

## **George Frederick DUNFORD**

**Born:** 1882, Park Green, Carisbrooke

**Parents:** George Dunford and Elizabeth Cotton

**Last known address:** Taunaka, Wanganui River, New Zealand

**Last known occupation:** Self-employed farmer

**Service number:** 61577                      **Regiment:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Otago Regiment,  
New Zealand Expeditionary Force

### **Service history summary:**

- enlisted: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1917
- rank: Private
- decorations: New Zealand War Medal and Victory Medal

**Died:** 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1918                      **Age:** 36

**Commemorated:** [St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France](#)

**Family:** George Frederick was the eldest son of George Dunford and Elizabeth Cotton of Pallance Gate, Northwood and was born on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1882. There is no record of their marriage on the Isle of Wight or nationally. Of their 11 children, Florence only lived six weeks and Minnie died at the age of four. George's father, George senior, died in July 1919 and his mother Elizabeth in 1947. Both were still at Pallance Gate.

Brothers: Albert James (1884), Oliver Bertie (1886), Alfred Ernest (1889) and Henry (1897)

Sisters: Elizabeth Harriet May (1887), Frances Emily (1892), Daisy (1894), Florence Gertrude (1900-1900), Rosa Lily (1902) and Minnie (1904-1909)

**Northwood/Gurnard connection:** George and his brother Albert (who appeared to be known by his second name, James) were born in Newport district. All the other brothers and sisters were registered in the Cowes district, probably born at Marks Corner. On the 1881 census George's father is listed as aged 23, unmarried and living with his parents, George and Ellen Dunford, at Sticeletts Farm, Northwood. George was described as a farmer's son.

Ten years later George and Elizabeth were living at Slovens Hole, which was somewhere between the top of Horsebridge Hill and Hillis Gate. George senior described himself as a labourer and bonnet maker. By 1901 they were living at 1 Pallance Gate, Northwood, just to the east of Parkhurst Forest, near Hillis Gate. With them at this time were George Frederick, James, Oliver, Elizabeth, Ernest, Frances, Daisy, and Henry. In 1911 George (44), farm labourer, and Elizabeth (38) were living at Pallance Gate, Northwood with Bertie (26) builder's labourer, Henry (14) and Rosa (9). By then, George junior was in New Zealand although it has not

been established how or why he went there. His Army record states that he arrived in around 1905.

**War record:** Private George Frederick Dunford served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Otago Regiment NZEF and his records tell us that he signed up on the April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917. He stated that his age was 33, had been in New Zealand 12 years and his religion was a “free thinker”. The doctor suggested on his medical form that he appeared older than his stated age but he seemed quite fit. He trained at the Featherstone Military Camp, the largest training establishment in New Zealand in WWI. He embarked from Wellington, New Zealand on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1917 on the SS *Corinthic*. He disembarked at Liverpool on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1917 and left for the base camp at Etaples in France on March 20<sup>th</sup> 1918.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Otago Regiment formed part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Division, which had been in France since April 1916. The Division took part in many of the major battles including the Somme in 1916, Messines and the third Battle of Ypres in 1917 and the first and second battles of the Somme in 1918. George probably died during the heavy fighting around Bapaume. This was a very hard fought attack and is often considered to be the turning point of the First World War on the Western Front.

The *Isle of Wight County Press* of September 7<sup>th</sup> 1918 records the following:

Mr Dunford of Pallance Gate, has been notified of the death on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1914 of his eldest son, Pte. George Dunford, Otago Regiment, New Zealand, as a result of wounds (gas poisoning) received on 26<sup>th</sup> of August. He was 36 years of age.

The detailed records from the excellent website of “Archives New Zealand,” include the following letter to his mother at Pallance Gate from the New Zealand Military Forces:

16<sup>th</sup> January 1919

Dear Mrs E Dunford

Re George Dunford

I have to inform you that the official Army Form relative to the above-named deceased soldier has been received from the Front, and the following particulars are extracted therefrom for your information: -

Wounded in action, In the Field	26/8/18
Admitted No.1 N.Z. Field Ambulance, Field	26/8/18
Admitted 56 <sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station, Field	26/8/18
Transferred to No. 1 Australian General Hospital, Rouen	1/9/18
DIED OF WOUNDS at No. 1 Australian General Hospital (gunshot wound back and chest)	2/9/18 9/30am

Yours faithfully

B. A. Marris

Chief Clerk