

Codford War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I

6/2891 CAPTAIN

W. R. WAKELIN

N.Z. CANTERBURY REGT.

5TH FEBRUARY, 1919



*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Capt. W. R. Wakelin is located in Last Row
Grave Plot # 81 of Codford War Graves Cemetery (Using Map by Brian Marshall)
(CWGC Reference - Grave # 132)*

William Richard Wakelin was born 15th December, 1877 at Wellington, New Zealand, the son of George Kenrick & Grace Annie Wakelin (nee Mitchell).

William Richard Wakelin enrolled in Wellington Post & Telegraph Rifles on 8th June, 1898. His service continued until 23rd March, 1903 where he was transferred to Reserves on 24th March, 1903. He was re-transferred to Active list on 5th May, 1905 & continued to 12th January, 1911. He was transferred to Reserves on 13th January, 1911 until 17th March, 1913. Sergeant William Richard Wakelin, 5th Regiment (Wellington Rifles), received the 12 years N.Z. Long Service Medal in 1912. Wakelin was transferred to N.Z Post & Telegraph Corps on 18th March, 1913 through to 12th May, 1915.

From the *New Zealand Gazette* dated 29th October, 1914:

“New Zealand Post and Telegraph Corps - William Richard Wakelin to be Quartermaster and Honorary Lieutenant (South Island Battalion) vice Robertson. Dated 18th March, 1913.”

On 13th May, 1915 William Richard Wakelin attested for service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. He was a 37 year old, single, Civil Servant from Wellington, New Zealand. His service number was 6/2891 & his next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs Grace Annie Wakelin of Park Terrace, Blenheim, New Zealand.

1st Lieutenant Wakelin was posted to 2nd Battalion of Canterbury Infantry Battalion on 1st October, 1915.

Lieutenant William Richard Wakelin embarked with 7th Reinforcements, Canterbury Infantry Battalion from Wellington, New Zealand on 9th October, 1915 destination Egypt. Three Ships embarked that day carrying a total of 2,437 men on HMNZT (32) *Aparima*, HMNZT (33) *Navau* & HMNZT (34) *Warrimoo*. He disembarked at Suez from *Aparima* on 18th November, 1915.

From the *New Zealand Gazette*, 27th July, 1916 :

“The undermentioned 2nd Lieutenants to be Lieutenants. Dated 1st March, 1916 – Honorary Lieutenant William Richard Wakelin.” At the time of the promotion, Lieut. Wakelin was stationed at Ismalia.

Lieut. Wakelin was posted to 2nd Battalion at Reserve Camp on 8th March, 1916.

Lieut. Wakelin embarked on S.S. *Ascania* from Alexandria for France on 8th April, 1916.

Lieutenant Wakelin was seconded for duty with Light Trench Mortar Battery on 29th April, 1916.

On 29th May, 1917 Lieutenant W. R. Wakelin applied for the 16 years N.Z. Long Service Medal. At the time he was stationed in France as part of the 2nd New Zealand Light Trench Mortar Battery, 2nd New Zealand Infantry Brigade – Post & Tele Engineer Company.

Lieutenant W. R. Wakelin was promoted to the rank of Captain – dated 15th September, 1917.

Lieutenant Wakelin received the 16 years N.Z. Long & Efficient Service Medal on 26th November, 1917. His service was from 8th June, 1898 until 29th May, 1917 when he was still on active service.

Lieutenant Wakelin was discharged to Officers Rest House at Rouen, France on 6th September, 1917. He was attached to Reinforcement Camp in 30th September, 1917. He was on leave to Paris from 1st to 10th October, 1917 & rejoined his Battery on 26th October, 1917.

Captain Wakelin was seconded for duty as Assistant to 22nd Corps Salvage Officer. Dated 26th February, 1918. (From the *New Zealand Gazette* No. 93, 27th June, 1918)

From the *New Zealand Gazette* No. 158, 28th November, 1918:

“Corps of N.Z. Engineers - Honorary Lieutenant and Quartermaster William Richard Wakelin to be Captain, under the provisions of paragraph 111, General Regulation, 1913. Dated 23rd October, 1918.”

Captain Wakelin departed from France to UK on 23rd January, 1919. He arrived from France on 27th January, 1919 & reported to Sling Army Camp, Wiltshire. He was admitted to Fargo Hospital, Larkhill Camp on same day. Captain William Richard Wakelin was reported as Dangerously Ill on 3rd February, 1919 at Military Hospital Fargo with acute consumption.

Captain William Richard Wakelin was transferred to No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital at Codford on 3rd February, 1919.

Captain William Richard Wakelin died on 5th February, 1919 at No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital at Codford, Wiltshire of TB Lung.

A death for William R. Wakelin, aged 41, was registered in the March quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

Captain William Richard Wakelin was buried at St. Mary's Cemetery, Codford.

Captain William Richard Wakelin, 6/2891 was last attached to Canterbury Infantry Regiment. He had served in the Egyptian Front – 1915-1916 & Western European War Front – 1916. Captain William Richard Wakelin was mentioned in despatches – *London Gazette* 8th Supplement 8.7.19 by Sir Douglas Haig for “gallant service & devotion to duty during the period of 16.9.18 to 15.3.19.”

Captain William Richard Wakelin was entitled to 1914-15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal as he had entered several Theatres of War – Egypt – 1915-1916; Western European - 1916. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Capt. Wakelin's mother – Mrs G. A. Wakelin 9 Park Terrace, Blenheim, New Zealand. (July, 1921 & January, 1922)

(2 files – containing 5 pages & 75 pages of Capt. William Richard Wakelin'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.

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4 of Captain William Richard Wakelin's younger brothers also served in WW1:

Herbert Record Wakelin (born 1881) – Driver – 2/3114 with New Zealand Expeditionary – No. 1 Brigade Ammunition Column (embarked 1916).

Walter George Wakelin (born 1883) – Private – 15/1126 with New Zealand Expeditionary – Headquarters (embarked 1914-15).

Eric Ferrars Wakelin (born 1892) – Gunner – 2/2285 with New Zealand Expeditionary - Field Artillery (embarked 1914-15).

Bertram Raphael Wakelin (born 1895)- Bombardier – 2/1546 with New Zealand Expeditionary Force – Field Artillery & served in Samoa & Egypt (embarked 1914-15). He survived the war & died in 1983.

Newspaper Reports

PERSONAL

The death of Captain W. R. Wakelin, eldest son of Mrs G. K. Wakelin (Blenheim), on the 5th inst. in hospital at Fargo, England, has been advised. Captain Wakelin, who prior to the war was in the head office of the Postal Department in Wellington, left New Zealand with the rank of lieutenant in the Seventh Reinforcement. In France he had command of a light trench mortar battery, and on receiving his promotion he became Divisional Salvage Officer. Active service conditions brought on ill-health, and quite recently Captain Wakelin was notified as being on the dangerously ill list. His four brothers have seen active service; Gunner Eric Wakelin has already returned and Staff-Sergt. W. Wakelin, Bombardier B. Wakelin, and Driver H. Wakelin are still abroad.

(Marlborough Express, Volume LIII, Issue 36, 12 February, 1919)

NEW ZEALAND ARMY

CANTERBURY DISTRICT

DIED OF SICKNESS

Wakelin, W. R., 6/2891, Capt., C.I.R. (Mrs G. A. Wakelin, Blenheim, m) 5th February

(Evening Post, Volume XCVII, Issue 36, 13 February, 1919)

PERSONAL MATTERS

Captain W. R. Wakelin, reported yesterday as having died of sickness in Scotland, was the eldest son of the late C. K. Wakelin, well-known in journalistic circles in Marlborough. Deceased was one of five brothers, all of whom enlisted in the early stages of the war. He left as 2nd Lieutenant with the 7th Reinforcements, and served right through in France and Belgium. He was in charge of a trench mortar battery in the Battles of the Somme and Messines, and was afterwards promoted captain. Subsequently he was attached to a salvaging corps in France, and the last heard of him was that he was looking remarkably well. Captain Wakelin, who was 42 years of age, joined the Post and Telegraph Department as a cadet over twenty years ago, and gradually rose in the service to a position in the accountancy branch at the head office, afterwards going to the Money Order office at Christchurch, and from thence back to Wellington. He was an enthusiastic volunteer and was Lieutenant in the Post and Telegraph Rifles, Wellington, for years and secured the long-service medal. Being a crack rifle shot he represented that corps at the association meetings at Trentham. He was an enthusiastic member of the Kelburn Bowling Club and of the Workmen's Club, and was a Freemason. His mother, who resides in Blenheim, and who was preparing to receive her five soldier boys home again by the early drafts, has the sympathy of a large circle of friends at the death of Captain Wakelin.

(Evening Post, Volume XCVII, Issue 37, 14 February, 1919)

Captain W. R. Wakelin has a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone. None of the New Zealand CWGC headstones at Codford have a personal inscription.

Photo of Captain W. R. Wakelin's Headstone at Codford War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)