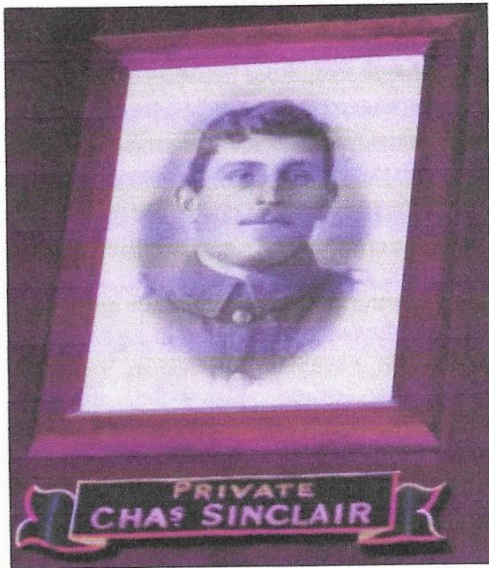




Charles Alexander Sinclair
11/12/1892 – 13/12/1918

Compiled by his great-niece
Anne McAllister (nee Sinclair) March 2020

39336 – Private Charles Alexander Sinclair

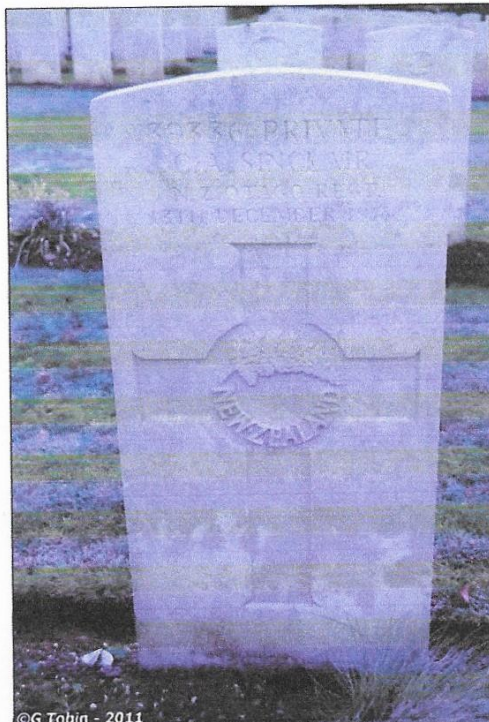


Charles was born on 11/12/1892 (Wrong date on application of 7/12/1890) at Tapanui the son of Charles Cairnes and Eliza Mary Sinclair. He was working as a Labourer at Tapanui when he enlisted for service on 18/10/1916 and embarked from NZ on 19/1/1917 with the 21st Reinforcements, attached to the 2nd Battalion, Otago Infantry Regiment, 14th Company.

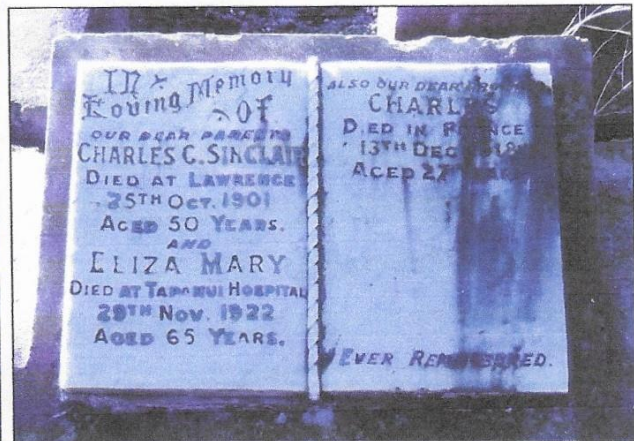
He marched into Sling on 27/3/1917 and left for France on 28/5/1917. Charles was evacuated from the field sick with a scalded foot (accidental) 22/12/1917 and on 9/3/1918 he joined the 1st Battalion, Otago Infantry Regiment, 4th Company then the Divisional Employment Company, in the field. He went on leave from 26/8/1918 to 12/9/1918 then on 16/10/1918 was charged with "joining in a meeting in forces belonging to HM Forces in that he, in the field, joined in a meeting by combining with others not to work in the

Divisional laundry when it was their duty to do so." He was given a 6 month sentence of IHL but this was suspended from 29/10/1918.

Charles was admitted to No 56 General Hospital, Etaples on 7/12/1918 suffering from broncho-pneumonia and died in hospital on 13/12/1918. He is buried in the Etaples Military Cemetery, grave reference XLVII. D. 12.



He is also remembered on the family grave in the Tapanui cemetery.



During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern and the southern battlefields. In 1917, 100,000 troops were camped among the sand dunes and the hospitals, which included eleven general, one stationary, four Red Cross hospitals and a convalescent depot, could deal with 22,000 wounded or sick. In September 1919, ten months after the Armistice, three hospitals and the Q.M.A.A.C. convalescent depot remained. The cemetery contains 10,773 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, the earliest dating from May 1915. 35 of these burials are unidentified.

Source: Wilma Brock, West Otago Vintage Club

PO Box 3768
Parramatta 2124
NSW
Australia.

20 April 2005

Ms A. McAllister
111A Geraldine Street
Christchurch
New Zealand.

Dear Anne

Re your relative Charlie Sinclair

As I mentioned in my email, Grandad's war diary mentions Charlie.

From war diary of Arthur James Gordon {1895 – 1978}, of Tapanui, West Otago, regiment number 35013, J Company, Otago Regiment.

May 2 1917 Sling Camp, Salisbury Plain, England

'Another warm morning and looks as if it is going to be very hot for the march back. We left Sling at 8 a.m, Otago Battalion leading the column which was far better for us than being in the dust etc in the rear. The halts were the same as going over 10 minutes after 40 minutes marching, the day was every bit as hot if not hotter than when we marched over but being in the head of the column we did not feel it as much as in the dust at the rear. We arrived back into Codford at 3.30 p.m. dusty but not as tired as when we marched over. A large part of the 21st Reinforcements came over with us. Amongst them Chas. Sinclair, Ronny Nicol, J.Potts and Gill McLean, so Tapanui is well represented in the new brigade.'

April 2 1917 Sling Camp, Salisbury Plain, England

'Awoke very tired after our few hours sleep and found the ground covered with snow. Sling is a beastly place, enough to make one down-hearted. We are doing nothing today, evidently having a spell before going on a route march of 18 miles to Codford where we are to form a new Brigade. All day is put in getting fitted up preparatory to the march. The day have been very cold, the snow has thawed and left terrible slush. In the afternoon I fixed up some photos and parcels for home before leaving here. In the evening posted the parcels and met Jim in the Y.M.C.A., had supper and made for hut. Snow about six inches on ground. Clarence and I went up to see Charlie Sinclair and R.Nicol, both are looking well. Heard that Bill Isteed has gone into hospital with influenza and cold in the back.'

Notes

After Grandad passed away in 1978, Mr G.W. {Bill} Stuart made notes about some of the people mentioned in the diary. 'Charlie Sinclair – shearer and general farm hand. Fanatical where machinery was involved. Mr Stuart can remember this man crawling out into 'No Mans' Land' in Belgium to 'rat' a wrecked plane. He would carry out a sandbag full of magnetos, carbs, etc., give the lot away and bring out a fresh supply the next time in the line. Worked at 'Brooksdale' {Stuart family property} at odd times. Died of flu during 1918 epidemic. A very tough strong man.'

Yours sincerely



John Gordon

email hedgehope@yahoo.com

THE ROLL OF HONOR.

PRIVATE CHARLES A. SINCLAIR.

Mrs C. C. Sinclair, of Manse Bush, received intimation last week that her son, who was presumably in England, had died on the 13th inst. from broncho-pneumonia. Recent letters received from him stated that he was in splendid health, and was looking forward to a good time when he obtained leave. The late Private Sinclair was born and educated at Tapanui, working on his mother's dairy farm after leaving school. He joined the 21st Reinforcements, and saw considerable fighting. The only casualty he sustained was through accident scalding some time ago. He was 27 years of age, and was a strong healthy young man, just the stamp apparently that are falling victims to the deadly pneumonia. Mrs Sinclair and family have the sympathy of all in the loss of a son and brother who had fought the Hun, and in the ordinary course would ere long have been on his way homeward.

Source unknown, presumably Tapanui Courier

FOR THE EMPIRE'S CAUSE.

DEATHS

GUNN.—On December 5, 1918, died from wounds received in action "Somewhere in France," Corporal Wm. Geo. Gunn; aged 24 years and 8 months.

His King and country called him,—

That call was not in vain;

On Britain's roll of honour

You will find our hero's name.

M'KAY.—Died of wounds in France on November 4, 1918. Andrew Provan, beloved son of the late Angus and Eliabeth M'Kay, Hyde, Otago Central, and beloved brother of A. G. and D. A. M'Kay, Albion Hotel, Napier; aged 34 years.

SINCLAIR.—On December 13, from broncho-pneumonia, Charles A. Sinclair (of Tapanui), the dearly beloved eldest son of Eliza Mary and the late C. C. Sinclair, and brother of Edward S. Sinclair (on active service) and Ivy Sinclair; aged 27 years. "So loved, so mourned."

Otago Witness, 25 December 1918

SINCLAIR.—In loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private Charles Alexander Sinclair (39336, 21st Reinforcements), who died from broncho-pneumonia at 56th General Hospital, France, on December 13, 1918, the dearly beloved eldest son of Eliza Mary and the late C. C. Sinclair.

There came a shock, an awful pain,
The world has never been the same;
To have, to love, and then to part,
Is the saddest story of the human heart.
It is not the tears at the moment shed
That tell how beloved is the soul that
fled,
But the tears through many a long
night wept
And the sad remembrance so fondly
kept.

There is a link death cannot sever,
Fond remembrance lasts forever.

—Inserted by his loving mother,
brother, and sister, Tapanui.

Otago Daily Times, 13 December 1919

Charles' death penny



A memorial plaque was issued after the First World War to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire service personnel who were killed as a result of the war.

My cousin, Lynette, and I gifted Charles' death penny to the West Otago Museum in 2019.

Charlie had a brother, my grandfather Edward Sidney (Sid), (26/2/1894–29/12/1975) and a sister, Ivy Alice Susan Chandler (11/4/1896–8/9/1981). My father Charlie (Charles Edward 10/2/1923–12/10/1995) was named after him. Of course, Dad never met his namesake, and I didn't ask grandfather Sid or Aunty Ivy about him, so we don't have any recollections of Charlie, apart from what is on record and presented above. My son Peter, named his son, Charlie (Charlie James Roy McAllister b. 20/6/2006) in memory of my father, so the name continues in the family.

I visited Charlie's grave at Étapes Military Cemetery, France on 23 August 2016. Here is a small selection of photos from that visit.



Reference: XVIII. F. 4A.

SIMSON, Captain, NOEL SPICER, Officer Cdg. 21st Anti-Aircraft Sect., Royal Garrison Artillery. Died of wounds, received on St. Jean Road, near Ypres, 26 September 1915. Age 34. Son of Frederick, John and Dora Simson, of White House, Worthy Lane, Winchester. Born at Ste. Adresse, France. Grave Reference: I. B. 5.

SINCLAIR, Private, CHARLES ALEXANDER, 39336, 1st Bn. (Div. Emp. Coy.), Otago Regiment, N.Z.E.F. Died of disease, 13 December 1918. Age 27. Son of Eliza Mary and the late C. C. Sinclair, of Tapanui, Otago, New Zealand. Grave Reference: XI.VII. D. 12.

SINCLAIR, Private, J, 12563, 9th Bn., British West Indies Regiment. 20 May 1918. Age 25. Son of James Sinclair, of Auchtembiddie, Jamaica, British West Indies. Grave Reference: XXXVII. A. 3.

SINDEN, Serjeant, WILLIAM FREDERICK, 3408, 2nd Bn., Rifle Brigade. Died of wounds, 27 October 1916. Age 24. Son of the late William and Clara Sinden. Native of Great Chart, Ashford, Kent. Grave Reference: VIII. D. 16A.

SINMOOK, Driver, 26219, Depot, Indian Royal Artillery. 22 July 1919. Grave Reference: XXXVII. A. 1.

SINSON, Private, FRANK, A/40292, 5th Bn., Canadian Infantry. Died of wounds, 28 April 1918. Age 21. Son of the late James and Mary Sinson, of U.S.A. Grave Reference: XI.VII. D. 12.

