

Richard PROUSE (1852-1884)

Wanganui Herald 11 Nov 1884

Major Stapp was a passenger for Patea this morning, taking with him some of the members of the Garrison Band to attend the funeral of Trooper Richard Prouse, which takes place at Patea this afternoon.

Manawatu Standard 12 Nov 1884 Fatal Gun Accident at Waverley – Further particulars – Herald correspondent

A fatal accident occurred at the rifle range here on Saturday last, by which Richard Prouse, a settler of Patea, and a member of the Wairoa Light Horse, lost his life. The body was brought into town directly after the accident. A coroner's inquest was held to-day (Monday), before C. A. Wray, Esq., coroner. The jury being empanelled, Mr Mason was chosen foreman. After viewing the body several witnesses were examined. The first called was William Giles, who deposed that he was in the butt with deceased when the fatal shot was fired. About sixteen men took part in the firing, and commenced at the small target at 200 and 300 yards, these distances being on the one range, both men attended to the marking on the small target. Giles states that on three separate occasions he warned deceased, and prevented him from rushing out to inspect the target before the danger signal had been recognised from the firing point, and states that he said, "Why Prouse you will be shot," when Prouse replied, "Oh! That's nothing." The next distance fired from was 500 yards, and the marking was done from the same butt, the targets being on each side of it, as the first men fired their number of shots at the 300 yards range, they went back to the 500 yards on the other range, and commenced firing there, Prouse acting as marker. On the 9th shot being fired the deceased complained that the target was so dull that he could not distinguish the hits, he however marked a bulls-eye on the dummy, but feeling still dissatisfied, took up the danger flag and went to the target without waiting to be recognised from the firing point; he had just arrived there when the report was heard, and Giles hearing a thud looked round and saw deceased hit, and limping towards the butt, he went to his assistance and supported him, being under the impression that he was hit on the leg. The others came running up from the firing points, and the deceased breathed his last a minute later, it was found that the bullet had entered the back and made its exit above the naval, after which it struck the target. Trooper Matheson was at the 500 yards when the accident occurred, he was not firing, but Major McLean and Trooper Wall were; they were lying down, firing alternately, McLean fired the 9th shot, and Wall the 10th, with the fatal result. McLean was not looking at the target when Wall fired, but was adjusting his sight, as he was one of the next two to fire. His attention was drawn to the target on hearing an exclamation from Wall, when he saw a man in front of it. He ran up with the others, and on reaching the target they found the wounded man still alive, but he died in a few minutes. Trooper Prouse, brother of the deceased, who was firing at the 300 yards range, stated that he saw a man run out to the large target, when he and those with him ceased firing. They heard the report and saw that the man was hit. They ran up to the target and found that he was dying. Sergeant-Major McLean was next examined. He was firing with Wall, and fired the 9th shot, which was marked a bulls-eye. He then got up, and was attending to the fixing of a sight. When the shot was fired, he glanced at the target and saw what had occurred, and ran up with the others. In reply to the Sergeant of Police, Sergeant-Major McLean said he was acquainted with the Volunteer regulations. He did not think it was necessary for a commissioned or non-commissioned officer to be in charge of the firing party, neither was it necessary for an officer to be in the butt. When the danger flag was shown from the butt, firing ceased at both firing points. He saw no danger flag after firing his last shot, which was marked as usual. Dr Croft gave evidence as to seeing the body on Saturday, which was of a technical form and character. Constable Lyster certified to having seen the body in the cottage adjoining the Commercial Hotel. The Coroner then summed up, saying that it was a most unfortunate affair, but that he did not think blame could be attached to anyone. The above is the gist of an examination which lasted for four hours. The Coroner, sergeant of police, and jury, investigated the affair in all its details, the marking arrangements being particularly scrutinised by the sergeant, the result however proved that neither carelessness nor neglect could be laid at the door of the

troop. The unfortunate sufferer himself by neglecting ordinary precautions rushed into the jaws of death. It is the general opinion that he thought that 10 shots had been fired, (the arrangement being, that the target should be wiped out after that number). The unfortunate occurrence has cast a gloom over the whole district. The deceased leaves a wife and seven children to mourn his loss. It is reported that his life was insured for £300. The remains were sent to Patea, where they will be interred to-day, arrangements have been made for a military funeral. The widow and the orphans have the sincere sympathy of the whole district.

1896 Patea Electoral Roll

Mary Jane Prouse, widow, Whenuakura

1896 Wellington Electoral Roll

Emily Jane Elizabeth Miller, domestic duties; Frank Ernest Miller, woollorter – both of Waterloo quay

RGO Births – children of Frank Ernest and Emily Jane Elizabeth Miller

1895/10042 Ethel Jane (died 1895 aged 8 months); 1897/5964 Myrtle Evelyn Dorothy; 1898/7860 Gilbert Ernest (died 1900 aged 2yrs); 1900/3843 Winifred Coralie Ruby; 1902/2534 Eileen Doris Annie; 1904/1849 Ruby Lillian Alice; 1905/18499 Doris Kathleen Emily; 1911/21662 Edna Noel Georgina

RGO Births – children of Arthur Frederick and Mary Ann Spooner

1897/4962 William Richard Onslow; 1899/14411 Loie; 1900/14368 Frederick Stephen; 1906/22598 George Arthur; 1911/2028 Mona Annie

RGO Births – children of Andrew and Harriet Catherine Riddell

1902/9187 Gertrude Catherine; 1904/17554 Cecilia Catherine

Wanganui Chronicle 25 Aug 1909 Marriage

At Opunake, by the Rev T. G. Hammond, Edwin Richard Prouse, of Patea, to Mary Alice, fourth daughter of Captain Jones, Wanganui.

1911 Patea Electoral Roll

Alice Maud Louisa Prouse, spinster, Patea; George William Thomas Prouse, farmer, Patea; Mary Jane Prouse, River View, Patea, widow

1914 Patea Electoral Roll

Alice Margaret Prouse, spinster, Patea; Edwin Richard Prouse, gardener, Patea; Mary Jane Prouse, River View, Patea, widow