

Private soldier John (Jack) MCGRATH, No. 14139, 1st Battalion Wellington Regiment (New Zealand)



(Author: Joris SAERENS, English translation: Dorrit TOMBROCK)

Private soldier <sup>1</sup> John (Jack) MCGRATH.

Regimental number in the Army (New Zealand): 14139.

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Wellington Regiment / 25th Division (New Zealand).

Born at Dawson Doyleston <sup>2</sup>, Canterbury on ~~28th August 1880~~ 25th November 1875.

Father: Patrick MCGRATH, Mother: Margaret BURNS.

Wounded on 9th June 1917 during the battle in Messines (Belgium).

Died in Bailleul (France) on 11th June 1917 (First World War).

**Foreword:**

In the project ComingWorldRememberMe (CWRM 2014-2019, <https://fb.watch/2-ioJMdeIE/>) by the Flemish artist Koen VANMECHELEN, my wife, Augustine, obtained the "sponsorship" of the fallen New Zealand soldier John MCGRATH.

This was my reason to research the life of this soldier.

Information regarding WWI soldier John MCGRATH was found in documents from the New Zealand archives (*Commonwealth War Graves Commission*).

**Genealogical data:**

Private soldier (No. 14139) John MCGRATH's military records stated he was born in Dawson, Canterbury region on 28th August 1880.

With this information I started genealogical searches by requesting the birth certificate of John MCGRATH from [www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz](http://www.bdmonline.dia.govt.nz).

But because the place "Dawson" does not exist in Canterbury and also "Canterbury" is not mentioned in his birth certificate, someone from the facebook group "New Zealand history and Genealogy" gave me the tip that the birth data was most likely added later and that "Doyleston" may have been misunderstood as being "Dawson" when enrolling John MCGRATH in the military.

1. With reference to your memorandum of 14 May, I can readily identify the service of 14139 John McGrath, who died of wounds on 11 June 1917.

2. When attested for service at Trentham on 28 March 1916 this soldier stated he was born at Dawson, Canterbury on 28 August 1880 but was not required to name his parents. His next of kin during service was shown as his wife, Mrs Catherine McGrath, but there are no details of the marriage in Army records nor is there mention of a daughter. When last communicated with by the Army in 1921 Mrs McGrath's address was Johnsonville, Wellington.

*Details from a letter dated 20 May 1969 from Deputy Secretary of Defense (Army) addressed to District Public Trustee in Greymouth. In this letter it is stated that John MCGRATH was not obliged to indicate the names of his parents when registering, but "born at Dawson, Canterbury on 28 August 1880" was apparently not correct either. (Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)*

<sup>1</sup> A "private" is a soldier of the lowest military rank (equivalent to NATO Rank Grades OR-1 to OR-3 depending on the force served in). In modern military writing, "private" is abridged to "Pte" in the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth of Nations countries and to "Pvt" in the United States. (Source: Internet Wikipedia)

<sup>2</sup> Most likely, "Doyleston" was misunderstood as being "Dawson" when John MCGRATH entered the army. The place Dawson does not exist in Canterbury. (Source: Facebook-groep "New Zealand history and Genealogy")

From this I had to assume that this was apparently a different John MCGRATH as the one who died during WWI and I had to start another genealogical research via a different search path.

An "IN MEMORIAM" in the "Evening Post" newspaper on 11th June 1918 (*one year after John MCGRATH's death and announced by his widow*) stated that his widow's name was Kate and his daughter was called Thelma.

Further genealogical research through data on the birth certificate of John MCGRATH's daughter, Lillian Thelma, indicates that John at the time of Lillian Thelma's birth in 1906 was 30 years old and thus born about 1875-1876 in Canterbury and not in the place Dawson of 1880<sup>3</sup> as first thought by the first person examining the documents of Private soldier John MCGRATH No. 14139.

FATHERS.		When and where Married.	MOTHERS.	
1. Name and Surname. 2. Rank or Profession. 3. Age. 4. Birthplace.	1. Name and Maiden Surname. 2. Age. 3. Birthplace.			
1. John Mc Grath	Labourer	August 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1906	1. Ethel Catherine Mc Grath	formerly Russell
2. 30 years	Canterbury N.Z.	20 years	2. 20 years	3. Auckland N.Z.

Detail about "parents" in the birth certificate of Lillian Thelma MCGRATH, born 29th July 1906 in Palmerston North.  
 Father: John MCGRATH, 30 years, from Canterbury.  
 (Document source: Births, Deaths, Marriages and Citizenship of Department of Internal Affairs "Te Tari Taiwhenua")

So this should ultimately be the "right" person John MCGRATH we were looking for<sup>4</sup>:

REGISTRAR'S RETURN OF ALL ENTRIES OF BIRTHS IN THE REGISTER-BOOK FOR THE DISTRICT OF <i>Ellesmere</i> DURING THE QUARTER ENDING THE <i>31<sup>st</sup> day of December, 1915.</i>										
No.	When Born and Where.	Page, if any.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Name, if added after Registration of Birth.
577	November 25 <sup>th</sup> 1875 Doyleston		Male	Patrick Mcgrath	Margaret Mcgrath	Labourer	Mr. Mcgrath Doyleston	December 31 <sup>st</sup> 1915	H. M. Lee	

Birth certificate of John MCGRATH (born in Doyleston, Canterbury on 25th November 1875).

Father: Patrick MCGRATH, Mother: Margaret BURNS.

(Source: Births, Deaths, Marriages and Citizenship of Department of Internal Affairs "Te Tari Taiwhenua")

John MCGRATH was registered at Catholic School in Leeston, Canterbury on 25th September 1880.

John had many brothers and sisters (*family of more than 10 children*) and both his parents were still alive when he died in 1917.

A younger brother of him, George (*born 1892 in Ellesmere, CTY Folio 3907 4th Qtr, Canterbury and died in Greymouth on 6th or 9th September 1967, aged 74*), served during WWI with Australian Imperial Force 18th Battalion from 5th February 1915 till 15th November 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Apparently John MCGRATH was registered in a school in Leeston, Canterbury in 1880 and perhaps later 1880 was incorrectly noted as the year of birth on his military records, or John MCGRATH may have fudged his birth year to get into the army (*John MCGRATH was 40 years old at enrollment*).

<sup>4</sup> Confirmed by relatives of John MCGRATH-Ethel Catherine HASSELL.

Joris SAERENS has made contact in New Zealand with some of the direct relatives of John MCGRATH-Ethel Catherine HASSELL.

2. It can now be confirmed that this soldier was married on 4 August 1904 at the Registrar's Office, Levin, to Miss Catherine (or Katherine) Hassell. Their daughter, Lillian Thelma McGrath, was born at Palmerston North on 29 July 1906.

John MCGRATH was married on 4th August 1904<sup>5</sup> to Ethel Catherine (Kate) HASSELL (born 1883 in Awahuri, Wellington region, died 1941) in the Registrars Office in Levin, Manawatu-Wanganui region.  
(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

COPY OF REGISTER OF MARRIAGE.

Marriages in the District of *Shannon* *04/4156*

No.	When and Where Married. (Date, Locality, and Description of Building.)	Names and Surnames of the Parties.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Education of Parties. 1. Bachelor or Bachelor of Science (or degree) (2). 3. Master of Arts (or degree) (3). 4. Doctor of Medicine (or degree) (4). 5. Other (5).	Birthplace.	Residence. 1. Present. 2. Usual.	Parents.	
								Father's Name and Surname (1) and his Rank or Profession (2).	Mother's Name (1), and Maiden Surname (2).
31	<i>1904- August 4 Registrar's Office Levin</i>	<i>John McGrath Kate Hassell</i>	<i>27 21</i>	<i>Soldier Domestic Aides</i>	<i>Bachelor Agriculture Levin Levin</i>	<i>Palmerston North Levin</i>	<i>Levin Levin</i>	<i>Patrick McGrath Labourer</i>	<i>Marjorie McGrath Bornas Lily Hassell McGregor</i>

MARRIED, after the delivery to me of the Certificate required by "The Marriage Act, 1866," by  
*H. C. Nation* Officiating Minister (or Registrar).

This Marriage was solemnised between us,  
*John McGrath*  
*Kate Hassell*

In the presence of us,  
*Jessie Nicholson*  
*Louise Allaway*

I certify that the above is a true copy of the entry in the Register-book of Marriages kept by me,  
*H. C. Nation*  
Officiating Minister (or Registrar).

4156

Certificate of the marriage of John MCGRATH and Kate HASSELL on 4th August 1904 at the Registrar's Office in Levin, Manawatu-Wanganui.

(Source : Births, Deaths, Marriages and Citizenship of Department of Internal Affairs "Te Tari Taiwhenua")

		(a.) Christian and Surname of Woman to whom married, and whether Spinster or Widow. (b.) Place and Date of Marriage. (c.) Name of Officiating Minister or Registrar.		
		(a.)	(b.)	(c.)
11. Particulars as to Marriage.		<i>Katherine Hassell (Spinster)</i>	<i>Levin 29/8/1904</i>	<i>Registrar at Levin</i>
12. Particulars as to Children.	Christian Names.	Date and Place of Birth.		Where registered.
	<i>Thelma</i>	<i>29/7/1906</i>	<i>Pal. North</i>	<i>Pal North</i>

On this detail of a military document, 29th August 1904 is erroneously identified as wedding date of John MCGRATH and Kate HASSELL while this was 4th August 1904.

(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

<sup>5</sup> Or on 29th August as indicated in another document but in the birth certificate of Lillian Thelma and in the marriage certificate of John MCGRATH and Kate HASSELL 4th August 1904 is mentioned as the wedding date.



In the family of John MCGRATH and Ethel Catherine HASSELL, their daughter <sup>6</sup>, Lillian Thelma MCGRATH, was born on 29th July 1906 in Palmerston North, Manawatu-Wanganui.

BIRTHS IN THE		DISTRICT OF		DURING THE QUARTER ENDING THE		DAY OF		1910.	
No.	CHILD.		FATHER.		MOTHER.		INFORMANT.		REGISTRAR.
	When and where born.	Name of Child, and whether present or not.	1. Name and Surname. 2. Rank or Profession. 3. Age. 4. Birthplace.	When and where Married.	1. Name and Maiden Surname. 2. Age. 3. Birthplace.	1. Signature. 2. Description. 3. Residence. 4. If entry a correction of a former entry, Signature of Witnesses attending the same.	1. When registered. 2. Signature of Registrar.	Name, if added or altered after Registration of Birth.	
314	1906 July 29 <sup>th</sup> Palmerston North	Lillian Thelma (present)	1. John M. Grath 2. Labourer 3. 30 years 4. Canterbury N.Z.	August 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1904 Lower N.Z.	1. Ethel Catherine M. Grath 2. formerly Hassell 3. 20 years 4. Otago N.Z.	Catherine M. Grath Mother Palmerston N.Z.	1906 September 4 <sup>th</sup> 2. (P. H. Keeling) Registrar		

Birth certificate of Lillian Thelma MCGRATH (born 29th July 1906 in Palmerston North).

Father: John MCGRATH 30 years from Canterbury, mother: Ethel Catherine HASSELL.

(Source: Births, Deaths, Marriages and Citizenship of Department of Internal Affairs "Te Tari Taiwhenua")

Lillian Thelma MCGRATH attended Shannon School in Palmerston North from 14th November 1911 till 14th February 1913 when the MCGRATH-HASELL family moved to Wellington.

At the death of John MCGRATH, his and his wife's residence was at 15 Jessie street in Wellington <sup>7</sup> and in 1928 his widow, Ethel Catherine HASSELL, lived somewhere in the large suburb of Johnsonville in North Wellington.

The daughter, Lillian Thelma MCGRATH, was married on 28th February 1923 to Alexander ORR (1900 - 1984) and she died on 28th June 1954 (age 49).

12 MAR 1923		1923		Marriage in the District of		Wellington.		822	
When and where married. (Date, Description of Building, and Locality.)	Names and Surnames of the Parties.	Ages.	Rank or Profession.	Condition of Parties. 1. Bachelor or spinster for as one may be. 2. Widow or widower of former Wife or Husband.	Birthplace.	Residence. 1. Present. 2. Usual.	PARENTS.		
							(1) Father's Name and Surname. (2) His Rank or Profession.	(1) Mother's Name. (2) Her Maiden Surname.	
28 February 1923 Registrar's Office, Wellington.	Alexander Orr Lillian Thelma Mcgrath	22 16	Labourer	1. Bachelor 2. - 3. -	Wellington. Palmerston North	Johnsonville Johnsonville Johnsonville	(1) William Robert Orr (2) Labourer Retired	(1) Elizabeth Orr (2) Lang 1. Katherine Mcgrath 2. Hassell	
MARRIED, after the delivery to me of the Certificate required by the Marriage Act, 1908, by						H. C. Gladstone, Deputy Registrar.			
This Marriage was solemnized between us,			In the presence of us,						
Alexander Orr Lillian Thelma Mcgrath			M. J. Burns married Johnsonville A. J. Kennedy, Carpenter, 10 Sages Lane, Wellington						
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above is a true copy of the entry in the Register-book of Marriages kept by me at						Wellington.			
						H. C. Gladstone Registrar.			

Marriage certificate of Lillian Thelma MCGRATH and Alexander ORR on 28th February 1923 in the Registrar's Office in Wellington City, Wellington.

(Source : Births, Deaths, Marriages and Citizenship of Department of Internal Affairs "Te Tari Taiwhenua")

<sup>6</sup> There is no trace of other descendants of John MCGRATH and Kate HASSELL, only a daughter.

<sup>7</sup> The newspapers "Press" on 25th June 1917 and "Evening Post" on 26th June 1917 stated the residence of John MCGRATH and his wife Ethel Catherine HASSELL: Jessie street 15 Wellington, Wellington. On another military document and in Auckland Weekly News on 19th July 1917, the town of Lower Hutt, Wellington was identified as the last residence of John MCGRATH.

NEW ZEALAND-THE BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATION ACT 1951																							
DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS AT WELLINGTON DURING THE QUARTER ENDING THE 30th OF June 1954																							
No.	DESCRIPTION OF DECEASED.		CAUSE OF DEATH.		PARENTS.		BURIAL.		WHERE BORN.	IF DECEASED WAS MARRIED.	INFORMANT.	REGISTRAR.											
	1. When died.	2. Where died.	1. Name and Surname.	2. Profession or Occupation.	1. Sex.	2. Age.	1. Name and Surname of Mother.	2. Name and Surname of Father.	1. Name of Minister (or Minister of Wines).	2. Religion of Minister.	1. Where born.	2. How long in New Zealand.	1. Where married.	2. At what Age married.	3. To whom married.	4. Age of Wife, if living.	If issue living state Age each born.	1. Signature.	2. Description.	3. Residence.	1. Where Registered.	2. Signature of Registrar.	
(1.)	(2.)	(3.)	(4.)	(5.)	(6.)	(7.)	(8.)	(9.)	(10.)	(11.)	(12.)	(13.)	(14.)	(15.)	(16.)	(17.)	(18.)	(19.)	(20.)	(21.)	(22.)	(23.)	
(1) 1954 28th June Public Hospital Wellington 462 7 Camp Street	(1) Lillian Thelma McGrath (2) Married	(1) 28th June 1954 Public Hospital Wellington 462 7 Camp Street	(1) General carcinoma ? months carcinoma of stomach (2) ? months (3) 25th June 1954	(1) Jack McGrath (2) Catherine McGrath (3) Hassell (4) Haymiller	(1) 1904 20th June Stratford at Napier	(1) J. S. Holland (2) English (3) 29 years	(1) Palmerston North (2) Wellington (3) 17 32 (4) Alexander Chr.	M. 20 F. -	(1) W. Davidson General Director (2) Wellington (3) 29th June 1954 (4) Registrar.	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954	(1) 29th June 1954

Death certificate of Lillian Thelma MCGRATH, daughter of John MCGRATH and his wife Ethel Catherine HASSELL, on 28th June 1954 at Public Hospital in Wellington City, Wellington. (cause of death: carcinoma of stomach / stomach cancer)

(Source : Births, Deaths, Marriages and Citizenship of Department of Internal Affairs "Te Tari Taiwhenua")

**Wellington Infantry Regiment:**

63459.14 Rev  
(Form No. 2)

**NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.**

ATTESTATION OF

No. 14139 Name: McGrath John Regiment or Unit: Infantry

Questions to be put to the recruit before enlistment.

1. What is your name? ... John McGrath

2. Where were you born? ... Dawson Canterbury

3. Are you a British subject? ... Yes

4. What is the date of your birth? ... 28 August 1880

5. What is your trade or calling? ... Labourer

6. Are you an indentured apprentice? If so, where, and to whom? ... No

7. What was the address at which you last resided? ... 49, E. P. B. Wellington or Palmerston N.Z.

8. Have you passed the Fourth Educational Standard or the equivalent? ... Yes

Registration in Trentham, Upper Hutt on 28th March 1916 from John MCGRATH at New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Date of birth: 28th August 1880<sup>8</sup> 25th November 1875. Place of birth: ~~Dawson~~ Doyleston, Canterbury. Profession: labourer. (John MCGRATH was 40 years old at enrollment) (Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

Part of the infantry of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

The Wellington Infantry Regiment was one of four regional infantry groupings (along with Auckland, Canterbury, and Otago) which made up the bulk of New Zealand's infantry forces during the First World War.

It served as the Wellington Battalion at Gallipoli in 1915 before being divided into 1st Wellington Infantry Battalion<sup>9</sup> and 2nd Wellington Infantry Battalion in March 1916.

An additional battalion, 3rd Wellington Infantry Battalion, existed between March 1917 and February 1918.

All battalions of the regiment served on the Western Front from 1916 until 1918.



(From left to right): New Zealand flag, New Zealand army emblem and army patch from 1st Battalion of the Wellington Infantry Regiment. (Source: Internet)

<sup>8</sup> The strikethrough data is personal data that was most likely added to the document later and was incorrect data.

<sup>9</sup> Private soldier John MCGRATH belonged to 1st Battalion Wellington.

**Wellington Infantry Battalions:**

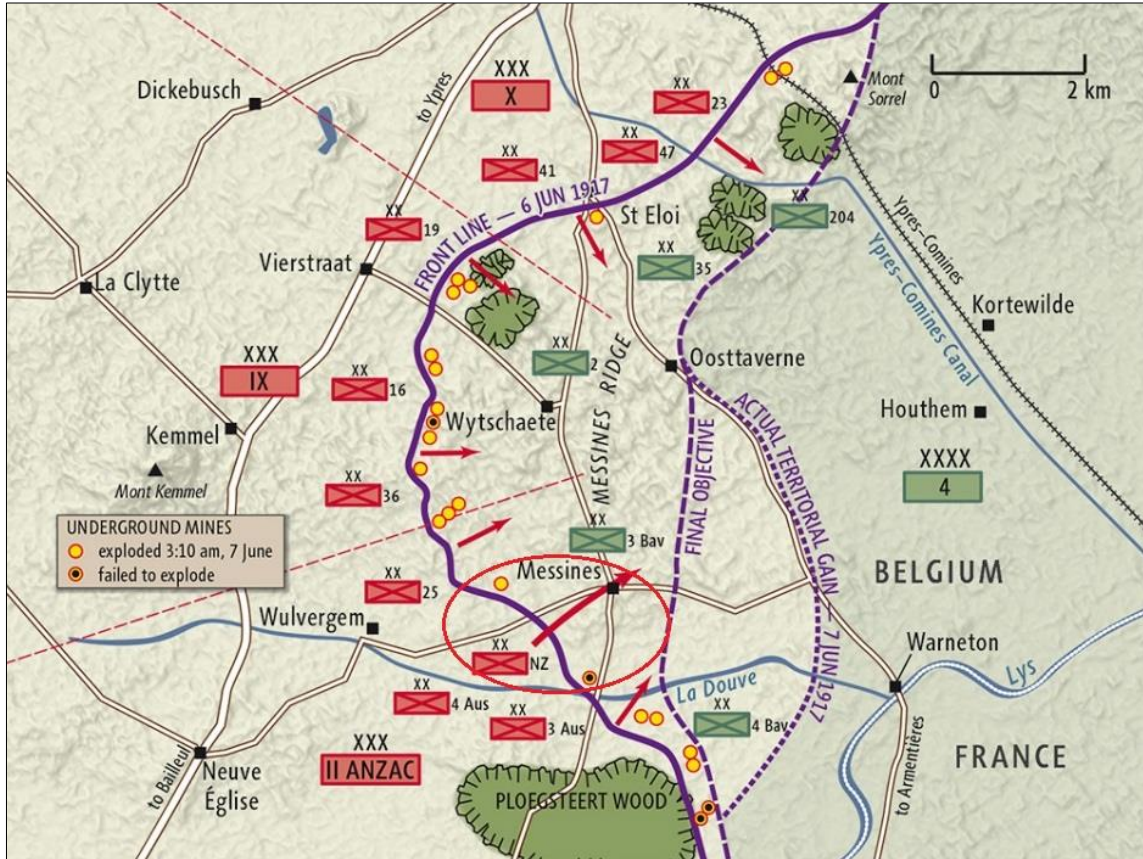
Name	Unit attached to ( <i>dates</i> )	Campaigns	Further information
Wellington Battalion	New Zealand Infantry Brigade ( <i>Aug 1914 - Mar 1916</i> )	<a href="#">Gallipoli</a>	<a href="#">Unit diaries at Archives New Zealand;</a> <a href="#">Unit diaries at Australian War Memorial</a>
1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion Wellington Infantry Regiment ( <i>1/WIR</i> )	1 <sup>st</sup> New Zealand Infantry Brigade ( <i>Mar 1916 - Feb 1919</i> )	<a href="#">Western Front: Somme 1916;</a> <a href="#">Messines 1917;</a> <a href="#">Passchendaele 1917;</a> <a href="#">Spring Offensive and Advance to Victory 1918</a>	<a href="#">Unit diaries at Archives New Zealand</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Wellington Infantry Regiment ( <i>2/WIR</i> )	<i>(a)</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Infantry Brigade ( <i>Mar-Dec 1916</i> ) <i>(b)</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> New Zealand Infantry Brigade ( <i>Jan 1917 - Feb 1918</i> )	<a href="#">Western Front: Somme 1916;</a> <a href="#">Messines 1917;</a> <a href="#">Passchendaele 1917;</a> <a href="#">Spring Offensive and Advance to Victory 1918</a>	<a href="#">Unit diaries at Archives New Zealand</a>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion Wellington Infantry Regiment ( <i>3/WIR</i> )	4 <sup>th</sup> New Zealand Infantry Brigade ( <i>Mar 1917 - Feb 1918</i> )	<a href="#">Western Front: Somme 1916;</a> <a href="#">Messines 1917;</a> <a href="#">Passchendaele 1917</a>	<a href="#">Unit diaries at Archives New Zealand</a>
Wellington Regt training/reserve battalion, ( <i>1916</i> )	New Zealand Reserve Group/ New Zealand Infantry ( <i>Reserve</i> ) Brigade ( <i>1916-19</i> )	Training unit based at Sling Camp in England	<a href="#">Unit diaries at Archives New Zealand</a>

*Private soldier John MCGRATH belonged to 1st Battalion Wellington Infantry Regiment (1 / WIR).  
(Source: Internet, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/infantry-units/wellington-infantry-regiment>)*



**The second "Battle of Messines" <sup>10</sup> in Belgium (7–9 June 1917) where John MCGRATH was wounded on 9th June:**

The second "Battle of Messines" (7–9 June 1917) was an attack by the British Second Army (*General Sir Herbert Plumer*), on the Western Front near the village of Messines in West Flanders, Belgium, during the First World War.



See circled designation of New Zealand (NZ) troops on 6th June 1917 near Messines (Mesen) including the 1st Battalion Wellington with John MCGRATH (6th June 1917 was the day before the start of the second "Battle of Messines").

(Source: Internet <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/western-front-1917>)



General Sir Herbert Plumer in 1917.

(born: 18 March 1857 Kensington [Londen], England – died: 16 July 1932 Londen, England)

(Source: Internet)

<sup>10</sup> Messines (Flemish: Mesen) is a small town in the Westhoek in the Belgian province of West Flanders. (Source: Internet Wikipedia)



SATURDAY The next day passed comparatively quietly and Coys were busy re-organising, clearing wounded men, etc. During night of 9/10th the 2nd 9th June 1917. Battn and this Battn were relieved by 14th Battn A.I.F. From various causes this relief was very much delayed, and was not complete until 4 a.m. Coys then made their way down to BULFORD CAMP, where the Battn went into reserve.

7. COMMUNICATIONS. The forward party sent to establish the Forward Command Post had several casualties and this delayed the moving up of Battn H.Q. Battn Forward Command Post was established in a German Artillery O.P. at O.32.d.20.45. by 6.30 a.m. After this, communication forward of the Battn Forward Command Post was by runner, until 2nd WELLINGTON had established their H.Q. at BLAUWEN MOLEN and installed a telephone. Between Battn F.C. Post and Brigade Forward Station both telephones and runners were used. Touch with the AUSTRALIANS forward of BLACK DOTTED LINE was non-existent.

8. RATIONS. The first night these were unloaded near GOOSEBERRY FARM. Second night limbers came up to our Aid Post just below MOULIN de L'HOSPICE. From these points they were carried by hand.

9. WATER, S.A.A. &c. This was worked forward from Brigade Dump to Battn Dump by a special party of 20 under 2/Lt.A.R.MC ISAAC. Both this party and the Q.M.S.'s parties did their work well.

*Description of the battle at Messines on 9th June 1917 in "1st Battalion Wellington Regiment-Narrative of events during attack on Messines on 7-8-9/06/1917".*

*John MCGRATH, 1st Battalion Wellington Regiment, was wounded in Messines (B) on 9th June 1917 and died later in Bailleul (FR) on 11th June 1917. (Document source: Internet, Archives New Zealand Reference: WA 76/3 item 5b)*



*Our First Aid Post at Messines.*

*Our First Aid Post at Messines from the book "The Wellington Regiment N.Z.E.F. 1914-1919".*

*John MCGRATH, 1st Battalion Wellington Regiment, was wounded in Messines on 9th June 1917 and died in Bailleul on 11th June 1917. (Photo source: Book "The Wellington Regiment N.Z.E.F. 1914-1919")*



**The circumstances in which John MCGRATH was killed:**

On the document "Casualty Form - Active Service" you will find the following information about his death:

DAAG (A) Major J. L. Linton, B.E.F.	27.9.16	C/o 2nd Coy 1st Bn	Attached 8th Light Base Depot	Etaples	27.9.16	Roll 44102
	14.10.16	C/o 1st Coy 4th W.S.R.	Joined Battalion	In the field	12.10.16	SB 21322/165
	16.6.17	C/o 1st Coy 4th W.S.R.	Wounded in action	do	9.6.17	SB 213
	16.6.17	C/o 77th Fld Amb	Adm No 77 Fld Amb	do	10.6.17	236 410315
	16.6.17	C/o 53rd M.B.C. Stn	Adm No 53rd M.B.C. Stn	do	10.6.17	236 410223
	12.6.17	C/o 53rd M.B.C. Stn	Died of wounds in No 53. Cas. Stn	In the field	12.6.17	Death Report 1/6/17/3.4.10065 (N.C. 431)

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
 (b) Signaller, Shoeing-Smith, &c.  
 (M1101) W4133/M758 1000m 9/16 153 G & S Forms/B.103/4. E.354. ENTERED ON HISTORY SHEET (P.T.O.)

John MCGRATH was wounded on 9th June 1917 during the battle in Messines (B).

On 10th June 1917 he was transferred to Field Ambulance N° 77 <sup>11</sup>.

Transferred on 10th June 1917 to Casualty Clearing Station N° 53 in Bailleul (FR).

Died of injuries sustained (Died of Wounds) on 11th June 1917

at Casualty Clearing Station <sup>12</sup> N° 53 in Bailleul <sup>13</sup>.

(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

Killed in action ...		
Died of wounds* sickness*	3509. 20.6.17.	Died of Wounds June 11 <sup>th</sup> 1917.
Missing ...	108. R & Co. BR 9/2	Buried Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension reported Bailleul 1.8.2. reported by 3 R. Units.
Prisoner ...		
Injuries in or by the Service ...		

John MCGRATH was buried in Bailleul Municipal Cemetery (FR).

(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

MCGRATH, Pte. John, 14139. 1st Bn. Wellington Regt., N.Z.E.F. Died of wounds 11th June, 1917. Husband of Catherine McGrath, of Johnsonville, Wellington, New Zealand. III. C. 93. 112

Grave Registration Document on John MCGRATH.

(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

14139	McGrath, John	Private	17th Coy 1st Bn	11 June 1917	Died of Wounds	Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, France
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Death indication of John MCGRATH.

<sup>11</sup> A Field Ambulance was a front line unit that treated soldiers who had been wounded.

<sup>12</sup> A Casualty Clearing Station or C.C.S. is a military medical post usually located behind the front line and just out of reach of enemy artillery. A C.C.S. is a term used in the British Army and all other Commonwealth countries.

A C.C.S. is usually located close to a railroad or other major transport route, in order to smoothly transport the wounded soldiers. It served as an intermediate station between the first aid post at the front and the large hospitals. Most of the soldiers did not stay long at the C.C.S., those who were cared for were sent back to the front. The soldiers who needed further care were stabilized and then evacuated to a hospital. (Source: Internet Wikipedia)

<sup>13</sup> Bailleul (French-Flemish: Belle) in France is located about 15 km from Messines (Flemish: Mesen) in Belgium where John MCGRATH was injured.

**Nominal Roll of Honour of Members of the Regiment who died while serving with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Great War:**

Reg. No.	Rank.	Name.	Date Death.	Cause.	Place.
14139	Pte.	McGrath, John	11-6-17	D of W ( <i>Died of Wounds</i> )	France

(Source: Report of the death of John MCGRATH, page 375 in book "The Wellington Regiment NZEF 1914-1919")

**Information about Field Ambulance:**

The Field Ambulances		
Field Ambulance	Great War history	Remarks
77th	25th Division	

*Field Ambulance N° 77.*

(Source: Internet, <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/soldiers/a-soldiers-life-1914-1918/the-evacuation-chain-for-wounded-and-sick-soldiers/field-ambulances-in-the-first-world-war/>)

The Field Ambulance was a mobile front line medical unit (*it was not a vehicle*), manned by troops of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Most Field Ambulances came under command of a Division, and each had special responsibility for the care of casualties of one of the Brigades of the Division. The theoretical capacity of the Field Ambulance was 150 casualties, but in battle many would need to deal with very much greater numbers. The Field Ambulance was responsible for establishing and operating a number of points along the casualty evacuation chain, from the Bearer Relay Posts which were up to 600 yards behind the Regimental Aid Posts in the front line, taking casualties rearwards through an Advanced Dressing Station (ADS) to the Main Dressing Station (MDS). It also provided a Walking Wounded Collecting Station, as well as various rest areas and local sick rooms. The Field Ambulances would usually establish 1 ADS per Brigade, and 1 MDS for the Division.



*Example with photo of a Field Ambulance: Stretcher cases awaiting transport to a Casualty Clearing Station lie on the ground outside a dressing station at Blangy, during the Battle of Arras in April 1917. The building being used as a dressing station is badly pockmarked by shell damage and has no windows or doors. Several vehicles are making their way towards the station. In the background, damaged trees and more devastated buildings can be seen. On the right, a horse-drawn vehicle is also just visible. (Photo source: Internet, foto Q6195 from Imperial War Museum)*

**Info about Casualty Clearing Station N ° 53, known as North Midland C.C.S., opposite the Saint Vaast church in Bailleul, being the "Asylum" <sup>14</sup> where Private soldier John MCGRATH died on 11th June 1917:**

*Periods of use as C.C.S. : September 1915 - March 1916 till July 1917 - March 1918*

## Locations of British Casualty Clearing Stations

CCS	Locations	Remarks
53	Bailleul Sep 15 - Mar 16 and Jul 17 - Mar 18; Mont des Cats Apr 16 - Jul 17; Namps briefly in Mar 18; Fouilloy Apr 18; Longre Apr 18 - Aug 18; Vecquemont Aug 18 - Sep 18; La Chapelette Sep 18; Tincourt Sep 18 - Oct 18; Roisel Oct 18 - Nov 18; Le Cateau Nov 18 - Dec 18; Houyet Dec 18 - May 19	Known as North Midland CCS

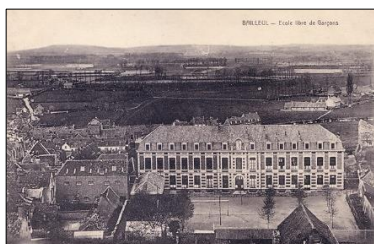
Location	CCS history	Remarks
Bailleul	2 Aug 14 - Sep 17; 3 May 15 - Mar 16; 8 Jan 15 - Mar 17; 11 May 17 - Jul 17; 53 Sep 15 - Mar 16 and Jul 17 - Mar 18	

*Casualty Clearing Stations N° 3 en N° 53 in Bailleul were British military medical posts.*

*(Source: Internet, <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/locations-of-british-casualty-clearing-stations/>)*

The Casualty Clearing Station was part of the casualty evacuation chain, further back from the front line than the Aid Posts and Field Ambulances. It was manned by troops of the Royal Army Medical Corps, with attached Royal Engineers and men of the Army Service Corps. The job of the CCS was to treat a man sufficiently for his return to duty or, in most cases, to enable him to be evacuated to a Base Hospital. It was not a place for a long-term stay.

CCS's were generally located on or near railway lines, to facilitate movement of casualties from the battlefield and on to the hospitals. Although they were quite large, CCS's moved quite frequently, especially in the wake of the great German attacks in the spring of 1918 and the victorious Allied advance in the summer and autumn of that year. Many CCS moved into Belgium and Germany with the army of occupation in 1919 too. The locations of wartime CCSs can often be identified today from the cluster of military cemeteries that surrounded them.



*Bailleul - "Asylum" (here an educational institution), photo from before WWI, seen from the Sint-Vaast church.  
(Photo source: Internet, CWGC 118)*

In 1918, the Medical Inspectorate of the British Headquarters in France, during on-the-spot checks, states that C.C.S. N ° 53 is located in the "Asylum" institution in Bailleul in France:

06.01.18

The next morning we left early and visited:

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<sup>14</sup> "Asylum": the English and Latin word for furnishing, institution, refuge, ...



No.10 Stationary Hospital where Miss Burke was very much interested in the chapel ward. We then went to No.53 CCS at Bailleul, where we had lunch and where we inspected the Clearing Station which is one of a block of a large Asylum. Everything is most comfortable and well arranged as far as the patients are concerned. The nursing staff are accommodated in small rooms at the ends of the big wards and their mess and ante-room was in a single-lined marquee in the grounds, badly lighted and with not even suitable or adequate heating conveniences, whereas the Medical Officers had a large hut, with kitchen, scullery, ante-room and mess, with fine big open brick grates in each room. Here we had lunch. I reported this matter to the General later as it is one of the exceptions in all the Armies where the Medical Officers have failed to consider the comfort and actual necessities of the nursing staff.

After lunch the day was rather cloudy and still very cold. We drove to Kemmel Hill, the ascent of which was very difficult, the roads being just one mass of ice, and it being almost impossible to walk. When we got to the top it was so thick it was impossible to see anything so we drove on to Witchet (*sic*), a very advanced spot, where the bombardment was terrible and where there was nothing but wonderful screens to conceal passers by and conveyances from the enemy. We drove as far as we were permitted by the sentries and got out and were told any further we went, we did so at our own risk. We saw the remains of the enormous tunnelling which had been done by the RE and where the Germans had been taken completely by surprise and the remains of the enormous excavations made by the mining. We walked a considerable distance and went into an advanced Aid Post and from there on to an Observation Post where a Gunner Officer was always on duty observing the movements of the enemy through a telescope. It was established in a recent German observation post and we were shown the enormous dugout which went down a tremendous depth, several storeys with a trap door on each floor which was connected with the floor below by very steep steps. This is the first time any women have been permitted anywhere near the front line and we were certainly objects of curiosity and wonder.

We returned to the Army Headquarters of the Second Army, where we had tea with the Army Commander, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Lord Hamilton, Lord Dalkeith and Lieut. Colonel Maintree, MP. We dined at the Army Headquarters with the DMS 1st Army. While there we received a message from Sir Henry Rawlinson to say we might visit Ypres next day. It was still snowing hard when we returned to St. Omer for the night, arriving there at midnight after a couple of hours' drive.

*(Source: Internet, SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS AND WORK DONE DURING THE MONTH AWAY FROM HEADQUARTERS – The official war diary of the Matron-in-Chief with the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders – Scarlet Finders)*



Left: Access road to the “Asylum” after German bombing. (Photo source: Internet, CWGC SLNSW PXE 699)  
Right: The “Asylum” building on 1st September 1918. (Photo source: Internet, Imperial War Museum Q7026)

The photo on the right was taken by Lieutenant John Warwick BROOKE (*British war photographer*).

This building was used as a hospital by British troops from October 1914 until the evacuation of the city in April 1918. Several British medical units were located in Bailleul at different times, including numbers 2, 3, 8, 11 and 53 Casualty Clearing Stations. The building was refurbished and continues to function as an important medical facility for the area today.

(Source: Internet, <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battlefields/gazetteer-of-the-western-front/gazetteer-of-the-western-front-bailleul/>)

**Commemoration:**

On the monument “Anneau de la Mémoire” in Ablain-Saint-Nazaire in France, Pte. “MCGRATH John” is mentioned.



(Source photo: Internet, Klaus KNOLL, Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e.V.)







<b>ROLL OF HONOR</b>	
<b>REPORTED KILLED IN ACTION</b>	
	(June 9th).
Private G. C. V. Petrie.	(June 7th.)
Lance-Corporal J. Brown.	
Private M. F. Davidson.	
Private A. McQuilken.	
Private A. E. B. Saunders.	
Private J. A. Currie.	
Private G. St. Bridge.	
Corporal B. Clarkson.	
Private G. G. Hibell.	
Private J. Rayner.	
Private G. Tajaroa.	
Private A. T. Gussy.	
<b>REPORTED DIED OF WOUNDS</b>	
	(June 14th).
Gunner L. C. Newman.	
Sergeant E. F. Sullivan.	
Private J. McGrath.	

Newspaper "Poverty Bay Herald" on 23th June 1917.

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

<b>CASUALTIES.</b>	
<b>LIST ISSUED THIS AFTERNOON.</b>	
<i>Press Association.</i>	
WELLINGTON, June 23.	
Casualty List No. 603 was issued this afternoon as follows:—	
<b>KILLED IN ACTION.</b>	
Auckland Infantry.	
	June 9.
G. C. V. Petrie.	
Canterbury Infantry.	
	June 7.
L.-Cpl. J. Brown.	
B. Clarkson.	
M. F. Davidson.	
G. G. Hibell.	
A. McQuilken.	
J. Rayner.	
A. E. B. Saunders.	
H. Tajaroa.	
Otago Infantry.	
	June 8.
J. A. Currie.	
Divisional Employment Coy.	
	June 9.
A. T. Gussy.	
G. Stanbridge.	
<b>DIED OF WOUNDS.</b>	
Field Artillery.	
	June 14.
L. C. Newman.	
Auckland Infantry.	
	June 14.
J. Middleton.	
Sgt. T. F. Sullivan.	
Wellington Infantry.	
	June 10.
C. Dath.	
J. McGrath.	

Newspaper "Sun (Christchurch)" on 23th June 1917 stating J. MCGRATH "Died of Wounds" on 10 June.

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

## N.Z. CASUALTIES.

WELLINGTON, June 23

### KILLED IN ACTION.

The following reported killed in action:—

Private G. C. Petrie.  
Lance-Corporal J. Brown.  
Corporal B. Clarkson.  
Private F. Davidson.  
Private G. G. Hibell.  
Private A. McQuilken.  
Private J. Rayner.  
Private A. E. Saunders.  
Private G. Tairaoa.  
Private J. A. Currie.  
Private A. T. Gussy.  
Private G. Stanbridge.

### DIED OF WOUNDS.

The following reported died of wounds:—

Gunner L. C. Newman.  
Private J. Middleton.  
Sergeant E. F. Sullivan.  
Private C. Death.  
Private J. McGrath.

Newspaper "Wanganui Chronicle" on 25th June 1917.

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

## SATURDAY'S LIST.

The following Casualty List was issued on Saturday:—

### KILLED IN ACTION

#### AUCKLAND REGIMENT.

Petrie, G. C. V. (D. Petrie, Victoria, f.); June 9th.

#### CANTERBURY REGIMENT.

(June 7th.)

Brown, —, L.-Cpl. (Mrs D. Brown, Linwood, w.)

Clarkson, B., Cpl. (Mrs B. Clarkson, Port Robinson, w.)

Davidson, M. F. (Mrs W. M. Davidson, Lismore, m.)

Hibell, G. G. (Miss R. Cox, Christchurch)

McQuilken, A. (J. McQuilken, Ireland, f.)

Rayner, J. (T. Rayner, Nelson, f.)

Saunders, A. E. B. (Mrs L. Saunders, Rakaiia, m.)

Tairaoa, G. (Mrs T. K. Tairaoa, Southbridge, grandmother)

#### OTAGO REGIMENT.

Currie, J. A. (Mrs C. Currie, Dunedin, m.); June 8th

#### DIVISIONAL EMPLOYMENT CO.

(June 9th.)

Gussy, A. T. (Mrs F. Gussy, Bayswater, m.)

Stanbridge, G. (J. Stanbridge, Puka, Gisborne, b.)

### DIED OF WOUNDS.

#### N.Z. FIELD ARTILLERY.

Newman, L. C. (C. A. Newman, Dunedin, f.); June 14th

#### AUCKLAND REGIMENT.

(June 14th.)

Middleton, J. (Mrs W. Middleton, Methven, m.)

Sullivan, E. F., Sergt. (J. Sullivan, Dannevirke, f.)

#### WELLINGTON REGIMENT.

D'Ath, C. (F. D'Ath, Herts f.); June 10th

(June 11th.)

McGrath, J. (Mrs K. McGrath, 15 Jessie street, Wgtn., w.)

Newspaper "Press" on 25th June 1917 stating the last residence of John MCGRATH.

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

McGRATH.—Died of wounds on the 11th June, 1917, in France, Private John McGrath, beloved husband of Catherine McGrath, of 15, Jessie-street; deeply regretted.

Newspaper "Evening Post" on 26th June 1917.

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

McGRATH.—June 11, 1917 (died of wounds). Jack, the third beloved son of Patrick and Margaret McGrath, Doyleston; and beloved husband of Kate McGrath, Wellington; aged forty-one years. Australian papers please copy

Newspaper "Lyttelton Times" on 29th June 1917.

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

## ROLL OF HONOR.

### NEW ZEALAND CASUALTIES

The following casualty list was issued last evening:—

#### Killed in Action.

Corporal A. Bunton.  
Private S. Caldwell.  
Lance-Corporal F. Bennett  
Private H. W. Callaghan.  
Private D. S. W. Craig.  
Private P. Cunningham.  
Private J. Green.  
Private C. P. Hamill.  
Private I. Irrand.  
Private A. J. Taylor.  
Private U. Sutherland.  
Private H. Shea.  
Private J. B. McKrure.  
Private T. Andrews.  
Private A. Holz.  
Private E. J. Holz.  
Private R. Hope.  
Private H. Knight.  
Private J. McGrath.

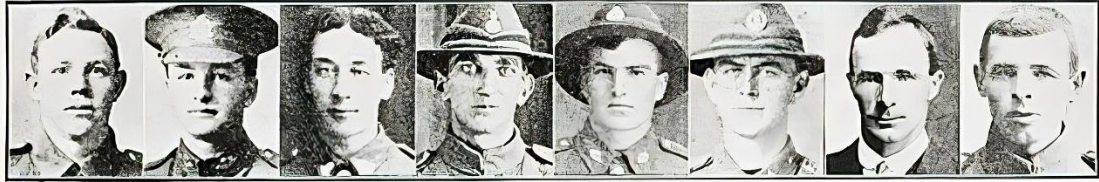
Newspaper "Gisborne Times, Volume XLVIII, Issue 4601, July 3, 1917".

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

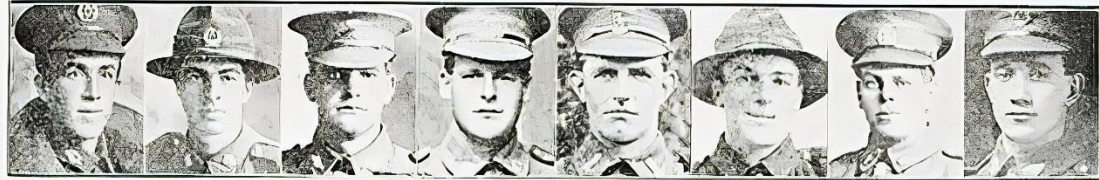




**REGT. JAV. MAHONEY,** of Wellington, killed in action.  
**PTC. B. T. (REG.) MOGRIEY,** of Otago, killed in action.  
**L-CORP. H. H. H. RUDNAYD,** of Manawatu, killed in action.  
**PIE. J. J. O'LEARY,** of Hutt, killed in action.  
**PIE. H. G. S. SWAIN,** of Napier South, killed in action.  
**PIE. HARDY M. SHERIDAN,** of Wellington South, died of wounds.  
**PIE. U. DALTON,** of Christchurch, killed in action.  
**PIE. T. C. WHELAN,** of Port Nelson, killed in action.



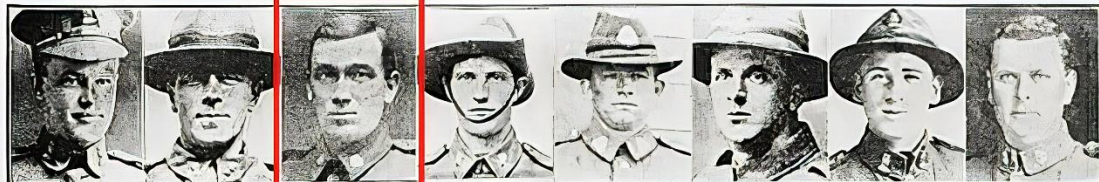
**COPT. GIB. B. DAVIN,** of Marlborough, killed in action.  
**PIE. B. H. ROSS,** of Manawatu, died of wounds.  
**PIE. H. S. FURZBERGER,** killed in action.  
**SAP. JAV. McCAVILL,** of Dunedin Hill, died of wounds.  
**PIE. V. HYNES,** of Otago Hill, killed in action.  
**PIE. S. J. SMITH,** of Victoria Hill, killed in action.  
**SAP. A. GREENE,** of Manawatu, died of wounds.  
**PIE. W. A. CLAYTON,** of Manawatu, killed in action.



**PIE. ALVIN BRIDGES,** of East Taranaki, killed in action.  
**PIE. NORMAN SMITH,** of Taranaki, killed in action.  
**L-CORP. H. A. GIBB,** of Karori, killed in action.  
**PIE. ISAAC GIBB,** of Karori, killed in action.  
**PIE. H. J. WILKINS,** of Karori, killed in action.  
**PIE. J. THOMAS,** of Manawatu, killed in action.  
**PIE. J. L. HEDGECOCK,** killed in action.  
**PIE. WALTER J. SMITH,** of Manawatu, killed in action.



**SAP. GEO. SANDSON,** of Invercargill, died of wounds.  
**L-CORP. S. E. BROWN,** of Dunedin, killed in action.  
**PIE. JOHN BROWN,** of Manawatu, died of wounds.  
**PIE. W. J. BRYAN,** of Hutt, killed in action.  
**PIE. ALAN MAC. WHELAN,** of Colyton, killed in action.  
**PIE. C. S. HANSEN,** of Pohorua, killed in action.  
**PIE. W. M. ALDRIDGE,** of Wellington, died of wounds.  
**PIE. A. ALDRIDGE,** of Wellington, died of wounds.



**REGT. MAJOR H. W. ANSELL,** of Johnsonville, killed in action.  
**GEN. W. B. WHELAN,** of Invercargill, killed in action.  
**PIE. JOHN MCGRATH,** of Lower Hutt, died of wounds.  
**PIE. DAVID J. GYLES,** of Manakiri, killed in action.  
**PIE. H. B. BUTT,** of Poroporo, died of wounds.  
**PIE. H. C. BIRD,** of Whangamomona, killed in action.  
**COPT. W. A. CAMPBELL,** of South Dunedin, killed in action.  
**COPT. P. G. CHAMBERLAIN,** of Wellington, killed in action.



**PLATE. D. J. YEO,** of Palmer, killed in action.  
**L-CORP. S. W. JELLYMAN,** of Blenheim, killed in action.  
**L-CORP. B. L. BAPAY,** of Ashburton, killed in action.  
**PIE. P. O. P. MORAN,** of Mount Eden, killed in action.  
**PIE. W. C. HENDERSON,** of Invercargill, killed in action.  
**PIE. H. S. VICKERY,** of Papanui, killed in action.  
**PIE. P. E. HUNTER,** of Havelock Bay (West), killed in action.  
**PIE. SAM. E. BLOOMER,** of Hastings, killed in action.

NEW ZEALAND'S ROLL OF HONOUR: NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN WHO HAVE DIED WHILE UPHOLDING THEIR COUNTRY'S HONOUR.

Record of the death of John McGrath in "Auckland Weekly News" on 19th July 1917 page 39. Here the town of Lower Hutt, Wellington was designated as the last residence of John McGrath. (Source: Internet)





Newspaper "Free Lance" on 20th July 1917.

(dark photo, the entry "killed" on Private J. MCGRATH should have been "Died of Wounds")

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

**NEW ZEALAND'S ROLL OF HONOUR**  
**IN MEMORIAM**

Inserted by his sorrowing wife.

**McGRATH.**—In loving memory of Private Jack McGrath, who died of wounds in France on the 11th June, 1917.

His duty nobly done

Inserted by his loving wife and child, Kate and Thelma McGrath, Petone.

Newspaper "Evening Post" on 11th June 1918. (1 year commemoration)

(published by his sad wife Kate and his daughter Thelma)

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

**ROLL OF HONOUR.**

**McGRATH.**—In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Jack McGrath, who died of wounds in France, June 11, 1917.

He heard the call of the Empire,  
 And in the fighting fell;  
 He fought for home and freedom—  
 He served his country well.  
 In a distant land he lies  
 At rest in a soldier's grave,  
 His battles fought, his name enrolled  
 On the scroll of the deathless brave.

Inserted by his loving parents, sister, and brothers.

Same report in the "Evening Post" and "Lyttelton Times" newspapers on 11th June 1918.

(1 year anniversary) (published by his parents, sisters and brothers)

(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

The death took place at Nazareth House, Christchurch, on Wednesday, of Mr Patrick McGrath, who was for many years a resident of Doyleston, at the age of 89 years. The late Mr McGrath was known as a man of upright character, and was greatly respected by the residents of Doyleston and others who knew him. His wife passed away some years ago. The funeral took place in Christchurch this morn-

Report in the Ellesmere Guardian newspaper on 18th November 1927 of the death of Patrick MCGRATH (born in Ireland on 1st January 1838 and died in Nazareth House, Sydenham, Christchurch, Canterbury on 16th November 1927), father of John MCGRATH. John MCGRATH's mother (born 1843 in Lower Hawkesbury, New South Wales, Australia and died 28th July 1923 in Doyleston, Canterbury) had died several years earlier.  
(Source: Internet, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers>)

**The grave of John MCGRATH in the cemetery of Bailleul (France):**

During the summer of 2019, my wife, myself, and a few friends visited the (*municipal*) cemetery of Bailleul. In the back of the cemetery (*extension*) are more than 5,000 fallen WWI soldiers of different nationalities buried (*Communal Cemeter and Extension*). Here is where we found the grave of John MCGRATH.



(Source photo June 2019: Archive Joris SAERENS)





*(Source photo June 2019: Archive Joris SAERENS)*

Author: Joris SAERENS January 2021  
Londerzeel (Belgium-Flanders-Europe)  
Email: [joris.saerens.wo1@outlook.com](mailto:joris.saerens.wo1@outlook.com)  
Website: [www.londerzeelwo1.wordpress.com](http://www.londerzeelwo1.wordpress.com)