

Codford War Graves World War I



Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan

6/1109 MAJOR B. S. JORDAN

N.Z. CANTERBURY REGT.

24TH MAY, 1918 Age 34



Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Major B. S. Jordan is located in Back Row Grave Plot # 83 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall) (CWGC Reference - Grave # 130)

Benjamin Stevens Jordan was born on 17th December, 1883 at Rangiora, Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Frederick William Stevens & Ellen Jordan (nee Moore). He was a 19 year old, single, Clerk from Rangiora, New Zealand when he enlisted on 16th January, 1902 with the New Zealand Military Forces for the South African War. His service number was 6066 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr Frederick W. S. Jordan of Rangiora, New Zealand.

Private Benjamin Stevens Jordan received the Imperial South African War Medal (also clasps for Cape Colony, Transvaal, South Africa 1902) on 27th June, 1904.

Benjamin was appointed as Acting Captain Rangiora Rifles Volunteers as from 13th May, 1908. Acting Captain Benjamin Stevens Jordan, of Rangiora Rifle Volunteers, passed the exam for rank of Captain 2nd June, 1909.

He passed the exam for the rank of Major & was promoted to Major, dated 16th May, 1912 (Extract New Zealand Gazette 20th June, 1912) & was also granted a Leave of Absence for 6 weeks from 17th May, 1912. The New Zealand Electoral Roll for 1905-1906 lists Benjamin Stevens Jordan, Clerk, Rangiora on the Kaiapoi Roll, Canterbury district. The New Zealand Electoral Roll for 1911 & 1914 lists Benjamin Stevens Jordan, Accountant of 36 Ashley Street, Rangiora on the Kaiapoi Roll.

He re-enlisted with New Zealand Expeditionary Force on 14th August, 1914. At that time he was a 30 year old, single, Registered Accountant who had served 10 years with Rangiora Rifle Volunteers.

Major Jordan embarked on 16th October, 1914 on HMNZT (11) *Athenic*, with the Main Body of the 1st New Zealand Expeditionary Force, Canterbury Infantry Battalion, destination Suez, Egypt.

Benjamin embarked from Alexandria for Dardanelles on 12th April, 1915.

He was admitted to Hospital Ship *Newralia* from Dardanelles on 12th August, 1915 with enteritis. He was transferred to 15 General Hospital at Alexandria, Egypt & discharged on 23rd August, 1915 to Red Cross Con. Home. A Medical Board had been convened as Major Jordan was suffering from Nasal Catarrh & Chronic Ear – Deafness due to 17 weeks service in Gallipoli. The Board determined that Major Jordan's disability could probably be permanent. He was recommended that Major Jordan return home for 2 months & was recorded as unfit for 2 months. On 25th September, 1915 Major Jordan was invalided back to New Zealand on SS *Willochra* for an operation due to inflammation of middle ear.

A Medical Board was held on 29th December, 1915 at Kaiapoi, Canterbury district, New Zealand for the purpose of examining & reporting of the health of Major Benjamin Jordan. The Board found that Major Jordan had recovered & his hearing was normal. He no longer suffered from his disability that he had received while on service in Gallipoli. He was recommended as recovered and fit for Active Service.

Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan married Elsie Christina Foster in 1915.

Major Jordan re-embarked on HMNZT (45) *Waitemata* on 12th February, 1916 from Wellington, New Zealand, destination Suez, Egypt. Major Jordan disembarked at Suez on 18th March, 1916 & was posted to New Zealand Infantry Brigade. On 21st March, 1916 Major Jordan was taken on strength at Ismailia, Egypt. On 1st April, 1916 Major Jordan joined New Zealand Infantry Training Battalion at Moascar as O/C (Officer Commanding). Major Jordan embarked for France from Alexandria on 27th May, 1916 & then embarked for England from France on 13th June, 1916.

On 8th May, 1916 Major B. S. Jordan applied for the 16 years' New Zealand Long & Efficient Service Medal. In his letter, Major Jordan stated that he "enlisted with the Rangiora Rifle Volunteers in 1900, served with the 8th N.Z.M.R's in South Africa & with the exception of a short break in 1907-08, have been an efficient member of the N.Z. Military Forces to date." Staff Officer N.Z. Training Battalions had replied to the application stating that "in the case of the 12 and 16 years medal the service must be unbroken, except in a special case of a short break, in which case the matter should be submitted to the Minister for consideration."

Headquarters, New Zealand Military Forces replied to Major Jordan's application for the New Zealand Long & Efficient Service Medal on 15th August, 1916. Their records showed that Major Jordan was "efficient from the date of his enrolment, (17/5/1901) to 28/2/1906, after which date his name is omitted from the Capitation Rolls of the Rangiora Rifles, until 20/5/1908, when his name again appears, as Captain, in that Unit." The letter also states that Major Jordan has explained that Major Humphreys of Rangiora, "is in a position to explain the reason for his, (Major Jordan's) non-efficiency for the period mentioned (1/3/1906 - 19/5/1908)." Upon investigation, Major Humphreys, having gone through all available records was unable to give further information. It was found that "Captain J. Borthwick was in command of the Company in 1906-08. A minute dated Oct. 13th, 1905 runs as follows:- that L.C. Thompson be appointed general secretary in place of Sgt. Jordan, resigned." After Capt. J. B. Borthwick resigned, a meeting was held on 13th May, 1908 & Mr Benjamin Stevens Jordan was elected Captain.

In a letter dated 26th September, 1916 by J. Allen, Minister of Defence – "I regret that it has not been shown that Major Jordan's service has been efficient during the broken period above referred to, and that his qualifying service does not entitle him to the award of the medal applied for."

On 13th September, 1916, Major Jordan left Sling Army Camp, Wiltshire for France. He was marched in at Etaples on 14th September, 1916. Major Jordan rejoined his unit in the field on 17th September, 1916.

On 7th November, 1916, Major Jordan was appointed Company Commander.

Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan of the Canterbury Regiment was seconded for duty in England, to date from 15th March, 1917, as appeared in New Zealand Gazette (Extract No.98, 14th June, 1917). He was attached on strength in London on 19th March, 1917.

On 7th April, 1917 Major Jordan was transferred to New Zealand Command Depot at Codford, Wiltshire.

Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan of the Canterbury Regiment was appointed Second in Command, New Zealand Command Depot, Codford, Wiltshire on 24th May, 1917. His appointment appeared in New Zealand Gazette (Extract No.65, 8th November, 1917).

Major Jordan was admitted to Military Hospital at Dorchester on 9th March, 1918 with diphtheria. He was attached on strength to New Zealand Command Depot at Codford on 20th March, 1918.

Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan was killed (accidently) on 24th May, 1918 at Codford Camp, Wiltshire. At a sports gathering at Codford Camp, Major Jordan had gone for a ride, as a passenger, in a stunt plane which crashed during the flight. Major Jordan died exactly one year of being appointed Second in Command, New Zealand Command Depot, Codford, Wiltshire.

A Court of Inquiry was held at Codford, into the death of Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan on 25th May, 1918. "The Court is of the opinion that Major B. S. Jordan met his death through injuries caused by the aeroplane in which he was flying crashing to the ground & that no blame whatever is attachable to anyone."

A death for Benjamin S. Jordan, aged 35, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

He was buried at St. Mary's Cemetery, Codford on 27th May, 1918.

Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan, 6/1109 was last appointed to Second in Command, New Zealand Command Depot, Codford, England. He had served in the South African War (Service number 6066), the Territorial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War 1.

He was entitled to 1914-15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal. He had entered several Theatres of War – Egyptian – 1914/15/16; Balkan – 1915; Western European – 1916/17. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also

sent to Major Jordan's wife – Elsie C. Jordan of 136 Bishop St, St. Albans, Christchurch (June, 1921 & February, 1922).

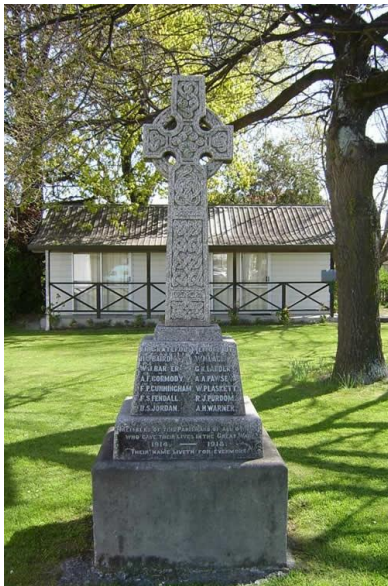
(2 files – containing 5 pages & 68 pages of Major Benjamin Stevens Jordan's Service records are available for On Line viewing at Archives New Zealand website).

Information obtained from the Archives New Zealand, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Commonwealth War Graves Commission & PapersPast, National Library of New Zealand.

B. Jordan is remembered on the Rangiora Cenotaph.



B. S. Jordan is also remembered on St. John's Church Memorial, Rangiora.



St. John's Church Memorial, Rangiora (Photo from NZ History – Aaron Clark)

B. Jordan is also remembered on the Rangiora High School Memorial crest & plaque.



Rangiora High School Memorial (Photos from NZ History – Aaron Clark)

Newspaper Reports

MAJOR JORDAN ALL WELL

Major B. Jordan, of the Canterbury Battalion, writing to Rangiora friends, describes the operations fully since the heroic landing on April 25th. He regrets that the New Zealanders were not delivered so quickly, and were a few hours later than the Australians, but they subsequently quite made up for it. He deals with the losses sustained and the wonderful progress made by the keen colonial troops. Major Jordan when the mail left, was in the midst of trench life, and had been exceedingly well. He urges the need of more men, and points out that for young men the experience to be gained is worth it all.

“HATS OFF TO THEM”

(*Press*, Volume LI, Issue 15355, 12 August, 1915)

DEATH OF MAJOR JORDAN

CHRISTCHURCH, last night.

Private advice has been received in Christchurch, that Major B. J. Jordan, late of Rangiora, was accidentally killed in England on May 24. Major Jordan was second in command at Codford Camp, a position he had filled for a considerable time. He was one of the first in North Canterbury to volunteer for service at the outbreak of war and left with the Main Body as commandant of D. Company, 13th North Canterbury and Westland Regiment. He was at the landing of Gallipoli and after some months' service on the peninsula, returned to New Zealand on sick leave, but soon left for England. In civilian life he was prominently identified with many public bodies.

(*Poverty Bay Herald*, Volume XLV, Issue 14618, 30 May, 1918)

MAJOR JORDAN'S DEATH

CHRISTCHURCH, July 9.

Writing to his relatives, Lieutenant Grace, of Rangiora, gives details of the manner in which Major B. S. Jordan, a Main Body man and a well-known Rangiora resident, was killed. Grace says that at a sports gathering at Codford Camp Jordan went up with an American airman who was doing some fancy “stunts.” After looping the loop several times they descended in a spiral, in the middle of which one of the wings broke, and they fell from a height of 1500 feet. When the men were picked up they were found with their hands clasped, as if they made a final shake of hands as the machine crashed to earth.

(*Hawera & Normanby Star*, Volume LXXIV, 10 July, 1918)

A FLYING ACCIDENT

DEATH OF MAJOR B. S. JORDAN

(From our Own Correspondent)

LONDON, 4th June

About 7 o'clock on the evening of 24th May Major B. S. Jordan, 2/C.I.R., went up for a flight as a passenger in an aeroplane piloted by an American aviator. Unknown to the pilot, the machine was unequal to the strain of extra revolutions, and while attempting to loop the loop a wing collapsed, and the machine fell from a height of 1000ft, both officers being killed outright. On that afternoon sports had been held at the New Zealand Hospital at Codford, and the aeroplanes came over and did some stunts. It landed and Major Jordan went up for a flight. The accident happened very soon after.

The New Zealand officer was second in command at the New Zealand Command Depot, Codford. He belonged to the Canterbury Regiment, and his appointment dated from August, 1914 (Main Body). He lived near Rangiora, and held the rank as Major in the North Canterbury and Westland Regiment (Territorial Force). At the inquest a verdict of accidental death was returned. The funeral took place at Codford two days later, with full military honours, the funeral service being read by the Rev. G. E. Cruickshank, C.F. Afterwards the Masonic rites were carried out at the grave by Lieutenant-Colonel Barclay, V.D., N.Z.E., who went from Boscombe at the request of the New Zealand brethren at Codford Depot. Major Jordan was a member of Lodge Ashley, No. 28, Rangiora. His tragic death is much regretted. (*Evening Post*, Volume XCVI, Issue 40, 15 August, 1918)

Major B. S. Jordan has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone. None of the New Zealand CWGC headstones at Codford have a personal inscription.

Photos of Major B. S. Jordan's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photos courtesy of Romy Wyeth)

