

# TROOPER 12887 PETER GEORGE WHITE



Peter White met his death in a hail of machine gun and small arms fire as he and the 11th North Auckland Mounted Rifles stormed the heights of [Tel El Saba on the 31st October 1917](#).

This ancient City Tel (mound) was overlooking and protecting the heavily defended positions of the garrison town of Beersheba.

The Australian Light Horse and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles had surprised the Turkish defence by attacking from an unexpected direction, coming out of the Sinai Desert at Kalhasha to the South. Before the key fortress Town of Beersheba could be taken, the protective artillery and machine gun positions of Tel El Saba had to be removed. The attack by the NZMR took more hours than expected, but finally there was success at 1500 hours.

Once conquered the Light Horse were able to charge the garrison positions in one of the last famous mounted cavalry attacks of modern warfare.

Trooper 12887 Peter George White enlisted on the 13th January 1916 and was the son of George and Margaret White of Masterton. He was employed as an accountant before enlisting. He obtained the rank of Lance Corporal in the 19th Reinforcements Mounted Rifles Signal section before departing New Zealand for Suez on HMNZT 70, the SS Waihora on the 5th December 1916, and arrived in Egypt 13th January 1917.

Peter was reduced in rank back to Trooper on arrival, a normal occurrence for New Zealand appointed NCO's arriving from training into a War Zone. On the 1st of May Peter was transferred "In the Field" to the 11th North Auckland Mounted Rifles.

The 11th led the attack to take Tel El Saba. It was to be a long hard day, in open rocky country with little cover for the advance. His Service Record shows below that Trooper Peter White fell in action and his original grave site was listed as: 125 degrees from Tel El Saba; 317 degrees from Hill 1180. (Further military reference map Beersheba 1/20,000 Military Graves at point 0.4.B.2.2.Grave 18) - Later reburied in the [CWWGC Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel, D.6](#).

**Left:** 1916 photograph computer coloured by the NZMRA May 2016

# CASUALTY FORM—ACTIVE SERVICE.

Regiment or Corps: 19th. Mtd. Machine Gun Sect.  
 Regimental No. 12887 Rank: Corporal Name: White. Peter, George,  
 Enlisted\*: 13/1/16. Terms of Service\*: Duration of war. Service reckons from\* 13/1/16.  
 Date of promotion to present rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of appointment to lance rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Numerical position on roll of N.C.O.s.: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Extended: \_\_\_\_\_ Re-engaged: \_\_\_\_\_ Qualification†: \_\_\_\_\_

**FILE**  
 2806719  
 No. 4

Report.		Record of Promotions, Reductions, Transfers, Casualties, &c., during Active Service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other Official Documents. The Authority to be quoted in Each Case.	Place.	Date.	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other Official Documents.
Date.	From whom received.				
		<i>Embarked for Foreign Service</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>9/12/16.</i>	
13/1/17	Emb Off o/c Mtd	Disembarked X Waihora	Suez	13/1/17	D 17653
20/1/17	Trg Regt	Posted to strength <i>Irish</i>	Moascar	13/1/17	B 213 <i>Pg TR 5-26</i>
<i>17</i>	-do-	<i>Reking appt. L-6pf</i>	-do-	<i>13.1.17</i>	<i>B213 Pg TR 9-54</i>
<i>3 2 17</i>	-do-	<i>Wicked out to Sch Indt</i>	<i>Leitonia</i>	<i>28.1.17</i>	<i>B213 Pg TR 10/62</i>
<i>24 17</i>	-do-	<i>Rejoined from 1st Indt</i>	<i>Moascar</i>	<i>20.3.17</i>	<i>B213 Pg TR 22/129.</i>
<i>5 5 17</i>	-do-	<i>Transf to 113th Mtd Bde</i>	-do-	<i>29.4.17</i>	<i>B213 Pg TR 33/200</i>
<i>5.5.17</i>	<i>1st Mtd Bde</i>	<i>Passed for Srgt (6 X) 1st</i>	<i>In the field</i>	<i>1.5.17</i>	<i>B213 Pg 19/140</i>
<i>4.11.17</i>	<i>Amys Mtd Bde</i>	<i>Killed in action</i>	-do-	<i>31.10.17</i>	<i>Cable 8574 for 302644</i>
	<i>G R M</i>	<i>Buried in</i>	<i>Palestine</i>	<i>31.10.17</i>	<i>B R 2152 (R 31)</i>
<i>Gravesite: 125° from Tel-el-Saba; 314° from hill 1180 - near edge of wady</i> <i>(Map ref. 1/20,000. District Military Graves at point 0.1. B.2.2. Lane No 15) Office Chap. J. D. Wilson.</i>					

\* In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into section D, Army Reserve particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
 † E.g., Signaller, Shoemaking, &c., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties. [P.V.O.]

ENTERED ON HISTORY SHEET  
 A 21 24 10 19.

Service form shows Trooper White was posted "In the Field" to the 11th North Auckland Mounted Rifles on the 1st May 1917.

This document extracted from

<http://www.nzmr.org/updates.htm>



WAR DIARY.

AUCKLAND MOUNTED RIFLES RE

Summary of Events and Information

At 1355 orders were issued that the Regiment would make a general attack at 1405. The whole Regiment being now in the line, the 11th Sqn (Major H.S. WHITEHORN) with 2 Machine Guns on the Right, 3rd Sqn (Captain S.C. ASHTON) and 4th Sqn (Major D.MUNRO) on the Left and Centre, and a Troop moving up on South Side of WADI. One Sqn supported us on the Right, and a A.L.H. Regiment on the Left. Under cover of Artillery and Machine Gun fire, at 1405 our line steadily advanced by short rushes, at 1440 the first enemy's position on his 400 yards East of TEL EL SABA was captured and 60 prisoners and 3 machine guns taken. Two of these guns were then turned round and used with great effect against the enemy on TEL EL SABA.

The first objective being captured our Troops were re-organised, moved forward steadily, and then rushed TEL EL SABA, which fell at 1500. 1 machine gun and several prisoners were captured here. The machine gun we used against the enemy, who was running away in the direction of BEERSHEBA, with good results as several of them were seen to fall.

Our captures included 122 unwounded and 10 wounded prisoners, 4 machine guns and much material of War, e.g., rifles, ammunition, field cooker, equipment, horses and mules etc.

Our casualties were, Captain S.C. ASHTON and 5 O/Ranks Killed, Lieut W.H. JOHNS, died of Wounds, 2/Lieut R.C. CHAPMAN and 200 Ranks wounded.

Total enemy killed about 25 on TEL EL SABA positions and several in surrounding country.