

## OBITUARY.

### MR H. A. ARTHUR.

Still another very old identity passed away on Sunday morning in the person of Mr Henry A. Arthur, after having reached the ripe age of 80 years. Deceased, who was born in Somersetshire, England, came to the colony about 45 years ago, at once settling in Wanganui, where for over 20 years he carried on a cabinet-making business. In the early days, in 1864, he spent a year in active service against the Maoris. After a long stay in Wanganui he opened a business in Patea, and subsequently another in Hawera which is now being carried on by a son, Mr A. H. Arthur. The old gentleman, whose wife died about four years ago, suffered illness for several months, and for three months he had been confined to his bed. Deceased leaves four sons and four daughters, namely, William, Charles and Fred (Wanganui), and Alfred H. (Hawera). His daughters are Mrs W. Williams (Meremere), Mrs J. Williamson (Kakaramea), Mrs A. Aiken (Marton), and Miss A. Arthur (Wanganui). Widespread sympathy will be felt for the family in their bereavement. The burial takes place at Patea to-morrow.

Figure 79: Henry A. Arthur obituary - The father of William III Williams wife Kate (Kitty) Arthur.



Figure 80: William III Williams Meremere house brought by bullock dray from Patea 1889



**Figure 81: Griff Williams and Louisa Ellen Reeve at Meremere 1915**

William III in 1889 bought land at Meremere on the Allen Road which was later farmed by Uncle Griff and later Griff's son-in-law Dawson Cox.

## 5. Alfred Edward Williams (Meremere to Hawera) 1898 - 1 May 1964

**Married:** Margaret Olivine Reid "Maggie" (born 4 May 1903 Stratford and died 2nd July 1977 in Hawera hospital aged 74). Died after all her sons died.  
 5 children: Jean Margaret (1923 - Living in NP), William Alfred Williams (4 Nov 1924- 5 July 1976), Betty Marie (1927-c.1999), Ngaire June (1932 - Living at Lake Macquarie, NSW) and Brian "Stirle" Williams (1933-1985).  
 Alfred Edward Williams died at Upper Newall Road aged 65.

**Notes:**

- Alfred E Williams fought in WWI and there is a photo of him with his horse in the Middle East in the book NZers at War by King. His Regiment # is 75867.
- Alfred E Williams was in partnership with "**Uncle Griff**" (i.e. **Griffith Williams his brother born 1885 in Patea**) after WWI. However then he chose not to be part of the partnership so Alfred bought another farm about 5km from the original family farm at Meremere, 20km inland from Hawera. Thus Alfred left the partnership with Griff.
- In the HD Williams letter in the appendices, Alfred liked to train his farm dogs to climb a slanting stick to get food and balance a jug of water on their noses.
- When he retired Maggie and Alfred both lived next to the sale yards in Egmont St, Hawera.
- Stirle and his wife "Reba" Catherine Reba Beckett then worked the Meremere family's farm until Stirle Williams died in March 1985 and the farm was sold as they only had 4 daughters and none of the son in laws were farmers.

- Alfred died at the Williams main house on the Upper Newall Road on the night he arrived to go duck shooting (1 May 1964 - aged 65).



**Figure 82: Alfred E Williams & Margaret Reid wedding 1910**

Above - Unknown / Unknown / A E Williams / Margaret Williams (nee Reid) ? 3 unknown bridesmaids



**Figure 83: Mrs Reid (Margaret's Reid's mother)**

### **ALFRED EDWARD WILLIAMS - WWI / EGYPT RIOTS - SUMMARY TIMELINE**

Alfred arrived in Port Suez, Egypt 11 days after the WWI ended in Nov 1918 and became a machine gun instructor. In March/April 1919 the local Egypt nationalists revolted against the British with 800 locals killed. Alfred was held back in Egypt until July 1919 probably to assist with this situation. Records show the whole NZMR Regiment each day did patrols throughout the Nile Delta village area looking for rioters (who were lashed and imprisoned). On their time off the NZMR raced horses in Alexandria and Cairo with the New Zealand horses and jockeys winning many races. Seven months after the end of WWI - Marched to Suez and the whole NZMR Brigade (75 officers and 1014 men) embarked for NZ on the S.S. Ulimaroa for NZ. It was not until 1922 that Egypt got its independence from the British.



**Figure 84: Alfred Edward Williams WWI**

3 Apr 1918	At the age of 20, <b>Alfred E Williams</b> listed his occupation as a farmer at Meremere Hawera when signing up in Hawera for the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces 42 Reinforcement draft. He expressed his preference to be in the mounted branch of the service. <b>Reg # 75867</b> . He listed William Williams of Meremere Taranaki as his father. He served in NZ for 218 days and overseas for 337 days. Finally discharged from the NZ Mounted Rifles on 9th Oct 1919.
27 Aug	Promoted to Corporal
9th Sept	<b>Promoted to Sergeant</b>
10 Oct	Embarked from NZ for Port Suez, Egypt.
11 Nov	<b>WWI ended 11 days before Alfred's arrival in Egypt</b>
22 Nov 1918	Disembarked at Port Suez , Egypt. Marched to troops isolation camp. Zeitoun Camp was close to the Pyramids.



**Figure 85: NZ Zeitoun military camp in Alexandria, WWI - feeding horses**

8 Jan 18

**Alfred Williams is posted to the 42nd Company, Wellington Mounted Rifles.** The Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment (WMR) remains at Rafah in Jan and Feb undergoing training and education to prepare the men for a return to civilian life.



**Figure 86: Corporal Alfred E Williams with horse Nov 1918 - Palestine WWI digging trenches**

21 Jan  
1919

**Passed as an "A" class instructor level in a Vickers Machine Gun Course** held at Zeitoun Camp from 18th Dec to 25th Jan 1919.

20 Mar  
1919

**Alfred Williams is posted to the 1st Machine Gun Squadron.** On 17th March the whole NZMR Regiment moved from Zeitoun Camp to Chevalier Island, Ismailia, Egypt. (Nationalist riots see above).

17th – The WMR leaves Rafah by train. The NZMR is being rushed to Egypt to help suppress a nationalist revolt. Martial law is in force.

- 18th – The WMR goes into bivouac at Kantara.
- 22nd – The WMR obtains horses from the remount depot.
- 23rd – The WMR leaves Kantara and moves 35 km south-west to Salhia.
- 24th – The WMR moves 20 km south-west to Faous, where it helps the local police recover weapons looted from the police station and arrest the looters. The regiment bivouacs near the police station.
- 25th – The WMR moves 30 km south-west to Zagazig.
- 26th – The WMR moves 25 km north-west to Mit Ghamr, on the eastern tributary of the River Nile, warning villagers along the way about their future behaviour.
- The 9th (Wellington East Coast) Squadron, led by Major W.R. Foley, travels by train to Cairo, the centre of the nationalist movement, to join a composite regiment.
- 28th – The WMR rides through Mit Ghamr as a show of force. Later in the day several leading local figures are interviewed about the disturbances and given 'good advice' about the consequences of any future rioting.
- 29th – The WMR moves 30 km upriver to Benha. It escorts eight rioters arrested in Mit Ghamr to the Military Court.



**Figure 87: Wellington Mounted Rifles - Vickers machine gun crew Egypt**

Alfred E Williams achieved an "A" pass in a Vickers machine course and was posted to the **1st Machine Gun Squadron**.


Vickers machine guns were very reliable and could fire 500 rounds (303 calibre) per minute for 20 minutes until 10,000 rounds required a replacement barrel to be slipped in. A skilled operator with a new barrel could do the "two fingered tap" i.e. Place swaths of bullets at chest height 2 inches apart across a target field out to 500 yards. They were very heavy, water cooled and required two men to carry.

At full strength the WMR had 26 officers and 523 other ranks. The regiment had 608 horses: 528 riding horses, 74 draught horses and 6 pack horses.

The WMR consisted of a headquarters staff, a **machine-gun section** and three mounted squadrons:

- Queen Alexandra's **2nd (Wellington West Coast)** Squadron
- 6th (Manawatu) Squadron
- 9th (Wellington East Coast) Squadron.

April	1st – The WMR moves 12 km north to Quwesna in the Nile Delta, where it sets up a bivouac. One troop is sent 20 km south-west to garrison Minuf. While passing through Subk ed Eahhak this troop is attacked by the villagers with stones and
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	<p>clods of earth. The troop leader eventually dismounts a section and orders them to open fire. It is believed that three villagers are wounded.</p> <p>•10th – Three Egyptians attempting to cut the telephone line between the WMR's bivouac and the Quwesna railway station are wounded by an ambush party.</p>
May	The WMR remains in Quwesna carrying out garrison duties and playing sport.
30th June 1919	<p>Seven months after the end of WWI - the whole NZMR Brigade (75 officers and 1,014 men (Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago Rifles) embarked for NZ on the S.S. Ulimaroa.</p> <p>22nd – The WMR travels by train from Quwesna to the Demobilisation Camp at Chevalier Island, Ismailia.</p> <p>•26th – The WMR is divided into two groups. One group moves to the New Zealand Training Unit and Depot at Ismailia to await transport to New Zealand in July.</p> <p>•30th – The second group embarks on HMT Ulimaroa. The regiment ceases to exist as a formed unit.</p> <p>Most soldiers in the mounted division provided their own horses or the NZ Army purchased horses for them. <b>Of the 18,000 NZ horses in the Boer War and WWI only one NZ horse ever returned to NZ</b> (Bess the Colonel's horse). The others were mostly shot by their owners before they returned to NZ to save them from a life of hardship.</p>
9 Oct 19	Alfred E Williams is discharged from service.
28 March 1922	<p>Awarded the Victory Medal.</p> 
	<p><b>Figure 88: Alfred E Williams WWI</b></p>