, Addington, Christchurch.
62275	" ..	Douglas, William Ernest ..	Engineer ..	Mrs. M. Douglas (mother), Esplanade, Te Kuiti.
62277	" ..	Dreadon, Walter ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. D. W. Dreadon (wife), Rehia.
60917	" ..	Dron, Harold ..	Teamster ..	Miss A. Dron (sister), Balcairn.
61127	" ..	Drummond, Duncan ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. B. Drummond (mother), Upper Moutere.
23285	" ..	Duncan, Albert Edward ..	Jockey ..	Mrs. W. Duncan (mother), South Street, Hokitika.
62279	" ..	Duxfield, John Edward ..	" ..	G. J. Duxfield (father), Matamata.
60918	" ..	Elkis, Thomas Grattan ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. H. M. Elkis (wife), 56 Salisbury Street, Christchurch.
60919	" ..	Ellis, Charles Francis ..	" ..	A. Ellis (father), Rife Butts Road, Templeton, Christchurch.
60920	" ..	Ellis, Henry Benjamin ..	Carpenter ..	Mrs. J. Ellis (mother), 32 Peacock Street, Christchurch.
60922	" ..	Fallon, William ..	Labourer ..	H. Fallon (father), Enfield, Oamaru.
62284	" ..	Finn, Patrick ..	Mill Hand ..	J. Finn (father), Ballyduff, County Waterford, Ireland.
62802	" ..	Fisher, Charles Forbes ..	Farm Hand ..	Mrs. M. Fisher (mother), Lumsden.
62285	" ..	Fitzgerald, Ernest James ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. B. Fitzgerald (mother), Ikamatua.
60927	" ..	Flynn, Maurice ..	" ..	C. Flynn (father), King Street, Timaru.
62287	" ..	Follett, Gilbert ..	Driver ..	Mrs. E. Follett (mother), The Plains, Waihi.
61129	" ..	Ford, Alfred George ..	Labourer ..	F. Ford (father), Waimea West, Nelson.
62288	" ..	Foster, Henry ..	Flax-miller ..	Mrs. E. D. Bunyan (mother), Post-office, Moerewa, Bay of Islands
62289	" ..	Foster, John ..	Farmer ..	J. Foster (father), Mangonui.
62291	" ..	Foulkes, Arthur Argent ..	" ..	Mrs. D. Gilbreth (sister), 75 Montreal Street, Sydenham, Christchurch.
62293	" ..	Fox, George William ..	Railway Employee ..	F. E. M. Fox (brother), Cape Foulwind, Westport.
60929	" ..	Francis, Walter Joseph ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. V. M. Francis (wife), 66 North Street, Timaru.
62294	" ..	Franklin, Fred Lavington ..	Cabinetmaker ..	Mrs. C. Franklin (mother), Waikino.
60930	" ..	Fraser, Hugh ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. C. Fraser (mother), 244 Stanmore Road, Christchurch.
62295	" ..	Frost, William James ..	Gardener ..	R. B. Frost (father), Piongria.
62296	" ..	Fugill, James Edwin ..	Carpenter ..	Mrs. F. Fugill (mother), "The Oaks," Te Aroha.
62805	" ..	Furey, Herman James ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. Annie Furey (mother), 35 Millais Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland.
61130	" ..	Gerrish, Kenneth William ..	" ..	R. Gerrish (brother), Neudorf, Nelson.
61131	" ..	Gibbs, William George ..	Motor-mechanic ..	Mrs. A. L. Gibbs (mother), Queen Street, Levin.
60931	" ..	Gilham, William Claude ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. L. Gilham (mother), Allington Street, Methven.
62300	" ..	Gill, Henry Herbert ..	Carpenter ..	Mrs. F. S. Gill (wife), 27 George Street, Palmerston North.
61134	" ..	Gill, Thomas Henry ..	Carrier ..	F. Gill (father), Redwood Valley, Nelson.
61135	" ..	Godfrey, Francis Rueben ..	Motor-mechanic ..	Mrs. M. Godfrey (mother), care of — Triner, 431B George Street, Dunedin.
60932	" ..	Gould, George Godfrey ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. E. Gould (mother), Rangatira Valley, Temuka.
62775	" ..	Griffiths, Thomas Thompson ..	Farmer Hand ..	T. Griffiths (father), Patetere, via Okoroire.
62302	" ..	Griffiths, William George ..	Launch Hand ..	Mrs. W. H. Bates (aunt), Dean Street, Arch Hill, Auckland.
61136	" ..	Hagen, Edward ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. B. U. Hagen (mother), Spring Grove, Nelson.
62304	" ..	Hall, Herbert William ..	" ..	W. Hall (father), Te Kowhai.
62306	" ..	Harris, George Leslie ..	Storeman ..	Miss M. Harris (sister), care of W. Addison, Reefton.
60936	" ..	Hastings, David ..	Shepherd ..	Mrs. G. Hastings (mother), Maxwelltown, Scotland.
61137	" ..	Hay, Theodore Bertram ..	Draper ..	J. Hay (father), Stevenson Street, Blenheim.
62309	" ..	Hemsley, Albert Henry ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. J. R. Hemsley (wife), care of Mrs. J. R. Lawson, Kensington Avenue, Mount Eden, Auckland.
60939	" ..	Hicks, Leonard ..	Shepherd ..	Mrs. E. Hicks (mother), Alford Forest, Canterbury.
62316	" ..	Hollett, Harry ..	Gardener ..	Mrs. D. Hollett (mother), 33 Abdale Road, Tunis Road, Shepherd's Bush, London West, England.
60942	" ..	Honiwell, Leonard Albert ..	Brickmaker ..	Mrs. M. Honniwell (mother), 71 East Belt, Christchurch.
62317	" ..	Hopkins, Christopher David ..	Book-keeper ..	Mrs. L. Hopkins (wife), Firth Street, Hamilton East.
62318	" ..	Houghton, Harold ..	Share-milker ..	Mrs. E. Houghton (mother), Te Awamutu.
62319	" ..	Houghton, John ..	Printer ..	Mrs. L. Houghton (wife), care of A. May, jun., Waiuku.
62320	" ..	Houghton, Leslie Frederick ..	Railway Signaller ..	Mrs. W. B. Houghton (wife), Rolleston Street, Thames.
62321	" ..	Houlihan, Thomas ..	" ..	Mrs. E. Houlihan (mother), Sorraha, Birr, Ireland.
62322	" ..	Howie, Charles ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. E. Howie (mother), "Woodlands," Okotuku.
60943	" ..	Hullen, John Martin ..	Farm Hand ..	Mrs. L. Hullen (mother), Pleasant Point, South Canterbury.
60945	" ..	*Iles, Oscar Henry ..	Farmer ..	Mrs. J. Iles (wife), care of W. Millar, Barr Hill, Rakaiā.
62325	" ..	Ireland, John Percival ..	Bee-farmer ..	H. J. Ireland (father), Rosedale Avenue, Hayes End Green, Middlesex, England.
62327	" ..	Johnston, Henry Wilson ..	Labourer ..	Mrs. J. S. Johnston (mother), Yellow Bluff, Otautau.
60946	" ..	Joines, Samuel Stanley ..	" ..	Mrs. S. Joines (mother), Springfield, Canterbury.

\* Born in Australia.

## WW1 Medals of William Crimmins



Above Left: **British War Medal 1914-1920:** Authorized in 1919 and awarded to all those who entered a theatre of war or rendered approved service overseas between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918.

Above Right: **Victory Medal 1914-1919:** Authorized in 1919 and awarded to all those who served with a unit in a theatre of war between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918.

Below: Known as Sweetheart Brooches. Made before leaving NZ and given to significant folk before leaving.

## Record of Service July 1917 to July 1918 – complied from Archives NZ Archway and Diaries from National Archives

Bill enlisted at Paeroa on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1917. He signed his Attestation Form and had his Medical on that day. His pay also started on that day. He is on the Nominal Roll Vol 3 No 72 p11: William Crimmins, C Company, Canterbury Infantry Regiment.

- 26 July 1917:** Posted to C Company, 30<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements as a Private  
**13 October 1917:** Embarked on HMNZT No 93 *Corinthic*, departed Wellington  
**3 December 1917:** Posted to 3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve Battalion, Canterbury Infantry Regiment (CIF).  
**8 December 1917:** Arrived Liverpool, UK.  
**9 December 1917:** Marched into (ie joined) & posted to C Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion CIF, at Sling Camp.  
**22 February 1918:** Transferred from B Coy to A Coy 3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve Battalion, CIF, at Sling Camp.  
**21 & 22 May 1918:** Qualified as First-Class Signaller, 4<sup>th</sup> NZ Infantry (Reserve) Brigade, at Sling Camp.

## **1918 France**

- 6 June** To France from Sling with No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company  
**June- July** Abeole - St Jane Capel – Meteren  
**8 June** In trenches in a quiet French village – all very peaceful  
**9 June** Marched into Etaples – a large training camp  
**12 June** Joined No 2 NZ Entrenching Battalion in the field at Rouen  
**26 June** Transferred to No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company in Rouen. Posted to strengthen the No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company ex No 2 NZ Entrenching Battalion  
**July 1918** Coigneux and Rossignol Farm [Rossignol Wood] ‘Working on CTO from Herberterne to front line’ ‘A good day for work no enemy shelling - dull cold day’  
**1-13 July** In reserve at Molliens – Vidame.  
**14 July** Left by train from Hangest for unknown destination through Abbeville, Eu, Gisons, Versailles, Nangis, Romilly-sur-Seine  
**17 July** Vertus, by lorry  
**19 July** Ay-sur-Maine  
**22 July** Mareuil-sur-Ay  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Marne – 10 days. NZ (Area) Employment Company in Mareuil sur-Ay. Soldiers told ‘you have added a glorious page to your history’.<sup>8</sup>  
**5 Dec** Mons: King and Prince of Wales visited  
**Dec 1918-Jan1919** No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company in Mons.  
**Jan 1919** NZ Reception Camp in Rouen

## **1919 Germany**

- 1 Jan** Church Parade. ‘Christmas festivities delayed as good things ordered for Christmas had been delayed’  
**January** Kaserne and Mulheim  
**2 Jan** Boat trip up the Rhine to Konigswinter, Bonne (the birthplace of Beethoven) and Cologne  
**11 Jan** Trip to Cologne  
**18 Jan** Prince of Wales – informal visit  
**28 Jan** Etaples to Rouen  
**29 Jan** Mainz, Weisbaden

## **1919 United Kingdom - New Zealand**

- 3 March** Sling Camp at Salisbury Plain, England  
**19 May** Embarked for New Zealand per SS *Ruahine* from Plymouth UK  
**8 July** Arrived in Wellington

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<sup>8</sup> The last German offensive took place in June-July 1918, and it failed. A counter-offensive by the French Army, supported by Allied forces, began on 18 July 1918. It became known as the Second Battle of the Marne. Some New Zealand units, including the NZ No 2 Entrenching Battalion, took part in this battle.

**Page from the No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company War Diary - July 1918**  
**(includes 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Marne)**

For the month of July 1918.																																													
<small>Information regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. N. Pages, Part II, and the War Diary respectively. These pages will be prepared in manuscript.</small>																																													
<b>WAR DIARY</b> <b>OF</b> <b>INTELLIGENCE-SUMMARY.</b> <small>(Name heading not required)</small>																																													
<small>No. 2 New Zealand(Area) Employment Company. Army Form G. 2112.</small>																																													
Date	Date	Summary of Events and Information																																											
<p>Mareuil-sur-Ay. 1st. to 13th. July. The Corps H.Q. is in Reserve at Molléans-Vidame. <b>IX</b>      14th. The Company left by train from Langres for an unknown destination at 2 p.m. We passed through Abbeville, Reims, Châlons, Versailles, and Mâcon, and arrived at Romilly-sur-Seine at about 5 p.m. 15th. July, where we detrained. We stayed here until the 17th. inst., and we left by lorries for Vertus on that date, where we stayed until the 19th. and made a further move to Ay-sur-Marne, moving from there to Mareuil-sur-Ay on the 22nd.</p> <p>On the 22nd. July Capt. J.W. Bright, Wellington Regt., relinquished the Command of the Company, and left for England, and Capt. P.H. Harper, N.Z.L.R.C., assumed Command. Capt. Bright had Commanded the Company since its inception just over a year ago.</p> <p>The Corps was in action in this, the second Battle of the Marne for 10 days, and very good work was accomplished. To quote from the Order of the Day, July 30th. by General Bertholet, Commanding the 5th. French Army, to the Troops engaged, comprising 61st. and 62nd. Divisions, Australian and New Zealand Mounted Troops, New Zealand Cyclist Corps, and all Officers and men of the 22nd. Army Corps, "22 Officers and 1300 Other Ranks taken prisoners, 140 Machine Guns, and 40 Guns captured from the enemy, 4 of whose Divisions have been successfully broken and repulsed; the Upper Valley of the Ardennes, with its surrounding heights, to the North and South reconquered; such is the record of the British share in the operations of the Fifth French Army." All Officers and men of the XII Army Corps, so ably Commanded by General Sir A.J. Godley, you have added a glorious page to your history."</p> <p align="center"><b>SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT.</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Clarks &amp; Orderlies.</td> <td style="width: 10%;">37</td> <td style="width: 40%;">Burial Party, C.C.S.</td> <td style="width: 10%;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cooks &amp; Waiters.</td> <td>22</td> <td>Guard.</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cantons.</td> <td>3</td> <td>Batmen.</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Motor Cyclists.</td> <td>3</td> <td>Sanitary Section.</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corps Salvage.</td> <td>11</td> <td>Carpenters.</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heavy Artillery.</td> <td>6</td> <td>"T" Army Corps Signal Coy.</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N.Z. Army Hospital.</td> <td>49</td> <td>Corps Schools.</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mechanics with Chemical Adviser.</td> <td>6</td> <td>No. 5 N.Z.L.R.C.</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>General Duties.</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">As at Noon, 6th. July.      2 + 361</td> <td>20th. July.      2 + 355</td> <td rowspan="2" style="vertical-align: middle; font-size: small;">Captain, No. 2 N.Z. Area Emp. Coy.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">13th.                    2 + 336</td> <td>27th.                2 + 332</td> </tr> </table> <p align="right" style="margin-top: 10px;"><i>Rehearsal</i></p>			Clarks & Orderlies.	37	Burial Party, C.C.S.	8	Cooks & Waiters.	22	Guard.	14	Cantons.	3	Batmen.	17	Motor Cyclists.	3	Sanitary Section.	17	Corps Salvage.	11	Carpenters.	5	Heavy Artillery.	6	"T" Army Corps Signal Coy.	34	N.Z. Army Hospital.	49	Corps Schools.	42	Mechanics with Chemical Adviser.	6	No. 5 N.Z.L.R.C.	23			General Duties.	30	As at Noon, 6th. July.      2 + 361		20th. July.      2 + 355	Captain, No. 2 N.Z. Area Emp. Coy.	13th.                    2 + 336		27th.                2 + 332
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<small>No. 2 N.Z. AREA EMPLOYMENT COY.</small>																																													

**Notes regarding the New Zealand Division that Bill was in.**

**No 2 NZ Entrenching Battalion**, was formed In February 1918 and disbanded in Oct 1918. They dug trenches and other earthworks. They were to assist units such as tunnellers, pioneers, railways, engineers and signallers.

**No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company** which was created in July 1917 was a stand-alone unit which undertook labouring work wherever it was stationed.

**Sling Camp at Bulford on the Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire**

The 4<sup>th</sup> New Zealand Infantry Brigade Reserve Camp located 3km from Bulford, Wiltshire, was usually referred to as Sling Camp. In 1914, Sling Camp was occupied by New Zealand soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) and became known as ANZAC Camp. In June 1916, it became the 4<sup>th</sup> New Zealand Infantry Brigade Reserve Camp and gradually the name reverted back to Sling Camp. In 1918, Sling Camp held approximately 4,500 men, although this number was greatly reduced after the Spanish Influenza Pandemic resulted in high casualties, and which later hit New Zealand with a vengeance.

The camp was divided into four separate battalions: Canterbury (No 1), Otago (No 2), Wellington (No 3) and Auckland (No 4). Each battalion was a separate camp with its own cluster of huts, training staff, headquarters and lieutenant-colonel in charge. The whole camp was controlled by a group headquarters, presided over by the brigadier and his support staff. The camp also housed fourteen New Zealand conscientious objectors (among them Archibald Baxter and his brothers Alexander and John), who had been forced into the army and sent all the way from New Zealand to England to make an example of them.



At the end of the war when troops were being returned to the United Kingdom, Sling Camp housed 6,000 men and became the site of the Battle of Bulford, when New Zealand troops staged a brief mutiny. The frustrations and grievances of the previous months (mainly a lack of ships to return the troops home because of a wharfies strike across Britain) which had been simmering throughout the camp, fuelled by rumours and speculation, eventually erupted into a full-blown mutiny and riot on 14 and 15 March 1919. Eight men were held to account for mutiny at courts martial. The New Zealanders left their mark at the camp by creating the Bulford Kiwi, a large mural on the hillside, carved into the chalk after the riots of 1919, which remains to this day.

The last New Zealand soldiers marched out of Sling Camp on 1 November 1919 bound for home. On 5 November 1919 Sling Camp was handed back to the Royal Engineers of the Imperial Army.

### Cologne                      The End of Conflict

An armistice on the Western Front came into effect at 11am on 11 November 1918. The conditions of the armistice gave the Germans 14 days to leave all occupied territory and 28 days to withdraw across the River Rhine. The New Zealand Division was designated to be part of the British Army of Occupation, responsible for ensuring the terms of the armistice were met. On 28 November 1918, the division began an arduous march of 240km through France and Belgium, reaching the German border on 19 December. Led by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Canterbury Infantry Regiment, the infantry entered Cologne the next day, followed on Boxing Day by the artillery and other horse-borne units.

The New Zealanders' role as occupiers was short-lived. When it became clear that Germany would not resume the fight, attention turned to demobilizing the troops and getting them home, with 700–1,000 men leaving Cologne each week. On 25 March 1919, the last New Zealand soldiers left Cologne and the New Zealand Division was officially disbanded.

# Page from the No 2 NZ (Area) Employment Company War Diary - December 1919

NEW ZEALAND  
EMPLOYMENT COMPANY

WAR DIARY

INTELLIGENCE-SUMMARY.

Information regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Reports will be contained in P. S. Regt., Part II, and the first Manual respectively. This page will be prepared in accordance with No. 2, N.Z. Area Employment Coy. [This heading not required]

Army Form C. 212.  
1919-1920

Month of December 1919.

Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	
<p>The weather has been fair and warm throughout the month, and health of the Troops good, and we died of disease. On Dec. 1st the King and the Prince of Wales paid an informal visit to NZED; the Grand Place was full of troops, and His Majesty got out of his car and walked through the crowd, followed by his staff. He received a great reception. On Dec. 2nd, A draft of 237 Officers of "A" Category arrived to replace C.I.T.C. Personnel. On 13th Dec. A draft of 170 O.R.s, Category C.I.T.C. left for the Base for return to New Zealand and on 15th Dec. a further draft of 22 left from Corps Schools. That day, warm and sunny, arrangements had been made to provide the men with a good dinner, and there was an abundance of Roast Turkey, Roast Pork, Plum Pudding and other meat fare. At 12 noon the men were all seated at the tables, and General Sir W. G. Godley came to the Mess Room, wished all a Merry Xmas, and a speedy return to New Zealand, and thanked all for the good work done during the past twelve months. The General was greeted with hearty cheers. Both Dec. A draft of 56 Category C.I.T.C. men and 7 members of the N.Z. Maori (Pioneer) Battalion left the company for return to New Zealand.</p>			
Weekly Effective Strength Returns.			
December 1st.		O Officers.	311 Others ranks.
1st		302	*
1st		302	*
1st		313	*
1st		302	*

*Pearkes*  
Captain,  
Officer Commanding,  
No. 2, New Zealand (Area) Employment Coy.

**Bill's Casualty Form.** Showing events from when he left Wellington in 1917 until his departure from Plymouth in the UK in 1919

NO 2 N.Z. (AREA) EMPLOY COY

CASUALTY FORM—ACTIVE SERVICE.

[Army Form B. 103.]

Regiment or Corps:	C 30		Name:	CRIMMINS William
Regimental No.	62267	Rank:	Pte	
Enlisted:	31:5:17	Terms of Service:	Duration of War	Service reckons from* 31:5:17
Date of promotion to present rank:		Date of appointment to lance rank:		Numerical position on roll of N.C.O.s:
Extended:		Re-engaged:		Qualification†:
REFUG.	Report of Promotions, Reductions, Transfers, Commissions, etc., during Active Service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26, or in other Official Documents. The Authority to be quoted in Each Case.	Place:	Date.	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 26, or other Official Documents.
Date.	From whom received.			
<p>EMBARKED ON TS 93 <i>Wellington</i> 13/10/17</p> <p>DISEMBARKED. <i>Surreyport</i> 8.12.17</p> <p>MARCHED IN &amp; POSTED. C.S.R <i>Abing</i> 9.12.17 PT. II NO. 81</p> <p>Qual. 1st Class Sign. <i>Abing</i> 12.12.17 190447</p> <p>LEFT FOR FRANCE <i>SLING</i> 9.4.18 NOM. ROLL</p> <p>Marched on <i>Abing</i> 9.6.18 PR. 190447/2005</p> <p>Joined Bn <i>Abing</i> 12.6.18 B. 213 (37/103/69)</p> <p>29.6.18 <i>Abing</i> 26.6.18 B. 213 (37/103/69)</p> <p>29.6.18 <i>Abing</i> 26.6.18 B. 213 (37/103/69)</p> <p>19/5/19 <i>Adm</i> 19/5/19 <i>Abing</i> 19/5/19 N/Roll</p> <p>Entered on Summary Roll. <i>J.W.</i> 10.4.19.</p>				

\* All entries into section D, Army Reserve particulars of each re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.

## **NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.**

B.R.—125.

REC'D Rank: P6  
39 JUL 19 Rank: P6  
JABE RECORDS Enlted. 31:5:17  
RENTAL  
Hire: BROWN L

Rank: Name: CRIMMINS WILLIAM Unit: No. 62267  
Enlisted: 31:5:17 M. or S.: S D. of Birth: 8:3:97 Occupn: Electrician Ht.: 5-7 Wt.: 144 lb.  
Hair: Brown Eyes: Blue Complexn: Medium Relgn: R.C. Inocln: ✓  
N/K: Mr. M.E.Crimmins (Father) Devon St. Waihi.

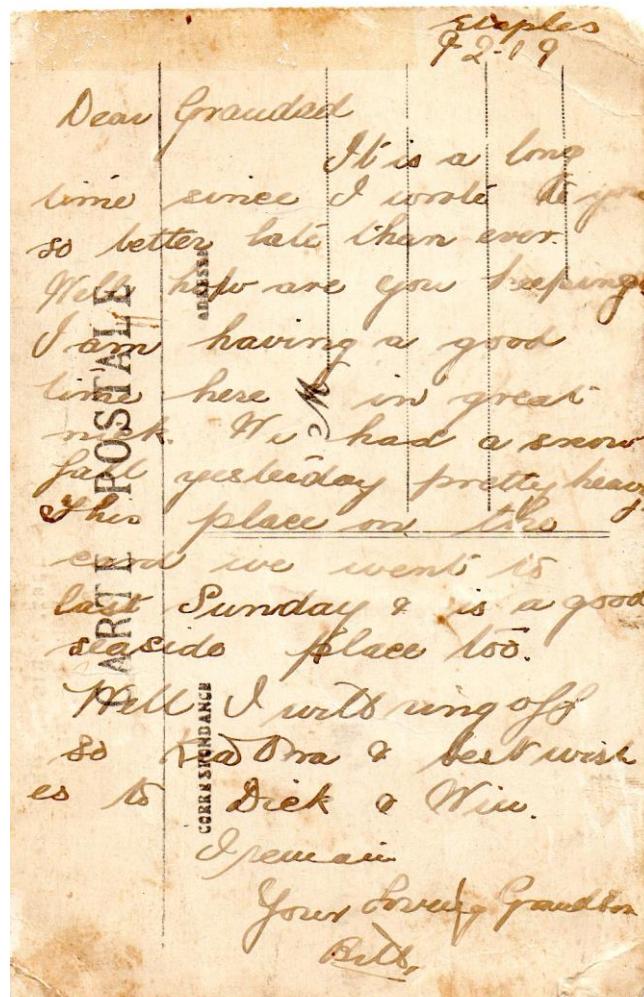
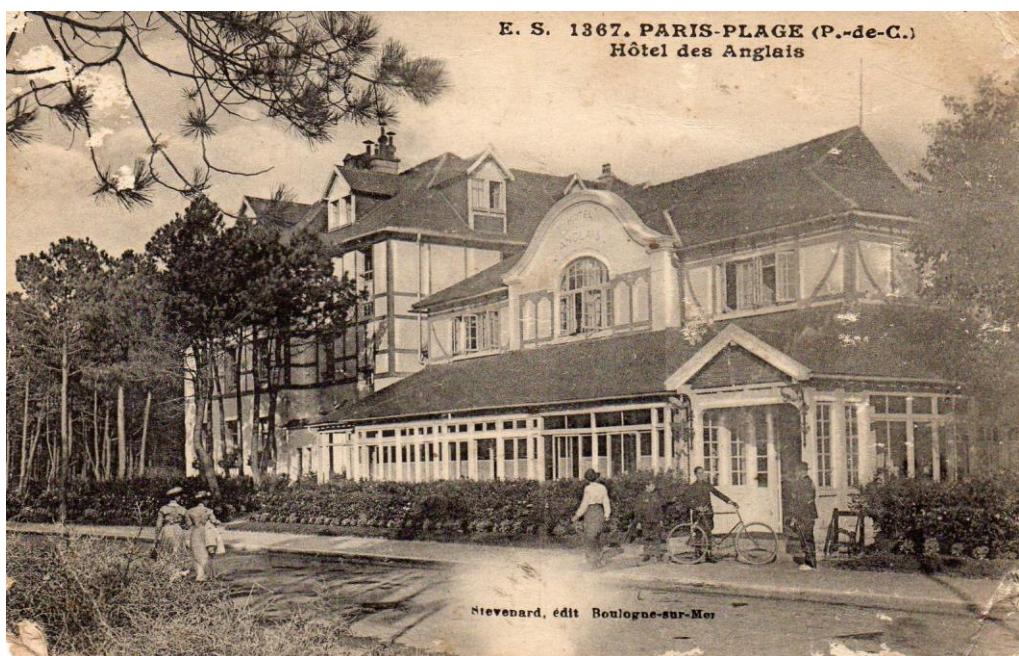
*Place of Birth:* Waihi N.Z.

PROMOTIONS, CASUALTIES, MOVEMENTS, Etc.	DATE OF CASUALTY.	AUTHORITY, AND DATE OF SAME	INITIALS.
EMBARKED ON TS 93	18 OCT 1917	Comd. Roll	AH
DISEMBARKED, Liverpool	8/12/17	DISEMBARKATION ROLL	JW
POSTED 4 CANT RES.	9-12-17	CANT RES 81 10	12-17 JW
Qual. 1st Class Signaller	22-5-18	5-18 1/25-29-5-18	18
Proceeded to sea	6-5-18	3-18 1/25-10-6-18	18
JOINED NO. 2/ENT.EN.	12-6-18	2/E.B. 12 1-7-18	Y
TRANS. TO 2/18/E.toy	26-6-18	✓ ✓ 13 8-7-18	
Posted to Unit Ex 3/E.B	16-6-18	Per 27 3/26 9-18	McLean
marched into N.Z. Recce Camp	19-1-18	PA. 696 W3802 9-18 (2/25.)	McLean
Hopetoun Anch. Mor. Set. along	3-3-19	2. 513. 9-19	
EMB FOR NZ. RUAHINE			
19, 5, 19			

## **Bill's Certificate of Discharge**

<p>N.B. - (1.) This certificate is issued without alteration or erasure of any kind.            (2.) Any person finding this certificate is requested to forward it to Headquarters, N.Z. Military Areas, Wellington, N.Z.            (3.) Should this certificate be lost or mislaid no duplicate of it can be obtained.</p>	<i>8.7.19</i> <small>[B.R. Form No. 207A]</small>  <b>NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.</b> <b>CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE.</b> No. 98363 <del>16-7-19</del> Name: <i>62267 Private Crimmins</i> <i>Corporal Crimmins Regt</i> Name: <i>William Crimmins</i> is discharged on the termination of his period of engagement. Service abroad: <i>1 years 269 days</i> DESCRIPTION OF SOLDIER ON ENLISTMENT. Age: <i>20 1/2 years</i> Height: <i>5 feet 7 inches</i> Complexion: <i>Medium</i> Eyes: <i>Blue</i> Hair: <i>Brown</i> Trade or occupation: <i>Electrician</i> PARCHMENT DISCHARGE POSTED Dated <i>15/7/1919</i> <i>8.7.19</i> Signature: <i>77B.</i> Wellington, <i>5th August 1919</i> For Major-General, Commanding New Zealand Military Forces <small>WITNESSED</small> <small>RECORDED</small>
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## Mementos from France



Above and left: A postcard sent by Bill to his Grandfather Nicholas Toomey on 9 February 1919 from Etaples, France.

NB: Nicholas and Johanna Toomey arrived in NZ from Ireland (via Capetown) on the *Maori* on 23 December 1864.

Below: It is assumed that Bill brought this tray cloth (60cm x 60cm), embroidered with *Souvenir de France*, home with him.



## Roll of Honour at Sacred Heart College Auckland



Bill attended Sacred Heart College, then in Richmond Rd Ponsonby, from 5 February – 8 December 1912 in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form. His name is the fifth in the second column..

A. AMODEO RIP	P. CORBETT
L. AMODEO	J. COSTELLOE
P. AMODEO	B. COTTERELL
R. AMODEO	G. COUPLAND RIP
W. BAGLEY	W. CRIMMINS
F. BARRY	L. CULLEN RIP
L. BEECH	J. DARBY
A. BEEHAN RIP	N. DEAN
K. BEEHAN	R. DELANEY
P. BLAKE RIP	J. DELEHANTY
V. BLAKE RIP	D. DIBLEY
J. BOLGER RIP	P. DIGNAN
F. BOLTON	O. DOLAN
C. BONE RIP	F. DONOVAN
W. BOWDEN	E. EARLLY
C. BOYLE	A. EDWARDES RIP
T. BRENNAN	J. EDWARDS
S. BROOKING	F. FARRELL
J. BROWN	D. FERGUSON
M. BROWNLIE	J. FISCHER
B. CAHILL	C. FITZGERALD
H. CAHILL	G. FITZGERALD
H. CARROLL	J. FRANKLIN
J. CARROLL	J. FOLEY
T. CARROLL	J. FRANKLIN
T. CLARKE	E. FRASER
C. COBOURNE	J. FREYNE
F. COOK	R. GARDHAM
G. CODY	J. GANLEY
J. COLEMAN	P. GILFEDDER
P. COONEY	F. GLEESON
A. COOPER	P. GOLDENSTEIN

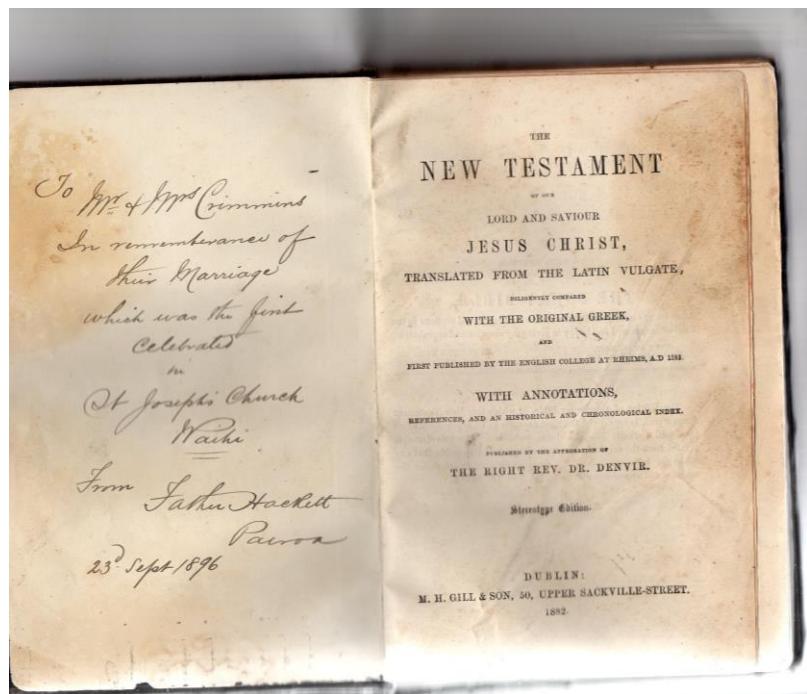
The motto 'Confortare Esto Vir' translates as  
'Take courage and act nobly'

# A Brief History of the Life of William (Bill, Will) Crimmins

Auckland Star 30th September 1896

**CRIMMINS-TOOMEY.**—On September 23, at St. Joseph's Church, Waihi, by the Rev. Father Hackett, Maurice, the third son of the late Thomas Crimmins, of Opotiki, to Bridget, sixth daughter of Nicholas Toomey, of Waihi.

Bill's parents' marriage, as above, was the First Marriage to be solemnized in the new St Joseph's Catholic Church in Waihi. They were presented with a suitably inscribed Bible to commemorate the occasion. At that time the Catholic Parish in Waihi was administered from St Mary's Church in Paeroa.



Portrait of the Infant Bill



Over a hundred years ago on 17 October 1917 Private William Crimmins (also known as Bill or Will) left Wellington to go to World War One. He was allocated to the No 9 Platoon "C Coy" of the 30<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements and later to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Canterbury Regiment. He was 20 years old. He was the eldest son of Maurice and Bridget (nee Toomey) Crimmins of Waihi. Maurice had come to Waihi as a very young man from Opotiki because of the opportunities that could be afforded for work in that gold mining town. Bridget had come to Waihi with her family from Ramarama, for similar

reasons. As theirs was the first marriage in the new Catholic Church in Waihi, they were presented with a suitably inscribed Bible by the officiating priest, Fr Hackett, who was well known by the family and also well respected throughout the community. William/Bill/Will was the eldest child of six children – three boys and three girls. A daughter and son died in infancy.

Maurice formed partnerships with Harry Deverell and Ernie Fathers (both at different times) in a passenger coaching business between Paeroa and Tauranga. This business later moved from ‘coaching horses’ to the ‘new motor vehicle’ transport. Eventually the business was taken over by the Government as NZ Road Services. Maurice was a keen horseman and won various events around the country – one being New Zealand Champion bareback rider over fences, about 1913.

Bill attended St Joseph’s School in Waihi and then in 1912 was in the 6<sup>th</sup> form at Sacred Heart College, at that time in Richmond Road Ponsonby, Auckland. (He would have stayed with his auntie and uncle in the Mt Eden area.) He then went to the Waihi School of Mines where he gained engineering qualifications and was subsequently employed at the Waihi Gold Mining Company. His work at various times involved putting up power pylons in various parts of the North Island. On his return from the war in 1919, Bill continued with his pre-war activities until he joined his father in farming in Waikino. There, they established Leaffield Pedigree Stud which was renowned throughout the Hauraki Plains, Ohinemuri, Waikato and Bay of Plenty.<sup>9</sup>

## WEDDING.

The wedding was solemnised recently in Hamilton at the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary by the Rev. Father O'Connor, of Thelma, eldest daughter of Mr. Thos. Clarkin, of Clarkin Road, Hamilton, and the late Mrs. Clarkin, of Eureka, to William, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Crimmins, of Waikino. The ceremony was followed by Nuptial Mass. The bride, who entered the church on the arm of her father, wore an ivory georgette frock trimmed with silver lace and a veil which formed the train. Miss Monica Clarkin was bridesmaid, and wore a cyclamen georgette frock and hat to match. Both bride and bridesmaid carried beautiful bouquets of spring flowers. Little Mariel Field, as flower-girl, wore a petalled frock of pink crepe de chine and a head-dress of gold tulle. The bridegroom was attended by his brother, Mr. Frank Crimmins, as best man. Miss N. Crimmins played the bridal music.

In 1928 he married Thelma Clarkin who was also born in Waihi, the daughter of Tom and Grace Clarkin. Both the Crimmins and Clarkin Families were involved in the transport industry.

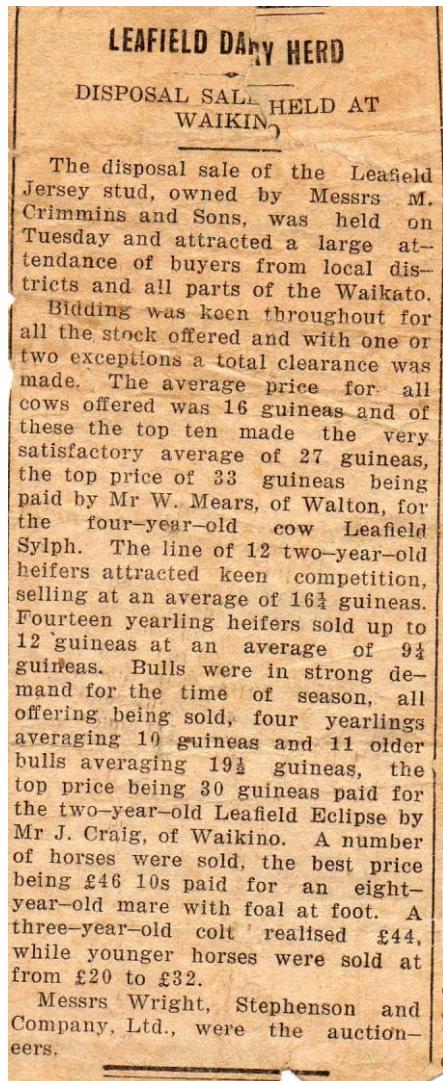


Thelma's father, Tom Clarkin and his brothers Jack, Fred and Pat, had teams of bullocks and horses (Clarkin Teams). Thelma's mother, Grace Kirby and Tom met when the Clarkins were contracting on the West Coast. They married in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton).

(Hamilton). The Clarkin Teams hauled the heavy machinery and coal across the hills from Paeroa to Waihi. At that time there was no road through the Karangahake Gorge. The boats could only get up the rivers (Waihou and Ohinemuri from the Hauraki Gulf) as far as Paeroa (hence the establishment of Paeroa). About 1901, Tom and Grace Clarkin moved from Waihi to Paeroa where Jack's family already lived and then about 1904 took up land in Eureka in the Waikato. The Crimmins and Clarkin families had always remained in touch with one another. The Crimmins's travelled to Kirikiriroa for Grace's funeral in 1920.

<sup>9</sup> In 1960, Judith, aged 19, as a very new school teacher in Tauranga, was amazed to be asked if she was linked with *Leaffield Stud* as her friend's parents had bought some cattle at the closing down auction sale in 1937!

This was also the commencement of the deepening relationship between Bill and Thelma which led to their marriage in 1928 and consequent life in Waikino. Following her mother's death Thelma had been caring for three of her younger siblings, one of whom had a severe disability. The early married life of Bill and Thelma was in Waikino. They had two daughters Grace (1932 - 2017) and Judith (b 1940).

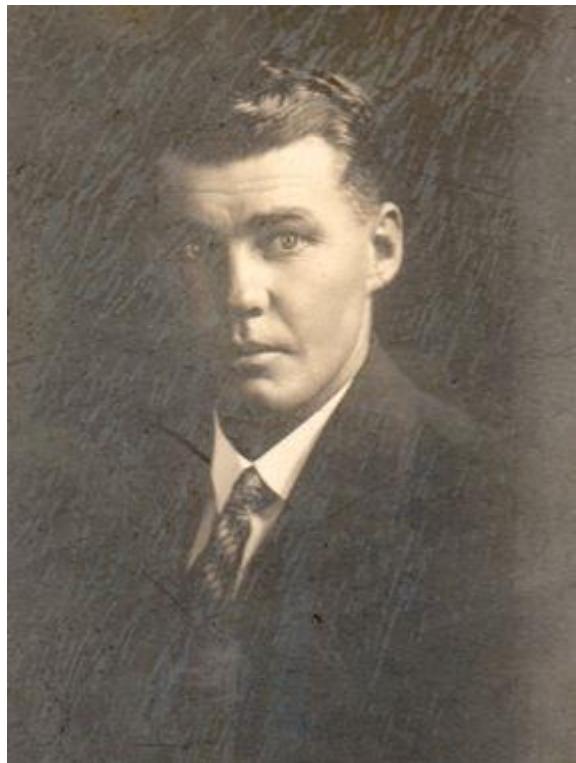


This photo appeared in the *Hoof Beats* Racing Magazine after Bill's death in 1952. It was taken at the Rotorua Races when he was about to be taken to the start of a race.

In 1935, Bill, his father, brother and a friend established *Alpha By Products* – a boiling down works on the eastern edge of Paeroa across the road from the Paeroa RSA Cemetery where Bill and Thelma are now buried. The site of 'Alpha' is now that of *Agrisea NZ Ltd*.

Bill and his father, Maurice, were the Official Starters at a number of Jockey Clubs (now called Racing Clubs) at Ohinemuri, Maramarua Hunt Club (both in Paeroa) Tauherenikau, Waverley, Woodville, Wairarapa, New Plymouth, Rotorua and possibly others as well.

Bill was also the Starter for the horse and pony events at the Annual Hauraki A & P Show and the Annual Kerepehi Sports Club.



Bill was concerned with community affairs and to that end was a Councilor for the Waikino area on the Ohinemuri County Council and later (1950 - until his death in 1952) he was a Councilor on the Paeroa Borough Council. He was active in a number of organizations including the Paeroa RSA as was Thelma in the Women's Section. She, also, was concerned with community affairs – she belonged to a number of community organizations and assisted others wherever possible. She was the Paeroa Representative on the Thames Hospital Board for many years. During that time she was engaged in establishing *Meals on Wheels* in Paeroa and subsequently delivered them as well. She was also a New Zealand Catholic Women's League representative to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) in Bangalore, India in 1979. She was very keen to go there as her grandmother, Elizabeth Clarkin (nee Gavin), was born in India. (I was able to accompany her on this special occasion.)

Bill and Thelma lived in Paeroa from 1937 until their deaths: Bill in 1952, and Thelma in 1986.

The respect with which Bill was held was signified by the guard of honour held en route to the cemetery and by the 760 tributes that were received in his honour at his very sudden death. These included 299 telegrams, 90 wreaths, 53 letters and 318 cards



***The family at the wedding of Bill's nephew Brian Carlton to Betty Curtis 1950.***

***Bill, Grace, Thelma.  
Judith***

LETTER TO BILL FROM  
BISHOP BRODIE

Catholic Cathedral  
Barbadoes Street  
Christchurch, C.1  
26. 9. 40

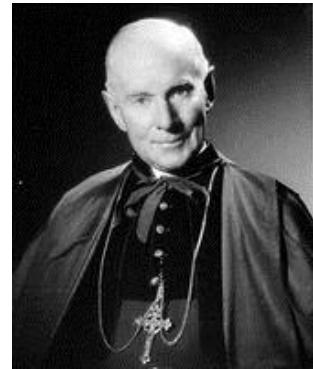
Dear Bill:

It brings me back to Waihi to get a letter from you. I am pleased my few words went over well - I trust that the confidence I suggested will be justified by the final outcome of the bitter struggle through which we are passing.

I hope you & all your crew well. I remember my many trips on the coaching days with your father Francis Crimmins & your brother so helpful to the young priest starting in Waihi.  
March 1<sup>st</sup> 1901.

I look forward to a drive with you from Anchors to Waihi - what a change from the river trip to Paeroa & then coach to Waihi.

Many thanks for your kind note - knowd well to Waihi - old friend  
*Most sincerely yours*  
Matthew Joseph Brodie  
Bishop of Christchurch



Bishop Matthew Joseph Brodie (1864-1943) 2<sup>nd</sup> Bishop of Christchurch was born in Coromandel and well known and loved throughout the district. He was ordained priest in 1896; in 1901 became the First Parish priest of Waihi, hence was well known to the Crimmins family.

It is assumed Bill wrote to him in relation to something he had said re World War Two.

### *Some poetry that Bill wrote in pencil*

**Bill was from a ‘racing’ family and so was very familiar with the horses of the time. (He was a Starter at various race meetings in the North Island.) The poem is undated and the first four verses are missing. It is impossible to ascertain when it was written. My estimation is that it would be the early 1900’s either before or after he went to the war**

5	Now the Boomed Mangapiko we did race For he was the pride of every place But the smiles we received from every face Was simply very easy to trace.	10	Then down to the Tauranga we did go A fortune we thought assured But after the races though We were very much demured.
6	After this at all the meetings We got many hand shakes and greetings To answer the 1 <sup>st</sup> question you see What about Manga – tell me.	11	Now the meetings we still do But the handshakes and smiles are few And by their faces we know sometime back They have lost 10 bob on our wonderful hack.
7	Times went on and wins appeared So we got our money ready got this hack But then his form had disappeared And alas we never got it back	12	Then we raced Mangapiko here and there Over the steeples and every where The more we raced him the worse he got And then we decided to chuck the lot.
8	A man came often after tea From the direction of Waihi Mounted on a bay mare was he And this was Mr James Delany.	13	We had lots of fun at the time For gracing the lawns was quite devine And to be in the Birdcage you see And knowing all about the “ <u>hidden mystery</u> ”
	He was once an old Friend of Course And he obtained information of this valuable horse But when he lost his money Oh my he did get so funny	14	Now Magapito’s racing career is over For on the turf he will appear no more. Now to the farm he is back To be used by all
9	At the Tauranga Races To Trainer Wallace I did ask ‘Jack what are his chances’ ‘Why’ he replied ‘Melbourne to a matchbox’		For an old cow hack.

## **Some of my Memories of my father, Bill Crimmins**

During the years I was growing up I often asked my father questions about the war. Often, he and I sat out on the front veranda where we could see across the Hauraki Plains toward the Patetonga/Kaihere Hills which all seemed very far away to me. I remember I asked Dad if that's where he went in the war! He explained that 'no' that it was much, much, much further away than that. Whenever we walked down-town in Paeroa – usually on our way to Dance's (our cousins) at the other end of town – it was normal for him to greet everyone he met with 'Kia Ora' or 'Tena koe' – this was normal language for him and so I was very surprised when telephone operators were told they could not use such language. That, of course has now changed.

I would often talk about what was going on at school. When I was learning about the Panama Canal he described to me his passing through there on his way to WW1. He drew diagrams in front of me illustrating the passage of his ship through the canal. And there as I pored through his diary – were those same diagrams [see Nov 4<sup>th</sup>]. (This was also an amazing recollection for me when I sailed through the Canal enroute to New Zealand from Southampton, after my time in Great Britain and Europe, in 1964.)

In my school atlas he drew for me the routes that he travelled while he was at the war. This was all fascinating, and I didn't realize at the time, how important this all was. At school (the Paeroa Convent) we were learning about Our Lady of Fatima, who was appearing to three children in Portugal at that time – my excited comment to him was. 'Gee, Dad, you weren't far from Fatima where Our Lady was; she was there at that time – look at how close it is from where you were. Did you go and see her?' He patiently explained that no, he hadn't gone, as really although it didn't look far on the map it was indeed a long way away. He didn't describe that he was a soldier at war and that that was really impossible. (I would have been about 9 or 10. I have no idea what happened to that atlas.)

Whenever possible, I would accompany him on his collection of dead cattle or other beasts in the school holidays; or the collection of offal from the abattoirs on a Sunday afternoon. These trips were always very interesting. He 'saved' one pony from being destroyed by keeping it to teach me to ride. This was fun but unfortunately it was not possible to keep it after his death and so my 'riding career' came to an end. On one occasion, again when I was about 9 years old, while he was sorting out some timber, and I stayed in the truck unbeknown to him I started playing around with the steering wheel and controls, then, not realizing or understanding what I was doing turned the key and pulled the starter button. And lo and behold it started! I got as big a shock as he. He was as quick as a shot back to the truck to turn it off and explain the foolishness of my actions. The truck was well used as transportation for the summer holidays to Waihi Beach of the extended family and friends (from Paeroa, Hamilton and Auckland). It was normal for 12 or more of us (children and adults) to be on the back of the truck, (along with all our sleeping gear, food and clothing), singing and having lots of fun, and at times, some of us would be standing up leaning against the cab to see the oncoming scenery and see who could see the sea first. The truck *had* been very thoroughly cleaned!! Health and Safety would have much to say about that these days as would the Traffic Cops!– but we were all perfectly safe.

He also talked about the Cathedrals in Rouen and Salisbury, and having spent time at both of them during his time in the war. When I travelled around England and Europe in 1963-64 both were special places for me because he had been there.

He also spoke of Belgian sausage (not German sausage as most people described it), not wasting food and to always think of the starving children in Belgium. I am sure this has influenced my attitude not being wasteful.



**Informal family photo** at Paeroa on Sunday 10 August 1952 when family from New Plymouth and Hamilton were visiting. Bill arrived home from some urgent work at 'Alpha' a short time before the photo was taken. Grace took the photo.

Chic Clarkin (cousin) Rene and Monica (Thelma's sisters), Thelma, Shirley Thurlow (niece), Kathleen Patton, Audrey McArthur (old family friends) and Gavin Clarkin (Thelma's brother). Judith is behind Bill who is sitting in front.

Bill died very suddenly from a heart attack in the morning of 12 August about 40 hours later.

## Walking in Peace – The Present

In the 80's, Grace's son, Maurice, worked in the Nelson area where he met Helga (his future wife) and Angela both from Germany - Helga from Bavaria and Angela from Cologne (Koln). A very strong extended family friendship was made with Angela (a NZ Resident) and so while Grace and I were staying with Maurice, Helga and Shawn (their son) in Germany in 2009 we stayed a few days with Angela, who had returned to Cologne to care for her invalid mother, Maria. Most days we walked around the streets of Cologne with Angela and wheelchair-bound Maria. Even though language exchange with Maria was limited she told us that she was not born until 1918 as her father was fighting in the war. Grace and I were dumbstruck as our father had also been fighting in the war but on the 'other' side.

It was so wonderful to realize that through the friendship of two grandchildren of those two men that we were all good friends, walking so peacefully through the streets.

It was only in the research for this book that I learned that Dad had been in Cologne at that time.



Above: Judith, Maria, Grace. On Koln Turm (Tower). Koln Cathedral Turm in background right.

Side: Angela's Grandparents

Below: Grace, Angela and Maria.

We are all enjoying Koln food!



**Angela's Story:** 'My mother was born in February 1918. My grandfather (Peter Dick) had been with the 1. Foot Guards (an infantry regiment of the Royal Prussian Army) (at least I believe that's what my mother told me) and was injured with a gun shot to his head. So he returned to Germany and could not fight in the war any longer. My mother told us that for the rest of his life his right eye was drooping and it was constantly watering. My grandparents got married in June 1915. My mother was born on 19 February 1918 (she would have turned 100 years in February 2018). I believe in 1944 the house where my mother and grandfather were living was destroyed by bombs so my mom lost all her photos and everything else that might have reminded her of her mother. I have no idea how these two photos survived.'

My mother told me a story that when she was a very young child, maybe 3 or 4 years old, she was walking through the streets of Koln with her mother and saw a soldier wearing a very big hat. She asked her mother why the soldier was wearing such a big hat - her mother told her that this was a soldier from NZ. As you know after the war, the British and French were stationed in Germany and I believe NZers were there on behalf of the British. So – who knows – maybe my mother even saw your father that day ...'

**And here We**

**enjoying those same streets**

**in PEACE**





#### Auckland War Memorial Museum Armistice Day 11 November 2018

Bill's daughter, Judith, placing a draft of this book on the Cenotaph while holding Bill's Diary.

Note that she is wearing one of Bill's Sweetheart brooches.

#### **Bill, as a Young Man**



## ***Acknowledgements***

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